SACS COC™

REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

(Revised: January 2012
Edited: May 2016; January 2018)

Statement Regarding the Report

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation *and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with SACSCOC Board of Trustees.*

Name of the Institution: **Sul Ross State University**
                                 Alpine, TX

Date of the Review: **April 3-5, 2018**

SACSCOC Staff Member: **Dr. John S. Hardt**

Chair of the Committee   **Dr. Warren J. Carson**
                                 Senior Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic
                                 Affairs, and Chief Diversity Officer (Retired)
                                 University of South Carolina Upstate
                                 Spartanburg, SC

Part I. Overview and Introduction to the Institution

Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, traces its roots as a state normal school to action taken by the Texas State Legislature in 1917. Beginning to enroll students in 1920, it has been in continuous operation graduating students every year since. Baccalaureate degree programs were added in 1923, and master's degree programs were first offered in 1930. The name of the institution was changed to Sul Ross State Teacher's College in 1923 and to Sul Ross State University in 1969. In 1973, Sul Ross State University opened an off-campus instructional site in Uvalde, Texas, and subsequently opened two additional off-campus sites at Del Rio and Eagle Pass which now exist collectively under the umbrella of Rio Grande College. The institution includes five colleges: the College of Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education and Professional Studies, Rio Grande College, and the College of Graduate Studies and offers 62 academic programs. In Fall Semester 2016, the total enrollment was 3,061 (2,257 undergraduate students, 116 post-baccalaureate students, and 688 graduate students). Since 1995, Sul Ross State University has been ranked as one of the top institutions in the country for Hispanic students.

This report presents the final committee analysis and includes the findings of the Off-Site and On-Site Reaffirmation Committees. It will be forwarded to the institution for a formal response. This report and the institution's response will be forwarded to the Commission's Board of Trustees for action on reaffirmation of accreditation.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee wishes to express its gratitude to President William L. Kibler for the courtesy and hospitality extended to the Committee by the entire University community before and during the visit. Every effort was made by the institution, led by the coordinated efforts of Dr. Jeanne Qvarnstrom and her team, to facilitate the work of the Committee; the cooperation of the administration, faculty, staff, students, and trustees is greatly appreciated.

Part II. Assessment of Compliance

A.   Assessment of Compliance with Section 1: The Principle of Integrity

1.1   The institution operates with integrity in all matters. **(Integrity)**

The Reaffirmation Committee found no evidence of a lack of integrity on the part of the institution in the submission of its Compliance Certification.

B.   Assessment of Compliance with Section 2: Core Requirements

2.1   The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies. **(Degree-granting authority)**

The institution is a public degree-granting institution authorized to grant baccalaureate and master's degrees. The institution receives authority to grant baccalaureate and master's degrees from the Texas State University System

(TSUS) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), both of which are empowered by the State of Texas.

2.2   The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board on which both the presiding officer and a majority of the other members are neither civilian employees of the military nor active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution's programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting board members are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. **(Governing board)**

The institution has provided clear evidence that it is a member institution of the Texas State University System, which is governed by the Board of Regents (BOR). The BOR has 9 members who are appointed by the Governor of Texas with the advice and consent of the State Senate. The BOR meets regularly and keeps minutes that demonstrate that policy issues are addressed and that the BOR ensures that financial resources are adequate to support the institution's educational programs. Board policy documents ensure that Board members must remain free of any financial interest in the institution.

2.3   The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. *(See the Commission policy "Core Requirement 2.3: Documenting an Alternate Approach.")* **(Chief executive officer)**

The job description and performance evaluation of the current CEO/President document and confirm that his primary responsibility is to the institution. The CEO/President has served since 2014 and is not a member of the Board of Regents of the Texas State University System.

2.4   The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. **(Institutional mission)**

The institution's current mission went into effect on April 18, 2017, after a one-year review by a broad-based committee that developed the institution's 2017-22 strategic plan. Addressing teaching, learning, and service, the mission is published in the student handbook, in the faculty handbook, and on the Institutional Effectiveness website. Its distinctiveness is described geographically.

2.5   The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional effectiveness)**

The institution has developed three strategic plans over the past ten years: 2008-13, 2013-18, and 2017-22. Only the 2017-22 strategic plan was included in the documentation. It lists a broad cross-section of campus participants on the committee and subcommittees that developed the plan. Campus stakeholders also participated in the plan's development through focus groups and a blog. The narrative states that a "baseline scorecard will be produced in August 2018," but no information was provided on targets and expected outcomes. In the narrative the institution documented only one outcome each for 2008 and 2013 (i.e., dual credit students and distance education), but provided no strategies or context for these outcomes within the strategic plans. Without these previous plans and documentation of campus-wide results, it is difficult to conclude that the institution used a systematic review of outcomes that resulted in continual improvement of institutional quality, not just within individual departments. The section on "Resource Allocation" claims that assessment reports feed into the budgeting process, but no documented evidence is provided. The example of raising salaries was described as being in alignment with the "2014-18 Strategic Plan" for objective #1, goal #1. Yet, a 2014-18 plan was not described previously; it was described as 2013-17. Also, it is unclear how assessment data informed the decision to raise salaries. Although the reader is referred to CR 2.11 for more details on the university budget process, the information provided in CR 2.11 does not describe how assessment data are a part of budgeting decisions.

