EFFECT OF THE NEW CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION
ON REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION
IN THE SOUTH

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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May, 1988

This study was concerned with characteristics of the process of reaffirmation of accreditation in the Southern region among institutions that completed reaffirmation under the revised *Criteria for Accreditation* and those that completed reaffirmation under the former *Standards of the College Delegate Assembly*. The institutions that had completed reaffirmation under the new *Criteria* were identified. A matching group of equivalent institutions which had last completed reaffirmation under the *Standards* was created. Each group contained 66 institutions. Data were collected using the records of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Four areas were identified in which the implementation of the *Criteria* might affect the process of reaffirmation of accreditation: (a) institutional organization for the self-study, (b) visiting committee composition, (c) number of recommendations by visiting committees, and (d) substance
of recommendations by visiting committees. A series of nine hypotheses were tested to assess these effects.

The process of reaffirmation of accreditation does not appear to have been substantially affected by the implementation of the new *Criteria for Accreditation*. Institutional organization for the self-study appears unaffected by the implementation of the *Criteria* for most institutions. There appears, however, to be evidence that the *Criteria* have effected change for a minority of institutions. The implementation of the *Criteria for Accreditation* does not appear to have influenced either the size or the composition of visiting committees of peers.

The implementation of the *Criteria for Accreditation* has not increased the average number of recommendations by visiting committees of peers, but there appears to be evidence that it has created a minimum core of recommendations common to many institutions. The addition of the criterion on institutional effectiveness apparently has created a new and proportionately overrepresented focus for visiting committee recommendations.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypotheses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of this Dissertation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Regional Accreditation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressures for Outcomes Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of the Criteria for Accreditation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Consequences for Reaffirmation Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization for the Self-Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition of the Visiting Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number and Substance of Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. PROCEDURES FOR THE COLLECTION OF DATA</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Procedures and Matching Techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE OF CONTENTS—continued

IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA . . . . . . 58

Introduction
Description of Selected Institutions
Organization for the Self-Study
Composition of the Visiting Committees
Number and Substance of Recommendations
Tests of Hypotheses
Error Tolerance
Hypothesis 1
Hypothesis 2
Hypothesis 3
Hypothesis 4
Hypothesis 5
Hypothesis 6
Hypothesis 7
Hypothesis 8
Hypothesis 9
Summary of Findings
Chapter Summary

V. SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 81

Summary
Discussion
Organization for the Self-Study
Composition of the Visiting Committee
Number of Recommendations
Substance of Recommendations
Conclusions
Recommendations for Further Research
Chapter Summary

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 107
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Levels of Participation in Self-Study</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Visiting Committee Size</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Composition of Visiting Committees</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Visiting Committees Containing Presidents or Chancellors and Institutional Researchers or Planners</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of Recommendations by Visiting Committee</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Number of Recommendations for Criteria Group by Year</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Test of Difference of Mean Number of Committees</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Test of Difference of Mean Number of Participants</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Test of Difference of Mean Average Committee Size</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Chi-Square Test of Independence of Group Membership of Institution and Positions Held by Visiting Committee Members</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Chi-Square Test of Independence of Group Membership and Presence on Visiting Committee of Institutional Researcher or Planner</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Chi-Square Test of Independence of Group Membership and Presence on Visiting Committee of a President or Chancellor</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Test of Difference of Mean Number of Recommendations</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES--continued

14. Analysis of Variance of Average Number of Recommendations by Visiting Committees During Different Years ........... 75

15. Chi-Square Test of Goodness-of-Fit of Proportion of Recommendations Involving the Criterion on Institutional Effectiveness with the Proportion of Must Statements from the Criterion .................. 77
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Each year approximately one-tenth of the degree-granting member institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) complete the process required for reaffirmation of accreditation. The process includes an institutional self-study and validation of the self-study by a visiting committee of peers.

Action in 1983 and 1984 by the College Delegate Assembly of SACS replaced the Standards of the College Delegate Assembly with the Criteria for Accreditation. As a result, self-studies are now conducted with regard to the Criteria rather than the Standards, visiting committee evaluations assess compliance with the Criteria, and decisions on reaffirmation of accreditation are made in reference to the Criteria.

Certain changes to the reaffirmation process were anticipated as a result of the implementation of the Criteria. It was anticipated that the clarification of "must" and "should" statements would result in an increased number of recommendations by visiting committees (Swanson, ...
1985, p. 18). Other consequences may also result from the changes. For example, the reorganization of 11 standards into 5 criteria may have an effect on levels of participation in the self-study process, given the common use (Commission on Colleges, 1987a) of one committee for each guideline.

It is important that studies be conducted to assess the effect of the implementation of the Criteria. This study examined that effect on three important aspects of the process of reaffirmation of accreditation: (a) institutional organization for the self-study, (b) composition of visiting committees of peers, and (c) the recommendations to institutions by visiting committees of peers.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was the process of reaffirmation of accreditation in the Southern region and the characteristics of that process among institutions that completed reaffirmation under the revised Criteria for Accreditation and those that completed reaffirmation under the former Standards of the College Delegate Assembly.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was fourfold, as follows:

1. To determine characteristics of institutional organization for the self-study process under both the Standards and the Criteria.

2. To determine characteristics of the visiting committees of peers at institutions subject to the Standards and at those subject to the Criteria.

3. To compare the number of recommendations by the visiting committees at institutions subject to the Standards with the number at those subject to the Criteria.

4. To assess the effect of the criterion of institutional effectiveness on the reports of the visiting committees.

Hypotheses

To carry out the purposes of the study, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. Institutions seeking reaffirmation of accreditation under the Criteria use fewer principal committees in the conduct of the self-study than institutions seeking such reaffirmation under the Standards.

2. The total number of individuals participating as members of all principal committees combined is less at institutions seeking reaffirmation of accreditation under
the Criteria than at institutions seeking such reaffirmation under the Standards.

3. No difference exists in the average membership size of principal committees used in the conduct of the self-study among institutions seeking reaffirmation under the two sets of guidelines.

4. No difference exists among institutions seeking reaffirmation of accreditation under the two sets of guidelines in the proportion of members of the visiting committees of peers who are presidents or chancellors, faculty, central academic administrators, unit academic administrators, librarians, finance officers, institutional planners or researchers, and other administrators.

5. No difference exists among the groups of institutions seeking reaffirmation of accreditation under the two sets of guidelines in the proportion of visiting committees of peers including participation of an institutional researcher or planner.

6. No difference exists among the groups of institutions seeking reaffirmation of accreditation under the two sets of guidelines in the proportion of visiting committees of peers including participation of a chancellor or president.

7. The average number of recommendations by visiting committees of peers is greater at institutions subject to the Criteria than at institutions subject to the Standards.
8. With regard to institutions subject to the Criteria, no difference exists in the average number of recommendations by the visiting committees of peers among reports issued in different years.

9. With regard to the recommendations by visiting committees of peers at institutions subject to the Criteria, the proportion of recommendations involving the criterion on institutional effectiveness exceeds the number expected by the relative proportion of must statements.

Significance of the Study

This study was concerned with the characteristics of the process of reaffirmation of accreditation under both the former Standards of the College Delegate Assembly as well as under the new Criteria for Accreditation. Kells (1986) anticipated changes would result from the adoption of the Criteria, especially the criterion on institutional effectiveness, and termed its adoption "an extremely important action for higher education in the South" (p. 4). He continued that "because of its national leadership in enacting the Criterion, SACS will also have an effect on all of U.S. higher education institutions" (p. 4). Thus, the Southern region is acting as a laboratory wherein the effects of such changes to accrediting guidelines may be examined. The data provided by this study may be used in
evaluating the success of the *Criteria* and their suitability for replication by other regional associations.

This investigation also provides the opportunity to test certain nascent theories regarding the reaffirmation process. The theory that enhanced linguistic precision with regard to the requirements of accreditation guidelines will result in increased findings of noncompliance has most clearly been articulated by Swanson (1985). Yost (in Howard et al., 1987) and Rugg (in Ewell, Thrash, & Rugg, 1987) both support this theory. This study is significant in that it is the first to investigate the effect of increased linguistic precision, the "must statements" and "should statements," on the recommendations of visiting committees.

The reorganization of the 11 standards into 5 criteria presents the opportunity to examine alternative theories with regard to institutional organization for the self-study. The acknowledgement by the Commission on Colleges of the then common practice of organizing by the standards (1977a) and its identification of the five areas of the *Criteria* "to which a principal committee is usually assigned" (1987a, p. 13), together imply a theory that institutional organization for the self-study mimics the organization of the accreditation guidelines. Alternatively, both the Commission (1987a) and scholars (Dressel, 1971; Kells, 1983a, 1983b; Kirkwood, 1978) affirm the importance of considering institutional characteristics
in designing and organizing a self-study. These affirmations presuppose an alternative theory of institutional organization for the self-study under which institutions create their own organizational schemes. This study is significant in that by examining institutional organization for self-study under two sets of guidelines that differ in their own organization, it contributes to the literature with regard to the applicability of the alternative theories.

Organization of this Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter I introduces the problem of the study, the purpose of the study, the hypotheses developed to accomplish the purpose, and the significance of the study. Chapter II reviews the literature relating to the problem of the study. Chapter III describes the procedures used for the selection of subjects and the collection of data. Chapter III also describes the research design employed in this study. Chapter IV presents the data and the results of the analysis of the data. Chapter V contains a summary of the study, a discussion of the results, the conclusions derived from the results, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Summary

This study concerns the process of reaffirmation of accreditation under the two sets of guidelines in recent use
by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association. The purposes include examination of institutional organization for the self-study, visiting committees of peers, and recommendations by visiting committees of peers. The study is significant not only in that it provides data that may be used to evaluate the new Criteria, but also in that it permits scrutiny of certain nascent theories regarding the reaffirmation process.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This study concerns the process of reaffirmation of institutional accreditation. The review of the literature related to this study is divided into seven major areas, as follows: (a) development of regional accreditation, (b) pressures for outcomes assessment, (c) development of the Criteria for Accreditation, (d) possible consequences for reaffirmation process, (e) organization for the self-study, (f) composition of the visiting committee, and (g) recommendations of the visiting committee.

Development of Regional Accreditation

Regional accreditation of institutions of higher education in the United States began in 1913. In that year, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools issued its first list of accredited institutions (Selden, 1960, p. 37). Three of the other regional associations quickly followed the example of the North Central Association, including the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). SACS authorized the "Commission for Accreditation

The first standards adopted by the regional associations were quantitative attributes concerned with fundamental institutional characteristics (Green, 1980, p. 6). Selden (1960) described the standards as "based upon specific minimum requirements for such factors as endowment, size of library, number of academic departments, size of classes, and credit hours for graduation" (p. 40). Bemis (1983) characterized them as "quite specific and arbitrary" (p. 169).

