



This document is a list of notes taken at the Lonestar Workshop in Austin, November 4, 2004. Dr. Margaret Sullivan, Director of the SACS Consulting Network was the key speaker. Dr. Sullivan provided advice and insight regarding the current focus of SACS for Community Colleges in Texas. What follows is not a complete “how to” guide, but detailed notes taken by a workshop participant writing as fast as she could.

*For detailed description of each Core Requirement, refer to SACS document, 2001: Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement.*

## **2.1 Degree-granting Authority**

- Validate:
- Include quotations from legislature, board documents and by-laws that support the facts.
- Provide links to websites, highlight appropriate material.

## **2.1 Governing Board**

- Include names, occupations, terms, locations.
- Make sure roster matches current catalog.
- Simple declarative sentences do not suffice as responses.
- Include board minutes that show that all members are present and active in proceedings, minutes that document that board members are policy makers, not just administrators.
- Minutes should include quotations.
- Provide ethics statements that each board member signs before taking office.

## **2.4 Institutional Mission**

- The mission statement is a good kickoff to a good assessment program. It should not be a one-sentence statement.
- Demonstrate frequent review, board approval, faculty input, support of new initiatives.
- It should be measurable.

## **2.5 Institutional Effectiveness**

- This response should be a critical analysis: do not be brief.
- It should include mentions of program changes, evidence of continuous improvement.
- Thoroughness cannot be overdone.
- Include an analysis of all documentation, and a letter of commitment from the president of the institution.

- When presenting budgetary evidence, include accurate dates and a discussion of the planning process related to budgetary decisions.
- Check faculty credentials in certification programs.
- Complete crosswalks of common courses.

## **2.6 Continuous Operation**

- Provide complete information about degree programs with charts, graphs about graduation rates, transfers, and a comparison to the last review.
- Number of graduates should reflect # dollars in budget per program.
- Remember that your compliance committee will not be from Texas—educate them.

### **2.7.1 Program Length**

- Don't only refer to website or catalog; provide separate documentation.

### **2.7.2 Program Content**

- Define what a “coherent course of study” is.
- Include a description of the core, student outcomes, differentiation of transfer and vo-tech courses and why, how advisors are kept up to date, the role of electives, process for changing majors, how information is distributed.

### **2.7.3 General Education**

- Document a composite set of outcomes with means for evaluation, making comparisons to other institutions, grade distributions, and external tests with national norms.
- Be able to relate each course outcome to type of assessment.
- If a particular outcome is embedded in all courses (computer literacy), be able to demonstrate the corresponding course outcomes.
- Note that curriculum changes must be based on student outcomes, assessments, and student performance in pre and post assessments or comparisons to other institutions—not just based on faculty ideas.

### **2.7.4 Contractual Agreements for Instruction**

- Include minutes of all arrangements.

## **2.8 Faculty**

- Be concerned with faculty to student ratio, full-time to part-time faculty ratio, credit hours produced by full-time and part-time faculty by department, program and location, faculty changing teaching responsibilities, and adjunct qualification.
- Include comparison to a sister institution.
- Begin a review of faculty credentialing ASAP.

## **2.9 Learning Resources and Services**

- Describe all resources, include digital photos, and describe space, staffing, holdings, virtual agreements, and budgetary concerns.

## 2.10 Student Support Services

- Document every student service function possible.
- Include plans for evaluation of services and document follow-up.

## 2.11 Resources

- Connect documentation to strategic planning; include audits, evidence of planning and approval process.

## 2.12 Quality Enhancement Plan

- Identify QEP projects, issues from baseline data.
- Include a literature review of relevant topic.
- Correlate student learning outcomes to the types of students in each program/course.
- Demonstrate that whole campus was involved in selection of QEP topic and that all are supportive and involved.
- Include implementation schedule and identify if outcome is a content change or student behavior change.
- Provide evidence of communication regarding projects.
- Institutional Research and Effectiveness office should be involved and providing statistical support.
- Demonstrate that the QEP is a dynamic instrument-which it evolves with implementation.
- *A Project Director is necessary.*
- Plans to plan will not fly.
- Include budget support for a 5 year project.
- The QEP is the link between compliance with core requirements and compliance with comprehensive standards—all under the umbrella of the institution's mission.