

Developing a “High-Impact” Industry Advisory Board

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Abstract

Virtually all academic programs in any accredited discipline are required to have an Industry Advisory Board (IAB). It must be noted that the term “IAB” is generic in nature and refers to any Industry Advisory Board, Committee, Council, or otherwise named advisory group. The sole purpose of any IAB is to add value to their associated academic program. An IAB has no legislative, administrative, or programmatic authority. The role of an IAB is *advisory*, exclusively. IAB members are volunteers who work cooperatively with the academic program and administration in an effort to share their expert knowledge of career-related tasks and professional competency requirements within the academic discipline. However, not all IAB’s operates at a high-level of effectiveness or efficiency. In general, a “High-Impact” IAB has the required organizational structure to effectively develop and deliver their “best practices” with associated quality systems for the benefit of the academic program and the IAB.

In order to clearly define and quantify IAB organizational structure and operating procedures, the IAB Growth Management Model (GMM) has been developed which is based on fundamental management and organizational theories and leadership/management models (1) (7) (8). The basic hypotheses of the IAB GMM state that: 1.) IAB Outcomes are a function of IAB Managerial Proficiency, 2.) IAB Outcomes are defined as the number and quality of “best practices” conducted by an IAB (2), 3.) Managerial Proficiency represents the IAB Organizational Structure and Staffing, the IAB Planning Systems, and the IAB Quality Systems; and 4.) an increase in IAB Outcomes or quality of IAB Outcomes necessitates an increase in IAB Managerial Proficiency. The primary goal of this paper is to enhance the Managerial Proficiency of an IAB which is attempting to increase or improve IAB Outcomes (best practices).

Purpose of an IAB

The sole purpose of any IAB is to add value to their associated academic program. An IAB has no legislative, administrative, or programmatic authority (3). The role of an IAB is *advisory*, exclusively. IAB members are volunteers who work cooperatively with the academic program and administration in an effort to share their expert knowledge of career-related tasks and professional competency requirements within the academic discipline. An IAB exists to *advise, assist, and support & advocate* for their associated academic program and the constituents of that program, as outlined below.

- **Advise** – IAB’s assess specific areas of the academic program. Suggestions designed to improve specific content areas could include: reviewing program goals and objectives, incorporating industry standards into the course material, and suggesting materials and equipment needed to update the laboratories. Suggestions should be presented in writing to the academic administrators of the program and the college.

- **Assist** – IAB’s assist both instructors and administrators with departmental activities. These activities could include: judging competitive skills events, setting up a scholarship program, or serving as a guest lecturer in the classroom.
- **Support & Advocate** – IAB’s are established to promote and market the academic program locally, regionally, and nationally. Promotion and marketing could include: talking to legislators, speaking for career and technical education at professional and community meetings, and arranging for publicity in the media.

Effective IAB’s understand the needs of the academic program and develop a plan of action to address the identified needs; set priorities for action (rather than trying to everything all at once); target specific IAB Outcomes (best practices) that have the greatest impact as assessed and evaluated through the benchmarking process; and have the proper balance of personnel and expertise on the IAB to successfully complete the work required.

The following section presents a brief overview of the IAB GMM. The model provides the fundamental theory needed to understand the relationship between IAB Outcomes and IAB Managerial Proficiency.

IAB Growth Management Model (GMM)

The IAB GMM, as illustrated in Figure 1 on the following page is based on fundamental management and organizational theories; the Leadership - Management Growth Model; and information collected from past participants of the ACCE IAB Events (1) (7) (8). The basic hypotheses of the IAB GMM state that:

- IAB Outcomes are a function of IAB Managerial Proficiency.
- IAB Outcomes are defined as the number and quality of best practices conducted by an IAB.
- Managerial Proficiency represents the IAB Organizational Structure and Staffing; the IAB Planning Systems; and the IAB Quality Systems.
- An increase in IAB Outcomes or quality of IAB Outcomes necessitates an increase in IAB Managerial Proficiency.

