Merger 101: One Institution’s Experience Merging SACSCOC and non-SACSCOC Institutions

PRESENTED BY:
Dr. Jay D. Marr, President
Dr. Diana Lawrence, Senior Vice President/Provost
Sullivan University

Sullivan University

- Founded in 1962
- Private, proprietary owned by the Sullivan Family
- Locations throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky
- SACSCOC-accredited since 1979
- Level V Institution offering two doctoral programs
  - UNDERGRADUATE: Business Programs; Nursing and Allied Health; Technology; Hospitality; Legal Studies; Pharmacy and Health Sciences
  - GRADUATE: Master’s in business and IT-related programs; Master’s in Physician Assistant; Ph.D. in Management; Doctor of Pharmacy
- Enrollment
- Programs licensed, approved or accredited by 21 other bodies.
- Pre-merger, Sullivan University was the flagship institution of three school brands owned by the Sullivan University System, Inc. Post-merger, Sullivan University is the only school brand.
**Spencerian College**
- Founded in 1892 as the Spencerian Commercial School by Enos Spencer
- ACICS accredited until 2017; then ABHES accredited until merger
- Certificate, Diploma, Associate and Bachelor degrees
- Nursing and Allied Health Programs
- Owned by the Sullivan Family for over 40 years

**Sullivan College of Technology and Design**
- Founded in 1961 as the Louisville Technical Institute
- ACICS accredited until merger
- Certificate, Diploma, Associate and Bachelor degrees
- Advanced manufacturing; HVAC-R; Interior Design; Dynamic Web Development; CADD
- Owned by the Sullivan Family for over 30 years

---

**The Merger - How did we get to a decision to merge?**

- Ownership, Administration and the Board had discussed for 10+ years
- In February 2017, during a normal meeting, the Board decided to pursue the merger
- In March 2017, a conference call was held with SACSCOC officials to discuss the process
- Shortly thereafter, a Prospectus was submitted
- Prospectus went to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees in June 2017
- In September 2017, a Substantive Change Committee visited
  - One recommendation followed for what became 13.3, Financial Responsibility
  - Timing prevented review by the Board in December 2017
- In June 2018, the SACSCOC Board voted to approve merger of the three institutions into the singular Sullivan University
- Now, to the details...
Preparation - For Substantive Change

- Development of new organizational structure
  - The New SU
  - Pre-merger, merges (COP/PA, online/main)
- Refinement of policies and procedures
  - Workgroups to explore best practices among the institutions
- Communication to all constituencies
  - Various methods
  - Preparation to work with other regulators

Academic Affairs - Accreditation, Compliance & Licensing

- Institutional Accreditation Requirements
  - Three different institutional accrediting body standards
  - Establish common ground
  - Translate standards to standards
  - Preparation for Substantive Change visit
- Programmatic Accreditation Requirements
  - Chicken and the egg
  - Programs licensed, approved or accredited by 21 other bodies
  - Various ways to measure credits, contact and/or platform hours
Academic Affairs - Faculty & Academic Leadership

- Institutional requirements - credentials
- Programmatic requirements
- Not Designed for Transfer (NDT)
- Responsibilities
  - Cultural differences
    - Job descriptions
  - Academic Leadership Teaching Load Rubric
    - Common ground
  - Faculty teaching load variances
    - Cultural
    - Curricular

Academic Affairs - Program Design, Delivery & Assessment

- Program Design
  - Standardize: Program Mapping/Design, Course Mapping
  - Training: Program reviews, program costs, etc.
- Delivery
  - Merge online and residential
  - Standardize & define (hybrid, online, etc.)
- Assessment
  - Changes to Planning & Evaluation Coordinating Council (PECC)
    - Assessment Plan - Description, assessment, budget, resources, & improvement
    - Evaluation - PECC serves as a formative evaluation resource
    - Seven Step Improvement Circle, achievement/progress, & satisfaction
    - Change in structure and coaching model implementation
Significant Challenges - Issues to be aware of & avoid through planning

- Cultural resistance
- Timing
- Communication
  - Messages and desired effect
  - Institutional, locational & individual
- What would we have done differently?

Questions & Answers
Thank you for joining us today!

Sullivan University

Dr. Jay D. Marr
jmarr@Sullivan.edu
502-456-6504

Dr. Diana Lawrence
dlawrence@Sullivan.edu
502-456-6504