



Preparing for the Reaffirmation Visit of the **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges**¹

Texas A&M University-Central Texas
April 10 – 12, 2018

Contents

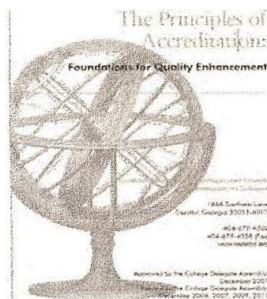
- | By the Numbers
- | General Schedule
- | Talking Points
- | Tips for the On-Site Visit/Possible Questions
- | Contact Information

¹ The creation of this document is the result of a similar document provided on Appalachian State University's website (<https://sacscoc.appstate.edu/sites/sacscoc.appstate.edu/files/Preparing%20for%20SACS%20Visit%20-%20comp.pdf>).

By the Numbers

98

Standards requiring a response in the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*



1

Opportunity for the team to review the Compliance Document and recommend yes to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees

2,660

Number of items contained in the Compliance Certification Document

110,142

Number of words contained in the A&M-Central Texas Compliance Certification Document

11

SACSCOC member institutions are located in 11 States, Latin America, and Dubai



10

Number of Team members on the Reaffirmation Site Committee. Nine committee members and one SACSCOC Vice President

17

Average number of standards that colleges and universities require follow-up on when turning in a Focused Report

11

Standards requiring a follow-up response in Texas A&M University-Central Texas' Focused Report

General Schedule

Monday, April 9, 2018

On-Site Review Team members begin to arrive in Killeen, Texas @ various times during the day

Interviews as requested with faculty, staff, and administrators to resolve lingering issues such as assessment, credentials, policies, or student complaints

Tuesday, April 10, 2018

On-Site Review Team to begin assessment of Compliance Certification report

Interviews as requested with faculty, staff, and administrators to resolve lingering issues such as assessment, credentials, policies, or student complaints

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

On-Site Review Team continues assessment of Compliance Certification report

Interviews as requested with faculty, staff, and administrators to resolve lingering issues such as assessment, credentials, policies, or student complaints. Reviewers make deliberations and decide on any final recommendations

Thursday, April 12, 2018

On-Site Review Team Exit interview with President Nigliazzo

Exit interview with the SACSCOC Leadership Team and University Council

December 2018

Final results of our reaffirmation of accreditation will be presented at the SACSCOC Annual Meeting in New Orleans

Need to Know

SACSCOC Review Committee Visit

Accreditation

Texas A&M University-Central Texas is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges and is a candidate for reaffirmation of our accreditation status in 2018.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of accreditation to universities. Regional accreditation is the way that the federal government ensures compliance with federal laws and mandates for higher education as well. Accreditation determines our eligibility to receive federal and state funds, our ability to transfer credits with other schools, and our ability to earn recognition from other universities, the business community and non-profit and government communities, and students.

Our campus SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is Dr. Jeff Kirk, Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Compliance Certification

The initial step in reaffirmation was the creation of a Compliance Certification report working group. The effort was led by Ms. Bridgit McCafferty and a leadership team from a cross section of the University. This group consisted of faculty and staff whose primary duties were focused on the review of our initial accreditation documents and the completion of our reaffirmation application. As part of this review, we submitted our Compliance Certification report, an extensive self-study of all aspects of the University, to SACSCOC in September 2017. Everyone on campus helped in some way, by participating in assessment, preparing needed reports and documentation, and helping to ensure our ongoing compliance with the 90+ standards required in the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*

(<http://sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>)

The Compliance Certification report we submitted was a detailed, systematic, thoughtful, and detailed representation of all areas of importance to any accredited University. A team of our peers from other Universities and Colleges in the SACSCOC region have read and analyzed our Certification Document report and supporting evidence and will follow up with an on-site visit in April 2018.