Selden (1960) remarked upon the privilege in a democracy of "publicly expressing disagreement and contention" (p. 40), and noted that "in accrediting, this privilege has been exercised no more thoroughly and consistently than over the question of standards or requirements for accreditation" (p. 37). This thorough and consistent criticism was directed at the objective standards (Bemis, 1983, p. 169; Green, 1981, p. 6; Selden, 1960, p. 40). Jessup (1932, cited in Selden) referred to the "shackles of conventional and arbitrary standards" (p. 40). Capen (1931) compared the use of these standards to "measuring the package in order to determine the chemical
constitution of its contents" (p. 102). He argued for the use of educational standards in accreditation and answered his own questions as follows:

With what are educational standards concerned? They are concerned with the intellectual achievements of individuals. Educational standards are concerned with nothing else. They do not involve time; or space, however luxuriously or meagerly enclosed and encumbered; or money; or mass; or number; or organization. They involve simply the results of the stimulation, the effort and the growth of individuals. Educational standards are measures of different levels of capacity to do something, something predominantly intellectual. They measure nothing but the individual with respect to the capacity in question. They do not measure square feet or the years of training of somebody else with whom the individual has been associated. Conversely, any devices for measuring these things, or for counting hours or heads or books or the size of somebody's income, are not educational standards . . . . How many of the standards used by standardizing agencies are educational standards? The answer is easy and brief. None. (pp. 101-102)

Criticism of the existing standards resulted in the creation by the North Central Association of the Committee on the Revision of Standards in 1929 (Capen, 1931, p. 101; Green, 1981, p. 6). The committee recommended a new set of standards in 1934. Although these new standards did not meet the requirements outlined by Capen--who, incidentally, was a member of the committee--they were sufficient to be characterized by Selden as "a radical approach" because of their initiation of "a new, additional purpose of accrediting, that of providing external stimulation to institutions for their continual growth and improvement" (1960, p. 41).
The new standards provided that an institution would be judged "in terms of the purposes it seeks to serve" and on "the basis of the total pattern it presents as an institution of higher education" (North Central Association, 1934, cited in Selden). These standards were adopted in 1936 (Bemis, 1983, p. 169) and the principles contained in them were subsequently adopted by the other regional accrediting agencies (Harcleroad, 1981, p. 39; Young, 1983b, p. 7).

The new emphasis on accreditation as a means toward improvement remains to this day. One of the purposes of accreditation recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation is "to assist in the improvement of the institution or program" (1982, p. 443). Johnston and Andrews, both staff members of SACS at the time, noted that "the basic purpose of the Commission on Colleges is the improvement of educational quality in the institutions it serves" (1978, p. 407). The Commission, in outlining the history of its self-study program, notes "its essential purpose was to improve the educational effectiveness of institutions of higher learning in the South by helping them reassess their goals, measure their success in attaining these goals and explore ways to increase their educational effectiveness" (1987a, p. 7).
The development of this new purpose for accreditation required for its implementation a new tool, the self-study validated by a visiting committee. Selden (1960) wrote:

an effective method of providing a truly stimulating influence for institutional self-improvement was not devised until the Middle States Association after the second World War adopted a schedule for re-visits to all its member institutions on a ten year cycle . . . . with the increasing use of the pattern which included both an institutional self-survey and a team of qualified institutional inspectors, stimulation for college and university improvement was practiced more widely as a major purpose of regional accreditation. (p. 41)

The Commission on Colleges followed the lead of the Middle States Association and, "after several years of planning and preparation" (Commission on Colleges, 1987a, p. 7) began its self-study program in 1958. Through this program, institutions "conduct comprehensive examinations of their activities and formulate recommendations for future improvements . . . . at the culmination of the study, a visiting committee of professional peers is sent to the campus to assess the educational strength of the institution and report its findings" (p.7).

The self-study and visitation processes are now central to accreditation. Bemis (1983) termed the self-study "basic to institutional accreditation" (p. 171) and peer review the "hallmark of nongovernmental accreditation" (p. 172). Young (1983a) termed the self-study and the on-site evaluation by a selected group of peers "essential elements in the accreditation process" (p. 21). Young and Chambers (1980)
termed institutional self-study and peer evaluation "basic to the accreditation process" (p. 92).

Another new purpose for regional accreditation was supplied by the federal government after the Second World War (Harcleroad, 1980a). Requirements first included in the Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952 limited federal assistance to students at institutions accredited "by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association." Similar provisions have since been included in the legislation establishing eligibility for other forms of federal assistance. Under this legislation, the Commissioner (now Secretary) of Education must create a list of accrediting agencies that are determined to be reliable authorities as to the quality of training offered by educational institutions. This reliance by the federal government on accreditation as an indicator of quality is indicative of the intertwining of the once internal debate over accreditation standards with the broader public debate concerning assessment of higher education.

Pressures for Outcomes Assessment

The adoption of qualitative standards, the redirection of the purposes of regional accreditation to institutional improvement, and the development of the self-study process did not end criticism of accreditation. In fact, it did not even foreclose the issues raised by Capen. Marchese
(Reichard and Marchese, 1987) could have been reacting to Capen when he referred to:

> a new and central feature in the discourse about quality in higher education and that is that quality should be judged not . . . on the basis of reputational rankings or on the basis of resources, the so-called 'inputs,' but on the basis of contributions made to student learning, the outcomes we bring forth in students . . . it is a view with profound implications in that it definitely implies the doing of assessment.

The continued reliance by accreditation on inputs rather than outcomes has not gone unnoticed. Troutt (1979) commented "accreditation criteria assume that judgments about institutional quality should rest on inferences from certain conditions rather than direct assessment of student performance" (p. 201). He likened this to an industrial model in which "instead of checking on the quality of production outcomes, i.e., student achievement, criteria generally check on the quality of the assembly line, i.e., curricula, faculty, resources, etc." (p. 202). Casey and Harris (1979) characterized as a serious flaw the "accreditation emphasis on structure and process" (p. 21). They argued that "if accreditation is to represent some reasonable assurance of educational quality, the criteria or standards employed must have some demonstrable relationship to that quality" (p. 101-102).

Attention to accreditation and outcomes assessment has not been limited to educators; public officials are prominent in the debate. A report by the National
Governors' Association (1986, p. 79) noted that "accrediting agencies have focused on campus resources, such as the number of volumes in the library, student/faculty ratio, and structural facilities and physical resources, rather than student learning and abilities." The Secretary of Education has written "the quality of the 'product'--of the education actually received--is the central issue. From the perspective of society at large, the worrisome inadequacies are inadequacies not so much of processes as of outcome and performance" (Bennett, 1986, i).

Academe and its confederations, the accrediting agencies, are beginning to notice the concerns of policy makers and others. Bok (1986) noted that "interest in these topics has emerged from a new quarter. Public officials have suddenly become concerned to discover how much students are learning and what benefits result from expensive undergraduate programs" (p. 20). He found that "as costs continue to rise, more and more legislators are echoing these sentiments by calling for some form of assessment of how far students have progressed" (p. 20).

There have been calls for accrediting agencies to increase attention to outcomes assessment. Bowen (1979) argued that "in meeting new societal needs and demands, the procedures of accreditation must become more concerned with outcomes and less preoccupied with resource inputs" (cited in Green, 1981, p. 8). Young and Chambers (1980) reported
that a project of the accreditation community "recommended that greater attention be paid to educational outcomes in the total accreditation process" (p. 98). They also described a conference sponsored by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) entitled "The Purpose of Accreditation: Evaluation of Educational Quality" (p. 98-99). The Secretary of Education has proposed regulations that would require colleges "to provide accrediting agencies with evidence of how much their students have learned" (Palmer, 1987, p. A26).

The accreditation community has begun to respond to these criticisms and call for attention to quality. The COPA Self-Study Advisory Panel (1986) recommended that COPA "encourage accrediting bodies to adopt standards which are defined in terms of educational outcomes" (p. 11). Armstrong (1983) found that most accrediting agencies have increased their emphasis on educational outcomes. Thrash (1987), in her survey of the professional staffs of accrediting agencies found "general agreement among the respondents that 'outcomes' are an important part of the demonstration of an institution's effectiveness" (p. 483). She noted change in the years between her two surveys as follows:

in 1984 all of the regional accrediting commissions made some reference to the concept of evaluating 'educational outcomes,' but by 1986 most of the references of the institutional accrediting agencies to outcomes were much more explicit and the expectations
concerning outcomes measurement were more detailed. (p. 482)

She qualified the 1984 finding that each agency had reference to outcomes by noting "it might not have been doing a whole lot but, outcomes were in the language or institutional effectiveness was in the language" (Ewell et al., 1987).

As noted by Moore (1986), "the writing on the wall is abundantly clear . . . the mandate—variously issued by educational professionals, the public, the politicians, and the press—is for increased accountability and increased effectiveness in institutions of higher education" (p. 51).

Development of the Criteria for Accreditation

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools also read Moore's writing on the wall. James T. Rogers, its executive director, indicates the Commission "realized after a number of years of using the old Standards that there was a new dimension that was called for in today's world of higher education" (G. Smith, Rogers, Lick, Sullivan, & Salley, 1987). To accommodate this needed new dimension, "our new criteria . . . incorporates [sic] a new section that we call 'institutional effectiveness' and that section really incorporates a measure of outcomes assessment, research, planning" (G. Smith et al., 1987). H.E. Smith (1985) explicitly
identified the demands for accountability by parents, students, and state and federal legislators as factors leading to the reevaluation of the Standards (p. 2).

Bentley, in his report as Chairman of the Commission on Colleges, gave the purpose of the review and revision of the Standards as "to better address quality issues in a greater variety of institutional types and give greater attention to educational outcomes, and the relationship between inputs and outcomes" (1981, p. 47).

The process leading from the awareness that something new was needed to the adoption of the new Criteria for Accreditation began in 1979. That year the College Delegate Assembly approved a proposal for "a comprehensive review of the accreditation process to serve as a basis for the development and adoption of revised procedures and a single set of Standards of the College Delegate Assembly" (Minutes; December 11, 1979). The review quickly focused on outcomes assessment. A report on its first year activities included "surveying the state-of-the-art of outcomes assessment in higher education" and examining "the implications of outcomes assessment for regional accrediting standards and procedures" (Bentley, 1981, p. 45). The corresponding report the following year noted the "wrestling with extremely complex and difficult issues, issues such as . . . developing means of evaluating the educational effectiveness of an institution" (Carpenter, 1982, p. 53).
A draft of the new *Criteria for Accreditation* was circulated at the annual College Delegate Assembly in 1982 (Carpenter, 1983, p. 43-44). Following opportunities for comment, including a series of public hearings in the region, the *Criteria* were presented to the 1983 annual College Delegate Assembly (Smith, 1985, p. 2). At that meeting the *Criteria* were approved in principle with the provision that a new section on institutional effectiveness be prepared to replace the then existing section on outcomes assessment (Minutes; December 13, 1983). A special committee was established to redraft that criterion and the *Criteria for Accreditation*, with the substituted criterion on institutional effectiveness, were approved by the 1984 College Delegate Assembly (Minutes; December 11, 1984).

