

NATIONAL
QUALITY
DIALOGUE

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TOOLKIT FOR CEOS AND CAOS: MAKING THE CASE FOR QUALITY *PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND*

October 2019

This *Toolkit* is meant to be a dynamic document and your suggestions are important. Please share what you find effective in addressing quality. This might include practices within your institution and engaging students, faculty or governing board members. Or, you may have thoughts to share about how you engage your community, governmental officials, media or the public.

If you would like your ideas to be part of the *Toolkit*, please send these to chea@chea.org. Please include your name, institution and title.

CHEA/CIQG Publication Series

CHEA Council for
Higher Education
Accreditation
CHEA International Quality Group **CIQG**

ABOUT CHEA

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) serves its member institutions through its advocacy for the value and independence of accreditation, its rigorous and demanding standards for the effectiveness of U.S. accrediting organizations, its service as an authority and repository of actionable research shaping the future of accreditation and quality assurance and its leadership and commitment to quality in higher education nationally and internationally.



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TOOLKIT FOR CEOS AND CAOS: MAKING THE CASE FOR QUALITY

PURPOSE

This *Quality Toolkit* is intended to assist CEOs and CAOs to make the case for quality for their institutions: framing, affirming, advocating for quality. The materials (1) provide key questions about quality and (2) offer suggestions for responses that can be tailored to individual colleges and universities. The *Toolkit* is one means of conceptualizing the quality and performance of a college or university to demonstrate the value of efforts to serve students and society. The material here may be used, e.g., to address the importance of quality and the value of an institution to governing boards, faculty, students, the community, employers and government officials at all levels.

BACKGROUND

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), in July 2019, initiated a “National Quality Dialogue” to provide a national forum for discussion for the all-important issue of quality in higher education, where we are today and ways to approach the future of quality. The Dialogue is framed by three key questions:

- How do we provide additional focus and emphasis on the vital quality issues for colleges and universities today and in the future?
- What tools can we identify and share that higher education leaders can use when addressing quality with key constituents of higher education?
- How do we vigorously reaffirm the leadership role of higher education in framing future expectations of quality?

An exploratory paper, *Conversations About Quality in Higher Education: What are They and Where do we Take Them?*, was developed to provide a foundation for the dialogue and is available here. The paper’s major takeaways are:

- The five major actors in the higher education quality space considered in this paper - higher education and accreditation themselves, research and policy institutes and foundations, alternative providers, the federal government and employers - each bring different perspectives to the quality conversation.
- At the same time, all of the major actors are focused on student achievement as a central indicator of quality.
- Based on these conversations, quality conversations in the future are likely to encounter and address:
 - Even greater attention to student achievement and success.
 - Additional public scrutiny and judgment about what counts as quality.
 - Continued diversification of the higher education environment.
 - Greater consideration of social justice, equity and inequality and free speech issues when addressing quality.
 - A continued drive toward more government regulation of quality, with ongoing pressure for greater uniformity and standardization.
 - Increasing attention to community and civic engagement as a key dimension of judging quality.

MAJOR QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR RESPONSES: MAKING THE CASE FOR QUALITY

- 1. What happens to students at your institution?*
- 2. In what ways does your institution contribute to your community?*
- 3. How does your institution contribute to the knowledge development so essential to the future?*
- 4. What is your thinking about what will count as quality for your institution in the future?*

1. WHAT HAPPENS TO STUDENTS AT YOUR INSTITUTION?

- Do students graduate or complete other educational goals they may have?
- How well does your institution assist with academic mobility: transfer of credit, entry to graduate school?
- How well does your institution assist with economic mobility, e.g., obtaining jobs, upgrading jobs, adequate earnings to meet life needs?
- How well does your success with students compare to other similar institutions?
- What are you doing to assist students who are struggling academically, financially?
- Are there areas of your service to students that you have identified as needing improvement? What are these and what are you doing about them?

What Information Might Be Helpful in Responding?

- Aggregate data on student progress and success - Fact Books, Annual Reports, data on institutional websites.
- Commentary from students - informal anecdotes, testimonials, surveys.
- Results of surveys that have been conducted that compare your institution's performance with other institutions with similar mission.
- Results of analyses or studies of institutional performance by outside consultants.

2. IN WHAT WAYS DOES YOUR INSTITUTION CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR COMMUNITY?

- What specific services is your institution providing your community?
- What is the economic impact of your institution on your community?
- How does your institution assist your community in addressing major economic and social issues?

What Information Might Be Helpful in Responding?

- Identification of the range of engagements, services and assistance your institution provides to the community.
- Results of surveys that provide evidence of success with your contributions to the community.
- Results of studies that provide data on your institution's ongoing economic impact in the community.
- Testimonials and other public acknowledgments of the value of your institution's contributions to the community.
- Showcasing of particularly important and successful work with your community.

3. HOW DOES YOUR INSTITUTION CONTRIBUTE TO THE KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT SO ESSENTIAL TO THE FUTURE?

- What are the research contributions of your institution to improve quality of life and addressing major societal concerns? (if applicable)
- What are various roles that your faculty are playing to advance their respective disciplines and fields of study, including developments in technology as well as teaching and learning, and how does this contribute to our intellectual future?
- In what research or other projects is your institution involved that engage your community and will contribute to further enhancing its wellbeing?

What Information Might Be Helpful in Responding?

- Website locations, publications that detail research contributions.
- Results of surveys of the impact of research and other projects in a particular discipline or area, on higher education, on a community or the country.
- Information about the engagement of faculty and other staff in assisting with community or other efforts to improve future service or products.

4. WHAT IS YOUR THINKING ABOUT WHAT WILL COUNT AS QUALITY FOR YOUR INSTITUTION IN THE FUTURE?

- What are the greatest challenges to moving forward to achieve or improve quality at your institution?
- What developments - economic, political, technological - will likely affect how your institution addresses quality in the future?
- What is your institution doing to work with constituents (e.g., students, employers, government officials) to develop shared understanding about expectations of quality, both opportunities and limitations?
- What insights can you share about the current climate for higher education and especially your institution that affects the progress that you can make in addressing quality?

What Information Might Be Helpful in Responding?

- Speeches, publications, meetings that engage the institution and its constituents in framing a vision of quality going forward, including challenges and anticipated accomplishments.
- Framing a compelling vision of what quality means to your institution, including anticipation of future needs.

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