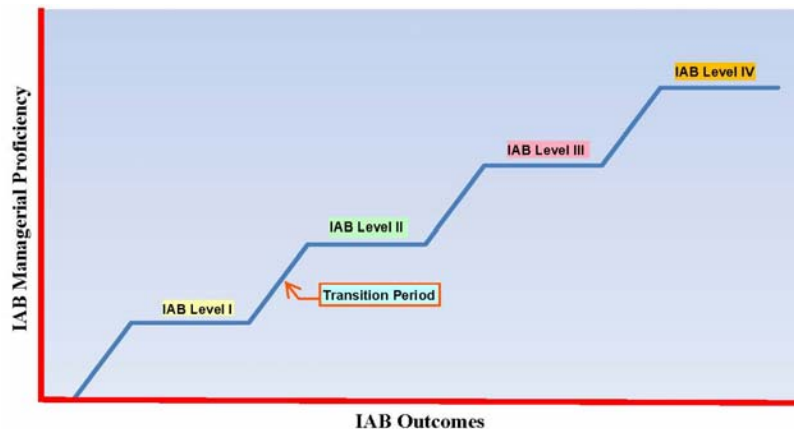


Figure 1 - IAB Growth Management Model

Within the model, the vertical axis represents IAB Managerial Proficiency. The horizontal axis relates to IAB Outcomes. The model is based upon the premise that the IAB Managerial Proficiency required is a function of the IAB Outcomes desired. The IAB Managerial Proficiency vs. IAB Outcomes relationship is represented by a series of management plateau levels linked by transition periods. The four management plateaus (IAB Level I to IAB Level IV) are associated with the IAB Outcomes that can be achieved at each level of IAB Managerial Proficiency. These levels or plateaus are “stability zones” where the IAB Outcomes matches the IAB Managerial Proficiency. Between each level are transition periods when an IAB makes a conscious effort to move to a higher level. Modifications to the current form of IAB Managerial Proficiency must be identified and administered when considering increasing the number or quality of IAB Outcomes.

Transition periods occur when an IAB makes a conscious decision to increase or enhance IAB Outcomes which necessitates an increase in IAB Managerial Proficiency. This increase is the result of an iterative process of learning through personal experience and the adoption of the next level of management systems practices (which is the basic purpose of this paper). A transition period often causes anxiety and frustration for the individuals within the IAB and sometimes within the academic program, as in the case of senior faculty who were instrumental in establishing and initially leading the IAB. They may feel a sense of abandonment once the IAB reaches a level of maturity and self-autonomy. Transition periods can result in interpersonal conflicts because of new expectations and higher anticipated efficiencies. During the transition periods, IAB members are typically being asked to step out of their personal “comfort zones” and meet new challenges. It is important to note that a transition period is probably the most critical time for an IAB. The IAB GMM is, in reality, a *business model* that provides the fundamental theory for understanding the magnitude and critical importance of effective IAB Managerial Proficiency which is presented in the following sections.

IAB Managerial Proficiency

The primary components of IAB Managerial Proficiency (as shown in Figure 2) are defined as: 1.) IAB Organizational Structure and Staffing; 2.) IAB Planning Systems; 3.) IAB Quality Systems. This illustration represents a hierarchy for creating or reorganizing an IAB.

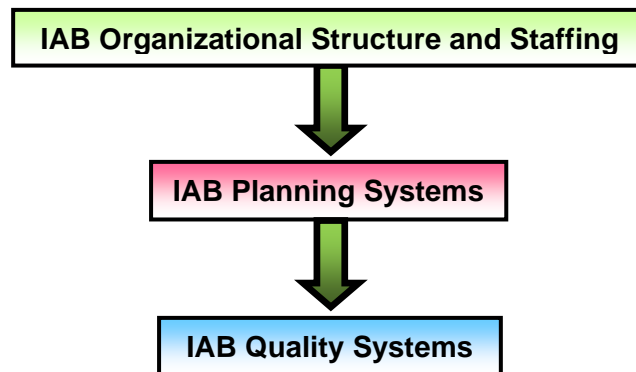


Figure 2 - Components of the IAB Managerial Proficiency Hierarchy

IAB Managerial Proficiency focuses on the processes required to operate an IAB more efficiently with moderate increases in the energy expended. An increase in Managerial Proficiency is limited only by the level of effort, training, innovation, and expertise of the membership of the IAB. IAB Managerial Proficiency is dictated by the structure and systems used by an IAB which must be defined in very specific terms in order to provide a means of assuring consistency and continuity.

