

The Decennial SACSCOC
Reaffirmation of Accreditation
Process
2021 Class
East Georgia State College

August 03, 2018

9:00 – 9:30am

Bob Boehmer, President

Involvement of Every Faculty and Staff Member at the College is Essential to the Success of this Process

▶ Quality Enhancement Plan

- ▶ Selecting the topic
- ▶ Writing the plan
- ▶ Implementing the plan
- ▶ Participating in the review of the plan by the SACSCOC on-site committee during its 3 day visit to EGSC

▶ Compliance Certification

- ▶ Methodically documenting the college's compliance with each of the *Principles of Accreditation*
 - ▶ <http://sacscoc.org/principles.asp>
 - ▶ There are principles directly related to the role each of you play at the college
 - ▶ *Each of you (not the college's accreditation liaison) have the fundamental responsibility to document our compliance with principles in your area of responsibility*
- ▶ Writing your section of the compliance certification
- ▶ Participating actively in the on-site committee visit by the SACSCOC committee

What is SACSCOC?

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

- ▶ A **Regional** Accrediting Body
 - ▶ “**Recognized**” by the U.S. Department of Education
 - ▶ **Accredits entire institutions (not programmatic accreditation)** in this region
 - ▶ Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and certain international sites
 - ▶ A **voluntary association** of educational institutions of higher education in this region
 - ▶ Governed by a 77 member Board of Trustees elected by its member institutions
 - ▶ Elected by College Delegate Assembly (one voting member from each member)
 - ▶ A 13 member Executive Council is the executive arm of the Board of Trustees
 - ▶ A form of **self-regulation**
 - ▶ Adopts the **Principles of Accreditation** (Foundations for Quality Enhancement) December 2017 which are the accreditation requirements
- ▶ Not the same as SACSCASI (a separate arm of SACS which accredits K-12)

What process does SACSCOC use to determine whether its members comply with the Principles?

- ▶ **Decennial reaffirmation process** for each member
 - ▶ **Compliance Certification** concerning all Principles **plus**
 - ▶ **Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)**
 - ▶ **Recommendations** are made by SACSCOC if an institution is not in compliance with one or more Principles
 - ▶ In the case of a recommendation concerning a **Core Requirement**, a sanction must be imposed (warning, probation, removal)
 - ▶ If the recommendation does not involve a Core Requirement, a institution will ordinarily be required to file a **Monitoring Report** (monitoring cannot exceed 2 years – if not in compliance then, a sanction must be imposed)
- ▶ Members are also required to report **substantive changes** in the interim period (between decennial reaffirmations)
 - ▶ E.g., EGSC recently reported the implementation of our new nursing program, SACSCOC visited and EGSC received approval to proceed
- ▶ At the midpoint of the decennial cycle, each institution must file a **5th Year Interim Report** and **Quality Enhancement Plan Impact Report**
 - ▶ E.g., SACSCOC recently approved (without any recommendations) both of these reports

Why is accreditation by SACSCOC important to EGSC?

- ▶ The Principles articulate standards which are fundamentally important to us as an institution of higher education committed to providing a quality educational environment and experience
- ▶ Accreditation is essential to maintain our reputation as an institution providing a high quality educational experience
- ▶ Failure to comply with the Principles has serious financial consequences
 - ▶ E.g., Failure to be authorized to award federal student financial aid would result from loss of membership in SACSCOC

Evaluation by SACSCOC is Mission Based

Consider the following Core Requirement as an example:

- ▶ “The institution employs an **adequate number of full-time faculty members** to support the mission and goals of the institution”
- ▶ Each institution has the burden to make its own case about what is “adequate” based on its unique mission
 - ▶ The Principle is not applied in a formulaic fashion
 - ▶ E.g., It is not possible to simply say our ratio of faculty to students is x:y so we are, therefore, in compliance
- ▶ When you are writing a section of our compliance certification, you are not simply stating a conclusion or applying a formula, **you are making a case for why EGSC (given its unique mission) is in compliance**
 - ▶ You **must also provide documentary evidence of each element** of your case

Integrity is a basic covenant among SACSCOC and its members

- ▶ A core requirement
- ▶ More importantly, at East Georgia State College, **integrity is one of our core values** and should guide us during this entire process

The Reaffirmation Process is Not Completed by our SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

This process is the collective responsibility of our entire
college community

- ▶ The role of the college's accreditation liaison
 - ▶ Provides expert guidance
 - ▶ Serves as EGSC's go-between with SACSCOC
 - ▶ Facilitates our completion of the process
- ▶ **Our individual faculty and staff each have the responsibility to make the case for the college's compliance with the Principles assigned to them**
 - ▶ Provide documentary evidence of compliance
 - ▶ Write a compelling case for EGSC concerning each Principle assigned

