

## MEMORANDUM

TO: SACSCOC Membership  
FROM: Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, President  
DATE: July 14, 2025  
SUBJECT: Update from the June 2025 SACSCOC Board Meeting

Greetings, Colleagues. I hope you're enjoying a bit of down time this summer and finding ways to beat the heat. This is my FINAL update from a SACSCOC Board meeting as I will be retiring on July 31, 2025. I want to THANK YOU all for the support, encouragement, and friendship that you have provided me during my 20-year tenure as President of this organization. It has been a privilege and my pleasure to have served you all and I wish you continued success going forward. Dr. Stephen Pruitt, the incoming president, is already on board and I am confident he will be as responsive to you as I have tried to be. You can reach him at [spruitt@sacscoc.org](mailto:spruitt@sacscoc.org).

If you have any questions about the information in this memorandum, please feel free to contact me through July 31st.

### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Due to the expiration of Board terms in December for all except one of the current Executive Council members, four Executive Council members stepped down from the Council at the end of June to assist in providing continued stability for the Executive Council. In addition, Dr. Matteel Knowles announced that she would be stepping down from the Executive Council and Board due to retirement. Accordingly, the following Board members have been appointed by the Chairman of the SACSCOC Board to serve on the Executive Council through December, at which time they will be eligible for re-election to the Council by the Board and College Delegate Assembly:

- Dr. Roslyn Clark Artis, President, Benedict College, Columbia, SC
- Dr. Katie Busby, Director of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning, University of Mississippi, University, MS

- Dr. John P. Marsden, President, Midway University, Midway, KY
- Dr. William Serrata, President, El Paso County Community College District, El Paso, TX
- Dr. Connie R. Walton, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Grambling State University, Grambling, LA

## **BUDGET**

For the 18<sup>th</sup> straight year, SACSCOC had a ‘clean’ audit. Thanks to Lisa Robinson and her staff for a job well done. We projected to end the fiscal year’s operational budget in the black this year. There were no extenuating circumstances reported and medical expenses are within the budget projections. Our investment account holdings as of March 31, 2025, were \$10.4 million even after money was withdrawn to cover the cost of recruiting a new CEO, the retirement celebration for the outgoing President that was held at the Annual meeting, and projected expenses for the Scholarship Gala to be held August 1, 2025.

## **LEGAL ISSUES**

Pat McKee, SACSCOC legal counsel, reported on the impending arbitration with St. Augustine’s University. The SACSCOC Board voted to drop the institution from membership in December 2024 for a second time after the previous Arbitration Panel remanded the case back to the Board. The institution appealed that decision but lost the appeal. The arbitration hearing was held June 26<sup>th</sup>. On July 14, 2025, the Arbitration Panel affirmed the decision of the Appeals Committee of the College Delegate Assembly. As of July 14, 2025, Saint Augustine’s University has been removed from membership with SACSCOC.

## **SMALL COLLEGE INITIATIVE**

The 2025 Small College Initiative which focused on the SACSCOC Standards related to Institutional Finance was held April 8, 2025. CEOs and CFOs were the targeted audience, and 154 registrants attended. More than one-third (59) completed the evaluation provided after the meeting with 89% reported being very satisfied, and 98% rating the overall value for their professional development as either extremely valuable or very valuable and 99% rated the overall value of the event to their institution as either extremely or very valuable.

## **POLICIES**

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees reviewed the following new or revised policies and guidelines. A summary document outlining the policy changes can be found [here](#).

A summary of approved revisions to the Substantive Change policy in [December 2024](#) and [June 2025](#) are also provided as information.

## **SACSCOC STAFF REPORTS**

### 2023-2028 Strategic Plan

There are six strategic goals for the SACSCOC Strategic Plan for 2023-2028: promoting quality and achievement, leveraging technology, expanding training, communicating successes, supporting pathways to membership and expanding staff support. An update on the progress of the plan was provided.

### Substantive Change

There have been requests from 579 or 74% of the member institutions which is down from 660 institutions last year. A new email has been developed to respond to questions related to substantive change issues which is [subchange@sacscoc.org](mailto:subchange@sacscoc.org).

## **EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

CHEA recognition was renewed for seven years, the maximum number of years possible. There is one follow-up item related to international members to which SACSCOC will need to respond. Also, the U.S. Department of Education granted the additional 1.5 years on the current five-year recognition after SACSCOC responded to the Monitoring Report issues. The next recognition will take place in 2026.

Again, let me thank you for EVERYTHING! While I won't see you at SACSCOC meetings, don't be surprised if I drop in for a friendly visit as I travel for leisure. Best of luck to you all as you continue to focus on student success. As we say in the South, "Happy Trails to You, Until We Meet Again."