

PERSPECTIVES ON AND APPROACHES TO AACSB INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

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In this special session, the panelists discuss their perspectives on and approaches to AACSB International accreditation and accreditation maintenance. Toward that end, Katrin Harich presents her college's efforts in preparation for accreditation maintenance under the new accreditation process. Her discussion includes mission and goals, strategic planning, annual reports, and assessment.

Craig Kelley talks about the proposed new standards for accreditation maintenance. The proposed accreditation standards differ from the current standards in format and substance. The new standards are grouped into three major categories, including strategic management, participants and assurance of learning. Strategic management standards require colleges to state their mission first and articulate specific actions that will have priority in the enactment of the college's mission. Participant standards tie together the current standards related to students, faculty and intellectual contributions. Learning standards require evidence of achievement of learning outcomes. Colleges have flexibility in defining the learning goals for each degree program, which removes the dependence on traditional U.S. educational structures.

Judy Hennessey shares experiences emanating from a recent AACSB International review team's criticism of the college's strategic plan. Issues centered on the lack of alignment of articulated goals with the mission statement and a misinterpretation of the mission. Goals had been developed with the assistance of a process facilitator. Initially the college felt that the faculty buy-in was most essential to successful goal achievement but later realized that this process inhibits goal alignment. The mission statement was presented in two paragraphs. This presentation structure fed an interpretation that the mission consisted of two independent directions for the college as opposed to one integrative and mutually supportive direction. Learning assurance assessment processes were developed in parallel rather than for each specific goal. However, since the intended mission priority was learning outcome

centered, the assessment program developed was perceived positively by the AACSB International review team and served as the mechanism for effectively restating the mission and developing appropriately aligned goals.

Judy Hennessey shares the reverse engineering strategy that was used to produce the current aligned goals and the faculty process that produced fast support for a concise restatement of the mission. The current well-aligned mission, goals and outcomes will be presented and discussed. Mary Curren focuses further on the experiences in involving faculty in the accreditation maintenance process.

Deborah Cours describes a curriculum design process that resulted in a fast track redesign of the undergraduate BSBA resulting in delivery in less than two years. The new curriculum reflects a different underlying philosophy (centralized vs. decentralized curriculum), and responds to input from employers, alumni, faculty, staff, students and administrators. Perhaps most importantly, the curriculum design considers AACSB International requirements for assessment needs, continuous improvement and strategic planning.