Accreditation in the California Community Colleges: Influential Cultural Practices

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Too many California community colleges are being placed on sanction

Colleges placed on sanction
Not-sanctioned 51
Sanctioned 62

Actions per college

Note: Above data refer to ACCJC published actions from June 2003 - January 2012

Accreditation Trends

Methodology

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Accreditation Trends

1788: US Constitution
1890s: First accrediting commissions
1926: WASC
1950s: Current methods adopted
1965: Financial aid linked
1980s: Institutional effectiveness
2000s: Student learning outcomes

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
Sanctions as % of actions
Trend

Reaffirmation
Sanction

Differences?

Qualitative comparative case study of four institutions

College X1
College Y1
College X2
College Y2
## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>X Colleges</th>
<th>Y Colleges</th>
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</table>
| **Division of Labor** | • Campus-wide role definition not as clear  
• Conflict longer lasting and more intense  
• Progress in-spite of conflict | • Roles clearly defined  
• Less conflict  
• Conflict resolution was paramount |
| **Motivation**    | • Accreditation not universally important  
• Motivation was external  
• Enforcement not as consistent | • Accreditation universally important  
• Motivation was internal  
• Enforcement was consistent |
| **Integration**   | • Degree of contact with accreditation varied  
• Processes had less integrity  
• Participants weren’t as interconnected  
• Resource were not as available | • Degree of contact with accreditation was consistent  
• Process integrity was maintained  
• Participants were more interconnected  
• Resources were more available |

- Accreditation-related role definition was similar across all four schools.
- Participants at all four reported on the importance of a critical mass.

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### Interpretation of Findings using Activity Theory

- **Division of Labor**
  - Campus-wide DOL conflicts affect the development of a functional accreditation activity system.

- **Motivation**
  - Differing interpretations of accreditation affect motivation.