The most substantive change from the *Standards* evidenced in the *Criteria* is the new criterion on institutional effectiveness (Swanson, p. 18). The criterion addresses each institution's "obligation to all constituents to evaluate effectiveness and to use the results in a broad-based, continuous planning and evaluation process" (Commission on Colleges, 1984, p. 9). According to H. E. Smith, the new *Criteria* "focus attention on what changes actually occur in students during their study in an institution" (p. 2). Kells (1986) referred to the criterion on institutional effectiveness as "a straightforward and
reasonable response to a long-standing need in the world of institutional accreditation'' (p. 4).

In addition to the substantive change regarding institutional effectiveness, the new Criteria differ in form and style from the Standards. With regard to form, the eleven standards have been reorganized into five criteria. With regard to style, the Criteria contain the note that statements "using the word 'must' are interpreted to mean that institutions are required to meet that specific criterion" and "statements including the word 'should' are advisory and are not intended to be prescriptive" (Commission on Colleges, 1984, p. 2). Swanson noted that in the Standards "the word 'should' was used often but not always clearly [and] a visiting committee had to interpret what was required and what was not required since practically all statements used the word 'should'" (1985, p. 18). Rugg more succintly explained the addition of the distinction as to "add more teeth" (in Ewell et al.).

Possible Consequences for Reaffirmation Process

The Commission on Colleges (1987a) claims that "the institutional self-study program has remained virtually unchanged since 1958 [and that although implementation of] the new Criteria has resulted in a few modifications . . . the program remains fundamentally the same" (p. 7). But despite this claim, each of the types of changes discussed
above; those of substance, form, and style; can potentially influence the processes of reaffirmation of accreditation, the self-study and the evaluative visit of peers.

The Commission on Colleges "imposes no specific restraint" on the "manner in which sections of the Criteria are subdivided and assigned to committees" (1987a, p. 13). Nonetheless, its Manual for Accreditation notes the five major sections of the Criteria "to which a principal committee is usually assigned" (1987a, p. 13). Its earlier Self-Study Manual (1977a) issued while the Standards were in effect noted the then common practice of organizing by the standards (p. 3). Kells (1983b) reported that "a comprehensive self-study process usually employs nine to twelve work groups" (p. 62). The change in form to five Criteria may influence the manner in which institutions organize for the self-study process.

"As noted by Rogers "planning has now become a requirement for all Southern Association accredited institutions" (in G. Smith et al.). In addition, the criterion on institutional effectiveness contains a section on institutional research, which it terms "an essential element in planning and evaluating the institution's success in carrying out its programs" (Commission on Colleges, 1984, p. 10). Thus, planning and institutional research will now be evaluated by self-study and by visiting committees.

Nichols (1987, in Howard et al.) argued that a peer
component is very important in the evaluation of the institutional research function. In addressing institutional researchers with regard to the evaluation of a particular characteristic of institutional research, he noted:

Not every Tom, Dick, and Harry out there who is on a visitation team can answer that question. It takes somebody like you and I that deal with this on a campus basis already to be able to make that assessment on another campus. (in Howard et al.)

The requirement that evaluations of planning and institutional research be conducted has created a perceived need for individuals skilled in those areas on visiting committees. Jones is concerned "that there are not very many institutional research types on accreditation teams" (Howard et al.). He continues, "I am not sure why that is. I think it is something SACS is trying to take care of in our region." Thus, the inclusion of the institutional effectiveness criterion, the need for evaluators skilled in planning and institutional research, and SACS' intention to "take care of it" may result in changes to the composition of visiting teams.

Both the inclusion of institutional effectiveness and the clarification of the must statements could result in changes to the recommendations of the visiting committees. Swanson (1985) anticipated more recommendations as a consequence of the must statements because each "noncompliance calls for a recommendation for compliance"
(p. 18). Yost concurred and reported his finding that "the teams are doing a literal, an extremely literal, interpretation of the must statements" (in Howard et al.). When extracted from the Criteria, the must statements fill 19 pages of single spaced type (Commission on Colleges, 1987c).

In addition, the new emphasis on institutional effectiveness could alter the substantive content of committees' recommendations. Montgomery noted that many institutions may be unequipped to comply immediately with the new criterion. He established "a hierarchy in institutional research" and noted "there is an awful lot of work that has to take place before you start doing assessment and outcome studies" (in Howard et al.). Gentemann and Rogers (1987) studied the preparedness to comply with the new criterion of institutions that will undergo reaffirmation of accreditation within the next five years. Of the 31 required activities identified by Gentemann and Rogers, for only one is compliance on a systematic, campus-wide basis reported by at least three-quarters of the institutions. Seventeen of the activities are reported to be conducted on such a basis by fewer than half the institutions. Kells and Kirkwood (1978) also found deficiencies in institutional capacity for institutional research. Thus, the enhanced requirements regarding planning and institutional effectiveness, coupled
with the lack of preparedness of many institutions for dealing with those requirements, may result in more recommendations in those areas.

The adoption of the Criteria may alter several aspects of the process of reaffirmation of accreditation. These aspects—organization for the self-study, composition of the visiting committee, number of recommendations, and substantive areas addressed by recommendations—have each been subject to prior study and analysis.

Organization for the Self-Study

Organization for the self-study is one of the essential steps in that process (Kells, 1983a, pp. 127-128). The manner in which a particular institution should organize itself depends upon the design of the self-study (Kells, 1983a, 1983b) and the characteristics of the institution (Commission on Colleges, 1987a, p. 13).

According to the Commission on Colleges, the self-study process should be "be participatory" and "on each campus, faculty, administrative officers, staff, students, and trustees are asked to serve on committees" (1987a, p. 7). Dressel (1971) indicated the "breadth of representation, in part, depends upon the scope of the study" (p. 282). Kirkwood (1978) acknowledged that an institution's size "affects the numbers and percentage of the whole participating in self-study" (p. 298) and recognized that
"good judgment and practicality determine the point of diminishing returns with respect to numbers engaged" (p. 298). Nonetheless, he asserted that "faculty and administrators are essential participants in self-study activities, and so are trustees and students" (p. 298). Simmons (1985) argued for trustee participation in self-study. Lick wanted the self-study to be "a process involving all constituencies of the institution" and added, "you need to have a wide variety of groups and people involved; everybody if at all possible, but certainly every unit on the campus" (in G. Smith et al.).

Kells (1983b) reported the use of 9 to 12 committees on a typical comprehensive self-study. Kells and Kirkwood (1978), in a study of the Middle States region, found a median of four to six committees in addition to the steering committee. They also found that 57% of the institutions surveyed employed from four to nine committees. Average committee size was four to nine members with the median institutions reporting seven to nine members.

Goldhagen (1971) identified the involvement of faculty to be one of five critical decisions in the self-study. Kells and Kirkwood found the median respondent institution involved between 41% and 50% of the faculty and between 21% and 30% of the administrators in the self-study. But, they indicate that the presence of so many small colleges in the region inflates the percentage of faculty involvement. They
found an upper limit on participation that resulted in greater percentage participation at smaller institutions. Perkins and Rubin (1984) studied institutional experience with the nontraditional self-study. Of the 16 institutions studied, eight included participation of more than 50% of the faculty, with five of those indicating faculty participation at the 90% level or more.

Kells and Kirkwood found "relatively few students" and "very few trustees" (p. 33). They report that 48% of the institutions had no trustee involvement, that approximately one-third had involvement from less than 10% of trustees, and that "only a handful had more than that level of participation" (p. 33). Perkins and Rubin found that in each institution, trustees and students were "provided the opportunity to participate in some way" (p. 6).

Composition of the Visiting Committee

According to Ewell, "ultimately, if the process is going to work, it is going to have to work by the [visiting] teams implementing the process" (Ewell et al., 1987). Kells (1979) argued that "one of the potentially weakest links in the accrediting process [is] the people-related aspects--the evaluation teams that visit institutions, the match between visitor characteristics and the institutions visited" (p. 178). Harris (1983) found the quality of the site visit team to be one of the factors influencing the success of a
self-study in reaching the goal of improving institutional effectiveness.

Arguments have been made for involvement from particular types of individuals on visiting teams. Elliott (1983) would like more presidents to serve on teams. Interestingly, although Kirkwood (1983) reported criticism concerning the lack of participation by college and university presidents (p. 6), Kells (1979) noted criticism of "the alleged dominance of institutional presidents" (p. 187). Simmons (1984) encouraged more involvement from Black individuals. As noted earlier, since the adoption of the criterion on institutional effectiveness, calls for more participation by institutional planners and researchers have been advanced.

The importance of the selection of visiting team members is emphasized by research regarding their training and their preparation for evaluating. Leach (1980), in a study of library evaluators for the North Central Association, found that fewer than one quarter felt well prepared to evaluate a library. A majority desired more guidance from the Association. Similarly, Yates (1973), studying library evaluators for SACS, found "library evaluators primarily operate within a framework that is based more in their own background of professional experience, educational training and personal attitudes than in the Southern Association's standard." Silvers (1982a),
in a study of evaluators in five of the six regions, found the "major weakness in the evaluation visit was the lack of an evaluation framework or model to guide the work of the evaluation team," and a major strength was "in the expertise and dedication of the volunteer evaluators." Similarly, Baysore (1971) found the selection, training, and evaluation of regional and specialized visiting teams to be informal but, found the team members to be "well prepared to make the kinds of judgments required of them in the examining visit largely by virtue of their individual professional competence, previous experiences and positions held, and their present positions." Cooney (1984) noted the "widely held belief that the performance of institutional and programmatic visiting teams is influenced by the experience, skills, knowledge, and attitudes of the team members" and offered a package of model guidelines and recommendations for training program development.