All IAB's are similar, but each IAB is unique, so the organizational structure and general operating procedures should be developed by the IAB members and are typically documented in the IAB Bylaws or the IAB Operating Manual. The following sections of this paper discuss the IAB Organizational Structure and Staffing, the IAB Planning Systems, and the IAB Quality Systems, respectively.

IAB Organizational Structure and Staffing

The organizational structure and staffing of an IAB provides the foundation for developing the planning and quality systems used by an IAB. Some of the key points that need to be addressed, as related to IAB Organizational Structure and Staffing, are listed below:

- Work under a written set of Bylaws which are periodically reviewed and amended.
- Recruit, select, and place (on a committee or task force) "active" IAB members.
- Deliver high-impact IAB meetings.
- Have well-defined lines of responsibility and authority (task allocation, coordination, communication, and follow-through).
- Operate under a formal organizational structure which includes committees, subcommittees, and/or task forces with clearly defined responsibilities and deliverables.

General IAB Guidelines (4)

- **Size of the Committee**

Effective IAB's are large enough to reflect the diversity of the community and provide a cross-section of the expertise required to effectively advise the academic program. On the other hand, the IAB needs to be small enough to manage effectively. Some IAB's are all inclusive, but have an Executive Committee that manages the operations. It is suggested that an IAB consist of a minimum of ten (10) members, since membership less than that number may have limited perspectives, inadequate information on the career fields, and too little diversity.

- **Term of Service**

A rotational, three-year term of service allows for both continuity and change. One-third of the total membership changes each year. To establish this rotation with a new committee, the members draw for one-year, two-year or three-year terms, with one-third of the committee in each category. Term limits may be imposed with a minimum leave of absence specified between terms.

- Selection of Members

Members may be appointed (by the academic program administrator) or elected (by the IAB membership). IAB membership should be representative of the general program service area. Members could include the following groups:

- Industry representatives (construction, engineering, architecture, etc.) who may, or may not, be alumni of the academic program.
- Program administrators and faculty (ex-officio members).
- Current and former students of the academic program.
- Parents of current students.

It is of utmost importance that the membership of the IAB be gender balanced and include representatives of special populations (minority groups).

- Attributes of IAB Members (5) (6)

Interest: Motivated persons who express a sincere interest in the academic program and the responsibilities of service. Members must be willing to devote the attention and energy required.

Availability: Members are expected to attend all IAB meetings, work on projects, and work in the industry and community on behalf of the academic program. It is important that the place of employment of an IAB member is supportive of their involvement in the IAB.

Character: IAB members must have a high level of respect within the industry and the community. Exceptional reputations enhance the standing of the IAB and the academic program.

Skill and Experience: Members must be knowledgeable about: 1.) the target career occupations and opportunities for the students of the academic program; 2.) the educational requirements of the academic program; and 3.) the standards of the accrediting organization.

IAB Planning Systems

The purpose of IAB Planning Systems is to increase the likelihood that mission and objectives of the IAB will be accomplished. IAB Planning Systems help to bridge the gap between “where we are and where we want to go.” The two primary IAB Planning Systems are 1.) *Strategic Planning* and 2.) *Plan of Work*.

The initial stages of developing a strategic plan may use a tool commonly employed in business, industry, and academia, namely, a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by an organization. However, within the structure of an IAB, it is recommended that IAB Benchmarking be used in lieu of a SWOT analysis and be conducted prior to developing a strategic plan. The process of IAB Benchmarking is discussed in the *IAB Quality Systems* presented later in this paper.

IAB Strategic Planning

When you don't know where you want to go than any road will do. This is certainly true of an IAB when attempting to achieve its goals and objectives. Once a strategic plan is in place the annual process of reviewing, revising and updating the strategic plan becomes, not only much easier, but very beneficial. Strategic planning provides IAB members with a sense of direction and satisfaction about the goals and objectives with an assurance of avoiding at least some unnecessary detours. Strategic planning is like creating a map for an exciting journey. A map helps to stay on course, but it isn't so stringent that you can't deviate from the plan. The strategic plan is used as a guide to make decisions, explore new opportunities, and avoid time-wasting distractions. The following discussion focuses on the components of a strategic plan.

