

## An Open Letter to the UCA Community

The University is embarking on its decennial process of self-study, in preparation for its application for continuing accreditation with the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Because institutional accreditation is vital to any university, and because the self-study involves all parts of the institution, we should all--students, administration, staff, and faculty--be aware of accreditation issues and prepared to contribute to the self-study process.

Fundamentally, the self-study process and the institutional accreditation it seeks are concerned with a university's integrity and with institutional improvement. In its overview of the accreditation process, the North Central Association summarizes the value of institutional accreditation in this way:

For members of the public--and especially prospective students of an institution--the institutional accreditation provided by the North Central Association means that the accredited institution has been found to meet the Commission's requirements and criteria and that there are reasonable grounds for believing that it will continue to meet them. Reaching this conclusion requires that an institution open itself to outside examination conducted by qualified persons using accepted criteria. For the accredited institution, the process of accreditation provides an opportunity for critical self-analysis leading to improvement in quality and for consultation and advice from persons from other institutions. Thus accreditation provides public certification of acceptable institutional quality and an opportunity and incentive for institutional self-improvement. (North Central Association, *Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions: An Overview*, September 1995)

President Thompson has formed the [Steering Committee](#) charged with coordinating the campus-wide evaluative self-study. Steering Committee members are Sam Buchanan (chair), Carolyn Floyd, Jonathan Glenn, Barbara Goswick, Larry James, John Mosbo, Gary Roberts, and Tony Sitz. As the self-study process gets under way, the committee will post information and updates on the Planning and Assessment web site [where you are now]: <http://www.uca.edu/divisions/academic/assess>. Information about the accreditation process in general can be found at the new North Central Association web site: <http://www.ncacihe.org>.

We invite you to inform yourself about self-study and accreditation and to help UCA use this process

as a means to institutional improvement and renewal.

--Dr. Sam Buchanan, Self-Study Coordinator, Spring 1997

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