Johnston and Andrews (1978), writing of visits conducted under the Standards, describe an average committee size of 12. Kells (1979) presented data on visiting team size in the Middle States region for three years; 1970-71, 1973-74, and 1976-77. The average team sizes during those years was 8, 7, and 7.4, respectively. The range of team sizes for the years was 3-13, 2-14, and 3-12. Team size was consistently found to be positively related to institutional size. Silvers (1982b) reported the number of team visits to
senior colleges and universities conducted by five of the six regions during 1980-81. He also reported the total membership of the teams. Calculation reveals the average team sizes by region to be Northeast, 6.31; Middle States, 7.30; South, 10.84; North Central, 4.33; and Northwest, 7.75. The average sizes for the Middle States and the South are consistent with those presented by Kells (1979) and Johnston and Andrews (1978). Perkins and Rubin (1984) reported visiting committee size for their nontraditional self-studies in the South. Nine were visited by teams with between 10 and 15, six by larger teams (the largest was 22 members), and the remaining school was visited by a team of 8.

Silvers (1982b) listed administration, student services, educational programs, and financial affairs as examples of the types of expertise normally included on evaluation teams. Kirkwood (1983) provided a roster of the 1,058 individuals who participated in the work of the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association during a three-year period. This roster also includes participants in activities other than visiting committees. Kirkwood's breakdown of the roster shows presidents/chancellors, 188 (17.77%); other administrators, 489 (46.22%); faculty, 252 (23.82%); librarians, 67 (6.33%); and finance officers, 62 (5.86%). Kells (1979), also studying the Middle States, found 60% administrators and
36% faculty on visiting teams during 1970-71. Six years later the percentages were 65 and 34, respectively. Kells found that 10% to 12% of visiting team members were presidents, ranking this category behind department chairs for each of three years and behind academic deans for two of those years (presidents and deans were equally represented the third year).

Number and Substance of Recommendations

Reports of the visiting committees of peers contain both recommendations and suggestions. The distinction between the two is analogous to the distinction between must and should statements. According to the Commission's Manual for Accreditation (1987a):

a recommendation indicates a committee's professional judgment that an institution does not comply with all or a part of a criterion . . . a suggestion offers, for consideration by the institution evaluated, a course of action which the visiting committee feels would result in the improvement of the educational quality of the institution, even though such action is not necessary in order to comply with the Criteria. (p. 20)

The Manual notes that although "institutions are encouraged to respond to suggestions but it is not mandatory, . . . an institution will be invited to respond, in writing, to each recommendation in the committee report" (pp. 20-21). In addition, an institution may be requested by the Commission "to submit a follow-up report on the implementation of the visiting committee recommendations" (p. 21). The Manual encourages institutions to "begin
immediate implementation of the recommendations . . . rather than wait for action on the report at the Commission's next meeting" (pp. 21-22).

As indicated earlier, it is anticipated by some that the new distinction between must and should statements will result in a greater number of visiting committee recommendations. After all, the instructions accompanying each committee member's nineteen-page list of must statements provide "if a committee member checks a specific statement as 'No' the committee member must be prepared to submit a recommendation referring to the institution's noncompliance to the specific requirement" (Commission on Colleges, 1987c, p. 1). In addition, the lack of preparedness with regard to the criterion of institutional effectiveness (Gentemann and Rogers, 1987; Kells and Kirkwood, 1978; Montgomery in Howard et al., 1987) could result in both an increased number of recommendations and a shift in the proportion of recommendations related to each criterion area.

Walters (1970) analyzed the visiting committee reports of public junior colleges in the Southern region. He found a total of 4,599 recommendation and suggestions combined in the 191 reports. This is an average of 24.08 recommendations or suggestions in each report. The cumulative total represented 516 specific suggestions or recommendations, each occurring in from 1 to 53 reports.
The areas of the Standards receiving the most recommendations or suggestions were Standard Three, Educational Program; Standard Seven, Student Personnel; and Standard Six, Library.

Ferster (1971) analyzed 140 visiting committee reports in the Middle States region. He found a total of 6224 recommendations for an average of 44.46 per institution (the Southern Association's definitions do not apply in the Middle States). Classification of the recommendations by area indicated Curriculum and Program, 28.84%; Resources, 19.49%; Organization and Administration, 17.71%; Faculty, 14.78%; Students, 14.78%; and, Aims and Goals, 4.39%.

Ellis (1966) analyzed the reports of 26 public institutions in the South. He reported particular areas of concern within the criterion areas. With regard to educational program, frequent recommendations involved the need for honors programs, lack of commitment to general education, and proliferation of course offerings. Recommendations for libraries indicated difficulty keeping pace with new publications, increased enrollments, and expanded program offerings. Recommendations regarding student services addressed staff shortages in counselling and health services.

Moore (1974) and Leon Garcia (1984) both studied the implementation of visiting committee recommendations. Moore selected recommendations in five areas; purposes and
objectives, organization, resources, programs, and outcomes. Various institutional personnel were surveyed to assess their attitudes regarding the relationship of implementation of the recommendations to several issues. The recommendation areas were ranked in terms of mean reported relationship to all issues. Differences in ranking were found among people in different institutional roles and among people with different previous experiences. Leon Garcia studies the implementation of recommendations at thirteen Western region institutions. He found that nearly two-thirds had been implemented. He also found on-going institutional efforts in the recommended areas at over 70 per cent of the institutions and belief reaffirmation had led to improvement among 78% respondents.

Chapter Summary

The development of regional accreditation has included debate concerning the standards that should be used. The debate currently mirrors broader concerns of educators, the public, and policymakers regarding the effectiveness of educational institutions. New criteria for colleges have been developed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in response to these concerns. The literature of institutional accreditation currently demonstrates the importance of organization for the self-study, visiting
committee composition, and visiting committee recommendation and provides benchmarks of these characteristics.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES FOR THE COLLECTION OF DATA

Introduction

This study was concerned with characteristics of the process of reaffirmation of accreditation among institutions in the Southern region. With regard to several of the characteristics, the study sought to make comparisons among institutions that underwent reaffirmation under the Standards of the College Delegate Assembly and those that underwent reaffirmation under the Criteria for Accreditation. This chapter presents a description of the procedures used in the collection of data. The procedures of subject selection, matching, and data collection were all accomplished in November, 1987, using records of the Commission on Colleges, at both the Commission's offices and the offices of their business archives contractor in Atlanta, Georgia. Included in this chapter are descriptions of (a) the research design, (b) the population, (c) the selection procedure and matching technique, and (d) the data collection.
Research Design

This study offered no treatment subject to control by the investigator; each reaffirmation of accreditation had been conducted either under the Standards or the Criteria. The Criteria have now been implemented by the Commission on Colleges for use by all member institutions. Whether or not a particular institution has yet been subject to the Criteria is the result of its position in the ten-year reaffirmation cycle at the time of the adoption of the Criteria. Since neither imposition of the treatment nor assignment to groups was subject to experimental manipulation, the study was conducted ex post facto.

An ex post facto design seeks to simulate experimentation by attempting in a static group comparison situation to create pre-treatment equivalence by matching of pre-treatment attributes (Campbell & Stanley, 1966, p. 70). The researcher creates a control group that has been designed to be equivalent on the pre-treatment attributes to the already extant experimental group.

Two methods for the creation of the control group, the group subject to reaffirmation under the Standards, were considered for this study: a panel method and a precision control matching method. The panel method would utilize the
same institutions in both groups. The characteristics of the institutions' reaffirmations of accreditation under the Criteria would be compared to the characteristics of those same institutions' previous reaffirmations under the Standards. With the precision control matching method, for each institution that underwent reaffirmation under the Criteria an institution would be included in the comparison group that is equivalent to it on "all relevant characteristics simultaneously" (Bailey, 1982, p. 232) but that last underwent reaffirmation under the Standards.

The disadvantage of precision matching is that suitable matches may not be found for all institutions, thus lessening the usable sample sizes. Despite this disadvantage, the precision control matching method is superior to the panel method for use in this study for several reasons. First, the panel method is more subject to the threats to internal validity identified by Campbell and Stanley as history and maturation (1966, p. 5). Because the Standards have been in recent use, precision matches are possible wherein the reaffirmations are not very far removed temporally. The panel method requires an interval of several years between the corresponding reaffirmations, thus subjecting it to the threat of history. Similarly, because institutions may change over time on some of the relevant pre-treatment characteristics, an institution may be more similar on those attributes to another institution selected
by precision matching than to its own previous characteristics.

Second, the panel method would either preclude the inclusion of institutions for which the reaffirmation under the Criteria was the first reaffirmation or else necessitate the comparison of reaffirmation characteristics with characteristics of initial accreditation. Similarly, the relevant pre-treatment attribute (Kells, 1983b; Kells and Kirkwood, 1978, 1979) of time since the last self-study could vary using the panel method, necessitating either a loss of sample size or the comparison of nonequivalent groups.

Finally, practical considerations regarding ease of data collection rendered the panel method unsuitable. Certain records of each institution's most recent reaffirmation are maintained at the offices of the Commission on Colleges. The corresponding records of prior reaffirmations are stored at a warehouse operated by a commercial business archives service. As was discovered in the attempt to locate other archival material at the warehouse, the indexing of the archival material is incomplete, and the retrieval of this material could be so difficult as to be impossible.

Thus, in this ex post facto study, the technique of precision control matching on all relevant characteristics simultaneously was selected as the method of establishing
equivalence among the groups. Several studies have examined the influence of institutional characteristics on aspects of the self-study or reaffirmation of accreditation processes (Butler, 1980; Day, 1976; Farrow, 1975; Kells, 1983b; Kells & Kirkwood, 1978; Kells & Kirkwood, 1979; Samors, 1979). Characteristics found to be significant include prestige (Samors, 1979), highest degree (Samors, 1979; Kells & Kirkwood, 1978, 1979), method of control, size, collegiate pattern, years since last self-study, and disciplinary profile (Kells, 1983; Kells & Kirkwood, 1978, 1979). The matching process described below utilizes all of these variables with the exception of prestige and disciplinary profile. Disciplinary profile had been found to be related to dependent variables involving motivation that are not part of this study. No satisfactory measure of prestige is available for sufficient institutions to permit its inclusion as a matching variable.

Population

The population for this study is all postsecondary degree-granting institutions in the United States that hold membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools through its Commission on Colleges and that have undergone reaffirmation of accreditation. The population expressly does not include member institutions that have received only initial accreditation but not reaffirmation.
Also, the population expressly does not include the few member institutions located outside the United States. Member institutions of the Southern Association are located in the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

Selection Procedures and Matching Techniques

The identification of institutions that have undergone reaffirmation of accreditation under the Criteria was accomplished by examining the reports of the visiting committees for all institutions completing reaffirmation since their adoption. These include the institutions listed as reaffirmed in the minutes of the Commission on Colleges' December meetings of 1984, 1985, and 1986; the institutions listed as reaffirmed in the minutes of the Summer, 1987, meetings of the Committees on Standards and Reports of the Commission on Colleges; and the institutions listed on the schedule for the then forthcoming meetings of the committees in December, 1987. This procedure identified 77 institutions that had completed reaffirmation under the Criteria. This procedure would not have identified any institutions that may have completed both the self-study and the committee visit too late to be considered by a Committee on Standards and Reports in December, 1987.
Using SACS' list of "Accredited Colleges and Universities" (1987), each member institution was classified as to method of control (public or private), years since last self-study, highest degree offered, and enrollment (full time equivalent). The number of academic deans at each institution, used as an operational indicator of collegiate structure, was determined using the Yearbook of Higher Education (1982).