At the request of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee, the institution provided previous and current strategic plan documentation along with a university scorecard. The institution also provided strategies and activities that demonstrate a systematic review of outcomes and how the budgeting process is informed by planning data.

2.6   The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs. **(Continuous operation)**

The institution traces its roots as a state normal school to action taken by the Texas State Legislature in 1917. Beginning to enroll students in 1920, it has been in continuous operation graduating students every year since. Baccalaureate degree programs were added in 1923 and master's degree programs were first offered in 1930. The name of the institution was changed to Sul Ross State Teacher's College in 1923 and to Sul Ross State University in 1969. In 1973, Sul Ross State University opened an off-site campus in Uvalde, Texas. The name of the site was later changed to Rio Grande College in 1985, and three other off-site campuses have been added since then: Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Castroville. The institution has grown to include five colleges: the College of Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Education and Professional Studies, Rio Grande College, and the College of Graduate Studies. In Fall Semester 2016, the total enrollment was 3,061 (2,257 undergraduate students, 116 post-baccalaureate students, and 688 graduate students).

Form edited May 2016

2.7.1   The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit.   **(Program length)**

The University offers bachelors and master's degrees and uses the standard definition for a credit hour. The institution requires 120 credit hours or more for undergraduate programs and a minimum of 30 hours for graduate programs. The concurrent dual degree graduate programs in Criminal Justice/Public Administration and in Homeland Security/Public Administration allow students to earn a combined degree with a minimum of 54 graduate credits. It is unclear whether students in these programs earn two graduate degrees, or one degree with curricular requirements from two academic disciplines. If students actually earn two graduate degrees, the institution failed to provide a rationale for awarding two graduate degrees to students who have not completed thirty graduate credits in each degree.

The Focused Report included minutes from a President's Executive Cabinet meeting that documented approval of a recommendation from program deans and department chairs for the Criminal Justice/Public Administration and Homeland Security/Public Administration concurrent dual degree programs to revise the minimum degree requirements from 54 graduate credits to 60 graduate credits for the combined degrees. In a meeting with the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee the Graduate Dean confirmed that the change is effective Fall 2018.

2.7.2   The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. **(Program content)**

The institution shows evidence of offering degree programs that follow a coherent course of study and are compatible with the mission of the institution. Faculty are responsible for developing the curricula for each degree program, which are then reviewed and approved by the Chair, Dean, and Provost, and finally the faculty Curriculum Council. Upon the recommendation of the faculty Curriculum Council, all new program proposals are submitted to the President, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and SACSCOC if needed. Currently, SRSU has one accredited program – the Bachelor of Science in Nursing accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. Although not explicitly stated in the narration for this standard, each program conducts a program review every seven years to ensure ongoing compliance with this standard.

The institution follows a four-digit course numbering system to demonstrate increasing levels of progression of knowledge and how courses build upon each other. For example, courses numbered 0 are remedial, 1000 – 2000 are lower division, 3000 – 4000 are upper division, and 5000 and above are graduate and professional certificate courses.

As samples of evidence, the institution provides a copy of its Curriculum Action request form, links to the Faculty Handbook 4.01 Curriculum Development, and sample Curriculum Council documents.

*2.7.3 In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses. **(General education)**

The university provides evidence that all students must complete a General Education core of courses representing a substantial component of each undergraduate degree. This core consists of 42 semester credit hours and represents 35 percent of the total hours required for the B.A. or B.S. degrees. The institution ensures breadth of knowledge through the application of a strong definition for any course approved as part of the General Education component which states that the primary purpose of the course is the "examination of particular expressions of human cultures in their social, historical, intellectual, aesthetic, or ethical dimensions."

Through an initiative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the institution assesses six core competencies throughout the general education core curriculum. These competencies are assessed on a three-year cycle and faculty participation is essential. This statewide initiative supports a coherent rationale for the general education core curriculum.

The general education core requires that students complete at least one course in the area of humanities/fine arts, one in social and behavioral sciences, and one in natural sciences/mathematics. Evidence of the enforcement of this requirement was provided through a sample degree audit.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including the institution's Course Catalog, the institution's website, and sample student degree audits, and conducted an interview with the Executive Vice President and Provost in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

2.7.4 The institution provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. If the institution does not provide instruction for all such course work and (1) makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia or (2) uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges. In both cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of

its educational program. (*See the Commission policy "Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternate Approach."*) **(Course work for degrees)**

The institution offers degrees at the baccalaureate and master's levels, and states that it is solely responsible for offering all courses in its degree-granting programs. The institution provides examples, including transcripts, from the Bachelor's degree in Spanish and the Master's degree in Biology, to demonstrate that it offers all required courses in degree programs at each instructional level.