Focused Report

The Off-Site Reviewers requested more information on the following 11 areas:

- Institutional Effectiveness (CR 2.5): We must provide more information about the development of our strategic plan.
- Faculty (CR 2.8): We must provide more information about which full-time faculty members teach in each academic program.
- Financial Resources and Stability (CR 2.11.1): We must provide a financial audit.
- Board Conflict of Interest (CS 3.2.3): We must provide more information about how the A&M System Board of Regents handles conflicts of interest.
- Institutional Effectiveness related to Educational Programs, to include Student Learning Outcomes (CS 3.3.1.1): We must provide more information about how we assess our educational programs.
- Institutional Effectiveness related to Research within our Mission (CS 3.3.1.4)²
- Institutional Effectiveness related to Community/Public Service within our Mission (CS 3.3.1.5)³
- General Education Competencies (CS 3.5.1): We must provide more information about how we assess student general education competencies.
- Faculty Competence (CS 3.7.1): We must address credentialing questions about one faculty member.
- Financial Stability (CS 3.10.3): We must provide a financial audit.
- Policy Compliance (CS 3.13.1): We must provide more information about how we represent our institution to other accreditors.

We will submit the additional information required by the Off-Site Committee in our Focused Report response no later than February 27, 2018. The purpose of this report is to address areas of concern identified by the Off-Site Committee and provide additional evidence necessary to resolve any remaining concerns.

² Not required for our focused report as these are not an area for reporting in the new standards approved at the SACSCOC Annual Meeting in December 2017.

³ Not required for our focused report as these are not an area for reporting in the new standards approved at the SACSCOC Annual Meeting in December 2017.

On Call Possibility

We anticipate that most interviews will be pre-scheduled, but there is a chance the On-Site Review Committee may request to meet with individuals or groups of people (faculty, staff, or students) during their visit to understand specific issues related to compliance. Please mark April 10th thru 12th 2018 on your calendar and be flexible and readily available should the Review Committee ask to work with you during this time period. There may be interviews scheduled at the last minute. Thank you for your flexibility and willingness to meet with Review Committee members during that time!

Quality Enhancement Plan

As part of the reaffirmation process, every SACSCOC institution is required to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (or QEP) which “identifies key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.” The topic for our QEP is *A Community of Writers*.

The full draft of the QEP will be available on our website (<https://www.tamuct.edu/accreditation/index.html>). The plan is the product of many campus stakeholders, and the effort was guided by a team of faculty, staff, and students that included Dr. Bruce Bowles, Dr. Lisa Bunkowski, Dr. Ed Hill, Ms. Lisa Hopkins, Dr. Mary Kelly, Mr. Isaiah Vance, Mr. Paul York, Ms. Yvette Milo, Ms. Heather Chandler, and Dr. Morgan Lewing. Over the last two years, the QEP team met with various individuals and institutional units (i.e., President’s Executive Council, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Student Government, Student Affairs, University Library, and the three colleges) in order to develop the plan. These groups provided important guidance and insight into developing a QEP full of opportunities that capitalize on institutional strengths while promoting responsible stewardship.

The theme of the QEP, *A Community of Writers*, was established in response to an institutional need, and aligns with the university’s core values and Academic Master Plan. The articulated goals and outcomes established as a framework for the QEP embody and harness the university’s core values: *knowledge*, providing “educational experiences to encourage lifelong learning and intellectual curiosity” and *collaboration*, developing and maintaining “partnerships to serve the needs of our students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders”. The three goals of the Quality Enhancement Plan are to:

- Graduate proficient writers with the knowledge and skills essential to writing in a variety of disciplinary contexts;
- Support faculty in offering effective writing instruction; and
- Create a culture that fosters the development of student writing through deep learning experiences.

Before the SACSCOC On-site visit, the QEP Leadership Team needs to hear feedback via the QEP website and through multiple forums on campus. We will submit the finalized QEP Plan to the SACSCOC On-Site Review Committee members by the end of February. During the On-Site visit, the Review Committee will try to assess the feasibility of the Plan, and give us additional suggestions or recommendations. After they leave, we will begin work on any recommended changes, implementation of the Plan, and preparation for a progress report in five years.

The purpose of the QEP is to create a number of permanent changes that will improve learning across our institution – and those initiatives will develop and grow over time with your input and help.

Members of the On-Site Review Committee may approach anyone – faculty they meet in the elevator, students having lunch, staff whom they visit with during meetings and meals – and ask them if they know what our QEP topic is. Please be prepared!

Review Team

A&M-Central Texas is pleased to host the visit of the SACSCOC On-Site Review Committee members in April and to participate in the process of peer review, which helps to shape the quality and development of accredited universities throughout the country.

