Part IV THE FOCUSED REPORT AND THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Although optional, an institution is strongly encouraged to submit a Focused Report in order to allow the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee to review remaining compliance issues in advance of its visit so that the Committee has ample time on campus to concentrate on evaluating the acceptability of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan, which is presented for initial review at that time. Both of these documents are sent to the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee four to six weeks prior to the campus visit, and two copies are sent to the institution' s Commission staff member. See Section V of this handbook for a complete listing of materials to be sent to the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

The Focused Report

This optional report, which may be distributed in print or electronically, contains two sections: one addressing the non-compliance issues cited by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee for further review and one addressing the standards identified by the Department of Education for on-site review.

Compliance Issues Cited for Further Review

The portion of the Focused Report that addresses issues of insufficient documentation of compliance is essentially a mini-Compliance Certification that differs from the document submitted to the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee in two important ways:

1. Not all of the standards included in the Compliance Certification are addressed. The Focused Report addresses **only** those standards that the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee marked **Non-Compliance** or **Did Not Review**.
2. Generally, for standards marked **Non-Compliance,** not all of the compliance components must be addressed in the Focused Report. The Focused Report addresses **only** those compliance components in each standard that were identified

by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee as insufficiently documented in the Compliance Certification.

Because the Focused Report addresses identified compliance components in a limited number of standards, it is substantially smaller than the Compliance Certification that was reviewed by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

Generally, comprehensive documentation of compliance is required only for those standards marked **Did Not Review** and those **Non-Compliance** findings for which the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee indicated that all of the documentation was inaccessible at the time of the review; the narrative and documentation for all other items marked **Non-Compliance** should focus on the missing documentation cited in the Committee's report. Typically, the narratives should not exceed three pages per standard, and in each narrative, institutions should develop a case for compliance in the same fashion established in Part II of this handbook for narratives in the Compliance Certification. The Focused Report provides an opportunity not only to submit available documentation that was not included in the Compliance Certification, but also to provide new documentation that was generated after the submission deadline for the Compliance Certification. In other words, through additional and/or updated documentation, the Focused Report gives institutions a second opportunity to present a convincing argument for compliance.

DOE Issues

Fifteen standards and requirements that directly parallel the criteria of the United States Department of Education must be reviewed on campus and are marked by an asterisk on the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee. These items include two Core Requirements (2.8 Faculty and 2.10 Student Support Services), six Comprehensive Standards (3.2.8 Qualified administrative/academic officers, 3.3.1 Institutional effectiveness, 3.4.3 Admissions policies, 3.4.11 Academic program coordination, 3.10.3 Financial aid audits, and 3.11.3 Physical facilities), and all of the Federal Requirements. If the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee marked any of these standards **Non-Compliance** or **Did Not Review**, institutions address them in the section of the Focused Report on compliance issues cited for further review. Since institutions are required to send the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee a copy of their Compliance Certification (narrative only), the narratives for the remaining DOE issues, those the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee marked **Compliance**, are included in that enclosure. Institutions need to ensure that the relevant documentation for these standards is also provided. Of course, institutions may update their narratives and supporting documentation of compliance to reflect recent changes.

The Quality Enhancement Plan

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is the component of the reaffirmation process that reflects and affirms the commitment of the Commission on Colleges to enhancing the quality of higher education in the region and to focusing attention on student

learning. By definition, the QEP describes a carefully designed course of action that addresses a well-defined and focused topic or issue related to enhancing student learning. The QEP should be embedded within the institution's ongoing integrated institution-wide planning and evaluation process and may very well evolve from this existing process or from other processes related to the institution's internal reaffirmation review.

Developing a QEP as a part of the reaffirmation process is an opportunity for the institution to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue or issues the institution considers important to improving student learning. The on-site evaluators will expect the Quality Enhancement Plan to present a clear and comprehensive analysis of the crucial importance to the institution of the selected topic. Responding to this reaffirmation requirement may also provide an impetus for focusing critical and creative energy. Institutions report that the QEP "has caused us to become much more intentional and focused about an important element of our mission" and "helped us put in motion our creativity." Appendix IV-1 provides additional comments from institutions concerning their experiences developing their QEPs.