Mission, Vision, and Objectives

The mission statement is a short and descriptive text that expresses the purpose of an IAB. The mission statement is a declaration of why an IAB exists and could be included in the header of the IAB meeting agendas and/or other IAB documents.

The vision statement is the IAB's future direction for a set time period (i.e., for five years).

Objectives are specific, quantifiable, measurable and time-bounded. Objectives need to be ambitious, but realistic. Objectives can be short-term or long-term. Short-term objectives fall within a one to two-year time horizon. They state "*the what,*" "*the when,*" and "*the who.*" Long-term objectives span a time frame of three to five years. They focus on what needs to happen in order to achieve the mission and vision of an IAB.

Action Plans

For *each* objective, an action plan needs to be created in order to achieve the desired outcome. The action plans should offer a step-by-step process that defines the milestones, the time needed to reach the milestones, and what resources are needed to reach the milestones. A plan should be in place to acquire additional resources, if necessary. Review the objectives and action plans and determine if they are realistic and are aligned with the IAB mission and vision.

The action plans contain the desired results (what will happen or what benefit will occur); potential obstacles and barriers (what might stand in the way or prevent progress); and support (what resources, people, tools are required and available to meet each objective). The action plans must explain how the plan will be implemented, the responsible parties, the deliverables, and the deadlines.

Communicating the Strategic Plan

The strategic plan needs to be communicated to all affected parties. The strategic plan may be disseminated in whole or in part, as appropriate. The strategic plan can be distributed in printed or electronic format. Many IAB's conduct meetings which focus solely on strategic planning.

Monitoring, Assessment, and Evaluation

Implementing a strategic plan requires ongoing review and adjustment. Establish when and how the plan will be reviewed, as well as, who will conduct the reviews. Establish methods to adjust the strategic plan to assure that critical objectives are met. Consider if certain objectives need to be modified or additional objectives added or deleted, dependent on internal and external changes. Assessment and evaluation, as well as, the IAB Plan of Work will be discussed in more detail later in this paper; however, a progress review which is a component of strategic planning should be completed periodically to determine:

- The extent to which the IAB is accomplishing the Plan of Work.
- The extent to which the recommendations and actions have strengthened and improved the academic program and the students of the academic program.
- Future directions, functions, and activities for the IAB.

Assign Responsibilities

The entire IAB should discuss the strategic plan and each action plan so that there is a very clear understanding of the plan and each associated task. Individual members should be assigned to the tasks and have a well-defined realization of what is expected and when. Timelines allow the individuals assigned to a given task to plan for its completion with a specific deadline and interim status reports. Status reports should be presented at the IAB meetings.

Recommendations

Recommendations are the desired outcomes for any action item. They should be recorded in the minutes and approved by consensus or majority vote. Recommendations should be brief, clear and concise. Some recommendations may need to be preceded by a rationale which includes why such recommended changes are needed and how they would be beneficial to the IAB or the academic program. The number of recommendations should be kept to a minimum and should be submitted in writing to the IAB and the academic administrator for review and consideration, since all IAB recommendations are advisory in nature.

IAB Plan of Work

The IAB Plan of Work involves the determination of IAB Outcomes, i.e., best practices as introduced in the IAB GMM. The Plan of Work focuses on the number of best practices conducted by an IAB and the parties responsible for each best practice. The quality aspects of the Plan of Work are discussed in the *IAB Quality Systems* section of this paper.

When developing a Plan of Work, several issues need to be kept in mind: the needs of the academic program, the accreditation standards, the resources of the IAB, and the time required to accomplish each IAB Outcome. The Plan of Work should also establish the priority of each IAB Outcome. The initial stage of developing a Plan of Work simply lists the IAB Outcomes (best practices).

Based on the information collected from the IAB Event participants, best practices can be categorized into the following four (4) IAB Outcome classifications:

- *IAB Operating Procedures.*
- *IAB Department and Curricula Involvement.*
- *IAB Industry Awareness and Recognition.*
- *IAB Funding Mechanisms and Deliverables.*

The best practices associated with each of these four (4) classifications are listed on the following two pages. It must be noted that several best practices have been added since the 2014 IAB Event.