*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 each of its academic programs. **(Faculty)**

The institution indicates that it employs 193 faculty, 76 of which are full-time faculty resulting in 39% of the faculty being classified as full-time. Data are provided to show that most of the programs employ full-time faculty; however, three of the programs (Animal Science, Industrial Technology, and Natural Resource Management) employ no full-time faculty. It was unclear to the Off-Site Committee how the coordination, quality, and integrity of these degree programs is ensured without the employment of full-time faculty. The Off-Site Committee also found no evidence to demonstrate that the institution employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to meet the non-instructional responsibilities expected of faculty. Finally, the Off-Site Committee found no evidence to demonstrate that the institution employs an adequate number of full-time faculty to support academic programs at its off-campus instructional sites.

In the Focused Report, the institution clarified the definition of full-time faculty and provided data to support the employment of full-time faculty in the three programs identified by the Off-Site Committee (Animal Science, 80%; Industrial Technology, 67%; and Natural Resource Management, 78%).

In addition, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee interviewed the Executive Vice President and Provost and the Chair of Animal Science. The institution provided a faculty-student ratio comparison with benchmark institutions. The Committee also reviewed the Faculty Workload Policy in the Faculty Handbook. Upon review of the additional information, the Committee concluded that the institution appears to have an adequate number of full-time faculty to support the institution's mission and to ensure the quality of the academic programs.

2.9   The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. **(Learning resources and services)**

The institution provides an adequate collection of resources to support the institutional mission. In addition to items owned by the institution, the university provided evidence of participation in sharing of resources with partner institutes.

The collection development policy allows for the input of faculty in the selection of resources to ensure that materials are appropriate for the disciplines offered at

the university. Library patrons enjoy reference, instruction, study spaces, meeting spaces, and access to technology through the library.

*2.10   The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that are intended to promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. **(Student support services)**

With a mission of providing accessible, comprehensive, and life changing education through high quality teaching, research, cultural awareness, creativity, and service through on-site and distance education in the Big Bend and the US-Mexico border regions of Texas, the institution provides a robust and rich offering of student support services in order to support its mission. Using student satisfaction and college student inventories, the institution has shown it uses data and feedback to meet the needs of its diverse student body.

A full offering of services and programs is provided, including assistance with childcare and family support, career services, cooperative education/internships, freshman leadership programs, graduate student center, academic center for excellence, and more. The institution also offers a variety of services for students at its sites that constitute Rio Grande College.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee interviewed students at the Uvalde, Del Rio, and Alpine campuses to confirm the activities reported by the institution in support of its compliance with Core Requirement 2.10. Students reported a wide variety of support activities consistent with the evidence submitted in the Compliance Report. Additionally, the committee interviewed the Vice President for Student Affairs to confirm that the programs, services, and activities offered by the institution support student learning and development.

2.11.1   The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (1) an institutional audit (or *Standard Review Report* issued in accordance with *Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services* issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a system-wide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or *Standard Review Report*) guide; (2) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and (3) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board. **(Financial resources and stability)**

The institution has a sound budgeting process in place that culminates with the annual budget being approved by the Board. Revenue has been increasing in recent years, while expenses have remained manageable. However, an institutional financial audit report, as well as other required documents, was not made available for review in the documentation submitted for the Off-Site Review.

Form edited May 2016

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee received the audited financial statement and associated management letter dated January 30, 2018 for the year ending August 31, 2017, prior to the site visit. The report accurately reflects current financial status. It should be noted that the institution received a 8.2% reduction in legislative appropriation in 2017 and has implemented a planning process, the "Sul Ross Legacy Plan 2018," to preserve and enhance academic excellence, unique and life changing student experiences, affordability, cutting edge research, service and outreach" in response to the reduction.

2.11.2 The institution has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. **(Physical resources)**

The institution has a master plan that was approved by the Board, and a campus committee led by the Provost is responsible for developing recommendations and ensuring all construction is consistent with the master plan. The institution is also actively expending funds to enhance campus infrastructure and address deferred maintenance issues. Based on the results provided from a recent survey of students, faculty, and staff, 76% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the adequacy of the institutional physical facilities.

~~**2.12** The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying 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. (Quality Enhancement Plan)~~

With the adoption of revised Principles of Accreditation by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2017, this standard is no longer applicable; it has been replaced by Requirement 7.2 (see below, Sections 2E and 3).

C.   Assessment of Compliance with Section 3: Comprehensive Standards

3.1.1 The mission statement is current and comprehensive, accurately guides the institution's operations, is periodically reviewed and updated, is approved by the governing board, and is communicated to the institution's constituencies. **(Mission)**

The institution's mission statement is current, having been approved by the Board on May 18, 2017, after a review that included various institutional constituencies. It is comprehensive in covering teaching, research, and service. The 2017-22 Strategic Plan describes how it plans to carry out the mission in the future.