As noted in Part II of this handbook, narratives in the Compliance Certification focus on the past and the present; the QEP, however, looks to the future. Core Requirement 2.12 requires an institution to develop a plan for increasing the effectiveness of some aspect of its educational program relating to student learning. Comprehensive Standard 3.3.2 mandates that the institution demonstrate institutional capability for completion of the QEP, involve institutional constituencies in both planning and implementation of the QEP, and establish goals and an assessment plan. These requirements launch a process that can move an institution into a future characterized by the development and/or modification of creative, engaging, and meaningful learning experiences for students.

Leadership for Institutional Development of the QEP

The institution's Leadership Team is charged with providing oversight for both the development of the Compliance Certification and the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan. After the institution has identified the topic for the QEP, the Leadership Team may wish to assign the day-to-day responsibility for its development to a select group representing those individuals who have the greatest knowledge about and interest in the ideas, content, processes, and methodologies to be developed in the QEP along with expertise in planning and assessment and in managing and allocating institutional resources. Since the QEP addresses enhancing student learning and/or the environment supporting student learning, faculty typically play a primary role in this phase of the reaffirmation process.

Many institutions charge a QEP Steering Committee with the task of drafting a document for review. Steering Committees frequently establish sub-committees that focus on particular aspects of the development process; for example, one group might conduct the literature review, another flesh out the strategies for professional development, a third

develop the assessment plan, a fourth detail the budget, and yet another work on a marketing plan.

To assist in the process of developing a QEP, institutions occasionally employ consultants, although doing so is not required, nor may it be necessary. However, since the QEP is expected to be a document developed by the institution that includes (1) an institutional process for identifying key issues and (2) broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, the Commission would expect that a consultant would not assume a leadership role in the QEP development.

Institutional Support. The development of a QEP that successfully addresses the quality of student learning requires significant commitment from the institutional community. Recently reaffirmed institutions note that they wish that they had realized earlier just how many people need to be involved in the development and implementation of their QEPs and the hours required for connecting with people.

An institution's support of the Quality Enhancement Plan should be evident through:

- Consensus among key constituency groups that the QEP, rather than being merely a requirement for reaffirmation of accreditation, can result in significant, even transforming, improvements in the quality of student learning.
- Broad-based institutional participation of all appropriate campus constituencies in the identification of the topic or issue to be addressed by the QEP.
- Careful review of research and best practices related to the topic or issue.
- Allocation of adequate human and financial resources to develop, implement, and sustain the QEP.
- Implementation strategies that include a clear timeline and assignment of responsibilities.
- A structure established for evaluating the extent to which the goals set for the plan are attained.

Review committees expect an institution to demonstrate its commitment to the QEP by providing a realistic operational plan for implementing, maintaining, and completing the project.

Developing the Quality Enhancement Plan

Processes for developing the QEP will differ among institutions, depending on such factors as size, campus culture, internal governance structures, mission, the focus of the QEP, physical and human resources, and numerous other variables that may determine what is

appropriate or even possible. These same factors affect the length of time necessary to develop the plan for on-site review. Institutions need to build into their development process sufficient time for extensive investigation, discussion, and refinement of the topic as well as time for drafts to be circulated, debated, and revised in ways that continue to gather and build support for the QEP. While On-Site Reaffirmation Committee members recognize the role that institutional culture plays in shaping the development process, they do expect the process to have been methodical, logical, and inclusive.

Developing a QEP is a recursive rather than a linear process, much like any other important, deliberative, and reflective planning and writing project. An institution should expect the focus and framework for the QEP to shift and evolve as the research, writing, talking, and campus participation occur. Over time, the focus will become sharper, the outline more certain, and the goals better defined. These considerations and reconsiderations are instrumental in the development of greater confidence in the QEP. In fact, a substantial amount of ambiguity is to be expected during the creative phase of the development process.

An important distinction for institutions to understand at the outset is that the QEP is an **action plan**; it is not a timeline for subsequent planning. Planning needs to be completed during the months prior to the arrival of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee on campus. Several years ago, a task force of experienced on-site reviewers identified nine steps in the development of the QEP. These steps, which are presented below, help to guide an institution through a comprehensive planning process that can result in an effective action plan. Institutions may choose, however, to organize their QEP development process in whatever manner suits their culture and resources.

Step One: Selecting a Topic

One way to begin the process of selecting the QEP topic is to explain the nature and purpose of the QEP to members of the institutional community. Before institutional constituents can be expected to support the development and implementation of the QEP, they must understand what it is, how it relates to other accreditation requirements, and what impact it can have on the future of the institution and its students. Some institutions tap the expertise of their public relations office in finding creative ways to get the message out; others tap the ingenuity of their faculty in establishing avenues for educating the internal community. Websites, rallies, contests -- institutions need to identify the vehicles that will work within their campus culture.

