

2028 SACSCOC Reaffirmation Leadership Team Meeting
June 25, 2026, 1:00 – 2:00pm
Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Raúl Hinojosa Jr., Mary Jo Venetis, Lev Gelb, Rafael Martín, Clark Meyer, Vicky Morris-Dueer, Robin Paige, Amanda Smith, Stephen Spiro, Vy Trang

Absent: Chandramallika Basak, Juan González, Sarah Moore, Inga Musselman, William Nichols

- **Working Group Progress and Structure Updates:** Dr. Raúl Hinojosa provided an update on the formation and progress of all working groups for the reaffirmation process, including the appointment of Melody Monjazebe as chair and Nate Howe as co-chair for the University Financial, Information Technology, and Physical Resources Working Group, and outlined the plan to post meeting minutes and keep the website updated for transparency.
 - **Formation and Cadence of Working Groups:** Dr. Hinojosa reported that all working groups have held initial meetings, reviewed their assigned accreditation principles, and established meeting cadences with the help of Vy Trang. Some meetings have been canceled due to scheduling conflicts, but overall, the groups are progressing as planned.
 - **Website Updates and Transparency:** Dr. Hinojosa shared that the SACSCOC university website has been updated to reflect the current working group listings, their memberships, and assigned principles. The team is also working on posting meeting minutes to the website to allow broader tracking of group activities and to support documentation for reaffirmation.
 - **Leadership Changes in Working Groups:** Dr. Hinojosa announced the addition of Nate Howe as co-chair alongside Melody Monjazebe for the University Financial, Information Technology, and Physical Resources Working Group. Melody Monjazebe will focus on financial documentation, while Nate Howe will coordinate efforts related to physical resources, including campus safety and IT infrastructure.
- **Leadership and Steering Committee Consolidation:** Dr. Hinojosa proposed, and Dr. Amanda Smith supported, consolidating the leadership and steering committees by inviting all working group co-chairs to the leadership team meetings, eliminating the need for a separate steering committee and streamlining communication and decision-making.
 - **Proposal for Committee Consolidation:** Dr. Hinojosa suggested revising the leadership team membership to include all working group co-chairs, thereby avoiding duplication of effort and meetings, as there is significant overlap between the current leadership and steering committees.
 - **Group Consensus and Implementation:** Dr. Smith voiced support for the consolidation, and Dr. Hinojosa observed general agreement among participants.

The group agreed to proceed with this approach, with co-chairs providing updates and discussing challenges during the regular leadership meetings.

- **Campus Outreach and Communication Strategies:** Dr. Hinojosa initiated a discussion on campus outreach for reaffirmation and QEP awareness, with Dr. Smith, Dr. Lev Gelb, and Dr. Rafael Martín contributing suggestions for engaging various campus groups, including staff, students, and faculty, and emphasizing the importance of targeted communication as the site visit approaches.
 - **Identifying Outreach Channels:** Drs. Hinojosa and Smith discussed leveraging existing staff meetings, Student Government, Graduate Student Assembly, and student organization meetings to disseminate information about reaffirmation and the QEP. Dr. Smith also suggested reaching out to Staff Council and HR Forums.
 - **Faculty Engagement Considerations:** Dr. Gelb noted that faculty committees are primarily interested in actionable requests, and Dr. Martín recommended holding open town halls for faculty rather than attending multiple committee meetings, unless specific input is needed.
 - **Timing and Targeting of Outreach:** Drs. Smith and Hinojosa agreed that more intensive outreach to all campus groups should occur closer to the site visit, as the on-site committee may request meetings with any group, making broad awareness critical at that stage.
 - **Written and Digital Communication:** Dr. Hinojosa highlighted the potential to use written communication channels, such as the Provost Newsletter, to reach broader audiences and requested suggestions for additional outlets to publish reaffirmation updates.
- **SACSCOC Name Change and Policy Updates:** Dr. Hinojosa informed the group about the SACSCOC name change to The Commission on Colleges and Universities, clarified that this does not affect accreditation status or Department of Education recognition, and outlined the plan to await further guidance before making any institutional changes.
 - **Name Change Announcement:** Dr. Hinojosa explained that SACSCOC will become The Commission on Colleges and Universities effective September 1st, but the Department of Education will continue to recognize the original name for accreditation purposes.
 - **Guidance on Institutional Updates:** Dr. Hinojosa advised that no changes should be made to institutional references or websites until further guidance is received from SACSCOC, and that updates will be communicated as more information becomes available.
 - **Other Policy and Guideline Changes:** Dr. Hinojosa mentioned that the SACSCOC Board of Trustees approved additional policy and guideline changes, some of which are informational and will be shared with relevant stakeholders in a targeted manner.
- **Draft Revisions to Principles of Accreditation and QEP Implications:** Dr. Hinojosa updated the team on the first draft of changes to the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, including feedback submission, anticipated changes such as the removal

of the QEP requirement, and the institution's plan to proceed with the QEP for the current cycle due to timing and regulatory uncertainty.

