

2028 SACSCOC Reaffirmation Leadership Team Meeting
August 27, 2026, 2 pm – 3 pm
Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Chandramallika Basak, Lev Gelb, Dustin Grabsch, Raúl Hinojosa Jr., Nate Howe, Jennifer McDowell, Clark Meyer, Melody Monjazebe, Sarah Moore, Vicky Morris-Dueer, William (Bill) Nichols, Robin Paige, Gloria Shenoy, Stephen Spiro, Eric Van Leeuwen, Mary Jo Venetis, Angela Franklin

Absent: Juan González, Rafael Martín, William Nichols, Amanda Smith, Vy Trang

Meeting Notes

- **Working Group Progress And Evidence Collection:** Dr. Raúl Hinojosa coordinated updates from the working-group chairs, with Eric Van Leeuwen, Dr. Stephen Spiro, Dr. Gloria Shenoy, Melody Monjazebe, Nate Howe, and Dr. Dustin Grabsch, and others reporting on evidence gathering, narrative drafting, data methodology, deadlines, and unresolved information gaps.
 - **Curriculum Design and Educational Policies and Practices Working Group:** Eric Van Leeuwen reported that the Curriculum Design and Educational Policies and Practices group has clarified its charge and is actively collecting evidence. The group held a working meeting before classes began, and smaller subgroups are meeting between sessions to complete evidence gathering. No major obstacles were identified, although general-education and state-level requirements remain a moving target that may require adjustments.
 - **Faculty and Academic Administration Working Group:** Dr. Spiro explained that the Faculty and Academic Administration group reviewed the Fifth-Year Interim Report and is defining consistent methods for identifying faculty, tenure status, program affiliation, workload, qualifications, and credentialing. The group plans to use the methodology previously applied by Dr. Chris Wendt, investigate automated extraction from FacBook, assign faculty and FTE across programs, and compile historical data for academic years 2024–2026 using agreed census dates, with November 1 suggested as the date.
 - **Student Success Outcomes, Assessment and Support Working Group:** Dr. Shenoy reported that the Student Success, Outcomes, Assessment, and Support group has met four times and is working in parallel across four distinct principles. Members reviewed documents submitted to the SACSCOC/UT Dallas document review and annotated narrative drafts with relevant evidence. One draft is approximately 60% complete; the remaining areas require additional contributions, including student support services, library documentation, and student complaint logs and procedures.
 - **University Financial, Information Technology and Physical Resources Working Group:** Melody Monjazebe reported that the University Financial, Information Technology, and Physical Resources group assigned principles to departments and set an internal submission deadline for the following Friday, August 28, 2026. Physical-resource documentation was arriving more readily than

financial information because FY2026 does not close until August 31 and financial data will not be available until September. Existing reports and charts covering the prior four years are being prepared for rapid updating, while FY2027 information may initially rely on interim values and later be replaced with unaudited data.

