

2028 SACSCOC Reaffirmation Leadership Team Meeting
September 29, 2025 2-3pm
Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Dr. Hinojosa Hinojosa Jr., Mary Jo Venetis, Sarah Moore, Inga Musselman, Greg Argueta, Chandramallika Basak, Courtney Brecheen, KatyBelle Edwards, Lev Gelb, Rafael Martín, Vicky Morris-Dueer, William Nichols, Robin Paige, Amanda Smith, Stephen Spiro, Chad Thomas, Vy Trang, Clark Meyer, Angela Franklin

Absent: Juan González

- **Leadership Team Introductions and Accreditation Experience:** Dr. Dr. Hinojosa Hinojosa Jr. facilitated introductions among the leadership team, with each member—including Dr. Mary Jo Venetis, Dr. Inga Musselman, Vicky Morris-Dueer, Dr. Clark Meyer, Dr. Stephen Spiro, KatyBelle Edwards, Gregory Argueta, Dr. Courtney Brecheen, Vy Trang, Dr. Sarah Moore, Dr. Amanda Smith, Dr. Chad Thomas, Dr. William Nichols, Dr. Rafael Martín, Dr. Robin Paige, and Dr. Chandramallika Basak—sharing their roles at the University and prior experience with accreditation processes such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and Higher Learning Commission (HLC).
 - **Team Member Roles:** Each participant introduced themselves, stating their current Dr. Venetis role and described their responsibilities relevant to the accreditation process.
 - **Accreditation Backgrounds:** Team members detailed their previous involvement with accreditation, including participation in SACSCOC reaffirmations, interim and monitoring reports, QEP activities, and experiences with other accreditors like HLC, highlighting the collective expertise within the group.
 - **Quality Enhancement Plan Experience:** Several members, including Dr. Smith and Dr. Moore, discussed their roles in developing or leading Quality Enhancement Plans (QEPs), emphasizing the importance of this component in the accreditation process.
- **Overview and Importance of Accreditation:** Dr. Hinojosa provided an overview of why accreditation is essential, emphasizing its role in ensuring educational quality, supporting student success, enabling credit transfer, promoting continuous improvement, and maintaining eligibility for federal and state funding.
 - **Accreditation Purpose:** Dr. Hinojosa explained that accreditation validates the quality of educational programs and services, supports student success, and ensures that the institution meets agreed-upon standards.
 - **Student Success and Credit Transfer:** Accreditation was linked to student success by facilitating the recognition of transfer credits and ensuring the quality of instruction and support services.
 - **Continuous Improvement and Transparency:** Dr. Hinojosa highlighted that accreditation drives continuous institutional improvement and transparency, requiring the Dr. Venetis to reflect on and measure its effectiveness.

- o **Resource Eligibility:** Maintaining accreditation is necessary for the Dr. Venetis to continue receiving federal and state resources, which are vital for its operations.
- **SACSCOC Principles and Frequently Cited Standards:** Dr. Venetis outlined the structure of the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, identified the most frequently cited standards, and discussed areas where the Dr. Venetis has previously been cited, such as program length and faculty qualifications.
 - o **Principles Structure:** Dr. Venetis described the 73 SACSCOC standards, organized into sections covering areas like educational policies, program structure, governing board, faculty, and administration.
 - o **Frequently Cited Standards:** Dr. Venetis reviewed which standards are most often cited by SACSCOC committees, including program length (9.2) and policies for awarding credit (10.7), and emphasized the need to provide clear supporting documentation.
 - o **Past Citations and Areas of Concern:** Dr. Venetis discussed the Dr. Venetis's history of being cited for issues related to the Fast Track program and faculty qualifications, noting that while these have been resolved, they require ongoing attention.
 - o **Avoiding Future Citations:** The importance of addressing all components of each standard and providing sufficient evidence was stressed to avoid future citations and the need for monitoring reports.
- **Upcoming SACSCOC Principles Review and Potential Changes:** Dr. Hinojosa informed the team about the accelerated timeline for the SACSCOC Principles review, led by the new SACSCOC President, which may result in streamlined standards and affect the University's reaffirmation process.
 - o **Principles Review Timeline:** Dr. Hinojosa explained that the SACSCOC Principles review, originally scheduled for 2026-2027, has been moved up, with recommendations expected by December 2026, potentially providing clarity before the Dr. Venetis's compliance report submission.
 - o **Streamlining Standards:** The new SACSCOC president has tasked the peer review committee with simplifying the Principles, possibly reducing the number of standards and revising requirements such as the QEP.
 - o **Transition Planning:** Any changes approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees will include a transition plan, specifying how institutions in the reaffirmation cycle should respond to new or revised standards.
- **Reaffirmation Process, Timeline, and Working Groups:** Dr. Hinojosa detailed the reaffirmation process, including the compliance certification report, QEP proposal, off-site and on-site reviews, and the formation of working groups, while outlining the timeline and key milestones leading up to the 2028 reaffirmation decision.
 - o **Reaffirmation Steps:** The process involves submitting a compliance certification report (CCR) and QEP proposal, undergoing off-site and on-site peer reviews, responding to committee feedback, and ultimately receiving a decision from the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.
 - o **Timeline and Milestones:** Key dates include leadership team orientation in September 2025, QEP topic collection in fall 2025, working group formation after