3.2.1 The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer. **(CEO evaluation/selection)**

The Board of Regents of the Texas State University System (TSUS) is authorized by the Texas Education Code (section 95.01) to employ and discharge the Presidents of the institutions in the system. The Chancellor of the Texas State University System has the delegated responsibility from the Board of Regents to conduct annual performance evaluations of the president. The institution presented a self-evaluation completed by the President in early 2017,

Form edited May 2016

and the narration asserts that subsequent steps occurred in the Board process of evaluation; however, none of these steps was actually documented in the institutional submission for this standard. It is noted in the Focused Report that the TSUS Chancellor's response to the President's Performance Evaluation was provided as evidence that the steps were documented.

3.2.2 The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution's governance structure: **(Governing board control)**

3.2.2.1 the institution's mission

The institution receives authority from the Texas State University System, whose authority is also recognized in the Texas Education Code Title 3, Subtitle E, Chapter 95. The university is under the management and control of the Board of Regents, Texas State University System. The Board of Regents operates with the authority granted by the State of Texas with nine board members appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Texas State Senate, serving staggered terms. Board minutes from May 18, 2017, verify the Board's authority for the institutional mission.

3.2.2.2 the fiscal stability of the institution

There is evidence that the fiscal stability of the institution is assured by well-defined Rules and Regulations for the creation of budgets, expenditure accountability, and reporting and auditing of expenses. The fiscal stability of the institution is shared between the Texas State University System (TSUS) Board of Regents and the President of the institution. TSUS Rules and Regulations provide that the institution's president shall be responsible for recommending appropriate operating budgets and supervising expenditures under approved budgets, TSUS Rules and Regulations Chapter IV. Section 2.25, with the Board having ultimate authority and responsibility to ensure the fiscal stability of the institution.

3.2.2.3 institutional policy

There is documentation, TSUS Rules and Regulations Chapter IV. Section 2.26, 2.27, 2.28, and 2.29, that the President of the institution has the authority and is responsible for nominating to the Chancellor and Board of Regents the appointment, reappointment, promotion, retention, or dismissal of all members of the faculty and administrative officers. In addition, the president is responsible for managing efficiently component business affairs and physical property; recommending additions and alterations to the physical plant; and developing long range plans for all component programs and physical facilities; serving as presiding officer at official meeting of component faculty and staff and as an ex-officio member of each college or school faculty; appointing campus committees, councils, and teams, and appointing or establishing procedures for the appointment of faculty and staff.

Form edited May 2016

3.2.3   The governing board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members. **(Board conflict of interest)**

Texas Government Code Chapter 572 ensures that members of the Board of Regents of the Texas State University System are required to adhere to the conflict of interest statues. The statues address personal financial disclosure, standards of conduct, and conflicts of interest for all governing board members. However, the institution provided no evidence of implementation of the conflict of interest policy.

The Reaffirmation Committee reviewed Texas Government Code Chapter 572 and the TSUS Rules and Regulations Chapter VII. These documents confirm the statutory intent to regulate conflicts of interests and the practical manner in which that intent is put into practice. A review of the TSUS Board of Regents Ethics Training Materials indicates that the subject has been clearly communicated to Board members. An interview was conducted with the President and Chair of the Board to confirm that the matter has been thoroughly communicated and that appropriate forms required by statute have been collected. The results of the review and interview indicate the institution is acting in accordance with the requirements of this core requirement.

3.2.4   The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence. **(External influence)**

The institution provided evidence that the Board of Regents (BOR) of the Texas State University System is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence. The BOR, consisting of 9 members and established by the Texas Education Code, Chapter 95, was given constitutional autonomy and independence from the influence of the various branches of the Texas State Government. This independent Board was given authority over all of the component institutions in the Texas State University System, including Sul Ross State University.

3.2.5   The governing board has a policy whereby members can be dismissed only for appropriate reasons and by a fair process. **(Board dismissal)**

Texas State Constitution (Article 15. Impeachment) and the Texas Government Code (Chapter 665. Impeachment and Removal) describe the process for removing or dismissing members of the Texas State University System Board of Regents. An additional provision for the removal of members of the BOR is described in the Impeachment and Removal by the House of the Texas Government Code (Chapter 665). Section 665.053. Notice and Hearing (a) which provides that the Board Member Notice of the reason for removal must be given to the officer who is to be removed. (b). The Board Member must be allowed to appear at a hearing before the vote for removal is taken. And (c). The cause for removal shall be stated and entered in the journal of each house. The Off-Site Committee found that the policy outlines a reasonable and fair process, but found no evidence on whether the policy has been implemented or enforced.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed Article 15 of the Texas State Constitution and Chapter 565 of the Texas Government Code, both of which deal with the extensive rules and regulations relating to the removal from office of

Form edited May 2016

state officials such as members of the Board of Regents. The Committee also reviewed a December 19, 2017 memorandum from Fernando C. Gomez, long-serving Texas State University System Vice Chancellor and General Counsel and counsel to the Board, that there has not been a situation that has called for impeachment of a Board member since 1986. The committee interviewed the Chair of the Board and the President who confirmed that Board members are well aware of the impeachment procedures, but that no Board member has acted in a manner that required action during their tenures. The Committee agrees with the assessment of the Off-Site Committee that there is a reasonable and fair process in place.