A Culture of Assessment is Essential to Our Success in this Process

- ▶ Consider the following one Principle (academic program assessment) as an example:
 - ▶ “The institution **identifies expected outcomes, assesses** the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides **evidence of seeking improvement** based on **analysis** of the results in the areas below:
 - ▶ Student learning outcomes for each educational program.”
- ▶ We must demonstrate our compliance with the Principle for **each one of our educational programs** (each bachelors degree, each associates degree, and each certificate program) – a cookie cutter approach simply will not work
 - ▶ Compliance requires identified outcomes and assessment of each outcome at the **program level for each program (not just course level)**
 - ▶ Compliance requires **evidence over an extended period of time** (multiple academic years)
 - ▶ Compliance requires evidence of analysis and evidence that we have taken the results seriously (**closing the loop**)
- ▶ Ask yourself these questions: If assessment is something that is done by someone else (e.g., the Institutional Effectiveness Office)(not you), is it really possible for that person (not an expert in your field of study) to really understand what a graduate of your program should know and be able to do (outcomes), is it really possible for that person to evaluate attainment of those outcomes (in a range of programs at EGSC from languages to hard sciences), and it is possible for that person to analyze results and decide what is needed to improve in such diverse areas? The obvious answers are “no” “no” and “no”
 - ▶ **A Culture of Assessment is essential** to meet the requirements of this Principle
 - ▶ We must approach this with the **same rigor and intellectual curiosity as applies in our teaching and research**
 - ▶ **We assess because we believe it’s inherent value** – not because we are required to do so

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SACSCOC Reaffirmation Timeline

- ▶ Early Fall Semester 2018
 - Develop SACSCOC Reaffirmation Organizational Structure
 - ▶ Steering Committee
 - ▶ Compliance Committee
 - ▶ Quality Enhancement Plan Committee (QEP)
- ▶ December 2018
 - Orientation of EGSC's SACSCOC Leadership Team at SACSCOC Annual Meeting
- ▶ Academic Year 2018-2019
 - Obtain **broad input about possible QEP topics**
- ▶ Academic Year 2018-2019
 - Complete draft **compliance certification**
 - ▶ Address each principle
 - ▶ Collect/organize documentation in electronic form for each principle
- ▶ Spring Semester 2019
 - Select **QEP topic**/ President Approves QEP topic
- ▶ Summer 2019
 - Conduct Practice SACSCOC Reaffirmation Committee Visit

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SACSCOC Reaffirmation Timeline

- ▶ End of Fall Semester 2019 Complete Compliance Certification by Calendar Year End
- ▶ End of Fall Semester 2019 Complete QEP including
 - ▶ Budget
 - ▶ Assessment Plan
 - ▶ Implementation Plan
- ▶ March 02, 2020 Submit Compliance Certification to SACSCOC
- ▶ April 21-24, 2020 **Off-Site Review** by SACSCOC
- ▶ Six weeks before on-site visit **Focused Report** by EGSC concerning any principles (if needed) not addressed by Compliance Certification
- ▶ Six weeks prior to on-site visit Submit QEP to SACSCOC
- ▶ September 14 - November 13, 2020 **On-Site Committee Visit** by SACSCOC
- ▶ (3 day on-site visit during this time period)
- ▶ March 2021 Response to SACSCOC On-Site Report and Revised QEP (if required)
- ▶ June 2021 SACSCOC Trustees make decision about EGSC **Reaffirmation** at Summer SACSCOC Meeting

A Suggested Approach to Writing a Response to a Principle

- ▶ **Start Now**
- ▶ Consider this principle (a core requirement) as an example
 - ▶ “The institution engages in ongoing, comprehensive, and integrated research-based planning and evaluation processes that (a) focus on institutional quality and effectiveness and (b) incorporate a systematic review of institutional goals and outcomes consistent with its mission. (Institutional Planning) [CR]”
- ▶ **Break the principle into its component parts** – each component must be separately addressed:
 - ▶ Ongoing
 - ▶ Comprehensive
 - ▶ Integrated
 - ▶ Research based
 - ▶ Focuses on institutional quality and effectiveness
 - ▶ Institutional goals and outcomes incorporated into the process
 - ▶ Process carried out in a manner consistent with institutional mission

A Suggested Approach to Writing a Response to a Principle

- ▶ Methodically collect documentary **evidence** of the college's compliance with this Principle
- ▶ Organize an outline of a response with a separate heading for each element (see above) of that Principle
- ▶ Write a response which separately addresses how EGSC, as an institution with a unique access mission, **complies with each element of that principle**
- ▶ If you make an assertion in your response, include evidence of that assertion with your response
- ▶ If your evidence includes a college policy or procedure, simply including that policy or procedure as evidence is not enough
 - ▶ Provide evidence that the policy or procedure is
 - ▶ **Published** and
 - ▶ Actually **applied** on a regular basis

Thanks for your
commitment to this
process!

Questions?