For each of the 77 institutions identified as completing reaffirmation under the Criteria, a corresponding institution that matched it on all of the above characteristics was sought. To constitute a match an institution had to share the same method of control, offer the same level of highest degree, have the same category of collegiate structure (one to five deans, six to ten deans, or greater than ten deans), have similar periods of time between self-studies (seven or fewer years, greater than seven years), and have similar enrollments (the matching institution within 20% of the target institution).

Using these precision control matching criteria, suitable matches were found for 66 of the 77 institutions. Four institutions were unable to be matched because they differ in enrollment so greatly from all other institutions of their method of control and degree level. Two institutions had experienced shorter periods between self-studies than all other institutions of their method of
control, degree level and size. Two institutions had collegiate structures different from all institutions of the same method of control, degree level, and size. One institution was unmatched because, of the four institutions sharing the same method of control, degree level, and size, two had also been reaffirmed under the Criteria, one had used a nontraditional rather than comprehensive self-study, and one had a dissimilar collegiate structure. Another was unmatched because, of the four institutions sharing the same method of control, degree level, and size, one had a dissimilar collegiate structure and three had used nontraditional self-studies. Finally, the last institution was unmatched because the one institution sharing the same method of control, degree level, and size had also been reaffirmed under the Criteria.

These 132 institutions, the 66 institutions in the criteria group for which matching institutions could be found and the 66 matching institutions, constituted the samples used in this study.

Data Collection

The Commission on Colleges maintains in its offices a file of each institution's most recent reaffirmation of accreditation. This file, available for all 132 selected institutions, contained the report of the visiting committee of peers. For all institutions, the dependent variable of
number of recommendations was determined by counting the recommendations in the visiting committee report. For those institutions in the criteria group only, the recommendations were classified as to the dependent variable of whether or not each referred to a deficiency in compliance with the criterion on institutional effectiveness. For these same institutions, the independent variable of date of visit was recorded as the final day of the committee's visit.

In all cases, the visiting committee report contained a list of committee members. For most institutions, this list contained institutional affiliations and positions. In other cases, the list containing these details was included as a separate item in the file. For all institutions for which the detailed list was available, it was used to classify committee members as presidents or chancellors, faculty, librarians, finance officers, central academic administrators, unit academic administrators, institutional researchers or planners, or other. For institutions without such rosters, the classification of additional members was accomplished by comparing the names of members from the membership list to the master file of the current pool of potential committee members. At least some data regarding the dependent variables of committee composition were missing for 12 institutions.

In some cases, the file contained the prospectus for the self-study. Each prospectus was examined and, for some
institutions, provided the source for the dependent variables of number of committees and number of participants. These variables were collected for other institutions by examining the self-study reports at the business archive warehouse. At the warehouse all cartons indexed as containing self-study reports were searched for the reports of the selected institutions. Many self-study reports were not found and, if retained at all, are incorrectly indexed, which is tantamount to being lost among the voluminous stored records of the Southern Association.

Chapter Summary

The population for the study is all degree-granting member institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in the United States which have undergone reaffirmation of accreditation. The research design for the study is an ex post facto design and there are several advantages in this instance of establishing equivalence among the groups by utilizing the technique of precision control matching on all relevant characteristics simultaneously. The relevant characteristics for the matching procedure are method of control, highest degree, size, collegiate structure, and time since the last self-study. Seventy-seven of the institutions in the population were identified as having completed reaffirmation of accreditation under the Criteria. Appropriate matching
institutions could be found for 66 of these 77. The 66 pairs of institutions constituted the sample used in this study.

Data were collected at the office of the Commission on Colleges and at the site of the Commission's business archive service. Data for the variables regarding visiting committee recommendations were collected from the visiting committee reports and were available for all institutions. Data for the variables regarding visiting committee composition were collected from visiting committee rosters and from the Commission's master file of the pool of potential committee members. At least some data regarding these variables were not available for 12 institutions. Data for the variables regarding institutional organization for the self-study were collected from self-study prospectuses and reports. Data on these variables were not available for many institutions.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the investigation into the characteristics of the processes of reaffirmation of accreditation among the selected institutions. The chapter presents a description of the selected institutions, the findings of the tests of hypotheses, and a summary of the findings.

Description of Selected Institutions

A total of 132 institutions were selected for use in this study, 66 that had completed the process of reaffirmation of accreditation under the Criteria for Accreditation, and a matching group of 66 that had last completed reaffirmation under the Standards of the College Delegate Assembly. Each matched pair of institutions share the same method of control, degree level, collegiate structure, and approximate size. In addition, each matched pair experienced a similar duration between the conduct of the reaffirmation used in this analysis and their next most recent reaffirmation or initial accreditation.
Data on each variable were not available for all institutions. In cases where an institution's information on a particular dependent variable was not available, both that institution and the corresponding matching institution were eliminated from the analysis of that variable. As a result, whereas the number of pairs of institutions analyzed differs for the dependent variables and hypotheses, the groups remain equivalent.

Organisation for the Self-Study

For both groups, data were collected for the dependent variables of number of principal committees used in the self-study and the total number of participants on these committees. A third variable, average committee size, was calculated from the two. The mean and standard deviation of the two groups on these three variables appear in Table 1.

Table 1

Levels of Participation in Self-Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>98.91</td>
<td>52.80</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average size</td>
<td>10.89</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees</td>
<td>11.08</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>113.11</td>
<td>59.18</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average size</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The number of committees used by the standards group ranged from 6 to 20 but, 22 of the 39 institutions used either 10 or 11 committees. The number of committees used by the criteria group ranged from 2 to 14. The most frequently used number of committees by this group were 11 and 12, each of which were used by six institutions. Nine institutions in this group used six or fewer committees.

The number of participants at institutions in the standards group ranged from 41 to 270 with a median of 94. The range of participants at the criteria group institutions was from 21 to 303 with a median of 89. This range is deceptive as the highest value other than 303 is 167.

Data for these variables were the least frequently available of all types of data used in this study. In only 35 instances did both institutions comprising a matched pair provide data on number of committees and number of participants. An additional four pairs provided information on number of committees only.

**Composition of the Visiting Committees**

For institutions in both groups, data were collected with regard to the members of the visiting committees of peers. The variables of interest were the size of each committee and their composition with regard to the professional positions held by the members. Complete data for both variables were available for 54 pairs of
institutions. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation of visiting committee size appear in Table 2.

For the standards group, visiting committee size ranged from 4 to 24 with a median of 10. The most frequent size was 10, occurring at 14 institutions. Thirty of the 54 visiting committees contained from 9 to 12 members. For the criteria group, visiting committee size ranged from 5 to 21, with a median of 11. The most frequent size was 11, occurring at 14 institutions. Thirty-six of the 54 visiting committees contained from 9 to 12 members.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>11.41</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>11.46</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 54 visiting committees in the criteria group contained a total of 616 members. The 54 committees in the standards group contained 619 members. The frequency and percentage of the members in each position category for the groups appear in Table 3.

Also of interest were the number of committees in each group with participation of at least one chief executive
Table 3

Composition of Visiting Committees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Criteria group (n=54)</th>
<th>Standards group (n=54)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>11.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>16.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Officer</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR/Planner</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central academic</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>14.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit academic</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>20.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>19.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

officer and the number with participation of at least one institutional researcher or planner. The information is available with respect to chief executive officers for 61 pairs of institutions and for institutional researchers or planners for 55 pairs of institutions. The frequency of committees containing these categories of individuals and their proportion of the appropriate total number of committees appear in Table 4 for each group.
Table 4

Visiting Committees Containing Presidents or Chancellors and Institutional Researchers or Planners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Presidents/chancellors (n=61)</th>
<th>IR/planners (n=55)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>86.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>86.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number and Substance of Recommendations

For both groups, the number of recommendations by the visiting committees was collected. This was available for all 66 pairs of institutions. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation for this variable appear in Table 5.

For the standards group, the number of recommendations ranged from 2 to 87, with a median of 13. For the criteria group, the number of recommendations ranged from 3 to 63, with a median of 20. No single number of recommendations occurred more frequently than six times among either group.

For the criteria group only, the recommendations were classified as to whether or not they were in reference to a deficiency in compliance with the criterion on institutional effectiveness. Of the 1413 recommendations by the 66
committees, 392 (27.74%) related to deficiencies in that criterion.

Table 5

Number of Recommendations by Visiting Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>21.41</td>
<td>11.95</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>17.98</td>
<td>15.07</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also for the criteria group only, the number of visiting committee recommendations was examined by the year in which the reaffirmation process was completed. Descriptive statistics for the three sub-groupings of 1985 and earlier, 1986, and 1987 appear as Table 6.

Table 6

Number of Recommendations for Criteria Group by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985 and earlier</td>
<td>24.10</td>
<td>13.28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>17.85</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>22.64</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tests of Hypotheses

**Error Tolerance**

For each hypothesis tested, the actual value of $p$, or the probability of committing a Type I error, is reported. Probability at or below the .05 level is used for decisions regarding the rejection of null hypotheses.

The power of each test was estimated using procedures described by Cohen (1977). For each test, both the post hoc estimate using the observed sample effect size and the a priori estimates at the conventional values for small, medium, and large effect sizes are presented. The post hoc estimate of power may be interpreted as the probability of detecting a population difference of the magnitude of the observed difference of the samples. Each a priori estimate may be interpreted as the probability of detecting a difference of the appropriate conventional magnitude. Power at or in excess of the .80 level for a medium effect size is used for decisions regarding the ambiguity of nonsignificant results. That is, unless the a priori probability that the statistical test will detect medium-sized differences is at least 80%, any nonsignificant results will be considered to be ambiguous.

**Hypothesis 1**

The first hypothesis was that institutions seeking reaffirmation of accreditation under the Criteria use fewer principal committees in the conduct of the self-study than
institutions seeking such reaffirmation under the Standards. The null hypothesis that the number of committees used by the criteria group would be greater than or equal to the number used by the standards group was tested using a directional t-test of the difference in the group means (Ferguson, 1981, pp. 176-179). The results of this test appear as Table 7.