3.2.6 There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. **(Board/administration distinction)**

The governance process of the institution makes a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the Texas State University System Board of Regents and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. The institution has established its own set of policies and procedures for the implementation and administration of its day-to-day operations – (SRSU Administrative Policy and Procedure Manual); and the BOR's authority and responsibility are clearly articulated in the TSUS Rules and Regulations manual. The institution's narrative identifies several examples that document that the administration and faculty administer policies established by the BOR.

3.2.7 The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies. **(Organizational structure)**

The institution provided a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates areas of responsibility, and detailed organization charts for the institution and its major divisions are published on the University Web pages. The institution's Administrative and Policy and Procedure Manual provides detailed guidance on the implementation and administration of policies related to all aspects of the institution.

With the adoption of revised Principles of Accreditation by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2017, this standard is no longer applicable.

*3.2.8 The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience and competence to lead the institution. **(Qualified administrative/academic officers)**

The institution provided a clear organizational chart. Individuals in key leadership positions appear to have appropriate education, experience, and expertise for their areas of responsibility.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed information submitted both in the Compliance Certification and Focused Report, and conducted interviews with key administrative and academic officers and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Committee.

Form edited May 2016

3.2.9 The institution publishes policies regarding appointment, employment, and evaluation of all personnel. **(Personnel appointment)**

The institution uses a variety of methods to communicate policies, both at the Board of Regents level and at the university level, related to personnel appointment, employment and evaluation. These policies are available through the Administrative Policy Manual, the Employment and Employee Policy, and the University Pay Plan and Hiring Procedures documents accessible on the University's Human Resources website. The Faculty Handbook is also available online on the university's website under University Policies.

All employee appointments are approved by the University President and are subject to confirmation by the Board of Regents. Evaluation of the President is conducted annually by the Board of Regents. All faculty evaluations follow the process outlined in the University's Academic Evaluation System. All staff employees are also evaluated annually.

The institution periodically reviews all employment policies. The University's Administrative Policy Manual 2.0 Development/Review Guidelines require that employment policies be reviewed and revised every five years and approved by the Executive Cabinet. All new employees are provided with access to employment policies through an orientation program that includes a checklist and a signed acknowledgement form attesting their responsibility to understand and stay informed regarding all University employment policies. A redacted faculty contract letter and a redacted faculty evaluation form were provided to document implementation of the published processes.

3.2.10 The institution periodically evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators. **(Administrative staff evaluations)**

Based on its published policies, the institution provided several sample evaluations to document that it has in operation a process to periodically evaluate its administrators.

3.2.11 The institution's chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution's intercollegiate athletics program. **(Control of intercollegiate athletics)**

The institution's chief executive officer oversees and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over all athletic components, following the framework outlined in the NCAA Division III Manual, Institutional Control. The president has ultimate responsibility and final authority for the conduct of the intercollegiate athletics program. The president is also a member of the American Southwest Conference (ASC) and the ASC rules mandate that the SRSU Administration is responsible for and in control of athletics (ASC, Article IV. Section 1). The SRSU President held the position of President of the ASC Council of Presidents for the 2016-2017 academic year. The institution's Athletic Director reports directly to the Vice President for External Affairs who is on the President's Executive Cabinet and a direct report to the president. The President meets annually with the Vice President for Finance to review all proposed university budgets including the athletics budget. The President ultimately approves the entire SRSU budget, including the athletics budget.

Form edited May 2016

3.2.12 The institution demonstrates that its chief executive officer controls the institution's fund-raising activities. **(Fund-raising activities)**

The institution provided evidence that demonstrates that the institution's chief executive officer controls the fundraising activities of the institution. In the president's position description, he must "assume active leadership in developing private fund support for the University." He also has ultimate control of fund-raising activities through his direct supervision and interaction with the Vice President for External Affairs, who guides day-to-day fund-raising activities.

3.2.13 For any entity organized separately from the institution and formed primarily for the purpose of supporting the institution or its programs: (1) the legal authority and operating control of the institution is clearly defined with respect to that entity; (2) the relationship of that entity to the institution and the extent of any liability arising out of that relationship is clearly described in a formal, written manner; and (3) the institution demonstrates that (a) the chief executive officer controls any fund-raising activities of that entity or (b) the fund-raising activities of that entity are defined in a formal, written manner which assures that those activities further the mission of the institution. **(Institution-related entities)**

The agreement between the University and the affiliated Sul Ross University Foundation Inc. ("Foundation), provides clear lines of demarcation, and also clarifies that the Foundation will look to the University for identification of specific needs for which the Foundation may consider soliciting funds. The Foundation is a separate 501c3, and in its bylaws it states that the SRSU president, through the University's Chief Development Officer, is responsible for oversight of the Foundation's fundraising efforts.

There is also another support foundation, Friends of the Center for Big Bend Studies ("FCBBS"), which raises funds to support the Center for Big Bend Studies, and it is a legally separate entity, although directors are appointed by the University president. Its operating agreement with the University states that FCBBS shall look to the University for identification of specific needs for which it may assist in fundraising.

