Institution-Set Standards for Student Achievement

Why are institution-set standards needed?
• National concern with student completion rates.
• ACCJC recognition compliance issue → USDE staff report (Nov. 2013): The ACCJC “must demonstrate that it evaluates the appropriateness of the measures of student achievement chosen by its institutions.”
• ACCJC Annual Report has requested information on institution-set standards for two consecutive years (2013 and 2014).
• Revisions to ACCJC standards (prime examples)
  ✓ I.B.3 (Academic Quality): “The institution publishes institution-set standards for student achievement, appropriate to its mission, and assesses how well it is achieving them in pursuit of continuous improvement.”
  ✓ IV.B.3 (CEO): “…the CEO guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by: …“ensuring the college sets institutional performance standards for student achievement.”
  ✓ IV.C.6 (Board): “The governing board regularly reviews key indicators of student learning and achievement and sets expectations through policy to improve academic quality.”

In which areas are institution-set standards needed?
• The most recent ACCJC Annual Report (2014) asked about the following standards:
  1. Successful student course completion rate (item 14b)
  2. Student completion of degrees and certificates [annual] (15a)
  3. Student completion of degrees [annual] (15b)
  4. Student completion of certificates [annual] (15c)
  5. Student transfers to 4 yr. institutions [annual] (17a)
  6. Licensure passage rates for CTE certificates and degrees [annual per program] (19c)
  7. Employment rates for CTE certificates and degrees [annual per program] (19d)
• Setting additional standards may be desirable, e.g., student persistence.

How does ACCJC define and evaluate “standard”?
• “identified level of performance determined by institution to be acceptable”
• “measure will be assessed for reasonableness and effectiveness by peer external evaluators”

What is/is not a “standard”?
• It is an acceptable minimum—not a benchmark, target or goal.
• It should be met annually by the college (easily exceeded). Not meeting it may require an action plan to move back up to the standard.

What else might the future hold concerning measurement of student achievement?
• Fourth part of ACCJC rubric for evaluating institutional effectiveness?
• Standards for student achievement in every program?