



## **MEMORANDUM**

TO: SACSCOC Membership  
FROM: Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, President  
DATE: June 19, 2024  
SUBJECT: Update from the June 2024 SACSCOC Board of Trustees Meeting

I hope this message finds you enjoying some much-deserved down time, catching up on your rest, and enjoying some relaxation. This memo is being sent as a way of sharing information from the SACSCOC Board of Trustees meeting that was held a couple of weeks ago, as well as providing some informational tidbits. As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

### **RETIREMENT ANNOUNCEMENT**

It is official, I have notified the Executive Council of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees of my intent to retire from my position as President effective July 2025. That will be the end of my 20<sup>th</sup> year as President and my 51<sup>st</sup> year as a professional educator, and I think it is time to call it a day. My sincerest thanks to everyone for their support during my tenure. Though there have been some trying times, I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to serve and represent all of you.

To provide a smooth transition for my successor, the Board voted to allow nine of the thirteen members of the Executive Council who would have ordinarily rolled off the Council to serve another year. Dr. Blaine Hansen will continue as Board Chair and Dr. Kemba Chambers will continue as Vice-Chair.

### **BUDGET**

The Board approved the FY25 budget for SACSCOC. It included a 5% pool for salary increases. Additionally, adjustments were made to present the revenue and expenditures more accurately for the upcoming annual meeting. We are in line with spending and revenue for the current year and our investment account holdings were right at \$10.9 million as of May 31, 2024. The Board also approved setting aside \$1 million for expenses to cover the presidential search process.

### **LEGAL ISSUES**

Pat McKee, SACSCOC legal counsel, reported that the only legal matter in which we are currently involved is the arbitration process with St. Augustine's University. The institution was dropped from membership last December, appealed the decision, and lost the appeal. The next step is arbitration.

### **SMALL COLLEGE INITIAITVE**

The 2024 Small College Initiative focused on *Effective Governance*. The meeting was held on April 9, 2024, and presidents and board chairs from institutions with 2,500 FTEs or fewer were the

targeted audience. Feedback from the participants showed that the conversations were relevant, timely, and helpful.

## **POLICIES**

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees approved a new interpretation of Standard 12.6 (Student Debt and Financial Literacy) to include the expectation for member colleges and universities to identify a Key Post-Matriculation Financial Indicator (KPMFI) measure. This reinterpretation allows institutions to address a new Department of Education requirement without adding a new standard. Institutions are expected to monitor, evaluate, and report on student post-college financial outcomes. Institutions will be asked to identify a KPMFI in early spring 2025 and the Interpretation will go into effect in September 2025 with the submission of Compliance Certifications Reports by Reaffirmation Class of 2026, Track B, institutions. In the coming months, SACSCOC staff will support member institutions by providing additional information on student financial outcomes via a technical paper, a series of webinars, and presentations at various SACSCOC events and other professional meetings.

A revision was made to an interpretation of Core Requirement 8.1 (Student Achievement) which clarifies expectations for disaggregation of student achievement data as identified by the member institution.

To align with changes in federal regulations and changes reflected in the *Principles of Accreditation* and the Resource Manual, the Board approved deletion of Section 1.02 regarding the geographical references in the SACSCOC By-laws.

Nine (9) policies are highlighted in the attached "[OVERVIEW OF Policies June 2024](#)":

- Appeals Procedures for the College Delegate Assembly
- Disclosure for Accrediting Documents and Actions of SACSCOC
- Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership
- Ethical Obligations of Evaluators
- Ethical Obligations of Members of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees
- Fifth-Year Interim Review
- Integrity and Institutional Obligations to SACSCOC (this was tabled at the Board meeting for further clarification)
- Separate Accreditation
- Substantive Change Policy and Procedures

## **SACSCOC STAFF REPORTS**

### 2023-2028 Strategic Plan

Feedback on the status of activities for the first year of the SACSCOC Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 was presented to the Executive Council. The plan's theme is "Committed to Quality Since 1895." Six strategic goals of focus include: promoting quality and achievement, leveraging technology, expanding training, communicating successes, supporting pathways to membership, and expanding staff support.

### Substantive Change

Please remember, effective March 2024, ALL substantive change requests should now be submitted ONLINE via the Institutional Portal. Several changes to the Sub Change policy have been

made recently so please read the requirements BEFORE submitting letters or emails regarding such changes.

**PERSONNEL**

Effective June 30, 2024, Ms. Rosalind Fuse-Hall will retire as Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs and Commission Support. Her successor is Dr. Rae Borden who is returning to SACSCOC after having left to work at three institutions of higher education so she could understand accreditation from the institutional perspective. We wish “Roz” the best in her retirement and welcome Rae back home.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

An *ad hoc* committee was authorized to study a three-year degree in order to provide additional guidance to institutions considering offering them. Additionally, the staff was asked to develop more specific guidelines related to the use of artificial intelligence in reporting accreditation activities to SACSCOC and report back to the Board in December.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I wish you a healthy and safe summer break.

Best regards,

*Belle Wheelan*

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