There is also a separate 501c3 association, ANRS and Rodeo Exes Association of Sul Ross State University, and the narrative appeared supportive of compliance. However, the institution did not include the recent operating agreement referenced in its narrative, which may have supported the assertions made.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Operating Agreement Between ANRS and Rodeo EXES Association of Sul Ross State University and Sul Ross State University, signed on September 1, 2017 by the President and the President of the ANRS Rodeo Exes Association. The Committee also interviewed the President and the University's Development Officers on the matter. The agreement is clear and concise, and the University's officers charged with its supervision are clear on their responsibilities.

3.2.14 The institution's policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. These policies apply to students, faculty, and staff. **(Intellectual property rights)**

Form edited May 2016

The institution's policies pertaining to Intellectual Property Rights are published in the institution's Administrative Policy and Procedure Manual, which reflects the guidelines of the Texas State University System's Rules and Regulations. The Office of the Assistant Provost for Research has oversight and is responsible for communicating policies regarding intellectual property to faculty, staff, and students.

The Administrative Policy and Procedure Manual, and the Faculty Handbook which references Intellectual Property Rights in Section 2.07 are both located in the university's website. Links to both are provided as evidence of documentation, along with a link to Texas State University System's Rules and Regulations. The institution reports that no disputes related to intellectual property rights have occurred since the institution's last reaffirmation.

With the adoption of revised Principles of Accreditation by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2017, this standard is no longer applicable.

3.3.1   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 each of the following areas (**Institutional Effectiveness**):

*3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes

The institution has implemented a way to generate pride and enthusiasm for academic assessment by selecting and advertising the Top Ten Assessment Reports annually. Peer review of reports is also a good practice that the institution conducted in 2015-16. The description of the assessment process is sound, but the evidence does not show that a broad range of academic programs are using assessment to improve the student learning. For instance, the sample program assessments presented in the narrative do not include a column for the use of results for improvement.

The examples of assessment planning, results reporting, and "closing the loop" demonstrate that the institution is in its early stages of using student data to drive curricular change. Although several programs' comments under "Use of Results" refer to assessment method changes (e.g., changes in targets, scoring rubrics), rather than curricular changes, other programs are actually making revisions within course curricula using the assessment data. However, some of the documentation is unclear. For example, in the BA in English 2014-15 report the addition of a capstone course is planned, but by 2016-17 the capstone is still referenced as being in the future. A review of the annual program reports fails to demonstrate the purposeful and consistent analysis of assessment data as a basis for the identification of actions to improve student achievement of the stated desired outcomes.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed additional documentation provided by the institution in the Focused Report that presented the "Use of Results" for several degree programs. There was also some evidence previously provided in the Compliance Certification related to "Use of Results." In the Compliance Certification, the institution noted that there

Form edited May 2016

were 65 degree programs; however in some programs there seems to be a small number of graduates and enrollments according to the Institutional Summary Form, which could lead to a lack of mature assessment data and processes in these small academic programs.

3.3.1.2 administrative support services

The Use of Results sections of several assessment reports show reflection and intended action of the units on what they listed as their continuous improvement outcomes. The Off-Site Committee, however, was confused about what the institution's mission and goals were during the assessment reporting periods from 2014-15 to 2016-17. In the first sentence of the narrative for this standard, the institution states that it "seeks to be a national and international leader in achieving excellence among universities in the areas of Education, Research, Social Mobility, Service, Affordability, and Shared Governance." However, that statement is the "Vision" in the linked document adopted in May 2017, not the "Mission." It is unclear whether the May 2017 mission was the same as in 2013-18. The institution's narrative lists the five strategic plan goals, but the reports do not explain to which campus goal(s) the unit is aligning its continuous improvement efforts. Many units listed outcomes to meet deadlines and submit budgets/reports, which are departmental functions, not outcomes. In assessment reports, outcomes are more than functions. They are expectations for continuous improvement, not just meeting responsibilities at a clerical level. Therefore, based on the documentation provided, it is difficult to evaluate whether assessment results improved administrative support services to further the mission and goals of the institution, particularly if the mission is to become "a national and international leader in achieving excellence." The 2017-22 strategic plan explains that administrative units "have or will develop their own plan to implement this plan as it applies to their operation" (p. 22). However, the institution did not provide evidence that this alignment of plans occurred for 2017-18 assessment activities.

The institution clarified its mission and goals and provided the correct mission statement and strategic plan. The evidence provided in the Compliance Certification as well as the Focused Report document that outcomes have been identified and assessed and these do align with the mission and goals of the institution. The "Use of Results" also provided documented activities that can lead to improvements.

