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Summer Institute
July 24, 2018



Section 14
Transparency
and
Institutional Representation



WYSIWYG!



An institution is responsible for **representing accurately to the public** its status and relationship with SACSCOC; **reporting accurately to the public** its status with state or the federal government, if receiving funding from either or both; **maintaining openness** in all accreditation-related activities; **ensuring the availability of institutional policies** to students and the public; and **publishing appropriate information** with respect to student achievement.



14.1
Publication of accreditation status



Representation of accreditation status

- Only member/candidate institutions
 - Statements from the 2012 Edition of the Principles of Accreditation (CS 3.14.1) are now in SACSCOC policy "Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure"
 - No statement allowed regarding possible future accreditation by SACSCOC
- Accreditation is institutional; SACSCOC does not accredit individual degrees or programs
- Accreditation is binary – "partial" accreditation is not possible



Collaborative arrangements

- Partnering with a non-SACSCOC accredited institution?
 - Accreditation is not “transitive”
 - Disclaimer statement – See SACSCOC Policy “Agreements involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards”
 - Avoid use of the SACSCOC trademarked Logo
 - International institutions may need particular vigilance
- Responsibility for compliance and transparency falls on SACSCOC institution(s)



Branch campuses

- Somewhat separate by nature
- May have history of independence that remains largely intact
- Include name of accredited institution in the name of the branch campus
- Clear that the accreditation of the branch depends on the accreditation of the “parent”
- If branch is too independent, a committee may recommend separate accreditation



14.2 *Substantive change*



Significant departure(s)

- Substantive changes are common reality; explosion over the past ten years
- Proper reporting and approval vital to ongoing financial aid for students in programs/at locations
- Institutional policy/procedures aligned with SACSCOC policy/procedures
- Clear and functional organizational structure for identifying, reporting, and managing substantive changes



14.3
Comprehensive institutional reviews



Distance learning

- Off-campus instructional sites – including branch campuses and online
- Something of a “catch-all” standard, since the evidence of review and application of “appropriate standards and policies” is found in narrative and supporting documentation for those standards
- Under 25%, 25-49%, and 50% thresholds
- New policy on “Dual Enrollment”



14.4
Representation to other agencies



Accurate representation

- SACSCOC Policy “Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies” – “identical terms”
 - Purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituents
 - Not “identical statement”
 - Particular issue with programmatic accreditors where institution is silent on the relationship between program and the entire institution
- Just USDOE recognized agencies



Change of accreditation status

- Institutional responsibility to notify all accreditors of changes in accreditation status (sanction, voluntary withdrawal, etc.)
- Accreditors are usually copied on such action letters, but....
- And...accreditors will usually follow up to make sure that such decisions don't indicate non-compliance with their own standards



14.5
Policy compliance



What else is there?

- Accreditation standards reviewed every three and five (or so) years
- In interim, policies may need to be established to address USDOE "dear colleague" letters or other changes in the higher education landscape
- Some SACSCOC policies apply only to SACSCOC
- Others require institutional action/response
- 2018 revision of the POA incorporated all but two SACSCOC policies requiring institutional action/response into the language of the Standards
 - 14.5.a – System description
 - 14.5.b – Separate accreditation



What needs clearing up?