IAB Operating Procedures

- Operate under a written set of periodically reviewed and updated Bylaws
- Develop an IAB strategic plan, associated action plans, and IAB Plan of Work
- Organize and deliver regularly scheduled “high-impact” meetings with recorded minutes
- Recruit “active” IAB members
- Post activities on the website of the academic program (Bylaws, officers, activities, etc.)
- Attend an ACCE IAB Event
- Become a member of ACCE
- Participate in ACCE Visiting Team Training
- Participate as a member of ACCE Visiting Teams

IAB Program and Curricula Involvement

- Review program goals and objectives (compare program accomplishments with program goals and objectives)
- Recommend employability skills to be included in the curriculum (oral communication, writing, organizational skills, etc.)
- Serve on program curriculum review committees (review instructional materials for technical accuracy)
- Compare program content with actual job tasks and responsibilities
- Serve as class/course reviewers (review syllabus, observe class instruction, and provide an assessment & evaluation)
- Meet with graduating seniors to discuss the academic program
- Evaluate quantity and quality of graduates and job placements

- Active participation in the academic program's capstone course
- Serve as classroom guest lecturers
- Serve as adjunct faculty (course instructors)
- Provide skilled technicians to supplement instructor's experience
- Assist in obtaining instructional materials (suggest recommended equipment and supplies)
- Provide "real-world" projects (for use in courses)
- Provide in-service activities for course instructors concerning current business/industry methods and practices
- Provide opportunities for "site visits" and "field trips" to construction operations
- Provide equipment and facilities for specialized training needs
- Serve on the search committees for academic administrators and faculty
- Serve as a reviewer for the ACCE Self-Study (accreditation report)
- Meet with the ACCE Visiting Team (during the accreditation site visit)
- Support student organizations (AGC, ASC, NAHB, CMA, etc.)
- Serve as coaches and reviewers for student competition teams and events

IAB Industry Awareness and Recognition

- Assist in recruiting potential instructors
- Assist in recruiting potential students
- Provide opportunities for student internships (and job shadowing)
- Sponsor or conduct leadership development seminars or workshops (for faculty and students)
- Assist in developing and delivering a marketing plan for the academic program
- Participate in career fairs and employment expositions
- Support and organize employer/student seminars and presentations
- Notify instructors of job openings for students
- Assist students in developing interview skills
- Assist in developing competitive skills events
- Sponsor or collect contributions of equipment and supplies for the skills events
- Judge competitive skills events
- Sponsor student organization activities
- Arrange for display space to promote student organizations and special events at professional or trade shows and place of employment
- Coordinate involvement with industry associations and organizations (ACE Mentor Program, AGC, NAHB, ABC, etc.) to create awareness among incoming students
- Meet regularly (i.e., lunch) with academic administrators (chair, dean, provost, and president)
- Communicate with legislators regarding academic program needs
- Promote tours for legislators
- Promote and support legislation for academic education and career advancement
- Sponsor awards (for outstanding students, faculty, and industry members)
- Establish events to recognize outstanding students, teachers, and community leaders
- Provide opportunities for faculty internships (at worksites)
- Employ graduates of the academic program
- Sponsor social events (for students and/or faculty)
- Create an IAB newsletter
- Promote coverage of the academic program in the media (newspaper, magazines, etc.)

IAB Funding Mechanisms and Deliverables

- Establish an IAB dues structure, if possible (in some political jurisdictions this is not allowed)
- Create internal development programs (internal fund raising)
- Sponsor student/department activities (award luncheons, banquets, etc.)

- Sponsor student scholarships (non-endowed)
- Spearhead and support efforts to establish endowments (for scholarships and faculty positions)
- Support the research efforts of the academic program (financially and administratively)
- Obtain contributions to support select activities of the academic program

Once the Plan of Work has been established and the best practices have been identified, responsible parties are assigned to each best practice. Each best practice must convey a very clear message concerning the tasks required, the desired results (deliverables), the deadlines (due dates), the assessment plan, the evaluation plan, and a timeframe for any necessary corrective actions. Several of these items are discussed in IAB Quality Systems.

IAB Quality Systems

Prior to a discussion of *IAB Quality Systems*, some definitions are provided in order to clarify the terminology.

Assessment - Assessment is one or more processes that identify, collect, and format data in order to evaluate the quality of IAB Outcomes (i.e., best practices).