Profile of Dr. Melissa Canady Wargo, On-Site Review Committee Chair

The chair of our On-Site Review Committee is Dr. Melissa Canady Wargo, Chief of Staff at Western Carolina University, Cullowee, North Carolina. Dr. Wargo has extensive experience serving on SACSCOC Review Committees and will lead a team of dedicated professionals as they review our Compliance Certification, Focused Report, and Quality Enhancement Plan.



Melissa Canady Wargo, Ph.D. has 25 years of experience working in higher education at four universities. She attended Tarleton State University in Stephenville, TX and earned her B.A. and M.A. in Anthropology and her Ph.D. in Transatlantic History from the University of Texas at Arlington. Dr. Wargo's academic discipline is European Paleolithic archaeology and she participated in active field work throughout the 1990's in Spain, France, and Albania. In 2017, she was awarded a certificate of completion for the Crisis Leadership in Higher Education Program from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. And, in 2014, she was awarded a certificate of completion for the Institute for Educational Management from the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. In her current capacity as Chief of Staff for Western Carolina University, Dr. Wargo serves as primary aide and advisor to the Chancellor and as chief external affairs officer for the University. As a member of the Chancellor's senior cabinet, she has responsibility for system board relations, state and federal relations, marketing services, communications and public relations, printing services, and special events. In addition, Dr.

Wargo is active with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, for which she chairs committees related to reaffirmation of accreditation, substantive change, and special issues. Dr. Wargo began her career in higher education administration in 1994 as an institutional research assistant at the University of Texas at Arlington. From 1996 to 1998, she served as Coordinator for Institutional Research and Assessment at Oklahoma State University in Oklahoma City. In 1998, Dr. Wargo returned to the University of Texas at Arlington as Institutional Research Associate and Director of State Reporting. In 2001, she became the Director of Assessment at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, TX where she led a successful reaffirmation of accreditation for the institution in 2003. In 2006, Dr. Wargo came to Western Carolina University as Director of Assessment where she was instrumental in the reaffirmation of accreditation in 2007. In 2009, she was promoted to Assistant Vice Chancellor for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness. Upon his arrival in 2011, Chancellor David O. Belcher appointed Dr. Wargo to chair the WCU 2020 Commission to chart a new and visionary strategic plan for the University. In 2012, he named her co-chair of the planning committee to draft a new Campus Master Plan. And, in 2013, Chancellor Belcher named her as his Chief of Staff. Dr. Wargo also is active with her local community. She is currently a member of the Board of Directors for Blue Ridge Public Radio, a member of the Rotary Club of Sylva, NC, a former member of the Jackson County Superintendent's Community Council, and past president of the Cullowhee Valley School PTA. A native of Texas, Dr. Wargo is married to her husband, Steve, with whom she has two children, a 13 year old daughter and an 11 year old son.

Profile of Dr. Crystal Baird, SACSCOC Vice President

Dr. Crystal Baird is the SACSCOC staff liaison for A&M-Central Texas. She is a Vice President at SACSCOC and works with Dr. Jeff Kirk to help review our documentation and prepare us for a successful On-site visit.



Dr. Crystal Baird joined the staff of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges in 2010 and currently serves as Vice President. Prior to her work with SACSCOC, Dr. Baird has served in a variety of different institutional roles including institutional liaison; associate dean of institutional effectiveness, planning, and research; director of library and IT services, and chairperson of student services. She has also served as President of the Community College Planning and Research Organization, Chair of the Council of Community College Library Administrators, member of the Library Services and Technology Act Advisory Committee for North Carolina, and a member of the Resource Advisory Committee for the North Carolina online library service *NC-Live*. Dr. Baird holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in English from Appalachian State University and a Master's in Library and Information Studies and a doctorate in Higher Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dr. Baird has worked closely with the University to develop the Compliance Certification document and guide the University through the process of the accreditation visit. She has

provided feedback on the entire document and provided invaluable expertise. We are grateful for her time, wisdom, and assistance.