Some institutions conduct initial exploration and research that engages a limited number of faculty, administrators, and students in thinking about the topics for the QEP before involving the larger campus community. Others engage a wide cross-section of the institution's constituents to discuss potential topics and then convene a smaller working group to determine the more focused topic(s). Institutions need to identify a process that harmonizes with their size and governance structure. Whatever the process used for selecting the topic for the QEP, one of the Commission's primary concerns is that the institution ensure widespread participation by all pertinent institutional constituent groups – faculty, administrators, students, and perhaps even alumni and trustees. Broad-based

involvement needs to be self-evident to on-site evaluators, who expect institutions to demonstrate that various institutional constituencies have been involved in the identification of the topic for the QEP.

Since faculty members shoulder responsibility for student learning, they should be appropriately represented in the early phases of the development of the QEP. Faculty members, in particular, need to agree that the issues identified for the QEP are sufficiently significant to engage individuals in implementation and follow-through, not only for enhancing student learning and/or the environment for supporting student learning on an institutional level, but also for engaging the long-term commitment of faculty and other individuals on whom the implementation and continuation of the plan will depend.

Sources of Inspiration. Since Core Requirement 2.12 requires "a broad-based institutional process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment," an exploration of the institution's culture, strategic planning, goals, mission, and assessment results is a good place to begin the search for an appropriate topic, one that links to the institution's mission/vision and fits into the institution's strategic plan. Tapping into issues centered on student learning where shared interests, concerns, and aspirations have already surfaced or where data have already been collected and analyzed may prove fruitful. The topic for the QEP need not be a brand new idea. For example, institutions might develop a QEP that extends, modifies, redirects, or strengthens an improvement that is already underway. Institutions might also develop a QEP around a project for which initial planning commenced shortly before the start of preparations for reaffirmation. Institutions may not, however, submit a QEP that describes initiatives that are fully realized.

Institutions are encouraged to base their selection of the topic for the QEP on an analysis of empirical data. The institution may wish to examine studies that have been done on best practices in higher education and other national and peer group data derived from carefully designed research. A QEP topic based on a needs assessment, for example, will have more validity and credibility than one stemming from anecdotal evidence. Recognized, substantive issues will likely have a good chance of getting the institutional stakeholders to support both the development and implementation of the plan.

Whatever the source of inspiration, institutions should ensure that the QEP clearly establishes the importance of the topic so that on-site evaluators can understand its value and appropriateness to the institution. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee will expect the institution to have selected an issue of substance and depth.

Scope. A critical factor in the selection of the topic is the determination of the scope of the initiative. While the QEP is not expected to touch the life of every student at the institution, the topic does need to be perceived as significant to the institution and as a major enhancement to student learning. On the other hand, it also needs to be focused enough to provide a manageable framework for development and implementation. One might argue that an institution has the right to select a broad, complex issue for its QEP, and certainly it does. Doing so, however, demands that extra care be taken in demonstrating to the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee the institution's capacity for implementing and sustaining the initiative. Successful QEP topics skillfully balance

significance and institutional capacity, and they stem from a realistic assessment of what the institution can afford and what the institution can expect to achieve in the time allotted. Of particular importance to on-site reviewers is a clear and concise description of the critical issue(s) to be addressed.

Viable QEP topics may focus on areas such as enhancing the academic climate for student learning, strengthening the general studies curriculum, developing creative approaches to experiential learning, enhancing critical thinking skills, introducing innovative teaching and learning strategies, increasing student engagement in learning, and exploring imaginative ways to use technology in the curriculum. In all cases, goals and evaluation strategies must be clearly and directly linked to improving the quality of student learning. Titles of QEPs submitted for Commission review in 2004 and 2005 and summaries of QEPs from later classes are available at www.sacscoc.org under "Institutional Resources."

Before institutions move on to the second step, crystallizing student learning outcomes, they need to pause and consider whether or not the selected topic requires definition. The appropriateness of topics such as "Critical Thinking" and "Academic Literacy," for example, may be self-evident, but the precise meaning of these terms may not be quite so apparent because both topics include a range of knowledge and skills. Taking the time now to develop operational definitions of terms such as these will pay dividends when establishing student learning outcomes and assessment plans.