The critical value of t for significance at the .05 level, 1.68 (Ferguson, p. 521), was exceeded by the calculated value of t, 3.0866. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the criteria group used fewer principal committees than the standards group.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.1026</td>
<td>2.9540</td>
<td>3.0866*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>11.0769</td>
<td>2.6890</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p=.0016

The calculated sample effect size (Cohen, 1977, p. 20) was d=.7342. The estimated power of this test at the calculated sample effect size (Cohen, p. 30) was .94. The
estimated power at the conventional small, medium, and large effect sizes was .22, .71, and .97.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis was that the total number of individuals participating as members of all principal committees combined is less at institutions seeking reaffirmation of accreditation under the Criteria that at institutions seeking such reaffirmation under the Standards. The null hypothesis that the number of participants at the criteria institutions is greater than or equal to the number at the standards group was tested using a directional t-test of the difference in the group means. The results of this test appear as Table 8.

Table 8
Test of Difference of Mean Number of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>98.9143</td>
<td>52.8006</td>
<td>1.0592*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>113.1143</td>
<td>59.1835</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.1467

The critical value of t for significance at the .05 level, 1.68 (Ferguson, p. 521), exceeds the calculated value of t, 1.0592. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.
and no difference was detected between the two groups in the average number of participants.

The calculated sample effect size (Cohen, p. 20) was $d = .2689$. The estimated power of this test at the calculated sample effect size was .30 (Cohen, p. 30). The estimated power at the conventional small, medium, and large effect sizes was .21, .67, and .95.

**Hypothesis 3**

The third hypothesis was that no difference exists in the average membership size of principal committees used in the conduct of the self-study among institutions seeking reaffirmation under the two sets of guidelines. This null hypothesis was tested using a nondirectional $t$-test of the difference in the group means (Ferguson, 1981, pp. 176-179). The results of this test appear as Table 9.

The critical value of $t$ for significance at the .05 level, 2.00, exceeds the calculated value of $t$, 1.1603. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and no difference was detected between the two groups in the average size of principal committees.

The calculated sample effect size (Cohen, 1977, p. 20) was $d = .3094$. The estimated power of this test at the calculated sample effect size was .24 (Cohen, p. 36). The estimated power at the conventional small, medium, and large effect sizes was .13, .54, and .91.
Table 9

Test of Difference of Mean Average Committee Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10.8878</td>
<td>4.3480</td>
<td>1.1603*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9.7855</td>
<td>3.5622</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p=.2500

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis was that no difference exists among institutions seeking reaffirmation of accreditation under the two sets of guidelines in the proportion of members of the visiting committee of peers who are presidents or chancellors, faculty, central academic administrators, unit academic administrators, librarians, finance officers, institutional planners or researchers, or other administrators. This null hypothesis was tested using a chi-square test of independence of group membership and positions held by visiting committee members (Ferguson, p. 207). The results of this test appear as Table 10.

The critical value of chi-square (df=7, N=1235) for significance at the .05 level, 14.07 Ferguson, p. 522), exceeds the calculated value. Thus, the null hypothesis of independence cannot be rejected and there is no difference between the two groups in the composition of the visiting committees with regard to positions held by the members.
Table 10

Chi-Square Test of Independence of Group Membership of Institution and Positions Held by Visiting Committee Members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Group</th>
<th>observed (O)</th>
<th>expected (E)</th>
<th>(O - E)²</th>
<th>(\frac{(O - E)^2}{E})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEO Criteria</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64.84</td>
<td>17.31</td>
<td>.2669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO Standards</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>65.16</td>
<td>17.31</td>
<td>.2656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Criteria</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>96.76</td>
<td>17.98</td>
<td>.1858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Standards</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>97.24</td>
<td>17.98</td>
<td>.1849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Criteria</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48.88</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.0723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Standards</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49.12</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.0720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib. Criteria</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50.88</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.0152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lib. Standards</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51.12</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.0151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR/plan Criteria</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.48</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>.6699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR/plan Standards</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.52</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>.6671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central acad. Criteria</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>75.82</td>
<td>201.07</td>
<td>2.6520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central acad. Standards</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>76.18</td>
<td>201.07</td>
<td>2.6394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit acad. Criteria</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>147.64</td>
<td>385.73</td>
<td>2.6126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit acad. Standards</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>148.36</td>
<td>385.73</td>
<td>2.6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Criteria</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>121.70</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>.0559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Standards</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>122.30</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>.0596</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square=13.0382*

Note. CEO=president or chancellor, Lib.=librarian, IR/plan=institutional researcher or planner, Central acad.=central academic administrator, Unit acad.=unit academic administrator.

*p=.0711

The calculated sample effect size (Cohen, 1977, p. 222) was \(\eta=.1028\). The estimated power of this test at the
calculated sample effect size was .75 (Cohen, p. 260). The estimated power at the conventional small effect size was .72 and exceeded .995 for both medium and large effect sizes.

**Hypothesis 5**

The fifth hypothesis was that no difference exists among the groups of institutions seeking reaffirmation of accreditation under the two sets of guidelines in the proportion of visiting committees of peers including participation of an institutional researcher or planner. This null hypothesis was tested using a chi-square test of independence of group membership and the presence of an institutional researcher or planner. The results of this test appear as Table 11.

The critical value of chi-square (df=1, N=110) for significance at the .05 level, 3.84 (Ferguson, p. 522), exceeds the calculated value, .9778. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and there is no difference between the two groups in the proportion of visiting committees containing an institutional researcher or planner.

The calculated sample effect size (Cohen, 1977, p. 222) was $\omega = .0943$. The estimated power of this test at the calculated sample effect size (Cohen, p. 235) was .17. The
estimated power at the conventional small, medium, and large effect sizes was .18, .88, and in excess of .995.

Table 11

Chi-Square Test of Independence of Group Membership and Presence on Visiting Committee of Institutional Researcher or Planner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>observed (O)</th>
<th>expected (E)</th>
<th>(O - E)²</th>
<th>(O - E)² / E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.0889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.0889</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = .9778*

*p = .3227

Hypothesis 6

The sixth hypothesis was that no difference exists among the groups of institutions seeking reaffirmation of accreditation under the two sets of guidelines in the proportion of visiting committees of peers including participation of a chancellor or president. This null hypothesis was tested using a chi-square test of independence of group membership and the presence of a president or chancellor (Ferguson, p. 207). The results of this test appear as Table 12.
Table 12

Chi-Square Test of Independence of Group Membership and Presence on Visiting Committee of a President or Chancellor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>observed (O)</th>
<th>expected (E)</th>
<th>(O - E)^2</th>
<th>(O - E)^2 / E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square=0*

*p=1.00

The expected frequencies are observed in this case. As a result, chi-square (df=1, N=122) is zero and p=1.00. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and there is no difference between the two groups in the proportion of visiting committees containing a president or chancellor.

Because chi-square is zero, the sample effect size is zero. The power of this test with a zero effect size is also zero. The estimated power of this test at the conventional small, medium, and large effect sizes was .19, .91, and in excess of .995.

Hypothesis 7

The seventh hypothesis was that the average number of recommendations by visiting committees of peers is greater at institutions subject to the Criteria than at institutions...
subject to the Standards. The null hypothesis that the criteria group experience fewer or the same number of recommendations was tested using a directional t-test of the difference in the group means (Ferguson, 1981, pp. 176-179). The results of this test appear in Table 13.

Table 13
Test of Difference of Mean Number of Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>21.4091</td>
<td>11.9499</td>
<td>1.4464*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>17.9848</td>
<td>15.0706</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p=.0740

The critical value of t for significance at the .05 level, 1.66 (Ferguson, p. 521), exceeds the calculated value of t, 1.4464. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and there is no difference in the average number of recommendations by visiting committees to institutions in the two groups.

The calculated sample effect size (Cohen, 1977, p. 20) was d=.2866. The estimated power of this test at the calculated sample effect size was .50 (Cohen, p. 30). The estimated power at the conventional small, medium, and large effect sizes was .31, .89, and in excess of .995.
Hypothesis 8

The eighth hypothesis was that with regard to institutions subject to the Criteria, no difference exists in the average number of recommendations by the visiting committees of peers among reports issued in different years. This null hypothesis was tested using one-way analysis of variance (Ferguson, 1981, p. 234). The results of this test appear as Table 14.

Table 14
Analysis of Variance of Average Number of Recommendations by Visiting Committees During Different Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between years</td>
<td>380.1990</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>190.0995</td>
<td>1.3454*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within years</td>
<td>8901.7556</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>141.2977</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9281.9545</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p=.2678

The critical value of $F$ (df=2,63) for significance at the .05 level, 19.48 (Ferguson, p. 525), exceeds the calculated value of 1.3454. Thus, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and no difference was detected in the number of recommendations issued by visiting committees to institutions in the criteria group during different years.

The calculated sample effect size (Cohen, 1977, pp. 274-275) was $f=.1238$. The estimated power of this test at
the calculated effect size is .13. The estimated power at the conventional small, medium, and large effect sizes was .10, .42, and .82.

**Hypothesis 9**

The final hypothesis was that with regard to the recommendations by visiting committees of peers at institutions subject to the *Criteria*, the proportion of recommendations involving the criterion on institutional effectiveness exceeds the number expected by the relative proportion of must statements. This hypothesis was tested by a chi-square test of the goodness-of-fit of the proportion of recommendations involving the criterion with the proportion of must statements involving the criterion (Ferguson, 1981, p. 204). The results of this test appear as Table 15.

The critical value of chi-square (df=1, N=1715) for significance at the .05 level, 3.84 (Ferguson, p. 522), was exceeded by the calculated value of chi-square, 33.2618. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the proportion of recommendation concerning the criterion on institutional effectiveness differs from the theoretical frequency based upon the must statements.

The calculated sample effect size (Cohen, 1977, p. 222) was $w = .1379$. The estimated power of this test at the calculated sample effect size exceeds .995 (Cohen, p. 258).
The estimated power at the conventional small effect size was .98, those for medium and large effect sizes exceed .995.

Table 15.

Chi-Square Test of Goodness-of-Fit of Proportion of Recommendations Involving the Criterion on Institutional Effectiveness with the Proportion of Must Statements from the Criterion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>observed</th>
<th>expected</th>
<th>(\frac{(O - E)^2}{E})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Must statements</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>75.37</td>
<td>1550 20.5652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>226.63</td>
<td>1550 6.8393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>352.63</td>
<td>1550 4.3955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1021</td>
<td>1060.37</td>
<td>1550 1.4618</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 33.2618*

*p<.000000001

Summary of Findings

The results of this study are summarized as follows:

1. The average number of principal committees used for the self-study by institutions in the criteria group is fewer than that used by the standards group.
2. No significant difference was detected in the average number of participants in the self-study for institutions in the two groups. However, this result is ambiguous due to the low power of the test to detect such differences.

3. No significant difference was detected in the average size of principal committees used for the self-study by institutions in the two groups. However, this result is ambiguous due to the low power of the test to detect such differences.

