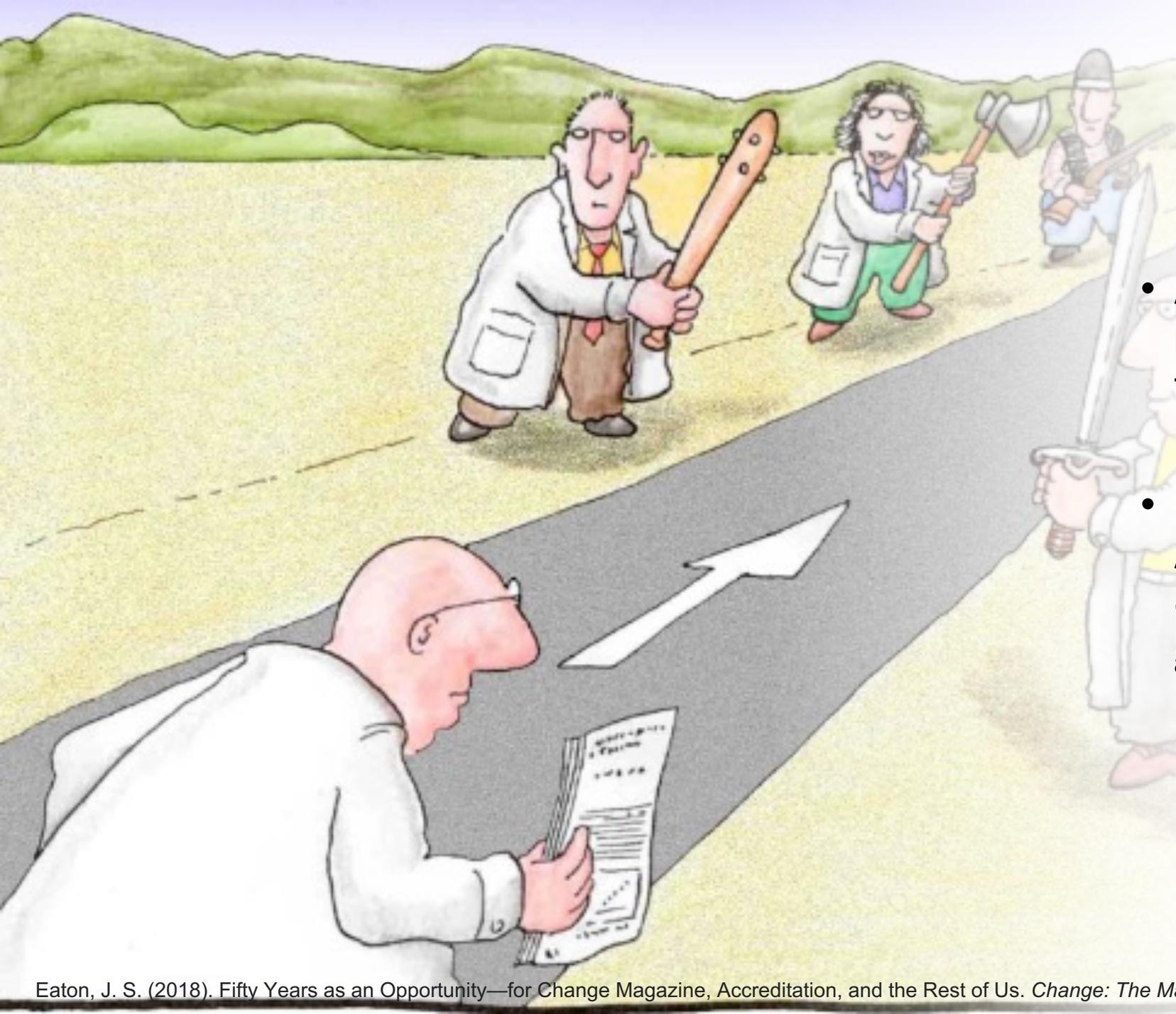# Accreditation:

Quality Assurance through Peer Review

Elizabeth Vogt
AVP Accreditation
University of North Texas

Agenda

- Accreditation – A very brief history
- Why accreditation is important
- Where we often go wrong
- QEP
- Success and lessons learned at UNT
- Recommendations

Brief History Accreditation

- Accreditation through the peer review process has been around for over 100 years

- 1965 Higher Education Act: Accrediting agencies reviewed every 5 years by the federal government

