

# WASC Postsecondary Visiting Committee Report

The following suggestions are offered to Visiting Committee Chairs as they guide the Visiting Committee in completing the *Visiting Committee Report (VCR)*.

1. The *VCR* should be a concise and constructive document that the Commission can use in making a decision about the accredited status of the institution as well as a document that the institution can use for school improvement.
2. In writing the *VCR*:
  - a. Validate the institution in light of its own stated mission, objectives, and the WASC Postsecondary Criteria.
  - b. It is critical that the *VCR* contain the analysis of learning data, along with charts and graphs, taken from the profile section of Chapter I so that the WASC Commission can accurately evaluate the level of student learning taking place.
  - c. Include favorable comments when deserved.
  - d. Provide evidence to support the key issues identified by the team and provide a fair and useful estimate of the effectiveness of the institution.
  - e. Emphasize student achievement and Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.
  - f. Avoid naming individuals, either in praise or blame. Comment, if necessary, on the office and not the officeholder when offering recommendations.
  - g. Avoid being prescriptive, leaving specific remedies to be worked out by the school. It is best to write recommendations that include “who” is responsible, “what” to do, and “why” to do it...leaving the “how” to do it up to them.
3. In preparing the *VCR*, consideration should be given to the following:
  - a. Is the *VCR* consistent throughout — no mixed or conflicting messages?
  - b. Does the *VCR* say exactly what is intended, so that there can be no misinterpretations?
  - c. Does the language of the *VCR* clearly represent observations, conclusions, and recommendations as coming from the team as a whole, not just from one member’s perspective?
  - d. Does the *VCR* deal fairly with the entire institution, without advocating selectively for certain special interests?
  - e. Does the text of the *VCR* support the key issues identified? Do the observations and conclusions clearly state the context or evidence on which the statements are based? Are the specific WASC criteria cited to refer the institution to statements of best practice and Commission expectations?
  - f. Is the tone of the *VCR* appropriate to the circumstances and intended effect? Unduly harsh criticism or language can affect the climate of an institution and can be harmful to individuals. The *VCR* should encourage the institution to take appropriate actions but should be stated diplomatically.

4. The *VCR* is written for the Commission and the school — be sure that the *VCR* is written with both audiences in view. A template is provided online for the *VCR*. It includes the following components:

**Title Page:** This page states the name of the institution visited, dates of the visit, and the name of the team chair.

**Chapter I — Introduction:** This section is a brief statement of the nature of the institution and its accreditation history. General observations about the institution and about the visit are stated in the introduction. Briefly summarize the most critical information from the student/community profile that impacts the school, including the following:

- Brief description of the students and community served by the school
- School analysis of student achievement data
- Other pertinent data

**Chapter II — Progress Report based on the key issues of the previous WASC Visiting Committee:** This section of the report validates efforts by the institution to address key issues from previous Visiting Committees. Thoughtful responses to the key issues are expected from an institution.

**Chapter III — Evaluation of School's Response to the WASC Postsecondary Criteria:** This section provides most of the substance of the *VCR* and is the section to which each team member makes a contribution. The team report notes whether evidence has been offered to demonstrate that the institution is accomplishing its published objectives and that these objectives are appropriate to postsecondary education and consistent with the WASC Postsecondary Criteria.

**Chapter IV — Action Plan Effectiveness:** The report ends with the identification of the school's major areas of strength and its major key issues that will be embedded into the schoolwide *Action Plan*.