

Helping to Write the Report

Don't worry! You won't have to write it all by yourself.

Throughout the ongoing self-study process, you will be responding to each point in your team's standard. The purpose is to come to consensus so that your team can submit a section of the report that reflects what you have agreed upon. The section will be written, edited, rewritten – and everyone's input will be needed to make sure the final product is accurate and says what you intended.

There are four tasks involved:

1. **DIALOGUE:** We will get together over the next six months to talk about these standards. The accrediting commission believes that “ongoing, self-reflective dialogue” is key to “promoting quality and improvement.” In order for these discussions to be successful, we need to:

- Listen carefully and understand our colleagues' viewpoints
- Come up with constructive ideas for change and improvement
- Document the discussion by taking notes

2. **DESCRIPTION:** For each point in your section of the standard, you will be asked to describe what we're doing at Valley – an objective, honest snapshot.

For example (College X): The college has 30 classroom labs that are equipped with computers for student use. Some are open for drop-in use, and some are dedicated to specific educational programs (Doc. 6.1). In total, approximately 1,000 computers are available for student use. The college has a basic telecommunication infrastructure in place for campus distribution of data. Campuswide networking facilitates access to library and instructional resources and the internet from all student computers.

3. **EVALUATION:** This is a judgment about the standard and how we are performing, ranging from perfect to adequate to terrible -- or somewhere in between. It expresses an opinion about the particular activity.

For example (College X): Although the library still falls below the ALA's minimum recommendations for space, the recent addition of 13,000 square feet makes for a much more spacious facility than was previously available. At this time, the available space seems adequate to the needs of students and faculty. One of the many unfortunate results of recent budget problems has been that the library does not have sufficient staff to open the new library computer lab.

If we discover such a deficiency, we may suggest a plan to correct it.

For example (College X): The associate dean of library and information services will seek funding to staff the first floor computer lab in the library. In the event that funds for staff are not available, the computer lab will be made available by appointment to instructors for individual class sessions.

4. **GATHER EVIDENCE:** This is the most important task. We have to collect proof to back up all our statements. Think of the self study report as a research project requiring documentation. (See the Sources of Evidence sheet.)