Team Members

Dr. Jeanne M. Daboval
Professor College of Education &
Enrollment Management Program
McNeese State University

Dr. Daniel F. Mahony
President
Winthrop University

Dr. Melody C. Pierce
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
North Carolina A&T State University

QEP Lead Evaluator

Dr. Terry Myers Zawacki
Emeritus Associate Professor, English
George Mason University

Dr. Tena L Golding
Interim Provost & Vice President for
Academic Affairs
Southeastern Louisiana University

Ms. Traycee F. Martin
Vice President for Finance and
Administration
Valdosta State University

Mrs. Jill C. Ratliff
Assistant Vice President for Academic
Affairs
Morehead State University

Observer

Dr. Abdou Ndoeye
Assistant Vice Provost for Assessment
Northern Kentucky University

Tips

Working with the On-Site Review Committee

April 10-12, 2018

- The members of the Review Committee are our peers, and the team generally consists of chancellors, provosts, vice presidents, deans, directors, administrators, and faculty members on other campuses in our SACSCOC region. They bring with them experience, and understand the complexity of the SACSCOC requirements and standards. Above all, they want to see us through a successful visit and reaffirmation of our accreditation status.
- The University and the Review Committee have spent a great deal of time in preparation for this visit. If you have not taken the time to become acquainted with the Compliance Document, please do so in the next few weeks. The document is accessible by going to the Accreditation Website at: <https://www.tamuct.edu/accreditation/index.html> and click on the **2018 SACSCOC Compliance Report** link.
- The Reviewers have thoroughly prepared for their visit. They have looked at our Compliance Certification, read the Focused Report and Quality Enhancement Plan, and will have spent a great deal of time reviewing our University's website and reading internal documents we have provided to them.
- Prior to or during the visit, you may be contacted by a colleague from the SACSCOC Leadership Team or from Academic Affairs when a Review Committee member needs information, documents, or wants to ask questions. If so, please be flexible! Bring print copies of all documents requested to your interviews with on-site committee members, when possible, and be prepared to answer hard questions.
- Approximately two weeks before the arrival of the team, a specific group of individuals on campus will be "scheduled for interviews" on Tuesday, April 10th and Wednesday, April 11th. This request will come directly from the Review Team. You will be interviewed on topics related to your area or the University in general. Reviewing the document and the possible questions below will help to prepare you for your interview. Please do not be alarmed if you are asked to be in more than one interview, and know you may not be called back for other scheduled times if questions are answered during an initial interview.
 - Please wear your A&M-Central Texas nametag April 10th thru April 12th.
 - Always be courteous and helpful, yet refrain from initiating a conversation with the team members.
 - Answer only the question that is asked during your interview.
 - If you do not know the answer to a question, refer the team member to Dr. Kirk for further information.
 - Please do not guess or make assumptions.

- Operate with integrity in all matters related to SACSCOC. This is in the *Principles of Accreditation*, Section 1.1. It is something on which we are assessed.
- Based on historic trends, the most likely areas to be investigated include:
 - **Assessment of Student Learning** - Possible meetings with Deans, Department Chairs, Directors, Institutional Research and Assessment, Committee Chairs, and those charged with assessment on campus.
 - **Principles of Accreditation** - Possible meetings with those who work with student complaints, distance learning for students, faculty credentials, and policies related to hiring and evaluation, facilities, academic regulations, and collaborative agreements.
 - **Mission Statement and Strategic Plan** – Possible meetings about how both relate to every aspect of teaching, learning, curriculum, budget, planning and assessment.

Possible Questions...

From Reviewers

Based on anecdotal reports from other institutions and relying on the *Handbook for Peer Evaluators*, provided by SACSCOC, the following questions are provided as sample or mock questions one might expect the Reviewers to ask. While not an exhaustive or guaranteed list, the questions do align with the *Principles of Accreditation and Standards* assessed by SACSCOC in the Compliance Certification Document.