Step Two: Defining the Student Learning Outcomes

Within the context of the QEP as a requirement for reaffirmation, the Commission on Colleges broadly defines student learning as changes in (1) knowledge, (2) skills, (3) behaviors, or (4) values. Within the context of its own particular Quality Enhancement Plan, an institution must specify realistic, measurable student learning outcomes appropriate for its topic.

As the critical issue identified by the institution is refined into a QEP topic with a narrow, manageable scope, the institution needs to begin investing energy in the establishment of specific student learning outcomes. This first draft of outcomes, which identifies the benefits to be derived from the QEP, will, no doubt, undergo refinement as the institution's understanding of current best practices relevant to the critical issue matures. Nonetheless, this first stab at setting the QEP's learning goal(s) is an important step in setting the parameters for the research of the literature.

Keeping colleagues focused on student learning outcomes at this stage sometimes requires a conscious effort to distinguish between the process of enhancing student learning and the resulting product of enhanced student learning. Initial excitement about the QEP topic frequently results in enthusiasm about actions that might be taken -- developing a freshman seminar, for example, or establishing learning communities. While the freshman seminar and learning communities may be viewed as outcomes of the QEP (after all, they

do not exist now, but they will after the QEP is rolled out), they are not **student learning outcomes**. Rather, as elements of a new process (the "action" portion of the QEP), they are strategies to be employed to enhance student learning.

Notice how the process outcomes listed below describe what institutions will do as they implement their QEPs rather than what students will be able to do as a result of the implementation of the QEP.

- The college will establish baseline performance measures for mathematics skills
- The faculty will use technology resources to develop and implement at least twelve web-enhanced classes over a five-year period.
- The Graduate School will provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

Actual student learning outcomes stem from the impact of strategies such as these on the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and values of students. What should students know post-implementation of the QEP that they don't know now? What should students be able to do then that they can't do now? How should their behavior change? What changes in values are anticipated? Institutions whose student learning outcomes have been reviewed favorably by visiting committees and the Commission presented statements such as the following:

- "Graduates will be able to describe the fundamental elements of the social, political, and economic reality of a country or region other than [their own]."
- "Graduates will be able to describe a single event from their own cultural point of view and from that of another culture."
- "Students who take the developmental math courses will succeed in the next level math course."
- "As the sender, the graduating student will generate respectful communications that have a clear purpose and are well organized, grammatically correct, and appropriate to the audience and mode of communication."

These statements focus on changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, or values. These statements are (1) specific, (2) focused, and (3) measurable. On-site evaluators expect a QEP to provide relevant and appropriate goals and objectives to improve student learning and student learning outcomes that can be expected to lead to observable results.

Step Three: Researching the Topic

Like any good research proposal, the QEP should be grounded in a review of best practices and provide evidence of careful analysis of the institutional context in which the goals will be implemented and of consideration of best practices related to the topic.

Nobody has time to reinvent the wheel (and the Commission does not expect that the QEP constitute "original" research), so the institution should take full advantage of the available literature on the topic. Library staff can offer valuable assistance in assembling a bibliography of current literature on the topic. Many institutions use this step as an opportunity to build a broad base of support for the initiative by engaging a wide range of colleagues in the development of executive summaries of the items on the bibliography. Many hands not only make the burden light, but they also provide an opportunity to build broad-based involvement into the process.

Supplementing that paper review with conversations with current practitioners not only adds an interactive element to this part of the planning process, thereby confirming or refuting initial impressions, but also helps to uncover potential consultants for the professional development component of the QEP or to find that specialized QEP evaluator for the on-site review. Investing in attendance at conferences and workshops is a valuable strategy for involving key individuals in an immersion orientation to the identified topic and offers yet another opportunity to find the QEP evaluator. Identifying this evaluator early on carries with it the obvious advantage of getting the on-site visit onto that individual's calendar. Many institutions that delay this search discover that their leading choices are already booked for the dates of their visits.

