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Conducting a Department or Program Self-Study and External Review

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1) Primary presenter biographical sketch:

Samuel Cotton - scotton@bsu.edu

Samuel Cotton is chairperson of the Department of Technology at Ball State University (BSU) in Muncie, Indiana. Prior to becoming chairperson, his primary duties included scholarship and teaching, directing, and advising for the undergraduate and graduate programs in Career and Technical Education (CTE). He earned a BS in Industrial Technology Education from BSU, an MA in Career and Technical Education from BSU, and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with a cognate in Special Needs from Purdue University. He has had many refereed publications, national presentations, and awarded grants largely related to educational methods primarily in CTE and special needs while at BSU since 1992.

2) Additional presenter - information:

Thomas Weidner - tweidner@bsu.edu

Thomas Weidner, Chairperson, Department of Kinesiology, Ball State University.

3) Title of presentation:

Conducting a Department or Program Self-Study and External Review

4) Abstract:

This presentation is to help those preparing to program or department self-studies and related external reviews. It will explore a variety of options and scenarios that are common across institutions relative to this process.

5) Keywords:

Self-study, external, review, evaluation, assessment

6) Presentation topic themes:

Evaluation and assessment - Facilitating program or department reviews

7) Target audience:

All department chairpersons

8) Type of presentation

Best practice presentation

9) Objective(s) of presentation:

Following the session, attendees will identify critical *processes, topics and content for conducting and preparing a self-study report.

Following the session, attendees will list essential qualifications for selecting and recruiting external program reviewers.

Following the session, attendees will identify potential pitfalls related to program or department reviews and resulting reports and will prepare strategies for addressing these concerns.

Following the session, attendees will be better prepared for developing action plans to guide the process of conducting and benefitting from a self-study and external program review.

10) Description of the session:

A critical element for program growth and improvement is conducting effective and informative self-study reviews and external evaluations. This presentation will share and examine many of the steps and potential pitfalls related to conducting a self-study and external program review. The discussion will include ideas and strategies for developing action plans prior to initiating a self-study and/or external review. This is of particular interest to department chairs since this is a challenging and valuable part of operation for departments and/or programs. Most institutions conduct self-study reviews on a regular basis, often a 3 to 7 year cycle. Understanding what to carefully consider, processes for engaging faculty, who to include in interviews, and how to use these resulting data, information, and recommendations to best effect is essential for administrators. Some topics to be included will include, but not be limited to, interviewing students, faculty, staff, administrators, and other stakeholders; benefitting from objective outside observations and critique; gathering essential data and information; organizing reports into useful formats; methods for insuring all important data and information are included in a useful form; and creating beneficial timelines to guide the process.

Organization, structure, and content are critical elements of a self-study report and advance planning is essential. This presentation will assist with preparing to conduct a self-study report and a related external review, including the process of selecting and preparing external reviewers regarding their role and the institutional expectations and requirements. The presentation will offer ideas for preparing adequate preparation time for identifying and gathering important data, selecting and interviewing players at all levels of program operation, determining appropriate and/or required format appropriate to a program and institution, and other issues related to effective execution of study timelines.

The presentation will include time for whole group discussion to explore ideas to improve benefit from external input, share experiences of attendees, and to address questions and shared concerns. Attendees will be encouraged to interact with the presenters as these concerns or issues become apparent. The intent is to customize the content to those currently involved in or about to begin these processes.

The process of self-study and outside review is a complex process that varies somewhat among institutions, departments, and programs. This presentation is intended to serve as an additional tool to help better prepare for and benefit from these two activities.