SAMPLE APPROACH TO OPEN FORUM DISCUSSIONS
AQIP COMPREHENSIVE QUALITY REVIEWS


1. Discussion One: Criteria One and Two
2. Discussion Two: Criteria Three and Four
3. Discussion Three: Criteria Five and the institution’s priorities for the future.

The team may also include one or two drop-in sessions for constituents to meet with the team.

Structure: The size of the institution, the number of discussion participants, and the room arrangements may require the team to be flexible in designing and facilitating these discussions. However, these discussions are intended to be listening sessions that engage the participants with questions, encourage candid commentary, and probe for participant opinions, observations, and evidence in relationship to the Criteria. The team may wish to appoint a team “convener” for the discussion and a second team member to serve as a reflective responder, an individual who will ask pertinent follow-up questions if necessary.

Guided Questions: The following guide provides a framework from which team members may work during the three criteria-based discussions. Nothing in this guide is intended to limit conversation or to require a particular style of facilitation by peer reviewers. Not all questions within a discussion need to be asked, and additional questions, as related to specific Systems Portfolio evidence, should be included. Team members should feel comfortable using this guide or modifying it in any way appropriate to the team’s work.

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CONVERSATION ONE: CRITERIA ONE AND TWO

Introduction: Members of the team should introduce themselves, welcome participants to the discussion, outline the intent of the discussion and its relation to the team's overall deliberations, and describe the structure of the conversation (small group discussion with report-outs, whole-group question/answer, etc.).

Criteria Review: A member of the team should read the descriptions of criteria one and two.

Guiding Questions: The following questions may be used to facilitate either small-group discussion/report-out or whole-group question-answer discussions. The term “institution” is used throughout the questions but is intended to be replaced with the name of the college or university during the actual discussion.

• It is evident from the college's/university's Systems Portfolio and CQR Quality Highlights Report that “the institution” has a clear understanding of its mission, vision, and values. How do you see the mission playing out in your daily lives? What do you see as the strongest evidence that the institution knows and follows its mission?

• The team found an example of how “the institution” attends to issues of human diversity (provide specific example). What other examples would you cite that demonstrate “the institution’s” understanding of its relationship between its mission and the diversity of society?

OR

• It was unclear how “the institution” demonstrates the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society. How can you help us learn more about how you address attention to human diversity?

• Institutions accredited by the Higher Learning Commission must demonstrate a commitment to serving the public good. How does “the institution” best engage its external communities in ways which demonstrate such a commitment?

• Ethical and responsible conduct by all members of the higher learning community is expected. What examples can you provide which speak to how such ethics are played out at “the institution”?

• What types of institutional policies guide expectations of academic honesty and integrity on the part of both faculty and students?

• The team has reviewed many of “the institution’s” public materials, i.e., electronic catalogues, recruitment materials, website. How are these materials most reflective of “the institution”, and what changes would you recommend to be even more clear about how the college interacts with its students and the general public and how it is perceived by them?

• As “the institution” moves into the future, what recommendations do you have in relation to its mission, vision, and values and to its demonstration of integrity that you believe would strengthen it?

Conclusion: Thank participants for sharing time with the team and for helping the team understand more clearly elements in “the institution’s” Systems Portfolio and CQR Quality Highlights Report. Note the times and locations of any additional Open Forum discussions and drop-in sessions.
CONVERSATION TWO: CRITERIA THREE AND FOUR

Introduction: Members of the team should introduce themselves, welcome participants to the discussion, outline the intent of the discussion and its relation to the team's overall deliberations, and describe the structure of the conversation (small group discussion with report-outs, whole-group question/answer, etc.).

Criteria Review: A member of the team should read the descriptions of criteria three and four.

Guiding Questions: The following questions may be used to facilitate either small-group discussion/report-out or whole-group question-answer discussions. The term “institution” is used throughout the questions but is intended to be replaced with the name of the college or university during the actual discussion.

• The team found consistency in the statement of learning outcomes for courses, programs, and degrees regardless of mode or place of delivery (on-ground, on-line, dual credit, etc.), and it appears that all programs and degrees have clearly articulated learning outcomes statements. What can you tell us about how learning outcomes are created at “the institution” at various levels (course, program, degree)? We are most interested in the processes and the levels of involvement of faculty, students, and others.

OR

• The team was unable to adequately discern whether or not “the institution” has clearly articulated learning outcomes for each of its programs and degrees. Can you help us understand where the college/university stands in relation to 100% compliance in this regard?

• We were intrigued with (state example here) as described in your general education program. Can you tell us more about this (example) and how it is integrated into the foundation of the General Education program?

OR

• The General Education program at “the institution” appears to be well-established and well-integrated into the college’s/university’s academic curriculum. Are there changes you envision making to the General Education program somewhere within the next five years? If so, what are you thinking about and how will such changes be designed? We are interested in learning more about your curriculum development processes.

