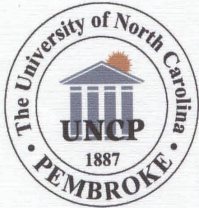




## Letter From Chancellor Meadors



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November 1, 2008

Dear Faculty:

The SACS reaccreditation process offers many opportunities for our campus community to examine what we are about here at UNC Pembroke. During the next year, I encourage each of you to participate in the process and reflect on the many excellent things we are doing, while also identifying and targeting areas where improvement is needed. SACS accreditation is vital to us on many levels; accreditation ensures our constituents that we offer quality programs, are eligible for federal funds of various kinds, etc.

The reaccreditation process is very different than previous reviews. Added to this process is the development of a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), which articulates a ten-year commitment for UNC Pembroke. Every institution must identify a project in its QEP that will be developed and implemented to positively impact learning. UNC Pembroke's faculty has identified writing improvement as the focus of the University's QEP. I believe that improving writing skills is an excellent focus for our QEP, and that the successful implementation of the plan will have a dramatic impact on student learning at UNCP. I'm pleased to report that a committee of faculty and administrators are already at work on the development of our Quality Enhancement Plan.

The Compliance Certification requires documentation of our programs, financial stability, processes, etc. Responses required for the Compliance Certification are being compiled/written with the intent of having a draft by early spring.

Faculty and administrators have dedicatedly worked on both projects. I commend each of you for the excellent work so far, and I'm especially grateful to our resident SACS expert, Dr. Elizabeth Normandy. Please know that I am committed to assisting the reaccreditation process in any way I can to ensure the success of our review.

Thank you for all the work you have completed to this point, and I encourage you to remain dedicated and enthusiastic about UNC Pembroke's SACS-related projects.

Sincerely,

Allen C. Meadors, Ph.D., FACHE  
Chancellor

## What is SACS?

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, SACS, is the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. The Commission's mission is the enhancement of educational quality throughout the region and it strives to improve the effectiveness of institutions by ensuring that institutions meet standards established by the higher education community that address the needs of society and students. It serves as the common denominator of shared values and practices among the diverse institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Latin America and other international sites approved by the Commission on Colleges that award associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degrees. The Commission also accepts applications from other international institutions of higher education.

## UNC Pembroke SACS Schedule and Deadlines

### Year 1 – 2008

- > Orientation of Leadership Teams

### Year 2 – 2009

- > Compliance Certification due—September 10
- > Off-site review—second week in November

### Year 3 – 2010

- > Quality Enhancement Plan due—six weeks prior to the on-site review
- > On-site review conducted between mid January and the third week in April
- > Review by the Commission on Colleges—first week in December

### Inside this issue:

The Compliance Certification 2

SACS Facts 2

The Quality Enhancement Plan QEP 3

UNCP QEP Process 4

SACS Committee Membership 4

## The Compliance Certification

In 2001, the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) adopted a new approach to accreditation. The focus of the new approach is Institutional effectiveness and the ability to sustain an environment that enhances *student learning*. The philosophy and process of accreditation is based on the expectation that the institution will make a commitment to comply with the Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards contained in *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*.

The Compliance Certification Document is the document that attests to the institution's compliance with the Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Regulations. The Document is based upon the institution's internal analysis and assessment of its compliance with the requirements and standards. It is based on the documentation generated or assembled to support the conclusions the institution has reached regarding compliance.

The Commission on Compliance requires that institutions establish a Leadership Team to manage and validate the internal institutional assessment of compliance with all Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards.

The Compliance Certification Committee is composed of individuals who have access to the data and information required to prepare a report that substantiates the institution's compliance. It includes representatives from areas across the university who are listed in this newsletter. They conduct their analysis by careful interpretation of the Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards to understand each aspect and determine what information and data must be assembled to document compliance. The committee is responsible for supporting its judgment with a narrative response and documentation as to whether or not the institution is in full or partial compliance with all aspects of the requirement or standard. It is in the narrative that an institution presents its "case" for compliance.

