Strategic Planning: Maintaining the Leadership of the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation

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Strategic Planning: Maintaining the Leadership of the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation

WMU – Academic Leadership Academy 2016-2017
Brad R. Watts – The Evaluation Center

Project Objectives

The purpose of this project is to

* Help lead the JCSEE in the development of a new strategic plan
* Support the creation of a business plan that fits with the strategic plan and is sufficient to financially sustain the JCSEE
* Support the creation of a new web site and other materials to further promote the activities of the JCSEE
* Determine how the WMU Evaluation Center can continue to play a leading role with the JCSEE

Background on the JCSEE

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) was founded in 1975 as a collaborative effort between professional organizations in the U.S. and Canada that are concerned with the quality of evaluations being produced. The Evaluation Center at WMU was also involved in the creation of the JCSEE and housed the organization for many years. Over the past four decades, the JCSEE has published sets of standards through three major publications:

* The Program Evaluation Standards
* The Personnel Evaluation Standards
* The Student Evaluation Standards

The JCSEE has also developed several other sets of standards and small products relevant to additional sub-sets of educational evaluators, such as the Classroom Assessment Standards for PreK-12 Teachers. The JCSEE has also provided resources and translations of the program standards into French. The process of developing these standards is also reviewed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for the purpose of accrediting the JCSEE and ensuring its competence in creating and developing standards.

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Need for Strategic Plan

At the 2016 JCSEE annual meeting, it was decided that the organization was in need of a plan to move forward. Members of the committee noted the following reasons for the JCSEE to develop a plan:

* No prior plan is in place
* Uncertain how new ideas for organization, such as partnering with other regions or offering training, fit with the mission
* Financial struggles – old royalties no long enough to support current budget
* Financial issues create desire for a business plan – but it should not be the primary plan
* Membership and leadership changes – no longer an institutional memory of the intent of the committee

Preparing for the Planning Process

Development of a strategic plan is on the agenda for the JCSEE annual meeting in September 2017. However, prior to this it was decided that some pre-meeting activities would need to be conducted to prepare the members and the organizations that they represent. Communications were planned to:

* Highlight the need for planning
* Remind members to solicit feedback from their organizations
* Get members thinking about what the JCSEE should be
* Collect data to use in the planning process at the meeting

Strategic Planning Survey

As Vice Chair, I volunteered to lead the strategic planning process, starting with the implementation of a survey to solicit information from JCSEE members regarding their perceptions of, and ideas for, the organization. This survey was conducted during May 2017.

Specific of the survey are as follows.

* JCSEE members (survey invitations sent) = 20
* Questionnaire items covering five topic areas
  - Inputs & resources used by JCSEE
  - Main committee activities
  - Outputs and products of JCSEE
  - Stakeholders
  - Mission statement: ideas and opinions
* Time survey open: May 9 to June 2 (four weeks)
* Reminders sent: 5 (plus email from the chair)
* Total valid and complete responses received = 10

Unfortunately, even in this small group where the members all know each other, getting participation is a struggle.

Survey Results

Respondents rated the importance of each listed factor, resource, activity, or group using a 100-point scale. The anchored scale ranged from 0 (not important) to 100 (essential).

Inputs (Fig. 1)

The inputs rated to be of most importance also generally correspond with those that currently play the greatest role in the process of developing standards. Input from member organizations was, academic research, and professional evaluators received the highest ratings.

Activities (Fig. 2)

All of the JCSEE’s current activities received high ratings for importance. The dissemination of standards, the recruitment of experts to create and review standards, and the process of reviewing standards were rated as essential (100) by most respondents.

Products (Fig. 3)

The program evaluations book was rated as the most important JCSEE product, followed closely by the classroom assessment standards and teacher evaluation standards.

Survey Results (cont.)

When asked to identify and categorize the beneficiaries of the JCSEE’s products, respondents generally indicated that they see the organization’s audience as being primarily professional evaluators and the organizations that directly receive these results (e.g., admin, teachers, and public ED departments). Direct participants in educational programming—i.e., students and parents—were most frequently mentioned as not benefiting from the standards.

Benefits by Times Placed in Each Category (Fig. 4)

Conclusions and Next Steps

The JCSEE has taken the first step by recognizing a need for strategic planning and identifying the membership’s overarching beliefs regarding how the committee operates and who it serves. Despite recent steps to consider new activities, such as offering training services and broadening the standards, the JCSEE appears to still see itself primarily as a standard-setting body that serves educational evaluators and school administrators. Financial pressures may have pushed the organization to consider new directions, however, new activities may not make sense if they do not align with the JCSEE’s strategic plan.

The next step will be for the JCSEE to further discuss these findings and work them into a formal strategic plan. This process is scheduled to begin during and following the 2017 annual meeting.

References

Dams, P. 2017. More power tools for the leader’s toolbox: Compelling missions and clear goal statements. Presentation to ALA Class of 2016-17.