differentiated review results in November 2025, annual meeting in December 2025, and final CCR submission in September 2027, with the on-site review in March/April 2028 and final decision in December 2028.

- o **Differentiated Review Application:** The University has applied for differentiated review, which would reduce the number of Principles to address; the outcome will influence the organization and focus of working groups.
 - o **Working Group Responsibilities:** Leadership team members will help determine the composition of working groups, ensure effective organization, and support the groups in collecting evidence, drafting narratives, and meeting deadlines.
- **Guidance on Drafting Compliance Narratives:** Dr. Venetis and Dr. Hinojosa emphasized the importance of strictly adhering to the resource manual when drafting compliance narratives, answering only the questions asked and covering all required components to avoid unnecessary scrutiny.
 - o **Resource Manual Usage:** Team members were instructed to use the resource manual as the definitive guide for addressing each standard, ensuring that all required elements are covered without providing extraneous information.
 - o **Drafting and Review Process:** Multiple drafts and reviews will be conducted to ensure narratives are concise, complete, and do not introduce additional questions or issues.
- **Next Steps and Upcoming Meetings:** Vy Trang and Dr. Hinojosa outlined immediate next steps, including attendance at the SACSCOC annual meeting in December, a debrief meeting for the leadership team, and the distribution of meeting materials and resources.
 - o **Annual Meeting Attendance:** Five leadership team members—Dr. Thomas, Dr. Brecheen, Dr. Hinojosa, Greg Argueta, and Dr. Moore—will attend the SACSCOC Annual Meeting in Nashville, TN, along with the University President.
 - o **Debrief and Future Meetings:** A debrief meeting is scheduled for December 15th to discuss insights from the annual meeting and plan next steps for the leadership team.
 - o **Resource Distribution:** The team will receive a summary of the current meeting, slides, and all relevant links, including the Dr. Venetis's SACSCOC website for further reference.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Monitoring Past Accreditation Citations:** Conduct follow-up conversations with Dr. Nichols, Dr. González, and Provost Musselman to identify and address any areas previously cited in accreditation, ensuring they are monitored and prepared for the upcoming reaffirmation. (Dr. Hinojosa, Dr. Nichols, Dr. González, Provost Musselman)
- **QEP Topic Collection:** Begin collecting topic ideas for the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) across campus, coordinating with Dr. Moore to organize the solicitation process. (Dr. Hinojosa, Dr. Moore)
- **Working Group Organization:** Determine the composition and organization of SACSCOC working groups after receiving the differentiated review decision, ensuring appropriate

representation and readiness to address required Principles. (Dr. Hinojosa, the leadership team)

- **Differentiated Review Status:** Follow up on the decision from the peer review committee regarding eligibility for differentiated review and communicate the outcome to the leadership team. (Dr. Hinojosa)
- **Annual Meeting Debrief:** Hold a debrief meeting with the leadership team after the SACSCOC annual meeting to share learnings and discuss next steps for the reaffirmation process. (Dr. Thomas, Dr. Brecheen, Dr. Hinojosa, Greg Argueta, Dr. Moore, the leadership team)
- **Resource Manual Distribution:** Share the SACSCOC resource manual with the leadership team at the next meeting to guide drafting and evidence collection for the compliance report. (Dr. Hinojosa)
- **Meeting Summary Distribution:** Send a summary of the meeting, slides, and all relevant links shared in the chat to the leadership team for reference and follow-up. (Dr. Hinojosa)