Evaluation - Evaluation is one or more processes for interpreting the assessment data and other evidence accumulated through assessment processes. Evaluation determines the extent to which IAB Outcomes are being achieved from a quality perspective.

Corrective Action - Corrective Action identifies and administers the actions dictated by the evaluation of IAB Outcomes to address the root causes of problems or concerns in order to prevent their occurrence (preventive action) or recurrence.

IAB Quality Systems consist of the following three (3) measures:

Self-Assessing and Evaluating IAB Performance.

Quality of IAB Outcomes (best practices).

IAB Benchmarking.

Self-Assessing and Evaluating IAB Performance is initially presented since it offers a streamlined approach to the process of assessing the quality of IAB performance. It is not as detailed or rigorous as the techniques and methods required in determining the *Quality of IAB Outcomes* or *IAB Benchmarking*, but it provides a stepping stone for further discussion and action. *IAB Benchmarking* is the final component of the IAB Quality Systems since it requires the results of the assessment and evaluation derived from the *Quality of IAB Outcomes*.

Self-Assessing and Evaluating IAB Performance

Ensuring organizational accountability is a key role for any IAB. On behalf of the constituents of the academic program, an IAB must ensure that organizational resources are effectively used. Through periodic performance assessments and evaluations an IAB can identify ways to enhance IAB operations and services to the academic program. A number of tools (which can be found on-line) are available to help nonprofit organizations achieve greater clarity about their own effectiveness. Most are designed as generic self-assessment questionnaires or surveys.

An IAB assessment and evaluation serves many purposes, some internal to the IAB and some in relation to the academic program. A systematic assessment process can:

- Give individual IAB members an opportunity to reflect on their individual and collective responsibilities.
- Identify different perceptions and opinions among IAB members.
- Point to questions that need attention.
- Serve as a springboard for IAB improvements.
- Increase the level of IAB teamwork.
- Provide an opportunity for clarifying mutual IAB expectations.
- Provide accountability.
- Provide credibility with the academic program, potential funding agencies, accreditation organizations, and other external audiences.

An IAB assessment and evaluation must be legitimate in the eyes of IAB members. The opinions of outsiders can be somewhat discounted, but what an IAB says about itself must be taken seriously. A self-assessment is more likely to lead to changes in the way an IAB operates. However, a self-assessment does not necessarily exclude input from other sources. The IAB may choose to ask the academic administrator or faculty to also provide feedback.

A full-scale assessment may be desirable only once every two or three years with interim assessments conducted to monitor progress on the Plan of Work or action items. The time at which a full-scale self-assessment may be particularly useful include:

- At the outset of a strategic planning process.
- In preparation of a major expansion of IAB programs or capital campaigns.
- When there is a sense of low energy, high turnover, or uncertainty about IAB member responsibilities.
- After a financial or executive leadership crisis.

Self-Assessing and Evaluating involves a number of steps, which include:

- Decide to conduct the assessment and evaluation. This must be a collective decision.
- Assign the responsibility for making the necessary arrangements to a small task force or to the IAB Executive Committee.
- Decide whether to use a standard instrument designed for “board” evaluations, design a process from scratch, or use the IAB Self-Assessment, as presented in Table 1 below.
- Distribute the assessment tool and ask IAB members to complete and return the questionnaire to the designated person.
- Compile and document the responses in a written report that is distributed to IAB members.
- Discuss and evaluate the results of the self-assessment, perhaps in a closed session, and identify actions that will lead to improved IAB performance.

Self-Assessing and Evaluating IAB Performance, when properly conducted and with corrective actions can have a profound impact upon an IAB. It can provide the impetus to move an IAB forward. It can also bring IAB members closer together and help break down barriers, establish camaraderie, and open-up dialogue. Self-Assessment and Evaluation may be the best method in

which to reach the root of governance problems and find lasting solutions that will make for a more dynamic and effective IAB. Table 1 - IAB Self-Assessment provides a tool for determining the performance of an IAB. This table is also available on the ACCE website in Word format.

