SACS Subcommittee on Accreditation Liaison  
First Meeting – March 27, 2008 – Meeting Notes

Present: Norma Cantu, Eve Layman, Christine Shupala, Judith Sutherland, Kathy Winston

Christine Shupala, co-chair of the reaffirmation of accreditation process, discussed the task of the subcommittee and the purpose of the Readiness Audit, which precedes the Compliance Certification Report. She explained that institutions are considered to be out of compliance if (1) they do not meet accreditation standards or (2) they do not have documentation of compliance. She went over the Responsibility Matrix for the Readiness Audit, which was emailed to the subcommittee members. The standards assigned to this subcommittee include the following:

3.12.1 Substantive Change: The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes.

3.13.1 Policy Compliance: The institution complies with the policies of the Commission on Colleges. (This standard is not addressed in the Readiness Audit or Compliance Certification.)

3.14.1 Publication of Accreditation Status: A member or candidate institution represents its accredited status and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in accordance with Commission requirements and federal policy.

Kathy Winston, subcommittee chair, distributed information on the SACS substantive change policy and copies of notification letters that the University has sent to SACS regarding the addition of doctoral programs and certain other changes. Norma Cantu was asked to check the Provost’s Office files and check with the President’s Office about additional documentation that may exist.

Discussion focused on the types of substantive change and how to determine compliance with the standard. The subcommittee needs to determine which degree programs offer 25-49% of coursework by distance learning, which programs offer 50% or more by distance learning, and whether SACS has been notified. Programs offering a substantial amount of coursework via the web may include the MSN in Nursing, the MS in Geospatial Surveying Engineering, and certain graduate programs in the College of Education. Subcommittee members mentioned various faculty members and administrators who might be knowledgeable about the extent to which various programs are delivered through online courses. Information is also needed about programs that are being phased out.

There was also discussion about whether the subcommittee needs representatives from more colleges for the data collection process. Shupala said she would ask Michael Scherger, College of Science and Technology, to serve on the subcommittee.

Judith Sutherland suggested developing a standard email letter that subcommittee members could use to request information from the college deans about substantive changes in the colleges. The letter would include links to information about substantive changes on the SACS
A table or form would list various types of substantive changes and provide space for the dean to indicate whether such changes have occurred and whether documentation of approvals or notification exists. The letter would provide information about the process for collecting the data, the expectations, and time lines. Sutherland indicated that she would be willing to contact the College of Education for information.

Kathy Winston said she would develop a letter and form and email the draft to the subcommittee members for feedback. Also, she will email the subcommittee members a list of degree programs that have been approved in the last 10 years.

Eve Layman said that UTMB has just completed the SACS reaffirmation process and mentioned that Pam Watson, Dean of the School of Nursing, has offered to provide information.

Shupala mentioned two good examples of Compliance Certification Reports accessible on the web: College of Charleston and University of Texas at Arlington.

The next meeting will be held after the data has been collected from the colleges.

Submitted by Kathy Winston