Examples of questions related to Institutional Effectiveness:

- To what extent and in what ways does the institution demonstrate that it uses the results of its planning and evaluation efforts?
- How are planning and evaluation used in your unit to guide daily practices?
- Does the institution and its components have stated goals or expected educational results that reflect a direct relationship to the statement of purpose/mission?
- What provision does the institution make for evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of your own organizational unit?
- How does the institution gather and use the results of feedback from its constituents regarding the quality and performance of instructional services?
- Are there clear and documented examples of changes -- additions, deletions, revisions -- made to any program or policy as a result of assessment or other effectiveness activity?
- Please tell me about something you do today differently than you did a few years ago as a result of some assessment activity. Describe that assessment activity.
- How does the institution use the results of its institutional research activities to change, strengthen, or enhance its educational programs and services?
- How are institutional research findings communicated to you?
- How does the University plan what it is going to do in the future? Do you have an opportunity for input? Is your input taken seriously? How do you know?
- Can you describe something the University once planned to do through its formal planning process that was later discovered, through its evaluation process, to not work as expected? What did the University do with this finding? Describe how the University made decisions about this plan and this evaluation?

Examples of documents and/or explanations requested:

- Please show me or tell me about the mission statement for your organizational unit.
- Can you tell me about some specific strategic goals that your unit is pursuing at the present time?
- Can you tell me how your unit will evaluate the achievement of those goals to ensure that they are accomplishing their intended outcome?
- Please show me the results of some tests and/or other analyses and evaluations of assessment.

- Do you have available copies of any external program reviews or accreditation reviews from specialized accrediting groups?
- Please show me the results of any surveys that you may have conducted?
- Can you show me a current policy (procedures) manual for your unit?
- Do you have access to and can you show me minutes of administrative committees, councils, faculty senate, etc. to document where they are addressing matters of institutional effectiveness?
- Can you show me a current and up-to-date job description for your own position?
- How is your own work performance evaluated? What are the criteria or expectations?
- Please describe what limitations, if any, prevent you from doing your best work here?
- What, if any, things need to be addressed through the formal planning processes that have been neglected?
- Can you describe any major decisions that have been made for the future direction of the University that may have by-passed the formal planning process? Why do you think this was this done?

Examples of questions about the Compliance Certification Document:

- How clear is the statement of purpose or mission of the University? Can you tell me what it is in your own words?
- Did you have an opportunity to provide input for the self-study?
- Have you had an opportunity to review the self-study? (i.e.: was it available for your review?)

Examples of questions about the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP):

- What is a QEP?
- Why is a QEP necessary?
- What is A&M-Central Texas' QEP topic?
- What are the specific goals of A&M-Central Texas' QEP?
- How will A&M-Central Texas' QEP improve student learning?
- How will student learning be assessed?
- Does A&M-Central Texas' QEP include specific activities for faculty?
- How will A&M-Central Texas support the successful implementation and continuation of the QEP?
- What was the process used to select and develop A&M-Central Texas' QEP?
- When will A&M-Central Texas' QEP begin?

Examples of questions to Faculty and Staff: ⁴

Q: What is SACSCOC?

A: The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

SACSCOC is the acronym for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (founded 1895), whose Commission on Colleges is the accrediting body for Texas A&M University-Central Texas. Its accurate, full abbreviation is SACSCOC. There are 8 accrediting bodies in 6 U.S. regions. Each is approved by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit institutions in their regions. Approximately 80 institutions undergo review each year by SACSCOC.

Q: How often do we participate and why do we participate?

A: Continually, with formal application for reaffirmation every ten years, because of required approvals for substantive change, eligibility for federal funds, and assessment of institutional quality.

Although we formally seek reaffirmation only every decade, our participation in SACSCOC is ongoing through requests for substantive change, program assessments, and planning for institutional effectiveness. We participate for several reasons. One is that accreditation by SACSCOC ensures access to federal funds, including those for student scholarships and financial aid. Accreditation also gives A&M-Central Texas the stamp of approval indicating that we have been evaluated thoroughly by our peers according to national educational standards. Finally, the self-analysis leading to reaffirmation gives us valuable insight by documenting areas of excellence and highlighting areas needing improvement.

Q: What happens between one reaffirmation and the next?

A: Interim reporting, continuous assessment, planning for institutional effectiveness.

Sustained efforts are ongoing through assessments of our effectiveness as an institution. SACSCOC's underlying philosophy is that the primary goal of institutions of higher education is to provide a quality education whose effectiveness can be documented. We seek approvals from SACSCOC for substantive changes to approved programs, including new sites. Program assessments of student learning continue. We create and implement a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP; see below) to improve student learning. During the 10-year period, we also submit updated institutional summaries, prepare a Fifth-Year Interim Report, and monitor the impact of our QEP on student learning. If there are new off-campus sites or expanded programs, we may be asked to host SACSCOC evaluators to assess them.