3.3.1.3 academic and student support services

The Off-Site Committee's confusion about the mission statement explained above in the comment for CS 3.3.1.2 continued with this standard. Again, alignment of unit outcomes with the mission statement and goals was not explicitly stated; however, the "Use of Results" sections in most of the reports, particularly for the student support units, contained evidence of analysis used to guide the next year's efforts. Several departments under the Colleges and the Units identified routine maintenance activities, like tracking inventory and completing state reports on time without errors, as one or more of their top three continuous improvement outcomes that will advance the department and

Form edited May 2016

the institution. Unless the departments had severe problems with lost inventory or completing state reports (which was not documented), it is difficult to categorize these activities as continuous improvement outcomes. Again, meaningful unit outcomes should be more than merely completing basic functions.

The institution clarified its mission and goals and provided the correct mission statement and strategic plan. The evidence provided in the Compliance Certification as well as the Focused Report document that outcomes have been identified and assessed. The "Use of Results" also provided documented activities that can lead to improvements.

3.3.1.4 research within its mission, if appropriate

Although this standard's narrative caused mission confusion (see Standard 3.3.1.2), the Off-Site Committee believes that the three units conducting research related to Goal 1 of the strategic plan had outcomes, means of assessment, and targets that were documented and analyzed in the "Use of Results" section to improve the center and the institution's research mission.

With the adoption of revised Principles of Accreditation by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2017, this standard is no longer applicable.

3.3.1.5 community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

Again, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee had extended conversations about the institution's mission statement and its relation to this standard. The assessment reports provided tended to present numbers of participants in the activities, which are important to demonstrate a broad-based community/public service. The centers tended not to use assessment methods to generate data to inform improvements of the activities in order to impact the community. A few examples of gaps in the assessment reports follow. The Center for Big Bend Studies had targets for improving publicity of its publications and conferences, relying on numbers submitted or attending. However, no method of assessment was being used to measure the quality of these conferences to better serve the community. The Public Safety report listed attendance at orientations and department meetings as an outcome. However, the list of notes under Results did not align with orientation activities. The "Use of Results" indicated a continuation to be included in orientation sessions without analysis of what might be changed from orientation to orientation or what issues were the most problematic over the year that needed re-emphasized at the next orientation. In the Big Bend Regional Minority and Small Business Development Center report, a Management Training Report was described and completed (note that it was not attached at the end of the report as stated), but under "Use of Results," how this report could be used to improve the next round of training was not documented. Completing the report was an end in itself. The link to the 2016-17 report for Public and Media Relations goes to the 2015-16 report. The Rio Grande SBDC references the "center scorecard" to track impact and semi-annual reports. The scorecard and reports were not available for Off-Site Committee review. The "Use of Results" column did not describe

17   Form edited May 2016

improvements made but referenced a survey, the cooperative agreement, and a strategic plan. Without more complete details, it is not possible to evaluate how the SBDC used data to drive its improvement.

With the adoption of revised Principles of Accreditation by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2017, this standard is no longer applicable.

~~**3.3.2** The institution has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that (1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. (**Quality Enhancement Plan**)~~

With the adoption of revised Principles of Accreditation by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2017, this standard is no longer applicable; it has been replaced by Requirement 7.2 (see below, Sections 2E and 3).

3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration. (**Academic program approval**)

The institution demonstrates that credit-bearing curricula for its programs are approved by the faculty and administration. The approval process starts with departmental faculty and progresses to the Chair, Dean, Curriculum Council, Provost, President, and Board of Regents. Additionally, once a year, the university engages in a process that allows each department to review the curricula for its respective programs. The process is designed to ensure that the faculty and administration approves any changes impacting the curricula.

3.4.2 The institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission. (**Continuing education/service programs**)

The institution does not have an office of continuing education and does not award continuing education units. However, it provides several examples of its involvement with community outreach and public service programs that are consistent with the mission of the institution. For example, the Center for Big Bend Studies is engaged in the research, education, and public education of the archeology, anthropology, and history of the region. Its transnational focus allows it to engage in collaborative projects with cultural agencies in Mexico. Another example is the Theatre of the Big Bend, which allows students and community members to participate in community theatre. Theatre faculty host the SRSU Children's Theatre program with summer camps and a fall theatre event. In addition, the university was licensed as a certified Texas law enforcement academy by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to provide basic training programs for law enforcement and corrections personnel in the university's service area. Other examples include the Museum of the Big Bend, outreach to secondary education students, Child Care and Family Support Center, and assistance to new businesses through the Small Business Development Center. Website links to the various programs listed are provided as supporting documentation.

Form edited May 2016

With the adoption of revised Principles of Accreditation by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2017, this standard is no longer applicable.

*3.4.3 The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission. **(Admissions policies)**

The institution provides documentation that demonstrates that its admissions policies are widely published and available. Additionally, the policies published in various forms and contexts appear to be consistent with the institution's mission. All admissions policies are published on the university's website, catalogs, and student handbooks. Admission requirements for undergraduate and graduate students are provided through different webpages and university catalogs. All admissions standards and requirements follow the Texas State University System rules and regulations.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee took additional steps to review and verify the institution's practices regarding the publication of admissions policies. The Committee interviewed the Director of Admissions to discuss the admissions policies and reviewed promotional admissions materials to verify that these materials were consistent with the institution's report to the Off-Site Review Committee. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee found that the admissions materials are consistent with the university's mission and are clearly available to students.