Table 1 - IAB Self-Assessment

IAB SELF-ASSESSMENT		
Assessment Item	Response	
The IAB held at least two meetings during the calendar or academic year	Yes	No
IAB members are notified of meetings in a timely manner.	Yes	No
The IAB agendas are prepared and distributed in advance of each meeting	Yes	No
The IAB delivered high-impact meetings	Yes	No
Percentage of IAB members who attended all meetings this year (from the IAB Secretary)	Percent	
The IAB meeting minutes are maintained as a permanent record and are distributed to the IAB members and appropriate administrators	Yes	No
The IAB elects officers on a regular systematic basis (yearly)	Yes	No
The IAB reports formally to the academic administrator	Yes	No
The IAB recruits “active” members	Yes	No
The IAB membership is diverse in gender and ethnicity, and is composed of individuals who represent a broad cross-section of the construction industry	Yes	No
IAB members are publicly recognized for their service	Yes	No
IAB members are aware of the IAB mission	Yes	No
The IAB utilizes up-to-date Bylaws to govern its operations	Yes	No
The IAB has an up-to-date Strategic Plan	Yes	No
The IAB develops and delivers an annual Plan of Work	Yes	No
The IAB uses Quality Systems to assess and evaluate <i>all</i> of their services and programs	Yes	No
The IAB takes corrective actions to address problems and deficiencies	Yes	No
IAB members are knowledgeable about accreditation standards	Yes	No
IAB members are familiar with the curriculum of the academic program	Yes	No
The IAB has reviewed the current academic program curriculum to determine if it is meeting the needs of the students and the employment needs of business and industry	Yes	No
The IAB reviews outcome data from the program, including: student competencies, placement rates, etc.	Yes	No
The IAB promotes and advocates for the academic program	Yes	No

The IAB Self-Assessment could be completed individually or collectively at an IAB meeting. It is recommended that the IAB Self-Assessment be completed individually and anonymously. The risk of completing the assessment collectively at an IAB meeting is that the assessment of an individual member may be influenced by peer pressure or the impression of not being a team player.

An individual assessment could be completed using an electronic survey from unbiased parties, such as, the academic program administration and staff. The academic administrator or staff could send the survey as an attachment, collect the responses, and summarize the results (removing any identifiers) and send the results electronically to all IAB members prior to the

meeting. At the meeting, the IAB members could evaluate the responses and set in place a plan of corrective action to address concerns and problem areas. Within the IAB Self-Assessment table there is no space provided for a “not sure” response. If an individual is “not sure” of a response to any assessment item, that is a “red flag” indicator to that individual and to the collective membership of the IAB.

Once an IAB has reached a level of maturity and competency the *Quality of IAB Outcomes (best practices)* can be assessed and evaluated, as outlined in the following section.

Quality of IAB Outcomes (best practices)

Determining answers and solutions to questions related to the IAB or the academic program is the most important reason to conduct assessment and evaluation and then take corrective action. It should be noted that corrective action includes acknowledging the outstanding efforts of individual members, as well as, the outstanding best practices of the entire IAB. Assessment and Evaluation can provide an IAB with the information and evidence which can assist in making data-based decisions.

As detailed in the Plan of Work (and subsequent action plans), the IAB Outcomes, i.e., best practices are identified and assigned to designated parties. Each best practice must have established standards of expected performance. Data must be collected to measure each of the best practices. Evaluation of the data identifies unacceptable variance between the expected and the actual performance. The data must be credible, applicable to decision making, and relevant.

The overall process of determining the *Quality of IAB Outcomes* requires that each identified best practice must have associated assessment methods using both direct and indirect measures. Direct data sources include written performance reviews and actual observations. Indirect data sources include surveys and opinions polls.

Each IAB is unique and thus uses different tools, methods, and measurements to assess and evaluate their best practices. Therefore, there is not a “one-size fits all” technique that applies to assessment and evaluation. So, for each best practice, how does an IAB identify the assessment tools and evaluation techniques needed? For some of the best practices, such as *meet with the ACCE Visiting Team (during the accreditation site visit)*, this is a rather easy one to assess (yes or no), but it gets a bit more complicated when you consider the following question, were the IAB members properly prepared for the ACCE Visiting Team meeting? Once again, corrective action may need to be taken.

