

Preparing for the On-Site Visit of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

Appalachian State University
April 8 - 11, 2013



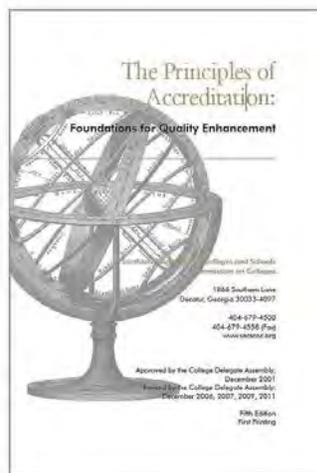
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SACS *by the numbers*

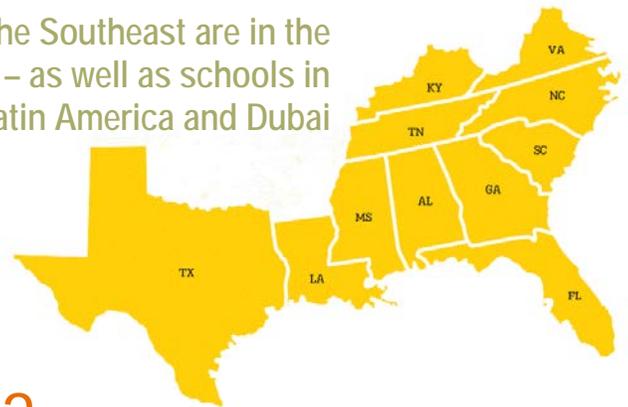
98

Separate standards which require response in the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*



11

States in the Southeast are in the SACSCOC region – as well as schools in Latin America and Dubai



13

Standards which require a follow-up response in Appalachian State University's Focused Report

19

Average number of standards that colleges and universities need to follow up on in their Focused Report

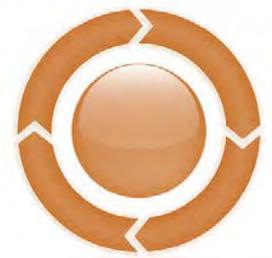
240+

Staff, faculty, and administrators who have served on a committee with the QEP or the Compliance Certification



10

Years between accreditation cycles (though SACS now requires a Fifth Year Interim Report on selected standards)



Save the date...

April 8, 2013

Team of Reviewers arrive in Boone

Reviewers visit off-site locations in Caldwell County and Hickory

April 9, 2013

Reviewers begin assessment of Compliance Certification

Interviews as requested with faculty, staff, and administrators to resolve lingering issues such as assessment, credentials, policies, or student complaints

April 10, 2013

Presentation to introduce the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to Reviewers

Interviews as requested with students, faculty, staff, and administrators to discuss campus buy-in and feasibility of the QEP

Reviewers make deliberations and decide on any final recommendations

April 11, 2013

Exit interview with Chancellor Peacock and the chair of the Review Team

Exit interview with the SACS Leadership Team

Presentation of findings with campus constituents

December 10, 2013

Final results of the affirmation of reaccreditation are presented at the SACSCOC Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia

Talking Points

SACSCOC Focused Report & On-Site Review Committee Visit

Accreditation

Appalachian State University is part of the SACS Commission on Colleges class of 2013 for reaffirmation of our accreditation status.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of accreditation to universities. Regional accreditation is the way that the federal government ensures compliance with federal laws and mandates for higher education as well. Accreditation determines our eligibility to receive federal and state funds, our ability to transfer credits with other schools, and our ability to earn recognition from other universities, the business community and non-profit and government communities, and students.

Our campus SACS liaison is Dr. Bobby Sharp, the director of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Planning.

Compliance Certification

As part of this reaffirmation review, we submitted our Compliance Certification, an extensive self-study of all aspects of University life, in September 2012. The effort was led by Georgie Donovan, associate professor and associate dean of libraries, and 13 sub-committees which included over 100 faculty members and campus professionals. Everyone on campus helped in some way, by participating in assessment, preparing needed reports and documentation, and helping to ensure our ongoing compliance with the 90+ standards required in the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation* (<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>).

The Compliance Certification we submitted was a thorough, thoughtful, and detailed portrait of all areas of importance to any accredited University. A team of our peers at other campuses in the SACSCOC region came together in Atlanta in the fall to read and analyze our documentation. These Off-Site Reviewers are faculty and administrators at campuses in the region.

