

SACS COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Lowman Student Center, Room 307
Meetings of December 14, 2006, 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Muehsam (Chair), Adams, Ashorn, Caso, Cushman, Eglsaer, Gilcrease, Holder, Lewis, May, Morris, Mullings, Nichter, Pruitt, Ringo, Smith, Tayebi, and Truax

1. Dr. Muehsam welcomed and thanked the committee members for their attendance.
2. Minutes of December 4, 2006 meeting
Action: Motion for approval by Ashorn, second by Smith; passed.
3. Dr. Muehsam reminded the committee of the upcoming SACS Retreat to be held January 9, 2007, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Dr. Mullings informed the committee that the Texas Room in the Criminal Justice Center had been reserved. The committee discussed whether or not the retreat should include a working lunch. It was determined that members would need a short break and that a lunch buffet could be catered by Aramark.
4. Dr. Muehsam identified a list of individuals from the University who attended the SACS annual meeting, stating that there was a large contingency. Several individuals in attendance at the SACS annual meeting were present and provided feedback to the committee with respect to lessons learned and/or important information gained. The following statements were made.
 - Integrity is key. Be honest about what criteria have been met. Document actions taken to correct deficiencies.
 - Don't ignore older assessment measures/approaches.
 - Focus must always be on how the University helps students learn.
 - Don't get bogged down in the process. Despite the "horror stories," universities experiencing difficulties or hurdles still "passed."
 - The SACS review is an evolving process. Be concise, yet be thorough.
 - Connect the seams. Many standards relate to one another. Show this connection within the report.
 - Many universities (80%) get "dinged" on faculty credentials. The documentation required is a tremendous amount of work. Supporting text must be clear. Allow the reader to stop reading early. More detail can be provided following a concise, to-the-point statement.
 - Faculty credential documentation must be very specific. Faculty must have documented expertise in the particular course topic.
 - Documentation for some international faculty is difficult as many international universities' names change. It is our responsibility to prove we have the appropriate documentation.
 - Report writers must not work in silos.
 - Student learning outcomes must have external validity.
 - Although some requirements are being moved from the standards to a handbook, don't be fooled; reviewers will still be looking for this information.
 - The report should address variations in degrees, including those degrees taught at multiple locations or via distance education. The report should document how the University ensures that the appropriate resources are made available to all students.
 - It's not only important that the University documents how resources are made available, but it is also important to document that students actually receive the resources.

- Many universities create a sub-committee composed of the SACS liaison, a main writer, a main editor, and a technology representative. This committee should be formed earlier rather than later.
 - The SACS review process is reasonable. Connect the dots and you will be fine.
 - We should keep in mind that this process should be a catalyst for other positive things.
5. Dr. Muehsam informed the committee that the SACS reviewers have the option of requesting a hard copy of the Compliance Report. The committee should keep this in mind when creating the online document. It was suggested that the web version be created utilizing “printer friendly” links.
 6. Dr. Muehsam reported to the committee that the proposed changes to the SACS Principles of Accreditation were discussed and voted on by the member institutions. Most proposed changes passed, while a select few were remanded. A revised SACS Principles of Accreditation document reflecting these changes will be forthcoming.
 7. Dr. Muehsam informed the committee that in June 2007, the University will be invited to SACS in Atlanta. At this meeting, institutions are typically allowed to bring five individuals to include the President, the SACS liaison, the QEP Director, a member of the Leadership team, and a technology representative. Further details will be available in March 2007.
 8. Dr. Muehsam informed the committee that the new assessment tracking database will soon be available. The assessment database on Blackboard will be closed as soon as the new program is released to the University. A series of training sessions will be held to familiarize users with the new system. It was pointed out that these training sessions will concentrate on the technical usage of the system and should not replace training on the overall concept of assessment.
 9. A discussion took place on the importance of syllabi. During fall 2007 and spring 2008 all syllabi should be reviewed for accuracy, completeness, and overall quality of content.
 10. Dr. Muehsam informed the committee that SACS is now including on all on-site review teams a university CEO.
 11. Next Meeting: A SACS Retreat will be held January 9, 2007, in the Criminal Justice Center, Texas Room. At this retreat, members will compile a list of supporting documents for each standard. The committee will also look at standards that relate to or reference one another.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Somer Smith