**“The Commission on Compliance requires that institutions establish a Leadership Team to manage and validate the internal institutional assessment of compliance with all Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards”**

## SACS Facts

1. UNC Pembroke is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The College Delegate Assembly (CDA), which directs all SACS operations, is composed of one voting delegate from each of the member institutions. some 780 colleges and universities in 11 Southern states. The SACS staff carries out policy set by the CDA and the SACS Commission on Colleges.
2. Accreditation is important because of the following:
  - eligibility for receiving federal and state funds;
  - to allow for transfer of credits between UNCP and other institutions;
  - to gain recognition from other colleges and universities;
  - to gain recognition from business, government, and industry, which equates to jobs for our graduates.
3. Each member (accredited) institution must complete a Comprehensive Certification document every ten years, prior to a SACS visiting committee inspection to verify that the institution meets the criteria for reaffirmation of accreditation.
4. The SACS visiting committee consists of faculty and staff from peer institutions, not SACS employees, although they are accompanied by a SACS liaison representative.
5. The Comprehensive Certification document concerns all functions of the college, with focus upon how each function serves the college's mission. The Comprehensive Certification Committee contains members of faculty and staff.
6. The university is required to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan.
7. A list of the membership of the principal committees is listed in this newsletter.

## SACS Facts (cont)

8. The visiting SACS committees examine institutional effectiveness to ascertain whether all divisions, departments, sections, etc. are meeting performance expectations and have the documentation to prove it.
9. The Comprehensive Certification Committee expects to complete the initial draft of the Comprehensive Certification document this Spring.
10. The SACS staff liaison will be visiting UNCP this Spring to review our progress.

## The Quality Enhancement Plan QEP

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is the component of the accreditation process that reflects and affirms the commitment of the Commission on Colleges to the enhancement of the quality of higher education and to the proposition that student learning is at the heart of the mission of all institutions of higher learning. By definition, the QEP describes a carefully designed course of action that addresses a well-defined and focused topic or issue related to enhancing student learning. The QEP should be embedded within the institution's ongoing integrated institution-wide planning and evaluation process and may very well evolve from this existing process or from other processes related to the institution's internal reaffirmation review.

Developing a QEP as a part of the reaffirmation process is an opportunity for the institution to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue or issues the institution considers important to improving student learning. Responding to this reaffirmation requirement may also provide an impetus for focusing critical and creative energy. Institutions report that the QEP "has caused us to become much more intentional and focused about an important element of our mission" and "helped us put in motion our creativity."

*SACS Handbook for Reaffirmation of Accreditation, 2008*

Core Requirement 2.12 of the Principles of Accreditation requires an institution to have a plan for increasing the effectiveness of some aspect of its educational program relating to student learning.

- The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a document developed by the institution that describes a course of action for institutional improvement.
- The QEP addresses a well-defined topic or issue(s) related to enhancing student learning.
- The QEP is based upon a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the institution in supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution.
- Student learning is defined broadly in the context of the QEP and may address a wide range of topics or issues.
- Student learning may include changes in students' knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values that may be attributable to the collegiate experience.

Examples of topics or issues include, but are not limited to:

- enhancing the academic climate for student learning,
- strengthening the general studies curriculum,
- developing creative approaches to experiential learning,
- enhancing critical thinking skills,
- introducing innovative teaching and learning strategies, and
- exploring imaginative ways to use technology in the curriculum.

Types of QEPs

- Curricular initiatives—general education, writing across the curriculum, developmental education, ethics
- Pedagogical—use of technology, capstone seminars
- Faculty--creating teaching and learning centers, student-centered learning

**"Developing a QEP as a part of the reaffirmation process is an opportunity for the institution to enhance overall institutional quality and effectiveness by focusing on an issue or issues the institution considers important to improving student learning."**

## UNCP QEP Process

The choice of enhancing student writing as the topic of UNCP's QEP grew out of a lengthy and deliberate process, in which all UNCP faculty, as well as other key stakeholders, had the opportunity to offer input. A QEP steering committee, composed of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and faculty from all three schools on campus, conducted this process in three phases.

