

SACSCOC

July 7, 2015 Updates

This is an update regarding the recent June actions of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees and its Executive Council and also a description of other initiatives from your membership organization.

1. **2014 Annual Report.** The electronic and PDF versions of the *SACSCOC Annual Report for 2014* can be found on our website under Publications at <http://www.sacscoc.org/proceedings.asp>. We hope you find it informative and would appreciate any feedback regarding the publication and its new delivery format.

2. **Substantive Change Drive-In Workshops.** We will be offering two one-day drive-in Substantive Change Workshops this fall: October 27, 2015, at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, and November 9, 2015, at Greenville Technical College in Greenville, South Carolina. The workshop learning objectives, intended audience, and online registration are posted on our website under the Substantive Change tab and at <http://www.sacscoc.org/Substantivechangeworkshops.asp>. Dr. Kevin Sightler, Coordinator of Substantive Change, will be the facilitator. Registration is free and space is limited. Please pass this along to those at your institution who may benefit from the workshop.

In addition, please remember to submit documents to be reviewed for substantive change early enough to allow the reviewers time to read and respond to them. For changes to be implemented in August, documents should be received in our offices by late April; for changes to be implemented in January, documents should be received in our offices by late August.

3. **Results of the Transparency Survey to the Membership.** Thanks to all who completed a Transparency Survey sent by your respective state's representative on the SACSCOC Executive Council. The Survey solicited comments regarding how SACSCOC could best share with the public accreditation actions taken by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Of the 353 institutions completing the survey, 75% favored the continued use of the Commission's current disclosure statement, 18% favored the posting of the SACSCOC notification letter to institutions, and 7% had suggestions other than the two options. The Executive Council decided to continue with its current practice of public disclosure statements.

4. **Activities of SACSCOC Study Committees.** The Executive Council received reports from study committees that are working on recommended changes to policies and practices, most of which will be forwarded to the Principles Review Committee that will begin its work this fall. The reports included the following:

- Interpretation to Core Requirement 2.7.1 dealing with program length. The Council favored the direction of the small group of peers studying the issue of combined programs and program length. The current interpretation was withdrawn in favor of examining current standards addressing program length, expanding forms completed by institutions that could be used to

better describe the combined programs so that they would not go unnoticed during the time of an institution's decennial and fifth-year review, and the development of guidelines and good practices for the delivery of combined programs. The committee will have a report for the Council to review in December.

- Dual-credit programs with high schools. The Council requested that the Principles Review Committee explicitly consider dual credit programs when the Committee suggests modifications to the *Principles* and to look at other options for approaching the review of these programs.
- Standards and policies addressing consortial arrangements and contractual agreements. The Council endorsed the proposed direction of the study committee that includes providing (a) clearer definitions, (b) characteristics about institutional relationships that are important enough to require approval by SACSCOC and why, and (c) the impact of proposed policy changes on revisions to the *Principles of Accreditation*. The study committee is also examining implications regarding the transcribing of credit awarded through such institutional collaborations.
- Data received from the National Student Clearinghouse regarding completion data of SACSCOC institutions for 4-year and 6-year outcomes. This data will be forwarded to the Principles Review Committee to consider a possible standard for student completion.

5. **Review of the current structure of the 77-member SACSCOC Board of Trustees.** At its meeting in March, the Executive Council authorized a committee to review the current structure of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. This committee, composed of current and former board members, will conduct a study to ensure that the composition of the Board adequately represents the Commission's current membership and the way the Board functions.

6. **White paper on SACSCOC relationship with governance systems.** A committee of representatives from our region's public governing boards/systems met for the purpose of soliciting ways to inform system offices of the work of SACSCOC and to generate discussion about ways to support institutions against legislative intrusion and external pressures. A white paper will be developed and submitted to the Council and Board of Trustees at their meetings in December.

As mentioned above, the Principles Review Committee will convene to consider revisions that need to be made to our standards, taking into account feedback from you and also new mandates imposed resulting from the reauthorization of the Higher Education Amendments. In addition, we will revisit policies to ensure that all are updated in accord with new practices and requirements.

Decisions regarding changes to policies and the initial review of proposed revised standards rest with your elected Board of Trustees. This September you will receive an email from your respective state's Executive Council member soliciting nominations to this important 77-member representative body. I encourage you to respond to the call for nominations and give thought as to individuals who would best represent your institution on the Board.

As always, please let us know if our staff can be of assistance to you in any way or if you have questions regarding the above information.

Thanks,

Belle Wheelan