4. There is no difference in the composition with regard to positions held of the members of visiting committees to institutions in the two groups.

5. There is no difference in the proportion of visiting committees containing an institutional researcher or planner between the two groups.

6. There is no difference in the proportion of visiting committees containing a president or chancellor between the two groups.

7. There is no difference in the average number of recommendations by visiting committees of peers to institutions in the two groups.

8. No difference was detected in the average number of recommendations by visiting committees of peers during different years to institutions subject to the Criteria.
However, this result is ambiguous due to the low power of the test to detect such differences.

9. Among recommendations to institutions subject to the Criteria, the frequency of recommendations related to the criterion on institutional effectiveness differs from the theoretical frequency based upon must statements.

Chapter Summary

Data concerning institutional organization for self-study, composition of visiting committees, and recommendations by visiting committees were collected and analyzed for the two groups. The only statistically significant difference between the groups is in the number of principal committees used for the self-study but, some of the findings are ambiguous due to low statistical power. Among the criteria group, the incidence of recommendations concerning institutional effectiveness differs from the theoretical frequency.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The problem of this study was the process of reaffirmation of accreditation in the Southern region and the characteristics of that process among institutions that completed reaffirmation under the revised Criteria for Accreditation and those that completed reaffirmation under the former Standards of the College Delegate Assembly. Because neither the assignment of the subject institutions to the groups nor the administration of the treatment was under the control of the investigator, the study was conducted ex post facto. The institutions that had completed reaffirmation under the new Criteria were identified. Using precision control matching on the relevant variables identified in the literature, an equivalent group of institutions that had last completed reaffirmation under the Standards was created. One hundred thirty-two institutions, 66 in each group, served as the subjects for this study. Data were collected using the records of institutions' reaffirmations maintained by the
The literature reviewed traced the development of regional accreditation generally and of the new *Criteria for Accreditation* specifically. This review indicated four areas in which the implementation of the *Criteria* might affect the process of reaffirmation of accreditation. The literature relating to these four areas; institutional organization for the self-study, visiting committee composition, number of recommendations by visiting committees, and substance of recommendations by visiting committees; was also reviewed.

The purposes of this study were:

1. To determine characteristics of institutional organization for the self-study process under both the *Standards* and the *Criteria*.

2. To determine characteristics of the visiting committees of peers at institutions subject to the *Standards* and at those subject to the *Criteria*.

3. To compare the number of recommendations by the visiting committees at institutions subject to the *Standards* with the number at those subject to the *Criteria*.

4. To assess the effect of the criterion of institutional effectiveness on the reports of the visiting committees.
A series of nine hypotheses was developed to carry out the purposes of the study. Each hypothesis was tested using the appropriate statistical technique. The results of this study are summarized, as follows:

1. The average number of principal committees used for the self-study by institutions in the criteria group was fewer than that used by institutions in the standards group.

2. No significant difference was detected in the average number of participants in the self-study for institutions in the two groups. However, this result is ambiguous due to the low power of the test to detect such differences.

3. No significant difference was detected in the average size of principal committees used for the self-study by institutions in the two groups. However, this result is ambiguous due to the low power of the test to detect such differences.

4. There is no difference in the composition with regard to positions held of the members of visiting committees to institutions in the two groups.

5. There is no difference in the proportion of visiting committees containing an institutional researcher or planner between the two groups.

6. There is no difference in the proportion of visiting committees containing a president or chancellor between the two groups.
7. There is no difference in the average number of recommendations by visiting committees of peers to institutions in the two groups.

8. No difference was detected in the average number of recommendations by visiting committees of peers during different years to institutions subject to the Criteria. However, this result is ambiguous due to the low power of the test to detect such differences.

9. Among recommendations to institutions subject to the Criteria, the frequency of recommendations related to the criterion on institutional effectiveness differs from the theoretical frequency based upon must statements.

Discussion

Organization for the Self-Study

One purpose of this study was to determine characteristics of institutional organization for the self-study process under both the Standards and the Criteria. Organization for the self-study has been identified by Kells (1983a) as an essential step in the process. The Commission on Colleges instructs that self-studies "be participatory" (1987a, p. 7). Kirkwood not only identifies faculty and administrators as "essential participants" (1978, p. 298), but trustees and students as well. Lick (in G. Smith et al.) advocates involving
"everybody if at all possible, but certainly every unit on the campus."

It was anticipated that the change in form from 11 standards to 5 criteria might affect institutional organization for the conduct of the self-study. A theorized reduction to the number of principal committees was implied by the common practice under the Standards of establishing a principal committee for each standard. This practice, if continued with respect to the five criteria, could result in participation in the self-study by fewer individuals.

Data were collected on the number of principal committees and the number of participants used for the self-study by institutions in both groups. In addition, the average principal committee size for each group was calculated. Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 tested the difference in the means of the groups for these variables.

The mean number of principal committees used by the criteria group was 9.10, and that of the standards group was 11.08. Although this difference was found to be statistically significant, the difference is not of the magnitude that would be expected were institutions merely establishing one committee for each criteria.

The number of principal committees used by both groups are consistent with Kells' assertion that "a comprehensive self-study process usually employs nine to twelve work groups" (1983b, p. 62). A majority of the institutions in
the standards group (22 of 39) used either 10 or 11 committees. Although the criteria group was more dispersed, a majority (20 of 39) of the institutions fell within Kells' range and the modal value of six institutions applied to the use of both 11 and 12 committees.

Despite the comparability of the measures of central tendency of the groups, there is some evidence of a trend to fewer committees among the criteria group. Although only one institution in the standards group used as few as six committees, nine institutions in the criteria group used six or fewer committees.

The mean number of participants in the self-studies of institutions in the criteria group was 98.91, and that of the standards group was 113.11. This difference was tested in Hypothesis 2 and was not found to be statistically significant. The variable of number of participants was highly dispersed for both groups. The standard deviation of the criteria group of 52.80 indicates that roughly two-thirds of the institutions had between 46 and 152 participants. The corresponding central range for the standards group was 54 to 172 participants.

Cohen (1977) establishes conventions with regard to small, medium, and large effect sizes for use in the estimation of the power of statistical tests. A medium effect size is conceived of as one about which "in the normal course of experience, one would become aware" (p.
The conventional medium effect size posited by Cohen for t-tests, .5, is equivalent to the difference in height between 14 and 18 year old girls or the difference in mean IQ between clerical and semiskilled workers (p. 26).

The power of the test of Hypothesis 2 at the conventional medium effect size was .67. This means that the test is able to detect medium sized differences only two-thirds of the time. Because of the low power of this test, the failure to detect significant differences among the sample groups is ambiguous.

The average size of each principal committee used by institutions in the criteria group was 10.89 and that of the standards group was 9.79. This difference was tested as Hypothesis 3 and was not found to be significant. Although slightly higher, both of these average committee sizes are consistent with the seven to nine members reported by Kells and Kirkwood (1978) of their median institutions.

The power of the statistical test used in Hypothesis 3 at the conventional medium effect size was .54. Hence, if the average committee size indeed differs by a medium amount, this test would only find the difference slightly more than half the time. Thus, because of the low power of the statistical test, the failure to detect a significant difference is ambiguous.

It was anticipated that the implementation of the Criteria for Accreditation might affect institutional
organization for the self-study by reducing the number of principal committees and hence, reducing the number of participants. This result would be undesirable in light of the repeated call in the literature for broad and representative participation. This study indeed found a statistically significant decrease in the number of committees but, not of the expected magnitude. Because no significant differences were found in the mean number of participants or in the average committee sizes for the two groups, there is no evidence that the undesirable effect has occurred. However, because of the low power of the those tests, there is a unacceptably large probability that the failures to find significant differences are Type II errors.

The implementation of the Criteria for Accreditation has not dramatically altered institutional organization for the self-study. Very few institutions merely assigned one principal committee to each of the new criteria as had been anticipated. Rather, the institutions used a variety of committee structures and devised their own plans for distributing the portions of the Criteria among the committees. The organizational structures used by institutions in the South under the Criteria remain within the mainstream. Kells' earlier finding that comprehensive self-studies usually utilize 9 to 12 committees remains accurate under the Criteria.
This result, that institutions are developing their own organizational strategies for self-studies under the Criteria, is important for two reasons. First, it indicates that for most institutions the implementation of the Criteria has not produced the anticipated threat to the breadth of participation. Second, and perhaps more importantly, it indicates that many institutions are devising structures for the self-study which do not merely follow the organizational pattern of the criteria. This finding adds to the literature concerning institutional accreditation by providing evidence that, for the majority of institutions, decisions with regard to organization for the self-study do not simply ape formats suggested by the organization of the accreditation guidelines. As a result of this finding the anticipated threat of the Criteria to participation in self-studies is lessened and the likelihood that organizational schemes will match institutional needs is enhanced.

Although the Criteria have not provided the anticipated threat to participation for most institutions, the threat may still apply to some institutions. Nine institutions in the criteria group utilized six or fewer committees; in the standards group only one institution used as few as six committees. The average number of participants at institutions using six or fewer committees is 56.44, roughly half the average for all institutions. Although not
widespread, this apparent reduction in participation at some institutions could impair the usefulness of the self-study process at those institutions.

Composition of the Visiting Committee

A second purpose of this study was to determine characteristics of the visiting committees of peers at institutions subject to the Standards and at those subject to the Criteria. Harris (1983) found the quality of the visiting committee to influence the success of a self-study in reaching the goal of improving institutional effectiveness. Cooney (1984) noted the belief that the performance of visiting committees is influenced by the experience, skills, and knowledge of the members.

The inclusion of the criterion on institutional effectiveness, with its requirements that institutional research and planning be evaluated, has created a need for visiting committee members with experience, skills, and knowledge in those areas. Jones (1987, in Howard et al.) asserted that not many institutional researchers serve on visiting committees. Nichols (1987, also in Howard et al.) argues that a peer component is necessary in the evaluation of these areas.

Data were collected on the number of members of visiting committees and on the professional positions held by the members. Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 tested differences
among the characteristics of the visiting committees at institutions in the two groups.

The mean number of members of visiting committees to institutions in the criteria group was 11.41, and the mean number to institutions in the standards group was 11.46. These observed sample means are consistent with both Johnston and Andrews' (1978) estimate of 12 and Silvers' (1982b) finding of 10.84.

The composition of the visiting committees in terms of positions held by the members was analyzed for the two groups. Although comparisons with other findings are confounded by differing classification schemes and types of samples, the finding that 11.20% and 9.85% of members of visiting team are presidents or chancellors for the criteria and standards groups, respectively, is consistent with Kells' (1979) finding of 10% to 12% presidents. Similarly, Kells' finding that the number of presidents ranks behind the numbers for both academic deans and department chairs is consistent with the present results for central and unit academic administrators.