- o **Draft Changes and Feedback Process:** Dr. Hinojosa shared that the institution received and reviewed the first draft of revised accreditation Principles, collected campus feedback, and submitted it to SACSCOC, with further revisions expected in early fall.
 - o **Key Changes in Principles:** Dr. Hinojosa highlighted significant changes, including the consolidation of Principles, new requirements for alignment with workforce and industry needs, and updated language on academic freedom and intellectual diversity, reflecting federal regulatory trends.
 - o **QEP Requirement and Transition:** Dr. Hinojosa clarified that the draft removes the explicit QEP requirement, but the institution must continue with its QEP for the current cycle, as the new rules will not be adopted until December and their effective date is uncertain. SACSCOC has indicated that institutions will not be penalized for QEP compliance during the transition.
 - o **Alignment with Strategic Planning:** Dr. Hinojosa noted that the QEP aligns with the institution's strategic plan and leadership changes, ensuring its relevance regardless of future accreditation requirements.
- **Accreditation Cycle Timing and Transition Uncertainties:** Dr. Gelb asked about the possibility of delaying accreditation to align with new Principles, and Dr. Hinojosa explained that federal requirements prevent delays, but SACSCOC is considering a transition plan for the adoption of new standards, with further details expected after discussions with SACSCOC leadership.
 - o **No Option to Delay Accreditation:** Dr. Hinojosa confirmed that institutions cannot delay their accreditation cycle to wait for new principles due to federal mandates, and that in the past, new standards have taken effect immediately upon approval, causing challenges for institutions mid-cycle.
 - o **Transition Plan Under Consideration:** Dr. Hinojosa stated that SACSCOC is working on a transition plan to address concerns about immediate implementation, but it is unclear whether institutions will have the option to choose which set of standards to follow. More information is expected after a rescheduled meeting with the new SACSCOC president.
- **Upcoming Events and Next Steps:** Dr. Hinojosa announced that he and Dr. Sarah Moore will attend the SACSCOC Summer Institute in Atlanta and will share updates at the next leadership meeting and reminded the group to send suggestions for communication channels and to expect further updates as new information becomes available.
 - o **Attendance at SACSCOC Summer Institute:** Drs. Hinojosa and Moore will participate in the SACSCOC Summer Institute in Atlanta, with plans to report back on relevant developments at the next leadership meeting.
 - o **Ongoing Communication and Feedback:** Dr. Hinojosa encouraged participants to suggest additional communication channels for reaffirmation updates and assured the group that further information will be shared as it becomes available.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Working Group Co-Chair Integration:** Invite the remaining co-chairs of the working groups to the leadership team meetings and ensure they provide updates at each monthly meeting. (Dr. Hinojosa)
- **Campus Outreach Presentations:** Identify and reach out to campus units (e.g., Student Affairs, OIT, Budget and Finance, Student Government, Graduate Student Assembly, Staff Council, HR Forum) to schedule informational presentations about reaffirmation and QEP starting in August. (Dr. Hinojosa)
- **Student Organization Engagement:** Coordinate with Student Government, Graduate Student Assembly, and presidents of student organizations to arrange presentations on reaffirmation and QEP. (Dr. Smith)
- **Academic Affairs Communication:** Leverage written communication channels (e.g., academic affairs newsletter, Provost newsletter) to distribute information about reaffirmation and QEP, and collect suggestions for additional publication venues. (Dr. Hinojosa)
- **SACSCOC Policy Updates:** Review and share relevant SACSCOC policy and guideline changes with targeted campus groups as appropriate. (Dr. Hinojosa)
- **SACSCOC Name Change Guidance:** Monitor SACSCOC guidance regarding the name change and update campus references and websites as needed after September 1st, once official instructions are received. (Dr. Hinojosa)
- **QEP Transition Plan Monitoring:** Track SACSCOC's transition plan for the QEP requirement and adjust institutional planning as new information becomes available. (Dr. Hinojosa)