



MEMORANDUM

TO: SACSCOC Membership

FROM: Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, President

DATE: January 14, 2022

SUBJECT: Update from the SACSCOC Annual Meeting/Board Meeting

Happy New Year! I hope you were able to get some much-deserved rest during the holidays and that you and your family stayed healthy and safe. This past year and a half have indeed been trying times for us all, but we've managed to rise to the occasion and continue to provide the high-quality programs and services for which we are known.

I am writing today to share information from the SACSCOC Annual Meeting and SACSCOC Board of Trustees Meeting that were held this past December, and some tidbits of information for your use and information. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

GRANT

Through the generous support from a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Grant, and a partnership with the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), SACSCOC established the Insight Data Equity Academy (IDEA) that offers technical support and a financial grant to provide institutions with access to the National Student Clearinghouse's student-level data analysis platform to improve student achievement. If you are interested in learning more about the SACSCOC IDEA Initiative, please email Dr. Godfrey Fuji Noe, Coordinator of Training and Research, at gnoe@sacscoc.org.

PRINCIPLES REVIEW COMMITTEE

An *ad hoc* Committee to review the *Principles of Accreditation* was established. In addition to considering several tweaks to the current *Principles* that have been brought to our attention, there are two new areas this Committee will be asked to consider: (1) a new standard on shared governance or an expansion of our standard on Academic Governance, and (2) how to encourage an institution to consider diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of its endeavors. If there are any specific areas you'd like to see considered, be sure and watch for the invitation to provide feedback to the Committee.

The Committee members invited are:

Kim Hall, Executive Council Member, Chair
Christy Montgomery, AL
Elizabeth Bejar, FL
Ivan Allen, GA
Bill Lucky, KY
Linda Carroll, LA
Maurice Eftink, MS

Harold Martin, NC
Al Panu, SC
Karen Weddle-West, TN
William Serrata, TX
Johnathan Alger, VA

BUDGET

Once again, SACSCOC had a clean audit. We are in line with spending for the current year, and we made budget for the SACSCOC Annual Meeting; however, the SACSCOC Board approved a withdrawal from our Investment Account to pay for hotel cancellation fees incurred as a result of moving the Annual Meeting to a virtual format. The total is not expected to exceed \$1.3 million.

SMALL COLLEGE INITIATIVE

The 2022 Small College Initiative will focus on changes to the Substantive Change Policy. A major redraft of the policy was approved and implemented in 2020 due in part to new federal requirements that emanated from a negotiated rulemaking process. The meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2022.

POLICIES

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees approved clarification language to the [Arbitration of Adverse Actions](#) policy that clarifies that current members of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees are not eligible to serve as Arbitrators and includes language permitting electronic submission of the required payment for the process. Additionally, clarifications to the [Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#) were presented for information, and modifications were made to the following policies: [Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level](#), [The Fifth-Year Interim Report](#), [Merger/Consolidation, Acquisition, Change of Ownership, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status](#), and “Ethical Obligations of SACSCOC Staff.”

SACSCOC STAFF RETIREMENTS

In case you haven't heard, Dr. Steve Sheeley, Senior Vice President, is retiring in January, and Vice Presidents Drs. John Hardt and Charles Taylor are retiring in February 2022. We have successfully hired their successors and they are Drs. Sandra Jordan (former Chancellor, University of South Carolina – Aiken, Aiken, SC), Geoffrey Klein (former Vice Provost for Research, Graduate Studies, and Assessment, Christopher Newport University, Newport News, VA), and Lynne Crosby (former Senior Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN). Please join me in wishing our retirees success in their future endeavors and in welcoming their successors to the staff.

Additionally, my Executive Assistant, Mrs. Rita Bell, will be retiring at the end of January after 44 years of service to the Commission. Needless to say, we're all having difficulty with that transition but know it's time for her to go have some personal fun. We are still looking for her successor.

SPRING ON-SITE COMMITTEES

We are making plans for the On-Site Committees for spring 2022 to be held on each campus going through that part of the Reaffirmation process; however, if the Omicron variant (or any new variant) continues to cause challenges, we will revert to the virtual visits. I truly appreciate your flexibility in scheduling these visits.

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

Please remember that ALL substantive changes are to be submitted to Dr. Kevin Sighter, Director of Substantive Change, and NOT to the President's Office.

OFF-CAMPUS INSTRUCTIONAL SITE APPROVAL BY EXTENSIVE REVIEW

Institutions planning to submit a prospectus for approval of new off-campus instructional sites by extensive review are reminded that the **prospectus content, review criteria, and review process are substantially different** than those required before the 2020 *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* revision. Resources to help you prepare the prospectus are available on the SACSCOC [substantive change webpage](#):

- the substantive change policy, which includes a “What to submit” list of *required* content for an extensive review prospectus,
- an on-demand webinar, “Off-campus Instructional Site Approvals,” and
- a new on-demand webinar, “Preparing an Off-campus Instructional Site Prospectus” to be available the week of January 17.

STANDARD 14.1

Institutions should note that recent changes in USDE regulations necessitated a revision of the statements used by either member or candidate institutions to represent their accreditation status with SACSCOC. That change was made in the SACSCOC policy, *Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure* (<https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/InstitutionalObligationsPublicDisclosure.pdf>). Please make any necessary changes to ensure your institution’s compliance

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I wish you a healthy and safe academic year.