⁴Adapted from Wiregrass Georgia Technical College; document located at <http://www.wiregrass.edu/pdfs/sacscoc/faq-faculty.pdf>

Q: What does SACSCOC require in order to reaffirm our accreditation?

A: A documented Compliance Certification and a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

We prepare and submit a Compliance Certification and develop our QEP. After attesting to institutional adherence to the Principle of Integrity, the full Compliance Certification includes narrative responses to 16 Core Requirements, 70 Comprehensive Standards, and 11 Federal Requirements, most of these subdivided into several sections. Each section is fully documented. Our recently submitted Compliance Report is approximately 277 pages and includes 2,660 pieces of evidence. Reviewers had access to institutional assessment plans printed from Taskstream.

Q: What is the timeline for A&M-Central Texas' reaffirmation of accreditation?

A: Compliance Certification (September 2017); Off-Site Review (November, 2017); Focused Report and QEP (February/March, 2018); On-Site Review (April 10-12, 2018) and the final vote (December, 2018).

During the final 12 months leading to a vote by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, we will receive questions or requests for clarification from our peer reviewers. We will prepare a Focused Report to respond to their concerns. Like the Compliance Certification, the Focused Report is fully documented and includes institutional plans to address any issues of non-compliance or perceived non-compliance.

Q: What should faculty members know about SACSCOC and the reaffirmation process?

A: That SACSCOC is committed to the centrality of faculty; that accreditation is necessary for federal funding; that student learning is a primary consideration; and that faculty involvement is essential to our success.

Many of the Core Requirements (C.R.), Comprehensive Standards (C.S.), and even Federal Requirements (F.R.) addressed in our Compliance Certification revolve around the faculty's central role in institutions of higher education. For example, C.R. 2.8 asks us to demonstrate that the number of full-time faculty members is sufficient to support our mission and maintain academic program quality. C.S. 3.4.12 asks us to demonstrate that the "primary responsibility" for curriculum content, quality, and effectiveness lies with the faculty. And C.S. 3.7 asks for extensive documentation of faculty qualifications. SACSCOC affirms that without a qualified faculty engaged in designing programs for successful student learning, we would not have a college. Faculty members informed about the basics of our reaffirmation process and engaged in our QEP contribute to a meaningful process leading to reaccreditation.

Q: What is a QEP?

A: An institutional Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) focuses on improving student learning and/or the learning environment.

The QEP as described by SACSCOC is a "carefully designed course of action that addresses a well-defined and focused topic or issue related to enhancing student learning." It should be integral to the institution's character and mission. A QEP Committee of faculty, students, and staff completed A&M-Central Texas' QEP, which is called "*A Community of Writers*." This topic was established in response to an institutional need, and aligns with the university's core values and Academic Master Plan. The articulated goals and outcomes established as a framework for the QEP embody and harness the university's core values: *knowledge*, providing "educational

experiences to encourage lifelong learning and intellectual curiosity” and *collaboration*, developing and maintaining “partnerships to serve the needs of our students, faculty, staff, and external stakeholders”.

Examples of questions to Students⁵:

Q: What is SACSCOC?

A: The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

SACSCOC is the acronym for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (founded 1895), whose Commission on Colleges is the accrediting body for Texas A&M University-Central Texas. Its accurate, full abbreviation is SACSCOC. There are 8 accrediting bodies in 6 U.S. regions. Each is approved by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit institutions in their regions. Approximately 80 institutions undergo review each year by SACSCOC.

Q: What does SACSCOC do?

A: SACSCOC accredits educational institutions at all levels from early childhood centers through graduate-degree granting universities.

Q: What are the accrediting standards used by the SACSCOC?

A: The accrediting standards used by the Commission on Colleges are contained in the handbook *Principles of Accreditation*. This document may be found on the agencies’ website at <http://sacscoc.org/pdf/2012PrinciplesOfAccreditation.pdf>.

Q: What must a university or college do to be reaccredited?

A: There are 2 major tasks:

- Compliance Certification: This is a detailed document to demonstrate that A&M-Central Texas is in compliance with the approximately 98 standards in the *Principles of Accreditation*. This is called the Compliance Certification Report.
- Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP): Select and develop a major improvement project which addresses student learning and success.

