

**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)**
<http://www.sacscoc.org>

**Disclosure Statement Regarding the Status of
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY
Edinburg, Texas
Issued December 15, 2016, by SACSCOC**

The following publicly available information is provided by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) concerning the accreditation of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Information presented below is in accord with SACSCOC's disclosure policy; staff of the Commission cannot comment further on questions specifically related to the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The institution has reviewed this statement prior to public posting.

Action by SACSCOC's Board of Trustees took place on December 4, 2016, and the institution's next review is December 2017.

What is the accreditation status of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley? The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges; however, the institution was placed on Probation following receipt of self-disclosed information submitted as part of a withdrawn merger application and receipt of a completed Institutional Summary Form. Prior to the institution's next review by SACSCOC's Board of Trustees in December 2017, a Special Committee will conduct an on-site evaluation of the institution's compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*—the accreditation standards of the Commission. SACSCOC's accreditation includes all components of the institution—all programs, branch campuses, off-campus sites, and distance learning programs as reported to the Commission; thus, the Probation status applies to the entire institution.

What does it mean to be placed on Probation? Probation is the most serious sanction imposed by SACSCOC's Board of Trustees short of loss of accreditation. It can be imposed on an institution for failure to correct deficiencies of significant non-compliance with the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, or Federal Requirements of the *Principles of Accreditation* of the Commission; failure to make timely and significant progress toward correcting the deficiencies; or failure to comply with Commission policies and procedures. Probation is an indication of the gravity of non-compliance with the *Principles*. Probation may be imposed upon initial institutional review, depending on the judgment of the Commission of the seriousness of the non-compliance or in the case of repeated violations recognized by SACSCOC's Board of Trustees over a period of time. The maximum consecutive time that an institution may be on Probation is two years. In December 2017, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley will conclude 12 months on Probation. For additional information about sanctions, refer to SACSCOC's policy entitled "Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership" that can be accessed at <http://www.sacscoc.org/policies.asp>.

Why was the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley continued in accreditation and placed on Probation? The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley was continued in accreditation and placed on Probation because SACSCOC's Board of Trustees determined that it had failed to demonstrate compliance with Principle 1.1 (Integrity), Comprehensive Standard 3.4.4 (Acceptance of academic credit), Comprehensive Standard 3.4.7 (Consortial relationships/contractual agreements), Comprehensive Standard 3.5.2 (Institutional credits for a degree), Comprehensive Standard 3.6.3 (Institutional credits for a graduate degree), Comprehensive Standard 3.10.2 (Financial aid audits), Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 (Substantive change), Comprehensive Standard 3.13 (Policy compliance: "Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status"), Comprehensive Standard 3.14.1 (Publication of accreditation status), and Federal Requirement 4.6 (Recruitment materials) of the *Principles of Accreditation*. The cited standards expect an accredited institution to provide evidence that it (1) operates with integrity in all matters, (2) publishes and implements policies for the awarding of credit, (3) ensures the quality of courses offered through contractual agreements, (4) ensures that 25 percent of credit hours for an undergraduate degree and one-third for a graduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree, (5) provides financial aid audits, (6) meets provisions of SACSCOC Substantive Change policy, (7) accurately represents its accredited status, and (8) ensures that recruitment materials accurately represent the institution. (To read the full statements for the standards cited above, access the *Principles of Accreditation* at <http://www.sacscoc.org/principles.asp>.)

What will happen in December 2017? SACSCOC's Board of Trustees will consider the accreditation status of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley following review of a Monitoring Report submitted by the institution addressing the standards cited above for non-compliance, and the report of a Special Committee that will visit the institution in fall 2017. The Board will have the following options: (1) remove the institution from Probation without an additional report; (2) continue accreditation, continue Probation, authorize a Special Committee, and request an additional report; and (3) remove the institution from membership for failure to comply with the *Principles of Accreditation*. Commission staff will not speculate on what decision might be made by the SACSCOC's Board of Trustees in December 2017.

For additional information regarding SACSCOC's accreditation process, access the *Principles of Accreditation* (<http://www.sacscoc.org/principles.asp>).