For other best practices the academic administrator, faculty, and/or academic institution can provide assistance since they are typically well versed in assessment and evaluation and probably have already collected some of the assessment data. IAB’s are strongly encouraged to work with these individuals to assist in collecting assessment data, evaluating performance of IAB best practices, and developing corrective actions for all identified best practices.

IAB Benchmarking

The IAB Benchmarking process cannot be properly accomplished until the *Quality of IAB Outcomes (best practices)* has been completed. IAB Benchmarking is part of the initial Strategic Planning process of an IAB, but is actually an *IAB Quality System*. The benchmarking process begins by determining the IAB Outcomes (best practices) which are identified on the IAB Plan of Work. Benchmarking is actually an extension of the Plan of Work. An associated measure of quality is determined for each best practice (as listed on pages 18 and 19) as determined from the process related to the *Quality of IAB Outcomes*.

Benchmarking requires that a numerical measure of quality (i.e., quality “ranking”) is determined for each identified best practice using the following scale:

- 4 - Our IAB really excels at this best practice.
- 3 - Our IAB does pretty well for this best practice, but we could use some improvement.
- 2 - Our IAB does OK with this best practice, but we need to do a much better job.
- 1 - Our IAB pays lip service to this best practice and vast improvement is needed.

Once each identified best practice has been given a “ranking” the mathematics of determining the “level” of the IAB can be calculated. A simple summation of the quality ratings provides a total quality score for the IAB Outcomes.

Since there are a total of 63 listed best practices, the maximum total quality score is 252 (if all 63 best practices were rated at a 4). A Level I IAB has a quality rating of 0-63 (0%-25%). A Level II IAB has a quality rating of 64-126 (26%-50%). A Level III IAB has a quality rating of 127-189 (51%-75%). A Level IV IAB has a quality rating of 190-252 (76%-100%).

An auto-sum Excel spreadsheet is available on the ACCE website that can be used for IAB Benchmarking. The spreadsheet contains all of the best practices listed on pages 18 and 19 and is organized using the IAB Outcome classifications (IAB Operating Procedures, IAB Department and Curricula Involvement, IAB Industry Awareness and Recognition, and IAB Funding Mechanisms and Deliverables).

Summary

This paper attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of the overall duties, responsibilities, and operational procedures of an IAB with a focus on Managerial Proficiency. The fundamental tenet for the guidelines, suggestions, and recommendations presented in this paper is that, “*IAB Outcomes (best practices) are a function of IAB Managerial Proficiency.*” When an IAB makes a conscious effort to increase the number of IAB Outcomes or the quality of IAB Outcomes (i.e., moving to a higher level) an increase in IAB Managerial Proficiency is required.

Managerial Proficiency is an all-inclusive term which is defined as the 1.) IAB Organizational Structure and Staffing; 2.) IAB Planning Systems; and 3.) IAB Quality Systems. They are presented in a sequential format within this paper, but in practice, they are totally interrelated and

do not work as independent components. By now, it must be apparent that all three systems need to be in place and functioning properly in order to truly develop a “High-Impact” IAB.

So, where does an IAB begin? Start by conducting an IAB Self-Assessment. Then, review your IAB Organizational Structure and Staffing, since this is truly the keystone function of the operation and management of an IAB and lays the foundation for the planning and quality systems. Then, develop an IAB Strategic Plan (including the Benchmarking process) and an associated IAB Plan of Work. Establish a priority list of which best practices are the top priorities of the IAB and determine the best ways in which to develop and deliver these best practices. In association with this effort, define the quality systems (assessment and evaluation) that will be used for each of the top priority best practices. Once these systems are in place and working properly, move to the next highest priority best practices and do likewise. Then proceed down the priority list until all IAB best practices can be defined as “high-impact” and have associated quality systems. This process will take time, perhaps several years, so realistic expectations concerning the level of effort, expertise of the IAB, and resources of the IAB and the academic program need to be examined. The term “High-Impact” IAB necessitates that the “*bar is set*” very high, indeed.

A comprehensive examination of IAB Managerial Proficiency by an IAB is not trivial and can be time consuming. It may appear to be overwhelming to certain IAB members, which may lead to a sense of frustration and perhaps disassociation. But, do not be discouraged. The benefits gained from the guidelines, suggestions, and processes described in this paper can lead to meaningful results and greatly improve the overall performance of an IAB.

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