- o **Mission, Governance, and Administration Working Group:** Dr. Hinojosa reported that the Mission, Governance, and Administration group is collecting evidence on intercollegiate activities, presidential oversight, new vice-president responsibilities, and academic administration, with contributions from Marco Mendoza, Dr. Venetis, Dr. Serenity King at UT System and other UT System sources.
 - o **Institutional Planning and Success Metrics Working Group:** Dr. Hinojosa reported that the Institutional Planning and Effectiveness group has not yet formally convened because it is waiting for the Roadmap 2030 strategy process to reach a public-plan stage; Dr. Dustin Grabsch is nevertheless tracking evidence for the institutional planning requirement.
- **SACSCOC Revision and Transition Timeline:** Dr. Hinojosa and Dr. Moore briefed the group on SACSCOC's proposed revision of its accreditation principles, including expected draft and approval dates, reviewer training, review-cycle changes, and the proposed transition options affecting UT Dallas's Class of 2028 reaffirmation.
 - o **Draft Revision Status:** Dr. Hinojosa reported that SACSCOC received approximately 400 sets of comments on the June 1 draft, including UT Dallas's institutional feedback. SACSCOC is revising the draft, with libraries identified as a major area of change and federal requirements expected to be restored in the next version. The next draft is expected in late September or early October, followed by a short feedback period; the Delegate Assembly is expected to vote in December 2026.
 - o **New Framework Structure:** The proposal would consolidate 73 current standards across 14 sections into 31 draft standards organized into four domains: Institutional Stability, Quality Education, Student Success, and Compliance with Regulations. Dr. Hinojosa emphasized that the June version is only a discussion draft and is not yet officially adopted.
 - o **Transition Classes:** Dr. Hinojosa explained the proposed transition plan: the Class of 2027 would respond to the current standards; the Class of 2028, including UT Dallas and UT Austin, would choose between the current standards and the new standards, while the Class of 2029 would be expected to use the new standards. UT Dallas's differentiated review status would continue to reduce the number of standards required if the current framework is selected.
 - o **Review Cycles And Training:** Dr. Moore reported that SACSCOC may vote in December to move to seven-year review cycles, eliminating the five-year review, although the placement of institutions in the revised cycle is not yet known. Dr. Hinojosa added that SACSCOC plans to train evaluators on the new principles beginning at the annual conference and through additional sessions during the following spring. This training schedule and the timing of UT Dallas's decision are factors the institution must consider.

- o **Quality Enhancement Plan And AI:** Dr. Moore reported that several institutions are discontinuing traditional QEPs, as UT Dallas plans to do, while using ongoing Roadmap 2030 and student-success work to address related priorities. Sarah also described potential uses of artificial intelligence in reaffirmation, including review portals, drafting support, proofreading, cross-checking, fact-checking, and generating materials for broader distribution; she plans to research effective implementation, with AI supplementing rather than replacing institutional work.
- **Draft Standards Crosswalk And Institutional Implications:** Dr. Hinojosa walked the group through the crosswalk between the proposed 31 standards and the 2024 principles, identifying standards that remain aligned, change, become new obligations, or are eliminated and outlining likely evidence needs for UT Dallas.
 - o **Institutional Stability:** The draft consolidates governance, CEO capacity, planning, finance, external funds, facilities, technology, and safety requirements. Potential additional obligations include administrative effectiveness, control of financial resources, sponsored research and external funds, and institutional-environment safety requirements. Dr. Hinojosa indicated that UT Dallas has prior experience and existing evidence for several areas, while financial documentation may require three years of data and further review of the exact language.
 - o **Quality Education:** The proposed framework changes undergraduate general-education requirements by removing prescriptive course-category and minimum-credit details and instead requiring an institutional rationale for the core. It adds or expands expectations concerning graduate curriculum, workforce alignment, transfer and prior learning, general-education assessment, and institutional credits for graduation. Dr. Hinojosa noted that UT Dallas already has relevant policies, program-approval processes, industry feedback, assessment activity, and roadmap work that could support these responses.
 - o **Faculty Requirements:** The proposed faculty standard shifts emphasis from the number of full-time faculty to whether programs are sufficiently supported by qualified faculty. The qualifications standard would focus more directly on credentialing policies, processes, documented exceptions, and justifications. Dr. Hinojosa said the team must ensure that faculty qualification decisions are consistently codified, documented, and supported by guidance while continuing the faculty-count and FTE analysis already underway.
 - o **Student Success And Compliance:** The draft combines student outcomes, academic and student support, student rights, privacy, admissions transparency, public materials, accreditation status, agency representation, and substantive change. New or expanded areas may include post-matriculation financial outcomes, assistance with post-completion transitions, student rights, and substantive-change reporting. Dr. Hinojosa connected these areas to existing work by Vicky Morris-Dueer and the Office of Institutional Success and Decision Support (OISDS) staff, the Roadmap 2030, student-support units, and the current revision of the substantive-change policy.
 - o **Eliminated Requirements:** Dr. Hinojosa noted that several current differentiated-review requirements would have no distinct counterpart in the draft, including specific library staffing and access requirements, some student-support

staffing language, and certain branch or off-campus-site provisions. The quality enhancement plan is the most consequential eliminated item; the other removals were described as relatively limited because related expectations are absorbed into broader standards.