• We are interested in learning more about your faculty development program and how such development opportunities lead to improved teaching. What can you tell us about opportunities for development at “the institution”?

• Professional development for non-faculty employees is also an important aspect of building an excellent learning community. How does “the institution” support you and others in your professional advancement?

• Support of student learning and development appears to be well established at “the institution”. What would you identify as your most creative student support service, and how does this service support increased student learning?

OR
• We were unable to fully understand how (cite example of service or activity) works at “the institution” and how it is fully integrated into the learning community. Can you help us understand this service/activity better?

• There are a multitude of resources designed to support effective teaching and learning, i.e., technology, scientific laboratories, performance spaces, museums, clinical practice spaces, etc. How would you describe “the institution’s” commitment to providing these resources?

• Are there any unique enrichment educational services or programs, i.e., co-curricular programs, research, community engagement, service learning, economic development, (religious or spiritual programs) about which you are most proud? How do your examples support quality in the teaching and learning process?

• Assessing and improving student learning can, at times, be a challenge for institutions. How has “the institution” ensured that it is adequately assessing student learning and that changes to program content, delivery, and resource development are made? Are students achieving the outcomes you set? How do you know? What student learning data and information do you have?

• Could you please provide some specific examples of how your Program Review process works and what difference such review has made to student learning at “the institution”?

• We are interested in learning more about how “the institution’s” dual credit program works. We’d be interested in learning more about how the program is managed, how courses are developed, what policies are in place to guide the institution’s work in this arena and what services are provided to students enrolled in the program.

• You state that “the institution’s” graduates are successful upon completion of their courses of study. How do you really know this? What measures have you taken to assess such success?

• The team found your work in student retention efforts to be quite supportive of students. What do you see as “the institution's” biggest challenges in the future in retaining students?

• Data collection and analysis in regard to student retention, persistence, and completion can be challenging. How has “the institution” defined these measures (retention, persistence, completion), and what processes are in place to ensure that data are used in decision-making regarding programs and services aimed at improving student retention, persistence and completion?

• As you look to the future, perhaps the next five years, what do you see as the greatest challenges confronting “the institution” as it seeks to teach and evaluate student learning and to improve the environment for quality learning?

**Conclusion:** Thank participants for sharing time with the team and for helping the team understand more clearly elements in “the institution's” Systems Portfolio and CQR Quality Highlights Report. Note the times and locations of any additional Open Forum discussions and drop-in sessions.
CONVERSATION THREE: CRITERION FIVE & INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

**Introduction:** Members of the team should introduce themselves, welcome participants to the discussion, outline the intent of the discussion and its relation to the team’s overall deliberations, and describe the structure of the conversation (small group discussion with report-outs, whole-group question/answer, etc.).

**Criteria Review:** A member of the team should read the description of criterion five.

**Guiding Questions:** The following questions may be used to facilitate either small-group discussion/report-out or whole-group question-answer discussions. The term “institution” is used throughout the questions but is intended to be replaced with the name of the college or university during the actual discussion.

- Every institution of higher learning has its unique twists on a governance model. The team found it interesting to read about how (use example here from the Systems Portfolio dealing with some aspect of the institution’s governance). What do you see as the strengths and the challenges of the governance model employed here at “the institution”?

- We were unclear at times about how “the institution” manages its fiscal resources and how those resources are distributed to meet the institution’s mission. Could you help us understand your resource allocation framework better and share with us your assessment of how well the process works.

- We've learned a lot about the college's/university's planning processes by reviewing the Systems Portfolio and CQR Quality Highlights Report. What this does not allow you to express at length, however, is how, exactly, all of your various institutional planning processes, i.e., strategic planning, annual planning, financial planning, technology planning, academic planning, etc. are integrated with one another. How do you see this integration taking place at “the institution”? What are the barriers you see to making this integration most effective?

- So much of looking towards the future and determining how to operationalize the overall institutional mission is trying to balance the institution's resources (fiscal, human, and technological) with the future vision of the learning community. Are there areas in your future vision which will require a major shift in the utilization of resources? How good do you find your current resource allocation to be in meeting your mission and supporting your current institutional priorities?

- Other than the processes you have in place to assess student academic achievement, what other processes are well-functioning in the evaluation of institutional effectiveness? Are there examples you can share regarding some of your stellar evaluation processes? Where might the institution focus in the future to strengthen its evaluation processes to ensure institutional effectiveness?

**Conclusion:** Thank participants for sharing time with the team and for helping the team understand more clearly elements in “the institution’s” Systems Portfolio and CQR Quality Highlights Report. Note the times and locations of any additional Open Forum discussions and drop-in sessions.

**Drop-in Sessions (optional).** In the Open Forums, inform those attending of any times and locations that the team has set aside where team members will be available to meet with anyone on a drop-in basis, should follow-up comments or interactions be desired by participants.