Greetings.  I hope you’re enjoying a relaxing summer and recharging for the challenges of the 2017-18 academic year.  I am writing to give you an update from the June Summer Meeting of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.  I hope you find the information valuable.

I.    There were several policies that were reviewed by the Executive Council and approved by the SACSCOC Board.  They can be found on the SACSCOC website and are:

      a.   “***Integrity and Institutional Obligations to SACSCOC,***” renaming the policy and adding the provision that the institution report *accurately to the public its status and relationship with the Commission*.

      b.   ***“Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure,”*** adding a section on an institution’s representation of status with SACSCOC and clarifying an institution’s accredited status.

      c.   ***“Advertising and Student Recruitment,”*** eliminating redundant statements with the current standards, and deleting passages regarding an institution’s representation which was moved to the policy noted above.

      d.   ***“Accreditation Procedures for Applicant Institutions,”*** modifying the effective date of initial accreditation to the date that the SACSCOC Board takes action.

      e.   ***“Unsolicited Information,”*** eliminating the provision that an institution report to SACSCOC any U.S. Department of Education investigation on sexual violence.  A requirement for Comprehensive Standard 3.11.2 (Institutional Environment) has been added to the Fifth-Year Interim Report and decennial Compliance Certification that an institution is required to report the status of any USDOE investigation on sexual violence.

II.   After more than 18 months of thorough review and discussion, the *Principles* Review Committee submitted its final report and modified changes to the *Principles of Accreditation* to the Executive Council which, in turn, recommended approval to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees at the June Summer Meeting.  The Board approved the report as presented.  I commend everyone who served on the Committee for their dedicated service and especially the extraordinary leadership provided by the committee chair, Dr. Sandra Jordan, Chancellor of the University of South Carolina-Aiken.

      In accordance with SACSCOC policy, the “Standing Rules: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, Executive Council, and the College Delegate Assembly,” “the proposed changes shall be forwarded in writing to the membership and posted on the SACSCOC website for other Commission constituents at least 30 days prior to the annual business session of the College Delegate Assembly”; however, I wanted the membership to receive this information before it was posted on our public website in early August.  Please see the attached.

      On August 1st, the proposed *Principles of Accreditation* will be posted on the SACSCOC website under the tab entitled, “Accrediting Standards.” We will also post the transitional information related to the submission of Fifth-Year Interim Reports, Reaffirmation Reports, and Candidacy Applications during the transitional period.  While I understand the anxiety of many about the proposed modifications, especially those directly affected by impending reports, there were only a few substantive changes made to the standards.  The most apparent differences will be the structure of the *Principles*, which are proposed to address 14 topical areas that resulted from input constituents provided during the Committee’s surveys throughout the process.  The structural changes reduce redundancy, while increasing the intentional flow of information in reports.  Core Requirements are identified within the topic areas.  Further, particular attention was paid to several standards that surveyed constituents most often identified as problematic.  Additionally, in an attempt to have the *Resource Manual* ready as soon as possible after the membership votes, recently retired Vice President Michael Johnson is working on updating the *Manual*.

      Though the SACSCOC Board of Trustees adopted the proposed *Principles* as presented by the Committee ***which included the QEP,*** there was opposition expressed by some of the Board members over retaining the QEP.  Therefore, a working group has been identified to examine the possibility of removing the QEP while still retaining the goal of increasing student achievement as the QEP was intended to do.

III.  The Board approved the budget for FY 2018.  There were no dues or fee increases included in the budget.

IV.  A report was given on our, then, upcoming appearance for continued recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education before the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI).   The Committee recommended a five (5) year renewal of recognition for SACSCOC (which is the most we could get) and without any additional reports.

V.   Lastly, the Executive Council conducted my performance evaluation and approved another year of my employment.  I am truly honored to work with each of you and look forward to another year of working to improve the quality of higher education within the Southern region.

I.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Belle Wheelan