

SACS Compliance Certification Team Meeting Minutes
1/30/08

Present: Rebecca Oekerman, Karen Smith, Sophia Andres, Douglas Hale, Narita Holmes, Roy Hurst, Robert Perry, Teresa Sewell, Leslie Toombs, Denise Watts, Bobbie Williams, Travis Woodward

Not Present: William Fannin, Kelly Kinnard, Melanie Nicholas, Maureen Page

I. Introduction of Members

Rebecca Oekerman began the meeting with a brief introduction of all of the members present.

II. Purpose of Compliance Certification Team

Dr. Oekerman defined compliance as making our case that the University is complying with the standards set forth by SACS. Therefore, the Committee's goal is to gather the necessary data and analyze the University's compliance (or lack thereof) with SACS standards.

III. Review of Team Notebook

The committee looked at the organization for the reaffirmation effort and at the three major teams and their individual responsibilities. They then turned to individual responsibilities of Committee members. The Committee members will be working with sub-committees which will address particular standards. A suggested list of sub-committee members is located in the notebook behind the detailed responsibilities page. Each member of the Committee is responsible for recruiting subcommittee members. None of the suggested subcommittee members has been approached.

This was followed by an overview of the SACS timeline. The Committee's work will be completed by September 2009 when the Compliance Certification is due to SACS unless compliance issues arise during the off-site review. The Committee opened the discussion of the *Principles of Accreditation* with a brief discussion of the importance of integrity. The Committee then turned to the core requirements. It is essential that the institution be in compliance with each core requirement in order for UTPB to be reaffirmed. These are minimum requirements and non-compliance with a core requirement is a serious threat to reaffirmation. The comprehensive standards are the second part of the *Principles*. The comprehensive standards are also important, however, non-compliance can be ameliorated through monitoring by the Commission. The Federal requirements are required in all regional accrediting commission's standards and, for the most part, are a repetition of all or part of several comprehensive standards. Each narrative must address every element of each core requirement, comprehensive standard and federal requirement. When the institution is found not to be in compliance with a standard or part of a standard that needs to be brought to the Committee's attention so that the deficiency can be remedied by the University. There was a brief discussion of changes in the wording of comprehensive standards 3.3.1 and 3.5.1 passed in December.

Dr. Oekerman noted that UTPB is one of the last institutions in the system to go through the compliance certification. Therefore, there should be plenty of reference information available on the internet.

Committee members then looked at the *Handbook for Reaffirmation*, which provides examples of documentation for the standards among other helpful information. Dr. Watts noted that the *Handbook* has not kept pace with changes in *Principles* over the last two years. It may be necessary to search for your standards. It was recommended that members read not only the example of the compliance report that was distributed, but other examples of compliance reports like those included in the notebook to become familiar with what a good narrative covers. There are no page limitations on the narratives; they be brief and cover every element of the standard addressed.

IV. Meeting Schedule

It was proposed that meetings be scheduled for the second and fourth Wednesday of every month. Dr. Hale asked that faculty members schedule classes to keep the time period free until 2009. The Committee then discussed the need for student involvement. Dr. Andres asked whether students needed to attend every meeting (no) and if graduate students could be involved (yes).

V. Next Meeting 13 February at 10:30 a.m.

Members need to review their standards and make sure that they understand them. If there was any confusion that cannot be cleared up in-house, the question can be referred to Rudy Jackson at SACS.