- **Reaffirmation Strategy And Continued Work:** Dr. Hinojosa directed all working groups to continue their current evidence and narrative work while the leadership team develops an informed recommendation on whether UT Dallas should use the proposed standards or retain differentiated review.
 - o **No Working-Group Pivot:** Dr. Hinojosa instructed the working groups not to change course because nearly all differentiated-review principles are represented in some form in the draft standards. Evidence collection and initial narrative drafting should continue; any adjustments to narratives or responses can be made during the spring after the final standards and guidance are available.
 - o **Decision Process:** Dr. Hinojosa clarified that the meeting was intended to provide background and initiate discussion, not to produce an immediate recommendation. The group will revisit the issue over the next several months, particularly after the next SACSCOC draft and handbook are released and will ultimately develop a recommendation for institutional leadership before the December decision point.
 - o **Fast-Track Question:** Jennifer McDowell asked whether the revised program-length language would remove UT Dallas from recurring scrutiny of fast-track programs. Dr. Hinojosa answered that he could not guarantee this because evaluators will have access to prior reports and may continue asking questions, although UT Dallas has added policies, procedures, and controls in response to prior reviews.
 - o **Off-Campus Sites:** Dr. Grabsch asked whether the draft changes requirements for off-campus instructional sites or branch campuses. Dr. Hinojosa answered that related requirements are largely consolidated without materially changing expectations, and some SACSCOC reporting and approval processes have been streamlined. He noted that separate Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and UT System requirements, especially for new programs, still need to be considered.
 - o **Accreditor Considerations:** Dr. Lev Gelb asked whether changes of this scale are typical and whether the decision would affect future reviews. Dr. Hinojosa said changes of this magnitude are unusual, although federal pressure is contributing to the current revisions, and the selected framework would likely shape the standards used in the next longer review cycle. Dr. William Nichols asked whether UT Dallas might change accreditors; Dr. Hinojosa said the current system view is not to seek a move from SACSCOC, although legislative or system direction could change that, and noted that the Commission on Public Higher Education is a possible alternative whose standards appear broadly consistent with emerging federal and SACSCOC expectations.

Follow-up tasks:

- **Faculty Data Methodology:** Finalize the methodology for assigning faculty to programs and distributing faculty FTE across programs, using the prior methodology as the default where appropriate. (Stephen Spiro, Mary Jo Venetis)
- **Historical Faculty Data:** Compile faculty data for academic years 2024–2026 using agreed census dates, with November 1 identified as the proposed date for each year. (Stephen Spiro, Mary Jo Venetis)
- **Faculty Principle Assignments:** Assign working-group members to specific accreditation principles. (Stephen Spiro, Mary Jo Venetis)
- **Student Support Narrative:** Hold a working session to develop the remaining student-support narrative, including input from the Career Center, Registrar, and other relevant offices. (Gloria Shenoy, Amanda Smith)
- **Library Narrative:** Draft the library narrative from the submitted documentation and meet with library representatives to review it. (Gloria Shenoy)
- **Student Complaint Evidence:** Collect the remaining student-complaint documentation and incorporate complaint logs and handling processes into the narrative. (Gloria Shenoy, Amanda Smith)
- **Financial Evidence:** Update the financial charts, graphs, and narratives when FY2026 data becomes available after the August 31 fiscal-year close and plan a later update for FY2027 data. (Melody Monjazebe)
- **IT Documentation Review:** Review the submitted IT documentation and analyses. (Nate Howe)
- **Governance Evidence:** Obtain evidence on intercollegiate activities and presidential oversight, new vice presidents' responsibilities, and academic-administration information for the governance and administration principles. (Raul Hinojosa, Mary Jo Venetis)