Greetings Colleagues,

I am writing to you today with information concerning six items:

1.         Comments to be used with Legislators

2.         Request for access to your course directory

3.         Contest for a Seal of Accreditation to be used by institutions

4.         Student achievement data project

5.         Mailing of annual Membership Dues

6.         High School teachers teaching dual enrollment courses

1.      As you know, the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act will (hopefully) occur during this calendar year.  I have attached to this email some comments that have been prepared for your use when visiting or writing to members of the U.S. Congress.  Please feel free to share them with your constituents who may have contacts with members of Congress as well.  Your input is vital to what we do as this is Your Commission and you should have a voice in the discussions being made about how accreditation is conducted.

2.      Many of you have submitted a substantive change request for a significant departure from what you were currently offering.  We have found that often, a significant departure doesn’t exist.  Also, the Commission is increasingly being asked by federal agencies, including Homeland Security, for validation of your academic programs.  Therefore, in order to assist the Commission in responding effectively to your requests and those of external agencies, we need to have access to the list of your programs with their Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) codes.  Would you please provide me with the link to the list of your academic courses on your website?

3.      Many of you have asked to use the SACSCOC logo on your website and in other publications, but the Executive Council has determined the SACSCOC logo should be used only for official documents.  Instead, the Council has asked for a seal of accreditation to be developed that could be used by institutions on their websites, in catalogues, etc., to demonstrate that they are accredited by SACSCOC.

         Toward that end, I’m inviting you to ask your faculty, staff and students to send the Commission their ideas for a seal.  Directions are attached for your use and information.  Dr. Pamela Cravey, Coordinator of Communications and External Affairs at the Commission, can answer questions related to the contest.  She can be reached at pcravey@sacscoc.org.  You might remember that the SACSCOC logo was developed using this same approach.

4.      In response to directives from the U.S. Department of Education, we are beginning a project to review student achievement data at each of our institutions so that we can determine ways to increase completion rates at our institutions.  Under separate cover, you will be receiving from me a letter that describes the project, includes data we have received from your institution on your Annual Institutional  Profile, data from the U.S. Department of Education (IPEDS), and if you gave your permission for the Commission to use it, data from the National Student Clearinghouse.  Please read the letter carefully and provide responses to the questions asked by the date identified.  If you have questions about the project, please contact Dr. Alexei Matveev, Director of Training and Research at the Commission (amatveev@sacscoc.org).

         As you are aware, SACSCOC is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and is scheduled for review for continued recognition this year.  We will use the information from the project on student achievement data in the materials submitted for our Petition for Continued Recognition.

5.      The SACSCOC annual membership dues invoices for the period July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018, are being mailed today to the office of the CEO at each institution.   Payment is due by July 31, 2017.   If you have not received an invoice within the next 5 business days or have questions about the invoice upon receipt, contact Ms. Tenille Wilson in the SACSCOC Business Office at (404) 994-6537 or twilson@sacscoc.org.

6.      Finally, we have heard that some institutions are getting around hiring qualified faculty to teach in dual enrollment programs by enrolling high school teachers in graduate programs and then making them teaching assistants with a qualified faculty member at the college or university as the teacher of record.  This is not an acceptable practice and borders on non-compliance with both our Principle of Integrity (1.1) and Comprehensive Standard 3.7, Faculty, that defines faculty qualifications.  I know that in some areas it is sometimes difficult to find qualified high school teachers to teach the dual enrollment courses, but you must find a better way than I just described.

As always, please let me know if I can be of any assistance to you.  Have a great summer!

Belle Wheelan