

Dr. Limbaugh's Notes from the SACS Leadership Team Meeting in Atlanta, June 2011.

1. Several changes to the Principles will go into effect upon their passage in December 2011. WE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ADHERENCE TO THESE REVISIONS when we submit our compliance certification.
2. Chief among the most recent changes approved by COC (and most costly) will be the authentication requirement for distance education students. The new distance education policy (as approved June 2010) specifically states that "At the time of review by the Commission, the institution must demonstrate that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as (1) a secure login and pass code, (2) proctored examinations, and (3) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification." Therefore, an immediate issue for Academic Affairs and Information Technology is identifying said "new technologies"—and finding the funding.
3. While I'm talking about distance education, COC emphasized that our report must have responses about distance education woven throughout the certification document as appropriate (e.g., when we're talking about student services or curriculum or anything else that would affect a DE student). So we'll need to tear apart the aforementioned distance education policy and be sure that we've addressed it adequately.
4. Another policy that we need to pay close attention to is the new SACS policy on policies and procedures (also adopted June 2010).
5. Emphasized more strongly than anything else was the integral relationship between assertion and documentation.
  - a. To show compliance with a standard, we can assert compliance but we must fully document.
  - b. To show partial compliance with a standard, we can assert same but we must show an action plan.
  - c. To show non-compliance with a standard, we can assert same but we must provide a thorough analysis of WHY we're non-compliant and include an action plan.
6. Also of concern was the issue of sampling when coupled with the question of how much documentation to provide. If we sample, we must provide an explanation of the sampling methodology to ensure that we offer a representative picture of our policies/actions/procedures.
7. If we shift procedures (e.g., IE efforts), we need to provide samples from both "old and new" in order to illustrate our efforts in improving a process.
8. Our report on strategic planning must show the link to ongoing self-improvement.

9. For 3.2.3 (Board conflict of interest), 3.2.5 (dismissal of board members), 3.7.5 (shared governance), and 4.5 (student complaints), we must show not only clear policies and procedures but also examples of implementation.
10. Assurance of 25% of hours in the discipline that are taught by terminal-degree-holding faculty is a big issue. Provide clearly-constructed tables that let reviewers see the percentages.
11. Another big issue is consortial agreements. If we have them, we need to provide not only the agreement but how we evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction being provided by the other institution. This is particularly important if we have consortial agreements with overseas institutions that provide courses that we accept toward our degrees. This concern doesn't involve any agreements we have for clinical placements and student teaching.