Eaton, J. S. (2018). Fifty Years as an Opportunity—for Change Magazine, Accreditation, and the Rest of Us. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 50*(3-4), 124-127
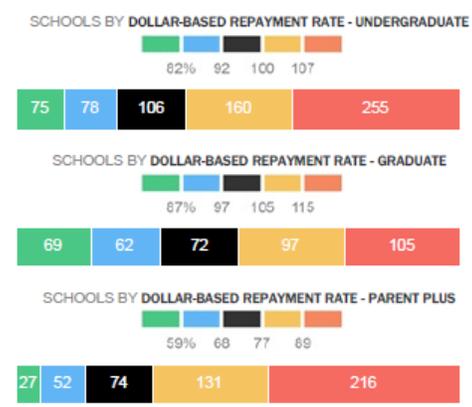
Accrediting Accreditors: National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI)
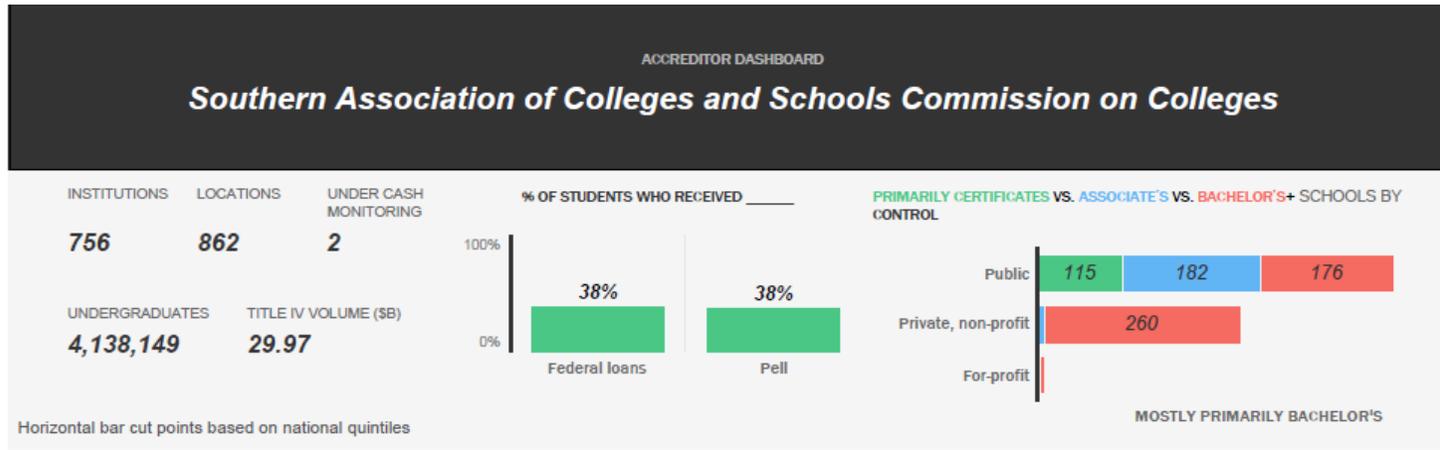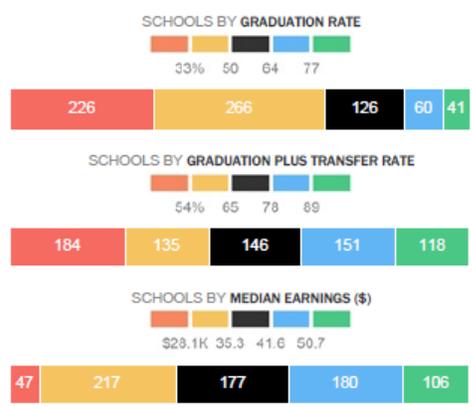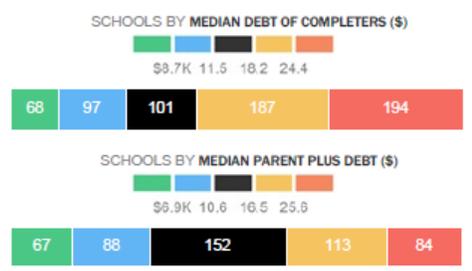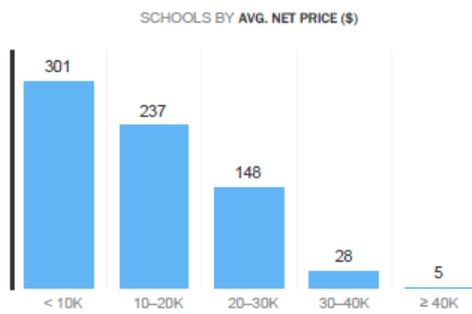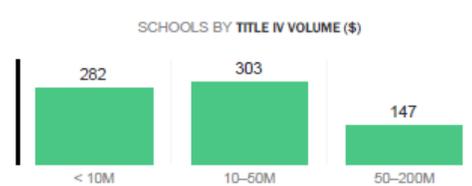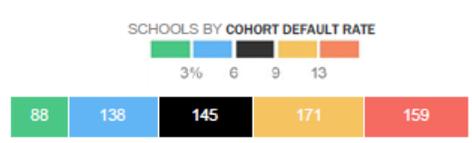
Accreditation Now