Group membership and committee composition were tested in Hypothesis 4 and were found to be independent. Because the power of this test at the conventional medium effect size was in excess of .995, it may be expected that dependence of group membership and committee composition would have been found were it in existence.
As noted above, there have been calls for more participation by institutional researchers and planners on visiting committees. Approximately 22% of the visiting committees to institutions in the criteria group contained an institutional researcher or planner, and approximately 15% of committees in the standards group contained one. These low percentages seem to confirm Jones' assertion of low involvement by these individuals. However, these results contain some error as some individuals with experience and expertise in institutional research and planning may have position titles that do not reflect this (for example, assistant to the president). These individuals would have been classified into the "other" category.

Hypothesis 5 tested the independence of group membership and the presence of an institutional researcher or planner and found them to be independent. Because the power of this test at the conventional medium effect size was .88, it can be expected that dependence of group membership and presence of an institutional researcher or planner would have been detected were it in existence.

Elliott (1983) wanted presidents to "take their turns" (p. 100) on visiting committees. As noted above, the proportion of committee members who were presidents or chancellors was consistent with earlier findings for both groups in this study.
Also analyzed was the proportion of visiting committees containing at least one president or chancellor. The same proportion, approximately 87%, of committees in both groups contained at least one president or chancellor. Obviously, the test in Hypothesis 6 of group membership and presence of a president or chancellor found them to be independent. Because the power of this test at the conventional medium effect size was .91, it can be expected that dependence would have been found were it in existence.

The implementation of the Criteria for Accreditation has not perceptibly altered the characteristics of the visiting committees of peers. This study found the size of the visiting committees to institutions in the two groups to be virtually identical. Likewise, the proportion of visiting committees in each group containing presidents or chancellors was identical. In fact, the overall composition of visiting committees was found to be independent of the guidelines under which the self-study was conducted.

With regard to individuals with expertise in institutional research and planning, for whom there have been calls in the literature for more participation on visiting teams, there is no statistically significant difference in the proportion of committees in the two groups containing representation. In establishing the membership of visiting committees, the staff of the Commission on Colleges include individuals for their particular areas of
expertise. One of the areas of expertise now included is that of the "institutional effectiveness". The inclusion of these individuals has not, however, resulted in increased participation from institutional researchers and planners.

The similarity of visiting committees of the two groups is not surprising. Change in the size and composition of visiting committees was neither a purpose of the Criteria nor a widely anticipated consequence.

Ewell (1987) and Harris (1983) have noted the importance of the quality of visiting committees to the success of the self-study process. The finding of consistency in visiting committee composition under the two sets of accreditation guidelines is good news to those impressed by the strengths of the committees and bad news to those concerned with their weaknesses. Those like Elliott (1983) who encourage participation by presidents, will be pleased that both groups boast presidents on 87% of the visiting committees. Those like Nichols and Jones (in Howard et al., 1987) who believe that institutional research can best be evaluated by its practitioners will be concerned that the mandated scrutiny of this function under the Criteria may not be conducted by the most capable individuals.
**Number of Recommendations**

The third purpose of this study was to compare the number of recommendations by visiting committees at institutions subject to the *Standards* with the number at those subject to the *Criteria*. Each recommendation constitutes both a finding by the committee of noncompliance by the institution with the required guidelines and an affirmative mandate to achieve compliance.

It was anticipated that the number of recommendations would increase under the *Criteria* for two reasons. Swanson (1985), Rugg (1987, in Ewell et al.), and Yost (1987, in Howard et al.) all expect the clarification and proliferation of must statements to result in more recommendations. In addition, the lack of preparedness of many institutions to comply with the criterion on institutional effectiveness (Gentemann & Rogers, 1987; Montgomery, 1987, in Howard et al.) was expected to result in more recommendations.

The mean number of recommendations by visiting committees to institutions in the criteria group was 21.41, and the number to institutions in the standards group was 17.98. The difference in these means was tested as Hypothesis 7 and not found to be significant. Because the power of this test for the conventional medium effect size was .89, it can be expected that a difference would have been detected were it in existence. This finding of no
difference in the number of visiting committee
recommendations to institutions subject either to the
Criteria for Accreditation or to the former Standards of the
College Delegate Assembly is the most unexpected finding of
this study. This finding, that the average number of
recommendations under the two sets of guidelines is the
same, adds to the literature concerning institutional
accreditation by providing evidence contrary to Swanson's
theory that as a result of the "new linguistic precision . .
. . an institution can expect more recommendations" (p. 18).

The mean number of recommendations to institutions in
the standards group was higher than anticipated. This high
mean may be partially attributed to three institutions that
received 63, 75, and 87 recommendations. Each of these is
equal to or greater than the greatest number of
recommendations received by any institution in the criteria
group. The median statistic is less sensitive to extreme
values than the mean. The median of 13 recommendations to
the standards group indicates that one-half the institutions
received 13 or fewer recommendations. The median for the
criteria group of 20 indicates that fewer institutions in
this group received only a small number of recommendations.
Similarly, 25% of institutions in the standards group
received 9 or fewer recommendations but, the corresponding
quartile point for the criteria group is 13 recommendations.
Thus, although the average number of recommendations has not
increased, it may be that the floor number of recommendations below which few schools are able to descend has increased.

Several of the must statements are cited in the recommendations to many institutions. Specifically, many institutions received three recommendations based upon the requirements in Section 6.4 of the Criteria that each institution (a) maintain a plan for the upkeep of its property, (b) maintain and regularly evaluate a comprehensive safety plan, and (c) maintain in writing a current facilities master plan that provides for the future orderly development of the institution. Other very common recommendations relate to the evaluation of part-time faculty, the evaluation of library programs, the preparation of faculty, the general education requirement, and the oral communication requirement. Although the average number of recommendations has not increased, the reduction of the number of institutions that receive only a small number of recommendations indicate that the Criteria may have established a core of recommendations common to most institutions.

Hypothesis 8 tested differences in the mean number of recommendations to institutions in the criteria group issued in different years. This hypothesis was of interest only in the event of a significant finding in Hypothesis 7. Had it been found that the criteria group was experiencing more
recommendations, this test would have been designed to study whether the difference was connected to the Criteria themselves or merely to the unfamiliarity of institutions with them during their first years of use.

In any event, the mean number of recommendations to institutions accomplishing reaffirmation before and during 1985 was 24.10. The corresponding means for 1986 and 1987 were 17.85 and 22.64, respectively. Although the difference of these means was not found to be significant, the power of this test at the conventional medium effect size was .42. The low power indicates the failure to detect a difference may be Type II error.

Substance of Recommendations

The final purpose of this study was to assess the effect of the criterion of institutional effectiveness on the reports of the visiting committees. The inclusion of the criterion on institutional effectiveness was the major substantive difference between the Criteria and the Standards. In addition, as noted above, institutions are perceived as being ill prepared to comply with this criterion. As a result of these factors it was anticipated that institutional effectiveness would receive disproportionate attention in the recommendations of the visiting committees.
In order to issue a recommendation, the committee must find a lack of compliance with a must statement from the *Criteria*. Of the 302 must statements, 36 or approximately 12%, are concerned with institutional effectiveness. Of the 1413 visiting committee recommendations to institutions in the criteria group, 392 or approximately 28%, are concerned with those must statements. These proportions were tested in Hypothesis 9 and the difference was found to be significant.

As anticipated, the criterion on institutional effectiveness is overrepresented among recommendations of visiting committees to institutions accomplishing self-study under the *Criteria for Accreditation*. Gentemann and Rogers (1987) found self-reported preparedness for compliance with the institutional effectiveness criterion to be low. The present finding contributes to the literature by providing similar evidence of actual failures to comply with that criterion.

Many of the same core of common recommendations discussed earlier contribute to the frequency of recommendations concerning institutional effectiveness. The three common recommendations from Section 6.4 refer to planning requirements that are required for compliance with the institutional effectiveness criterion. Similarly, the evaluation of both part-time faculty and library programs are necessary for compliance with that criterion.
It should be noted that the Commission on Colleges (1987) recently published a Resource Manual on Institutional Effectiveness. Institutions now undergoing reaffirmation of accreditation under the Criteria have available to them this resource manual and might, as a result, experience less difficulty in complying with the criterion on institutional effectiveness.

Conclusions

Based upon the findings of this study, the following conclusions are derived:

1. The process of reaffirmation of accreditation does not appear to have been substantially affected by the implementation of the new Criteria for Accreditation.

2. Most institutions apparently devise organizational schemes for the self-study that do not mimic the organization of the Criteria.

3. Although implementation of the Criteria for Accreditation has not produced widespread change to institutional organization for the self-study, there appears to be evidence that it has effected such change for a minority of institutions.

4. The implementation of the Criteria for Accreditation does not appear to have influenced either the size or the composition of visiting committees of peers.
5. Although the implementation of the Criteria for Accreditation has not increased the average number of recommendations by visiting committees of peers, there appears to be evidence that it has created a minimum core of recommendations common to many institutions.

6. The addition of the criterion on institutional effectiveness apparently has created a new and proportionately overrepresented focus for visiting committee recommendations.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based upon the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are offered.

1. Further study of the level of participation in self-studies subject to the Criteria for Accreditation should be conducted after a sufficient number of institutions have been reaffirmed under the Criteria to raise the a priori statistical power to an acceptable level. Participation among institutions that organize according to the format of the Criteria should be compared to levels of participation among similar institutions that utilize other organizational schemes.

2. The characteristics of the individuals utilized by the Commission on Colleges as the institutional effectiveness experts on visiting committees should be studied. The performance of these individuals and of the
visiting committees in assessing institutional effectiveness should be evaluated.

3. The experience of the institutions examined in this study should be compared with that of institutions completing reaffirmation with the aid of the Resource Manual on Institutional Effectiveness.

4. The influence of the criterion on institutional effectiveness, in general, and of particular visiting committee recommendations for compliance with individual provisions, in specific, on actual enhancements of institutional effectiveness should be studied.

5. This study should be replicated after the Criteria have been in effect a time sufficiently long for the subject institutions to be using them for the second time.

Chapter Summary

The process of reaffirmation of accreditation under the Criteria for Accreditation remains substantially the same as it was under the Standards of the College Delegate Assembly. Organizational structure for the self-study is similar for most institutions in both groups and there is no evidence of widespread reductions in participation. Visiting committees to institutions in both groups are virtually identical. The average number of recommendations has not increased although there is some evidence that the minimum number of recommendations has risen. Further research is recommended
with regard to the levels of participation, evaluations of institutional effectiveness, and actual enhancements of institutional effectiveness.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


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