

Faculty Senate Update**21 April 2009****Office of Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research****1. ECU Fifth- Year Interim Report to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (<http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/sacs/report.cfm>)**

ECU's [Fifth-Year Interim Report](#) was submitted to SACS on 15 April 2009. The document provides a brief history of the university and reports on the ECU's compliance status regarding 14 of the SACS core requirements and standards. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is one of only a few accrediting commissions that conducts a comprehensive review of its institutions every ten years. Most accrediting agencies conduct such reviews every 5 to 7 years. The U.S. Department of Education requires accrediting agencies that it recognizes to monitor its institutions more often to ensure that institutions having access to federal funds continue to meet accreditation standards. To that end, the Commission developed a Fifth-Year Interim Report s

SACS-COC Standards for the Fifth-Year Interim Report

Number	Core Requirement or Standard
2.8	The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs.
3.2.8	The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution.
3.4.3	The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission.
3.4.11	For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not indentify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration.
2.10	The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission.

3.11.3	The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.
3.3.1.1	The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in the following area: educational programs, to include student learning outcomes.
4.1	The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement including, as appropriate, consideration of course completion, State licensing examination, and job placement rates.
4.2	The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the purpose and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded.
4.3	The institution makes available to the students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies.
4.4	Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs.
4.5	The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints.
4.6	Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies.
4.7 and 3.10.3	The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the <i>1998 Higher Education Amendments</i> . The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations.

The interim report is a launching pad for ECU's full compliance certification due in 2012. Our plan is to move forward and continue building on the work done over the past four months. We are in compliance with all 14 requirements and standards on which we are asked to report. Subject matter experts from across our campus contributed significant time writing and collecting artifacts in support of our compliance. The Fifth-Year Interim Report Council led this incredible effort: Rita Reaves (Chair), Michael Poteat, Jan Tovey, Brenda Killingsworth, Michael Brown, George Bailey, Fiona Baxter, and David Weismiller. Superb administrative and technical support was provided by Lisa Brown, David Higdon, and Marcie Rouse.

2. Performance Management System and Electronic Portfolio

In fall 2008, ECU selected a web-based enterprise solution that provides the essential framework for institutional assessment, strategic planning, accreditation, and quality improvement processes from the student to university level. After careful examination of 13 systems and piloting three systems on campus last summer (2008), a committee of faculty and administrators recommended to the Provost that we proceed with the use of Nuventive TracDat. Such a system offers a complete process application for managing continuous improvement throughout academic and non-academic areas of our institution. The higher education literature supports that web-based assessment enables broad-based participation which in turn maximizes results and helps sustain and grow a culture of assessment and a culture of evidence.

- Outcomes Assessment – TracDat enables us to increase the understanding of and commitment to ongoing planning and evaluation from the level of individual programs up through the entire university.
- Integrated Strategic Planning – TracDat assists us in closing the loop between planning and action, a connection that is traditionally difficult to complete and measure in higher education institutions. Such a system helps to provide a structure and process definition to strategic planning initiatives.
- Organizational alignment – Is it possible to demonstrate how outcomes support the mission? How do program or department objectives support school/college/division goals? Which courses or activities support departmental activities? Which aspects of the campus support specific components of the mission? TracDat assists in driving institution-wide alignment because the system provides complete visibility into how each area of the institution contributes to meeting goals and objectives.
- Accreditation – Assessment plans with outcomes and their measures defined can be easily viewed. More importantly, observations including findings, results, and conclusions are linked to strategies or action plans undertaken to improve programs and learning (feedback loop).
- Performance Management – TracDat facilitates more efficient organizational management as it assists with translating data into coordinated goal-driven action. The program accepts data from any source and features a complete feedback loop built into the solution which focuses on the strategic issue of what the institution actually does with the information.

We have begun the set-up and training of ECU's Performance Management System – TracDat and electronic portfolio – iWebfolio. Nuventive (SunGard partner) was on campus in March as we began with a small group of faculty and administrators in establishing the system on campus. The adoption is being led by the Office of Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research under the direction of Matt Long and Kristen Dreyfus. The College of Business will be an early adopter of the electronic portfolio iWebfolio. Each freshman entering the COB this fall will have an iWebfolio account. The entire university community will be hearing more about both of these

products in the coming months. One of the many very positive attributes of TracDat is that faculty are NOT the end user. Faculty do not have a new electronic platform to "learn."

3. Institutional Assessment of Learning

In assuring a high quality education for our students, ECU is looking purposefully toward developing a culture of evidence. Such a culture provides an evidence-based framework for improving, revising, and introducing comprehensive systems for the collection, dissemination, and utilization of information on meaningful student learning outcomes. Such information can be used to develop new pedagogies, curricula, and technologies to improve learning. Embracing such a culture of innovation and quality improvement has been specifically called for in the report of the National Commission on Higher Education, otherwise known as the Spellings Commission.

The Office of Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research is dedicated to a concept of quality enhancement. The office will move the university in achieving continuous improvement by re-vitalizing engagement of faculty in a sound and meaningful process of outcome assessment. Although evaluation of an institution's educational quality and its effectiveness in achieving its mission is a difficult task requiring careful analysis and professional judgment, we are expected to document the quality and effectiveness of all our programs and services. Academic units implemented the outcomes assessment procedures (briefly) detailed below in accord with the process and stated timeline as provided to deans by the Provost's office on 3 September 2008.

Assessment is a formative process. IPAR plans to provide feedback to each academic unit on its outcomes assessment activities according to a pre-defined rubric. The Outcomes Assessment and Program Review Council established in preparation for our regional accreditation in 2013 by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) assists in report evaluation. The major objective is to provide meaningful, consistent, and objective information to academic programs and faculty in order to grow a culture of assessment and foster institution-wide improvement in institutional effectiveness. A secondary but important objective is to model portfolio assessment that can be used by academic departments to measure their own programs' effectiveness. Model outcome assessment reports have been shared.

Brief overview of the proposed Academic Program Assessment Reporting 2008-2009

Unit of Analysis

All academic programs should develop an outcomes assessment report for each distinct academic program. Bachelor's, masters and doctoral degrees in the same field represent three distinct programs. If there are two degrees at the same level in the same area but with only slight distinctions, these may be combined at the faculty's discretion. Examples are: 1) a B.A. and a B.S. degree in the same field in which the difference between required curricula resides in only one or two courses; 2) two masters' degrees in the same area that differ only by requiring a thesis in one case and an independent project in the other. Programs with both face-to-face and distance education sections of the

same course should employ the same learning objectives and assessment instruments in order to demonstrate comparable outcomes.

Required Components 2009-2010

Each program provides thorough information in these five areas:

1. Program Description
2. Outcomes
 - i. Academic Program Student Learning Outcomes (3)
 - ii. Academic Unit Strategic Initiative Outcome (1)
 - iii. Institutional (2009-2010) – The Global Perspective Outcome (1) – see attached
3. Assessment
4. Assessment Results
5. Improvement Actions

2008-2009 Assessment Results and 2009-2010 Assessment Plans

1 October	Academic unit completes final report including assessment results and improvement actions based on results for 2008-2009 (Fall and Spring) and revised program descriptions, outcomes, and assessment plans for 2009-2010	Dean's Office
1 November	Dean's approve and forward 2008-2009 reports and 2009-2010 assessment plans	IPAR