Focused Report

These Off-Site Reviewers requested follow-up information in 13 areas including:

- Assessment of student learning outcomes at the program level (Principles 2.5 + 3.3.1.1)
- System for resolving student complaints and other stakeholder complaints (3.13.3 + 4.5)
- Selected faculty credentials (3.4.11 + 3.7.1)
- Demonstrated enforcement of policies in academics, athletics, and hiring/evaluation (3.2.9, 3.2.11, + 3.4.5)
- Technology teaching for students (3.4.12)
- Collaborative agreements (3.13.2)
- Description of off-campus physical facilities (3.11.3)
- Submission of recent audit letter (2.11.1)

Talking Points | Continued...

By March 1, 2013, the University will submit a follow-up Focused Report on these areas, which we hope will resolve any lingering concerns.

The area of greatest concern in the Focused Report is the ongoing need for us to **demonstrate an assessment process in academic programs** wherein we establish student learning outcomes for every major, undergraduate and graduate; assess the ability of students to demonstrate those outcomes; and work to improve our programs based on our analysis of the results of that assessment. Every university in the SACSCOC region struggles with this requirement, but it is still vital that we continue our efforts to document our assessment efforts. Many groups, including the University Academic Assessment Council, College Assessment Committees, individual program coordinators, and faculty, will need to continue to work on interesting, helpful, meaningful assessments of student learning and curriculum development – just as we always have... but with an eye towards documenting our efforts and sharing them in a way that works for accreditation goals as well as the more crucial, overriding goal of improving our work.

On-Site Visit

On April 8-11, 2013, Appalachian State University will host the visit of a team of external reviewers who are also peers, working at colleges and universities in the SACSCOC region. This On-Site Review Committee will try to resolve any Compliance Certification issues which were not explained thoroughly by the Focused Report, and they will focus their attention on the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for Appalachian.

During the visit, the On-Site Review Committee may request to meet with individuals or groups of people (students, faculty, or staff) to understand specific issues related to compliance or the QEP. **Please mark April 8-11 on your calendar and be flexible and readily available should the Review Committee ask to work with you during this time period. There may be interviews scheduled at the last minute, but we expect for them to fall on the afternoon of April 9 and throughout the day on April 10.** Thank you for your flexibility and willingness to meet with Review Committee members during that time!

Quality Enhancement Plan

As part of the reaffirmation of accreditation process, every SACSCOC institution is required to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (or QEP) which “identifies key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.” The topic which Appalachian State University has chosen is **GLOBAL LEARNING**.

Members of the On-Site Review Committee will approach *anyone* – faculty they meet in the elevator, students having lunch, staff whom they visit with during meetings and meals – and ask them if they know what our QEP topic is. Be prepared!

The full draft of the QEP is now available on our website (qep.appstate.edu). The Plan is the product of 150 members of teams and extraordinary consultation with campus stakeholders. The QEP Leadership Team includes Jesse Lutabingwa, Renee Scherlen, Tony Carey, Terri Lockwood, and Gus Peña, and they visited 52 units last year (including colleges, schools, departments, and student development departments) as well as working with campus governance bodies on the Plan. These groups provided important guidance and some necessary cautions, which

Talking Points | Continued...

have helped us develop a QEP full of opportunities that fit with what faculty, staff, and students are now doing or want to do in the future.

The Plan is for all Appalachian State University students to engage in diverse experiences at home and abroad to increase their knowledge of global issues, regions, and cultures; improve their intercultural skills, and develop attitudes that cultivate global citizenship. Departments and units from across campus will be instrumental in accomplishing the mission of Appalachian's Global Learning QEP. The three goals of the Quality Enhancement Plan are:

- To develop globally competent knowledge;
- To cultivate intercultural competencies (in other words, to increase students' ability to work effectively with others who are different from them); and
- To foster globally competent citizenship.

Before the visit, the QEP Leadership Team wants to hear feedback via the QEP website and through multiple forums on campus, and then will submit the final QEP to the SACSCOC On-Site Review Committee members by the end of February. During the On-Site Visit, the Review Committee will try to assess the feasibility of the Plan and give us additional suggestions or recommendations. After they leave, we will begin work on any recommended changes, implementation of the Plan and preparation for a progress report in five years.

The purpose of the QEP is to put in place a number of permanent changes that will improve global learning – and those initiatives will develop and grow over time with your input and help.

Upcoming Visits

Appalachian State University is pleased to host the visits of the On-Site Review Committee members in April and to participate in the process of peer review which helps to shape the quality and development of accredited universities throughout the country.

The chair of our On-Site Review Committee is Dr. John Frederick, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Dr. Frederick has extensive experience serving on SACSCOC Review Committees. He will review our Compliance Certification, Focused Report, and Quality Enhancement Plan and provide expert advice to lead the On-Site Review Committee in their deliberations.