Step Four: Identifying the Actions to be Implemented

Having developed a compendium of best practices related to the selected topic, institutions now need to sift through that research and identify the actions to be taken and the activities to be implemented on campus to bring about the desired enhancement of student learning. Of particular importance at this point is ensuring that the list is both complete and affordable. For example, On-Site Reaffirmation Committees expect institutions to provide professional development for participating faculty and staff when QEPs take an institution in a new direction. They also want to know that the institution has looked at each action from multiple perspectives (such as impact on students, impact on faculty and staff, cost, and complexity) and addressed all of the ramifications of the plan, such as modifications to related policies and procedures, adjustments to faculty work loads, re-allocations of funds, and development of a support infrastructure. Keeping an eye on costs as this action list is developed positions the institution to meet the expectations of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee that the institution can afford to implement its QEP; monitoring costs this early in the planning also reduces the probability that sticker shock will derail one or more key activities. Having to trim the QEP's initiatives after some constituencies have developed strong commitments to the very activities that have been eliminated can seriously erode support for the project.

Step Five: Establishing the Timeline for Implementation

The task of establishing the timeline for the actions identified needs to result from a thoughtful integration of the intrinsic logic driving the development of the activities needed to produce the anticipated student learning outcomes and the realities of the human and

financial resources that will be available throughout the life of the project. Because the length of time necessary to implement and refine the action plan will vary among institutions, the Commission has not prescribed a set timeframe for the duration of the Quality Enhancement Plan.

Institutions need to take care to ensure that all activities are included on the timeline and that they are rolled out in an orderly and manageable sequence. Evaluators need to feel confident not only that institutions have identified a series of actions with the potential to generate the desired learning outcomes, but also that institutions have developed realistic timelines whose schedules for implementation and assessment they will be able to meet. Activities need to be calendared in a logical sequence that positions development activities and assessment methodologies at optimum points in the process. Furthermore, Committees expect institutions to move with sufficient dispatch to have meaningful results to report to the Commission in the Fifth-Year Interim Report.

Step Six: Organizing for Success

Early in the reaffirmation process, institutions tend to organize to *develop* the Quality Enhancement Plan. Evaluators, however, expect them also to have organized to *implement* the Quality Enhancement Plan, and this is a step that is frequently overlooked prior to the arrival of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee. Institutions must take care to detail the infrastructure for the implementation and the continuation of the QEP. Who is responsible for each activity? Are they qualified and empowered to fulfill those responsibilities? Who is responsible for keeping within budget, for monitoring progress, or for modifying the plan? Do these individuals have sufficient time to complete their task? Will they be appropriately compensated for their efforts?

Step Seven: Identifying Necessary Resources

An important step in the development of the QEP is estimating the financial, physical, and human resources necessary for developing, implementing, and sustaining the plan. The QEP need not require substantial investment; certainly, no QEP should require more resources than the institution can commit, no matter how valuable the plan and its results might be. Every plan, however, does require identification of personnel time, money, and materials necessary for its successful implementation. Institutions need to examine carefully the actions identified for implementation so that they can anticipate all of the personnel costs (stemming from both time commitment to the project and investment in professional development activities), all of the costs for instructional and testing materials, and all of the other related expenses. Requesting that strategies for faculty development be specified and that budgets for their implementation be detailed, for example, is a common theme in recommendations written by On-Site Reaffirmation Committees that believe all of the costs embedded in the project have not been fully anticipated. On-site evaluators do not hesitate to cite circumstances where hardware, software, personnel, and infrastructure costs have not been sufficiently detailed or where adequate learning resources have not been included in the budget.

Evaluators look holistically at the institution's capacity to implement and sustain the QEP and must be convinced that the institution possesses the financial, physical, and human resources to implement, sustain, and complete the QEP. Frequently underestimated by institutions, QEP budgets should stem from a realistic analysis of what is both desirable and possible. Often overlooked in initial budget submissions are such items as the cost of time commitments from full-time personnel and the re-direction of current line-item allocations to sustain the QEP. Many institutions also tend to underestimate the workload issues stemming from the management of the QEP. For others, a reluctance or inability to predict continuing costs in subsequent years can lead to sticker shock as the QEP gears up to full speed. As resource issues are explored and preliminary budgets developed, therefore, institutions may need to distinguish between "essentials" and "desirables" and then scale their expectations to match their capacity.

In addition to developing an appropriately detailed budget, the institution should identify the sources of the funds. How much is new money and where will it come from? How much is a re-allocation? Evaluators are interested not only in the budget detail and source of funding, however, but also in the institution's commitment to fund the project as described. Institutions should consider how to demonstrate that the estimated budgets will be funded in the succeeding years.