**Phase 1:** Every department or school on campus heard at least one presentation on the QEP from a member of the steering committee. During this presentation, which usually took place during a department meeting, the presenter typically described the QEP and distributed a survey soliciting suggestions for a QEP topic. Next, each department or school named a QEP liaison, who was charged with helping to solicit input on the QEP from his or her colleagues. Liaisons then met with a member of the SACS Leadership Team and heard a detailed presentation on the QEP. Furthermore, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs gave a presentation on the QEP to administrators in her division and solicited input via surveys. During Phase I, all UNCP faculty had the opportunity to contribute ideas to the steering committee in one of five ways: 1) completing the printed survey that was distributed at department meetings; 2) completing the online survey that was available on the Teaching and Learning Center's Web site; 3) completing the survey that was available on the university's Blackboard system; 4) sending an e-mail message to a member of the SACS Leadership Team; and 5) getting in touch with his or her department's liaison. Two members of the steering committee tabulated the results of this initial solicitation process, taking into account input provided in any one of the five ways described above. Three general topic areas, as well as a few other topics mentioned by just one or two individuals, emerged from these surveys: basic skills, freshman seminar, and general education. More than 70 percent of the input concerned topics that came under the heading of "basic skills," and approximately half of the input in this area concerned writing or a related skill or area, such as critical thinking, reading, or speech.

**Phase 2:** Faculty had the opportunity to complete a second survey, which solicited feedback on these three general topic areas and asked respondents to prioritize them. Liaisons distributed these surveys, examined the results, and attended another meeting with a member of the SACS Leadership Team. During this meeting, the liaisons narrowed the topic to writing. A member of the SACS Leadership Team notified the Provost of this topic.

**Phase 3:** A group of faculty, including those invited by the Provost, and others who chose to attend, attended a brainstorming discussion, in which all three general topic areas were put on the table. The topic of writing emerged as a central concern among those present at this meeting.

Having completed this process, which lasted from fall 2007 to spring 2008, the steering committee ultimately determined that writing—a leading concern among UNCP faculty in all three phases—should be the focus of the QEP, improving student writing.

## SACS Committee Membership

### Leadership Team

Allen Meadors, Chancellor  
Charles Harington, Provost  
Bill Gash, Associate Provost  
Kathleen Hilton, Associate Provost  
Elizabeth Normandy, Teaching and Learning Center

### Compliance Certification Committee

#### Chairs

Bill Gash, Office of Academic Affairs  
Elizabeth Normandy, Teaching and Learning Center

Ann Coleman, Livermore Library  
Betty Brown, School of Education  
Beverly King, Office of Institutional Effectiveness  
Carol Higy, School of Education  
Charles Tita, Office of Distance Education  
Chris Ziemnowicz, School of Business  
David Zeigler, Dept. of Biology  
Elinor Foster, Livermore Library  
Kathleen Hilton, Office of Academic Affairs  
Lela Clark, Office of Admissions  
Lisa Schaeffer, Office of Student Affairs  
Marlene Powell, Dept. of Sociology and Criminal Justice  
Ottis Murray, Dept. of Sociology and Criminal Justice  
Robert Brown, Dept. of History  
Robert Orr, Division of Information Technology  
Roger Guy, Dept. of Sociology and Criminal Justice  
Sharon Bell, School of Business  
Sharon Kissick, Registrar  
Sherry Edwards, Dept. of Social Work  
Shilpa Regan, Dept. of Psychology and Counseling  
Sylvia Pate, Regional Center  
Tom Dooling, Dept. of Chemistry and Physics  
Tony Curtis, Dept. of Mass Communications

### QEP Writing Committee

#### Chairs

Bill Gash, Office of Academic Affairs  
Elizabeth Normandy, Teaching and Learning Center

Adam Walls, Dept. of Art  
Anita Guynn, Dept. of English and Theatre  
Cherry Beasley, Dept. of Nursing  
Cynthia Miecznikowski, Dept. of English and Theatre  
David Nikkel, Dept. of Philosophy and Religion  
Debra Branch, Dept. of Social Work  
Judi Lash, School of Education  
Karen Stanley, School of Education  
Mark Canada, Dept. of English and Theatre  
Roger Guy, Dept. of Sociology and Criminal Justice  
Rosemarie Pilarczyk, Dept. of Nursing  
Sherry Edwards, Dept. of Social Work  
Stewart Thomas, School of Business  
Tim Ritter, Dept. of Chemistry and Physics  
Tony Curtis, Dept. of Mass Communications