SACS Subcommittee on Accreditation Liaison  
Third Meeting – May 15, 2008 – Meeting Notes

Present: Eve Layman, Michael Scherger, Christine Shupala, Kathy Winston

Kathy Winston distributed copies of the current statement about SACS accreditation in the 2007-2008 catalogs and proofs showing the updated statement that will appear in the 2008-2009 catalogs. These materials are related to standard 3.1.4, representation of status with the Commission. Chris Shupala will talk to Marshall Collins about providing accessible information about SACS accreditation on the university website.

Gerald Lord of SACS has asked Dr. Babbili to provide an addendum to the notification letter for the joint PhD/MS in Marine Biology. The purpose is to clarify the role of Texas A&M University-Galveston and to confirm that only Texas A&M University (College Station) and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi will award the degrees.

The BAAS program was also discussed. SACS has not responded to the email inquiry about whether the proposed BAAS represents a substantive change. Eve Layman believes that it fits into the substantive change category of the “degree completion program.” Winston is developing a draft of the notification letter. A copy of the proposal will also be sent.

Michael Scherger said there has been no further feedback about the MS in Geospatial Surveying Engineering. The program is advertised on the web as an online degree with a week-long meeting at the beginning of the semester. Shupala will follow up with Stacy Lyle.

The matrix that the subcommittee must submit was discussed. Compliance issues exist if there are substantive changes that have not been reported to SACS. Questions remain, however, about which changes are substantive. For example, several new degrees have been implemented since the last SACS reaffirmation process but whether they represent a significant departure from earlier degrees is not clear. There are issues related to distance education programs in several colleges, as well as the anticipated phasing out of certain degree programs.

Layman indicated that SACS should have been notified about the fast-track BSN in Nursing distance education program that is delivered to students in College Station (a new site). That program will end in December 2008. Layman and Rosemary Plank will develop notification materials this summer. Layman will prepare a statement explaining why the online delivery of the MSN in Nursing does not represent a substantive change. She also mentioned the possible development of a dual Masters of Public Health to address rural health needs.

Shupala indicated that notification may be needed for the BS in Biomedical Sciences (BIMS) degree. Two existing tracks (including the discontinued Clinical Laboratory Science degree) merged to form that degree program.

Shupala suggested looking for a five-year report to SACS to determine if it provides any relevant information on substantive changes.