Step Eight: Assessing the Success of the QEP

The institution's evaluation of its QEP should be multifaceted, with attention both to key objectives and benchmarks to be achieved in the implementation of the QEP as well as to the overall goals of the plan. Initially, evaluation strategies need to focus on the implementation process and provide crucial feedback to those with primary responsibility for the QEP.

In evaluating the overall goals of the QEP, primary emphasis is given to the impact of the QEP on the quality of student learning. Since On-Site Reaffirmation Committees must be convinced that institutions have developed the means for assessing the success of their QEPs, they expect details -- names of assessment instruments, timelines for their administration, processes for the review of the assessment results -- rather than general descriptions of intentions to develop instruments at some point in the future. Multiple strategies using both quantitative and qualitative, as well as internal and external, measures should be employed. The identified student learning outcomes will require careful analysis for consistency of results across different measures and for understanding variation among the outcomes. The chosen measures need to be both valid and reliable, and the comprehensive assessment plan should be flexible enough to accommodate, if necessary, subsequent changes made to implementation activities and timelines as a result of the analysis of previous assessment results. On-Site Reaffirmation Committees also expect institutions to have developed a system for monitoring progress in implementing its QEP and to describe the process by which the results of evaluation will be used to improve student learning.

Step Nine: Preparing the QEP for Submission

The QEP should be clear, succinct, and ready for implementation. It may not exceed one hundred pages of size 11 Arial font, including a narrative of no more than seventy-five pages and appendices of no more than twenty-five pages. A page header, right aligned, should identify the institution; the footer should center the page number. The title of the QEP, the name of the institution, and the dates of the on-site review should be prominently displayed on the title page.

Institutions have traditionally organized their QEPs according to two formats. Several years ago, a task force composed of experienced on-site reviewers suggested that the Table of Contents for the Quality Enhancement Plan generally include the following components:

I. **Executive Summary** *(one page)*

II. **Process Used to Develop the QEP**: Evidence of the involvement of all appropriate campus constituencies *(providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 "includes a broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development…of the QEP")*

III. **Identification of the Topic**: A topic that is creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning *(providing support for compliance with CR2.12 "focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning")*

IV. **Desired Student Learning Outcomes**: Specific, well-defined goals related to an issue of substance and depth, expected to lead to observable results *(providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 "identifies goals")*

V. **Literature Review and Best Practices**: Evidence of consideration of best practices related to the topic *(providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 "institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP")*

VI. **Actions to be Implemented:** Evidence of careful analysis of institutional context in designing actions capable of generating the desired student learning outcomes *(providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 "institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP")*

VII. **Timeline**: A logical calendaring of all actions to be implemented *(providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 "institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP")*

VIII. **Organizational Structure**: Clear lines of responsibility for implementation and sustainability *(providing support for compliance CS 3.3.2 "institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP")*

IX. **Resources**: A realistic allocation of sufficient human, financial, and physical resources *(providing support for compliance CS 3.3.2 "institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP")*

X. **Assessment**: A comprehensive evaluation plan *(providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 "a plan to assess their achievement")*

XI. **Appendices** *(optional)*

This presentation became popular with institutions that followed the suggestions in the *QEP Handbook* posted on the SACSCOC website. Other institutions, however, organized their Quality Enhancement Plan around five fundamental issues:

Executive Summary *(one page)*

I. **Broad-based institutional process identifying key issues**: *Evidence of the involvement of all appropriate campus constituencies; identification of a topic that is creative and vital to the long-term improvement of student learning (providing support for compliance with CR 2.12 "an institutional process for identifying key issues" and CS 3.3.2 "broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development…of the QEP")*

II. **Focus**: *Specific, well-defined goals related to an issue of substance and depth, expected to lead to observable results (providing support for compliance with CR2.12 "focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning")*

III. **Capability**: *Evidence of careful analysis of institutional context in designing actions capable of generating the desired student learning outcomes; a logical calendaring of all actions to be implemented; a realistic allocation of sufficient human, financial, and physical resources (providing support for compliance CS 3.3.2 "institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP")*

IV. **Broad-based involvement in development and implementation**: *Evidence of consideration of best practices related to the topic: clear lines of responsibility for implementation and sustainability (providing support for compliance with CS 3.3.2 "broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP")*

V. **Assessment**: *A comprehensive evaluation plan*

Ultimately, which format to use is an institutional choice; there is no one "best" format applicable to every plan. It is imperative, however, that the plan provide full coverage of all the component parts of the QEP standard, regardless of organization.