- Extensive government oversight of accreditation
  - More than 200 billion in higher education (HE) funding
  - Rising cost of HE
  - Public Accountability
- Accrediting agencies act as a buffer
  - Attempt to keep the focus on quality and improvement

Eaton, J. S. (2018). Fifty Years as an Opportunity—for Change Magazine, Accreditation, and the Rest of Us. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 50*(3-4), 124-127
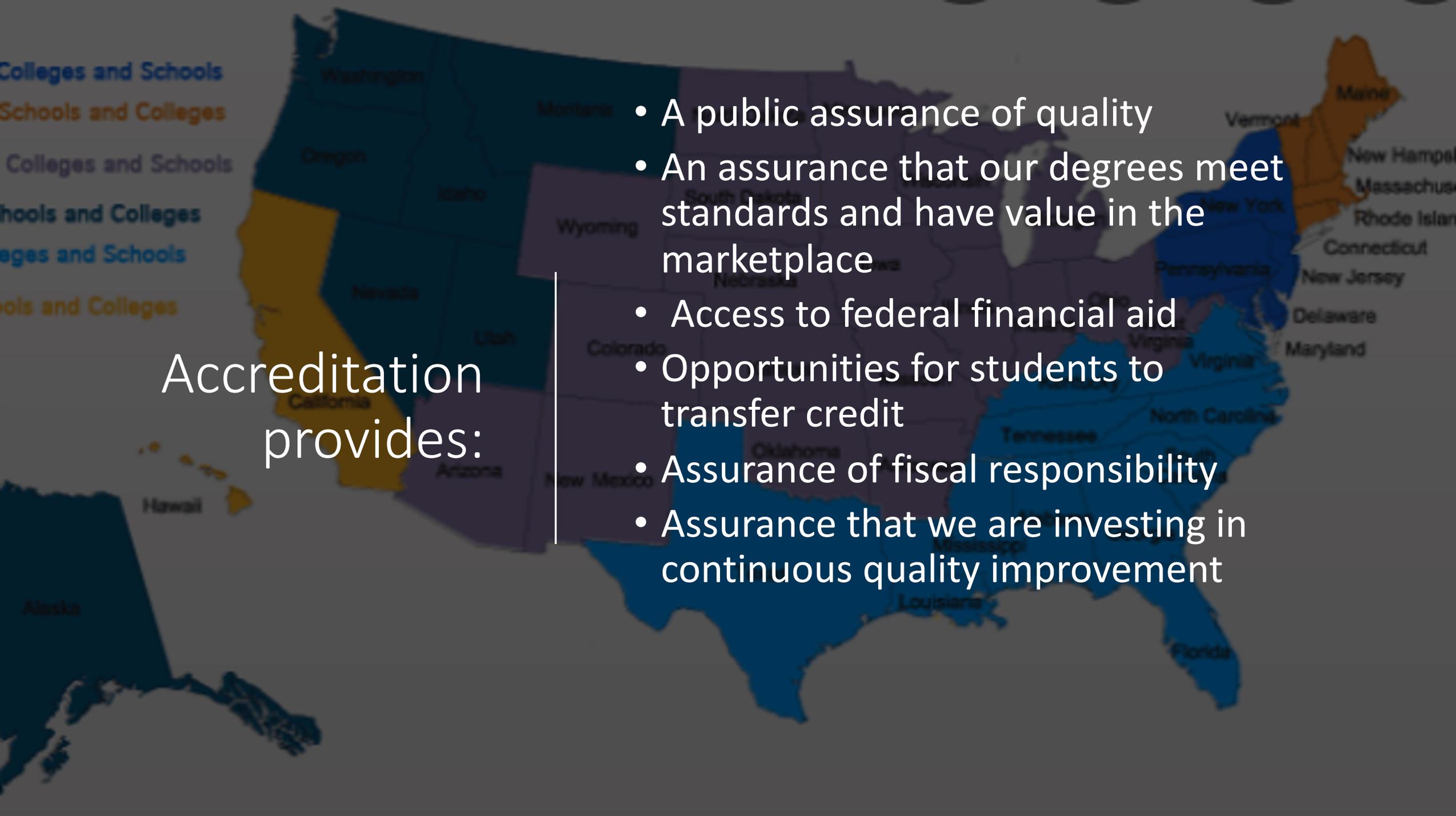
Accreditation provides:

- A public assurance of quality
- An assurance that our degrees meet standards and have value in the marketplace
- Access to federal financial aid
- Opportunities for students to transfer credit
- Assurance of fiscal responsibility
- Assurance that we are investing in continuous quality improvement

Where do institutions go wrong?

- By not addressing every part of every standard

- Lack of proof for an **ongoing systematic** process for compliance
  - A single year's worth of evidence will not show an ongoing process

- By not providing enough detail- Proof = Evidence
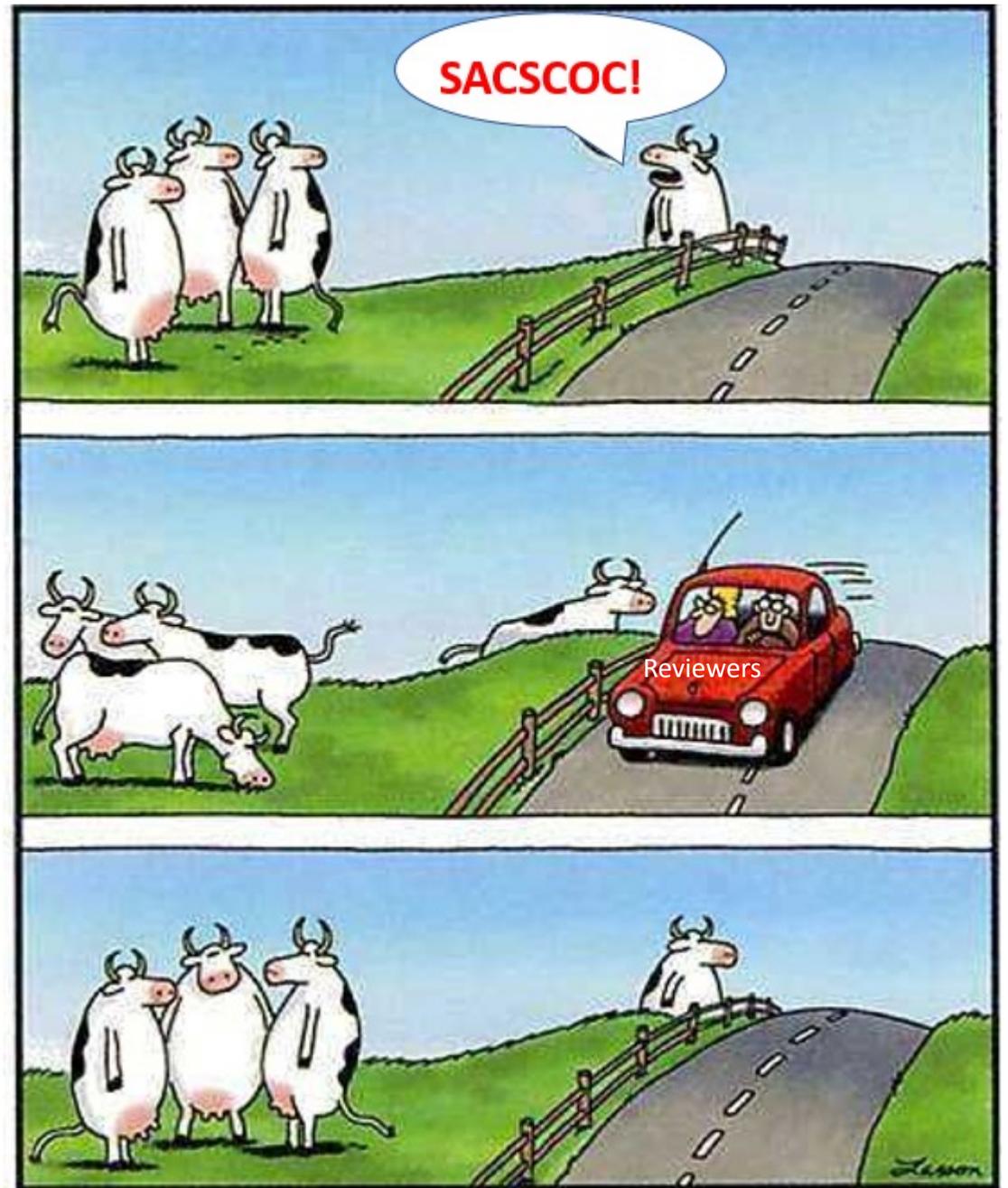
Student enrollment falls at colleges and universities that are placed on probation

Published: September 13, 2022 8:32am EDT

Accrediting agency places University of Texas Rio Grande Valley on probation

The brand new University of Texas Rio Grande Valley has been placed on probation by the commission that handles accreditation for southern universities.

