

**From:** Belle S. Wheelan [mailto:bwheelan@sacscoc.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 11, 2017 9:11 AM  
**To:** CEOs of SACSCOC Institutions <CEOs@sacscoc.org>  
**Cc:** Accreditation Liaisons <IALO@sacscoc.org>  
**Subject:** SACSCOC Updates and Information

Happy New Year! I truly hope you had a restful and happy holiday season and that the New Year brings with it peace and happiness to you. As I indicated in my remarks at the SACSCOC Annual Meeting in December, I am writing to update you on “Happenings at the Commission.”

1. On the Commission’s website, you can now find a LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES link that is designed to keep you informed on activities in Washington, DC specifically related to the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and all things accreditation. I hope that you will check it periodically and keep us informed of any activities in which you are engaged that will facilitate our issues. The first two documents included are a review of the landscape as seen by our contacts in DC and the Legislative Agenda for the Commission that was approved by the SACSCOC Executive Council.
2. The 2015 Annual Report has been uploaded to the website as well. We had several snags that prevented us from posting it sooner but I hope you will read it to see the good things we did.
3. The *Principles* Review Committee is scheduled to have the first draft of the proposed revisions to the *Principles* on January 20, 2017. You will have a second opportunity to review them, after revisions, on March 1, 2017, and provide any feedback you might have on them. The SACSCOC Board will vote on the FINAL version at its June 2017 meeting and will refer the proposal to the membership for a vote on the final adoption by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2017 at the SACSCOC Annual Meeting.
4. At the December Annual Meeting of the SACSCOC Board, the following actions were taken:
  - a. Revised the Unsolicited Information policy to include procedures for reviewing institutional cases following investigation by the Office of Civil Rights for allegations of sexual violence.
  - b. Modified the Substantive Change Policy to include a differentiated assessment fee for dual enrollment programs that reads: “An institution may submit a single prospectus covering up to 10 off-campus instructional sites that offer dual enrollment programs as long as the program offerings are identical. The assessment for the prospectus will be the same \$500 as for a prospectus for a single site.”
  - c. Adopted transition procedures for the Reaffirmation Class of 2019 as they relate to the implementation of any changes to the *Principles* that will be voted upon by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2017.
5. There have been several institutions that have submitted Substantive Change requests for approval of master’s level degrees in the legal area (LLM) that are less than the 30 hours as required by Core Requirement 2.7.1, Program Length, of the *Principles of Accreditation*. In the description of the requirement it states, “...The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.” This is a friendly reminder that there needs to be more justification than, ‘other institutions do it that way.’

6. Please know that Dr. Sarah Armstrong has retired as the Director of Substantive Change and that Dr. Kevin Sightler, who was the Coordinator in the area, is the new Director. If you need to contact him, you can reach him at [ksightler@sacscoc.org](mailto:ksightler@sacscoc.org) or (404) 994-6579.
7. From January 16<sup>th</sup> through February 16<sup>th</sup>, we will be advertising for several Vice Presidential vacancies. Please let folks at your institution know of these available positions. The notice will also be posted on our website.
8. At the SACSCOC Annual Meeting, I also mentioned that we are in the process of upgrading our information technology system to Armature. As part of that process, I will be sending you, under separate cover, information related to two issues. The first has to do with the development of a link that will provide information related to any institutional name changes your institution has undergone and the subsequent date(s) of accreditation. This might be due to mergers or consolidations, or just a simple name change. The second is related to a link we'd like to include on our website that identifies the programs offered at your institution. As details are developed, I will communicate them to you.
9. Hopefully, you remember me asking you for your permission to use National Student Clearinghouse Data related to completion rates in order to develop some more meaningful information to take to our Recognition hearing with NACIQI in June. We have now received that data and are in the process of determining what impact, if any, increases in achievement rates can be identified as a result of including part-time student and transfer student data, as well as using longer (300%) enrollment times for students enrolled in community colleges. Preliminary reviews of the data do indeed show our institutions have many more students who complete a degree when a more inclusive set of variables is included.  
  
Later this semester, I will be sending each of you information about your particular institution's data and asking you to (1) verify the figures and (2) identify institutions within our region that you consider to be your peers as determined by a set of variables we will identify. We will then try and make some judgments about how similar institutions are doing against others that 'look like them.'
10. We still have plenty of wall space available if you'd like to send us a picture of your institution on which to hang it. If so, something in the 16 x 20 category, framed and representative of your institution, region, etc., would be appropriate and appreciated.

As always, we stand ready to assist you so, please feel free to contact us. Have a wonderfully happy and successful 2017.

Belle Wheelan

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