Dr. Nuria Cuevas is the staff liaison for Appalachian State at the SACSCOC organization. She is Vice President at SACSCOC and works with Dr. Bobby Sharp to help review our documentation and prepare for a successful site visit.

Profile of Dr. John Frederick

A native of San Antonio, John Frederick earned his A.B. (1980) from Princeton and his A.M. (1982) and Ph.D. (1985) from Harvard, all in Chemistry. Following a three-year postdoctoral research appointment at the University of Washington in Seattle, Dr. Frederick joined the faculty of the University of Nevada, Reno as an Assistant Professor of Theoretical Chemistry in 1988. He was tenured in 1993 and promoted to full professor in 1998, becoming chair of the chemistry department in 1999.

Talking Points | Continued...

Dr. Frederick's research interests have been in the area of computational molecular dynamics, with a special emphasis on the study of molecular vibrations and structural rearrangements induced by the absorption of light. His work has appeared in some 50 articles in the chemical physics literature and has been funded by more than 15 external grants totaling over \$2.7 million.

Dr. Frederick served as Executive Vice-President and Provost of the University of Nevada, Reno from July 2001 through June 2007. In June 2007, he accepted a position as Senior Fellow with NASULGC, the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges.

In February, 2008, Dr. Frederick accepted the position as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at The University of Texas at San Antonio. As Provost, he is responsible for the academic mission of the University, including oversight of all its colleges, Undergraduate Studies, Graduate School, Honors College, Faculty Support, Academic Accountability, Institutional Research, and many student and community related initiatives.

Profile of Dr. Nuria Cuevas

In 2011, Dr. Nuria Cuevas became the newest Vice President to join the SACSCOC organization. Previously, she served as the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment at Norfolk State University, Virginia. She has extensive experience serving on On-Site and Off-Site Review Committees with SACSCOC, and brings that experience – as well as her expertise as a SACSCOC Vice President – to her work with universities like ours. One of her special areas of expertise is the topic of assessment, about which she has written and presented extensively.

Dr. Cuevas has worked with Appalachian State University over the past year to resolve any questions or concerns we have had about the reaffirmation process or the regular day-to-day questions related to SACSCOC reporting and regulations. She has been incredibly helpful, and her knowledge of universities throughout the SACS region has been a major help in the preparation of our University for the On-Site Visit in April.

Tips

for Working with the On-Site Review Committee

Here are some tips which may be helpful for knowing what to expect when the SACS On-Site Review Committee visits campus April 8-11, 2013:

- You may be contacted by a colleague from the Chancellor's Office or from Academic Affairs on April 9th or 10th because a Review Committee member needs some information or wants to ask some questions. If so, please be flexible! Bring print copies of whatever documents are requested, and be prepared to answer hard questions.
- Operate with integrity in all matters related to SACS. This is in the *Principles of Accreditation*, section 1.1 and something on which we are assessed.
- The members of the On-Site Review Committee team are generally chancellors and provosts, administrators, and faculty members on other campuses in our region. They understand the complexity of the SACS standards and they want us to succeed in our review. As our peers, they respect Appalachian State University and want to help us move through the re-accreditation process as smoothly as possible. **They want to see us through a successful visit and reaffirmation of our accreditation status.**
- The Reviewers have prepared thoroughly for their visit. They have looked at our Compliance Certification, read the Quality Enhancement Plan and the Focused Report, and often have spent a generous amount of time on the University website and reading internal documents such as the Faculty Handbook and Policy Manual. They have invested a great deal of time and energy in this review.
- The areas they are most likely to investigate include:
 - **The Quality Enhancement Plan** – including meetings with various constituents to see how the Plan is going to move our University forward.
 - **Assessment** – including possible meetings with program coordinators and those charged with assessment on campus.
 - **Any lingering compliance issues** – including possible meetings with those who work with student complaints, technology teaching for students, faculty credentials, and policies related to hiring and evaluation, academic regulations, athletics, and collaborative agreements.
- There may be an occasion where you have a meeting scheduled with a Review Committee member, and, through earlier meetings, they decide that their question has been resolved and therefore no longer need your meeting. That is usually a good sign. Thanks again for your flexibility and willingness to shift gears.
- Make sure you understand the basic goals of the Quality Enhancement Plan and that your colleagues and students know the topic (Global Learning).

Contact Information

For questions related to SACSCOC accreditation, the SACS *Principles of Accreditation*, the University's Compliance Certification and Focused Report, or the On-Site Visit:

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Thank you!

Appalachian's successful reaccreditation is due to your efforts every day.