Q: Who is involved in the process?

A: In one sense, the entire A&M-Central Texas community is involved in reaffirmation since everyone is needed to complete such a vast and important endeavor. SACSCOC principles also make it clear that broad-based involvement and input is needed for reaffirmation to occur. However, the effort leading up to reaffirmation of our accreditation by SACSCOC is being led by two groups: The Compliance Certification Team and the QEP Development Committee.

⁵ Adapted from Wiregrass Georgia Technical College; document located at <http://www.wiregrass.edu/pdfs/sacscoc/faq-students.pdf>

Q: Why is accreditation important to faculty?

A: Accreditation ensures that the University:

- has a mission appropriate to higher education;
- has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that mission;
- maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission, appropriate to the degrees it offers, and that indicate whether it is successful in achieving its stated objectives;
- allows faculty to apply for federal grants; and,
- ensures that students have creditable coursework when they leave the University.

Q: Why is accreditation important to students?

A: Accreditation ensures that:

- students have access to federally-subsidized financial aid;
- courses and degrees will be recognized by other institutions; and,
- programs and courses at the institution are creditable and of good quality, making them more competitive to employers.

Q: Is A&M-Central Texas accredited?

A: Yes, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges accredited A&M-Central Texas in 2013. The University is now seeking reaffirmation of our accreditation in 2018.

Q: Is accreditation permanent?

A: No. Initial accreditation is awarded for five years. SACSCOC requires that an institution undergo reaccreditation every ten years, thereafter. A&M-Central Texas's accreditation was affirmed in 2013 making our reaffirmation process due in 2018.

Q: What is a QEP?

A: QEP stands for Quality Enhancement Plan, which is a five-year improvement project, identified through an institution-wide process that focuses on improving student learning outcomes.

Q: What is A&M-Central Texas's QEP topic?

A: *A Community of Writers*

Q: What is the SACSCOC Visiting Committee?

A: The On-Site visiting team consists of 6-10 people from universities and colleges in the Southeast who will visit our campus and examine all aspects of our operations.

Q: When does the review of A&M-Central Texas take place?

A: There are actually two reviews:

- The Off-site review of the Compliance Certification Report took place September, 2017.
- An On-Site Committee will be on campus April 10-12, 2018.

Q: How do I find out more information about reaccreditation?

A: To find out more about reaccreditation in general, visit the SACSCOC website:

<http://www.sacscoc.org/faqs.asp>

Q: Who do I contact for questions about reaccreditation at A&M-Central Texas?

A: If you have questions about reaccreditation at A&M-Central Texas, contact the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, Dr. Jeff Kirk, at jeff.kirk@tamuct.edu.

Contact Information

For questions related to SACSCOC accreditation, the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*, the University's Compliance Certification Report, and the Review Committee Visit, please contact one of the following:

<p>Dr. Jeffery Kirk Associate Provost/Associate VP Academic Affairs SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison jeff.kirk@tamuct.edu FH 424E (254) 519-5427</p>	<p>Ms. Bridgit McCafferty Director of University Library SACSCOC Compliance Committee Chair bmccaffe@tamuct.edu WH 205A (254) 519-5484</p>
<p>Accreditation Leadership Team</p>	
<p>Mr. Paul Turcotte Director, Institutional Research and Assessment paul.turcotte@tamuct.edu FH 424F (254) 501-5817</p>	<p>Dr. Lucas Loafman Associate Professor and Department Chair, Management and Marketing loafman@tamuct.edu FH 318M (254) 519-5724</p>
<p>Dr. Brandon Griggs Dean of Student Affairs griggs@tamuct.edu WH 105C (254) 519-5721</p>	<p>Ms. Sanfrena Britt Executive Assistant to the Provost sanfrena.britt@tamuct.edu FH 429E (254) 519-5447</p>
<p>For Questions About the Quality Enhancement Plan:</p>	
<p>Dr. Morgan Lewing Assistant Professor, Higher Education Leadership morgan.lewing@tamuct.edu FH 429A (254) 519-5447</p>	<p>Dr. Bruce Bowles Assistant Professor, English Director, University Writing Center bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu WH 416 (254) 519-5461</p>