Wiley College issued warning by accreditation agency

Tusculum Placed On Probation By Accrediting Agency

By Eugenia Estes Staff Writer   Jul 5, 2019

NEWS

Accrediting agency puts U of L on probation

Andrew Wolfson @adwolfson

North Idaho College, found out of compliance by accreditation agency, receives warning

By GREG MASON The Spokesman-Review   Apr 5, 2022

Most Frequently Cited *Principles* in Decennial Reaffirmation Reviews: Class of *2021* [N=80]

Review Stage *I*: OFF-Site Committee

Rank	Requirement/Standard	% of Institutions in Non-Compliance
1.	**6.2.a** (Faculty Qualifications)	94%
2.	**13.2** (Financial Documents)	46%
3.	**8.1** (Student Achievement)	45%
4.	**6.3** (Faculty Appointment & Evaluation)	43%
5.	**6.2.b** (Program Faculty)	41%
6.	**8.2.a** (Student Outcomes: Ed Programs)	36%
7.	**13.7** (Physical Resources)	35%
8.	**13.8** (Institutional Environment)	35%
9.	**8.2.b** (Student Outcomes: Gen Ed)	34%
10.	**12.4** (Student Complaints)	34%

Review Stage *II*: ON-Site Committee

Rank	Requirement/Standard	% of Institutions in Non-Compliance
1.	**7.2** (Quality Enhancement Plan)	43%
2.	**6.2.a** (Faculty Qualifications)	21%
3.	**13.3** (Financial Responsibility)	14%
4.	**8.2.b** (Student Outcomes: Gen Ed)	8%
5.	**13.1** (Financial Resources)	8%
6.	**11.2** (Library & LIR Staff)	6%
7.	**6.2.b** (Program Faculty)	5%
8.	**6.2.c** (Program Coordination)	5%
9.	**8.2.a** (Student Outcomes: Ed Programs)	5%
		<5%

Review Stage *III*: Board of Trustees

Rank	Requirement/Standard	% of Institutions in Non-Compliance
1.	**13.3** (Financial Responsibility)	10%
2.	**8.2.a** (Student Outcomes: Ed Programs)	3%
3.	**13.1** (Financial Resources)	3%
4.	**13.4** (Control of Finances)	3%
5.	**13.6** (Federal and State Responsibilities)	3%
		<3%

7.2- Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

- Derived from an institution's **ongoing comprehensive planning and evaluation process**
- Focus is on an issue the institution considers important to improving student learning and/or student success
- Must have broad-based support
- Should impact a significant student population
- Must have resources committed
- Must have an assessment plan
- Use the SACSCOC suggested format: Page 40-
- https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2020/03/Handbook-for-Institutions-Seeking-Reaffirmation.pdf

DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

× **Do:** Identify personnel required for each item on the timeline

× **Do:** Make sure important hiring actions are on the timeline

× **Do:** Plan for 'picking up the slack" when assigning tasks to existing employees

× **Do:** Account for personnel capabilities and limitations

DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

× **Don't:** Be unreasonable – too much work piled on existing employees will raise questions about the college's capacity to carry out the plan.

× **Don't:** Leave faculty and front-line staff hanging. Make sure a clear "chain of command" is established for the QEP

× **Don't:** Forget to assign administrative responsibilities (e.g., reporting, budget)

DO: Submit 7.2 information to the off-site for review!

DO: Research potential candidates to be the QEP lead evaluator* (Due 3+ months before visit)

Our Success at UNT

Annual process for outcomes assessment

Biannual process for general education (Texas Core)

Teamwork

Lessons Learned

- Use headings liberally

- Leave time to review

- <mark>Highlight</mark> important areas in your report

- Judicious use of consultants

IN THE HOME STRETCH

- **Deadlines**
- **SLO reporting- Move up the due date!**
- **Have a draft of your QEP (7.2) for the off-site review**
- **Be vocal about your QEP- Ensure all constituents know about it**
- **Be detailed in your faculty credentials**

Questions

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