

UT MARTIN ASSESSMENT NEWSLETTER

JULY 2017

Reports from the SACSCOC Summer Institute

The SACSCOC Summer Institute was held July 16-19 in Austin, TX. Approximately 1000 people attended the institute; UT Martin had four representatives.

In addition to various sessions on accreditation, assessment, and improving instruction, Dr. Belle Wheelan, President of SACSCOC, provided an update on the revisions to the *Principles of Accreditation*. Dr. Wheelan described the revisions to college and university presidents in an email sent July 26. According to Dr. Wheelan:

“...there were only a few substantive changes made to the standards. The most apparent differences will be the structure of the *Principles*, which are proposed to address 14 topical areas that resulted from input constituents provided during the Committee’s surveys throughout the process. The structural changes reduce redundancy, while increasing the intentional flow of information in reports. Core Requirements are identified within the topic areas. Further, particular attention was paid to several standards that surveyed constituents most often identified as problematic.”

SACSCOC is releasing the proposed revisions to the *Principles of Accreditation* on August 1. The document will be posted on the SACSCOC website (www.sacscoc.org) under the tab entitled “Accrediting Standards.” If approved in December by the full membership, the revisions will go into effect immediately, which will affect our Fifth Year Interim Report. Along with the revised *Principles of Accreditation* document, SACSCOC will post transitional information related to the submission of this report.

In addition to the revised *Principles*, the SACSCOC Board of Trustees has established a working group to examine the possibility of removing the QEP from the reaffirmation process while still retaining the goal of increasing student

achievement. More details regarding this working group and the consequences of removing the QEP from future reaffirmations will be shared as they develop.

Faculty Members Attend SACSCOC Institute

In an effort to expand campus SACSCOC knowledge and experience, UT Martin sent two faculty members to the SACSCOC Institute in Austin. Ms. Heidi Busch from the Paul Meek Library describes her experiences below. Dr. Melanie Bruce, Department of Management, Marketing, and Information Systems, will be featured in a later newsletter. The Chancellor’s Office is planning to send two more faculty/staff to the SACSCOC Annual Meeting in December. If you would like to be considered as an attendee at this meeting, please email Stephanie Kolitsch (styler@utm.edu) and Patty Flowers (pflowers@utm.edu) with a short explanation of what you hope to gain from attending the Annual Meeting. Emails should be sent to Stephanie and Patty by September 15 to accommodate travel logistics.

**Attending the 13th Annual Institute on
Quality Enhancement and Accreditation
Austin, Texas - July 15-19, 2017
Heidi Busch**

Being able to attend the SACS/COC Summer Institute in July was a great experience. I think one of my greatest insights was realizing, once again, our primary goal with assessment and accreditation is the same reason we are educators: To provide students with the opportunity to be successful. In one of the early sessions, the speaker stated that, as educators, our desired learning outcome is to picture what the student will look like when they graduate. It seems almost simplistic to

say that, “When you graduate, you should look like this...”, since in stepping back to see the whole picture we often are not able to see all the work that has gone into making that graduate a success. Only by looking at learning outcomes at the college, program, and class level can we see where the outcomes intertwine to allow for the development of the successful graduate of our institution. We show that our students can be successful by preparing them to achieve the outcomes that we have set in place at each level.

At the Institute I learned a great deal about nuts and bolts of assessment and accreditation. I attended a couple of sessions about the assessment standards and understanding how to read and use them to assist with creation of good student learning outcomes. One of the sessions I attended allowed us to take the principles (standards) and parse out the language to better understand what was being required. I also attended sessions dealing with critical thinking and ePortfolios, which provided other perspectives on avenues of learning

that our students could leverage to achieve success. I appreciated the opportunity to learn from other educators at this conference and would encourage others to attend if possible.

Update on Fifth Year Interim Report Progress

The UT Martin Fifth Year Interim Report has three main sections requiring detailed narratives: the report itself, consisting of 17 standards; the QEP Impact Report; and, for UT Martin, a separate follow-up report providing updated information on the five standards contained in previous Monitoring Reports.

We will begin working on the follow-up report after October 1, when academic assessment reports for 2016-17 begin arriving in our office. (One standard in the follow-up report also appears in the report with 17 standards and addresses academic program student learning outcomes.) We will keep you updated on our progress throughout the Fall semester.