3.4.4 The institution publishes policies that include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, credit by examination, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript. *(See Commission policy "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.")* **(Acceptance of academic credit)**

The institution provides evidence that its criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit ensures that transfer coursework includes comparable learning outcomes at the collegiate level. The "Transfer and Award of Academic Credit" policy was provided as documentation and includes guidelines for the acceptance of transfer credit for both undergraduate and graduate coursework. This policy also addresses the award of non-traditional credit through examinations such as CLEP and DSST and Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs.

Credit for military service as well as credit for non-collegiate coursework is addressed through this policy and follows recommendations from the American Council on Education. The institution allows students in specific B.A.S. programs to receive credit for relevant work experience. This credit is awarded based on assessment services provided by LearningCounts.org or by the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning.

All policies related to the transfer of coursework are published in the institution's catalog and on the website. While the institution did not provide evidence in its submission related to this standard of following these policies, it did provide a

Form edited May 2016

redacted transcript in relation to CS 3.4.6. Further, the On-Site Committee did note that in the Focused Report the reference to experiential learning had been removed and the Administrative Policy: Transfer and Awarding of Academic Credit has been updated to reflect the change.

3.4.5 The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These policies are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution. **(Academic policies)**

All policies are published in the University's catalogs and on the website. Policies are based on the recommendations of regional and national organizations including SACSCOC, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officials (AACRAO) as well as state agencies. Additionally, select policies impacting specific areas of academics are published in the Faculty Handbook, the Student Handbook and the Administrative Policy and Procedure Manual.

Data are provided that show who is responsible for the oversight of academic policies. The review and approval of policies is conducted using a systematic process and new policies may be recommended by any of the institution's stakeholders. The communication and dissemination of policies is the responsibility of the President, Provost, Registrar, Admissions, New Student Programs, Dean of Graduate Studies, and Dean of Student Life.

In its submission for this standard, the institution demonstrates how policies are approved and disseminated, but it did not provide evidence that such policies are implemented or enforced. However, the Off-Site Committee found such evidence in the institutional submissions related to several other standards.

3.4.6 The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. **(Practices for awarding credit)**

The institution adheres to the Texas Administrative Code Title 19, Rule 4.6 regarding the definition of a credit hour including the amount and level of credit for each course. All courses, regardless of location or delivery method, follow these requirements.

Please see note in Section F related to this standard.

3.4.7 The institution ensures the quality of educational programs and courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the *Principles* and periodically evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the mission of the institution. *(See the Commission policy "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.")* **(Consortia relationships/contractual agreements)**

Not Applicable

3.4.8 The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience. **(Noncredit to credit)**

The institution describes how it awards academic credit for noncredit coursework in its Transfer and Award of Academic Credit policy. This policy includes guidelines regarding credit for military service, credit for non-collegiate courses, and credit for prior learning. Any academic credit awarded for non-traditional learning is guided by the recommendations of the American Council on Education and requires specific documentation by the student.

The institution provides a clear process for students who are interested in receiving credit for non-traditional learning. These processes are available to students through institutional catalogs.

3.4.9 The institution provides appropriate academic support services. **(Academic support services)**

The institution has a wide variety of resources on campus to provide academic support to students, faculty and staff. For example, the Academic Center for Excellence, Texas Success Initiative, Lobo Den Freshmen Center, and the Science Initiative are a few ways that the institution provides support. Resources, programs, and opportunities are widely publicized in brochures and websites. Evaluations of such services by faculty and staff indicate the effectiveness of such services to meet student and faculty needs.

3.4.10 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty. **(Responsibility for curriculum)**

The faculty have primary responsibility for all curriculum issues. As stated in the Curriculum Development Policy FH 4.01, "faculty and administration will be involved in all matters relating to curriculum development." The institution provided evidence of annual activities related to curriculum changes and reviews at all levels, beginning with program-specific faculty. Curriculum Councils, consisting of faculty and students, review all proposals for new and revised program changes. Graduate curriculum follows this same process through the Graduate Council, made up of faculty representing departments with graduate programs.

*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 identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. **(Academic program coordination)**

Program coordinators are selected based on highest degree earned in the "field" defined by the institution as an academic discipline or teaching/research specialty related to the academic degree. The institution provides a table with the specific qualifications of its Academic Program Coordinators. A review of the information provided in the table reveals that all Program Coordinators have the terminal degree, with the exception of one, and appear to be well qualified to coordinate the programs as assigned. Additional information including graduate credentials and professional experience for the Coordinator of the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology was located in the institution's response to CS 3.7.1 and was deemed sufficient to justify this individual's qualifications to coordinate the program.

Form edited May 2016

As it prepares for the further review of this standard by the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee, the institution should locate evidence to confirm that the assigned program coordinators actually perform the responsibilities expected of them by this standard.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents such as department meeting minutes, emails, and program reviews, and conducted an interview with the Executive Vice President and Provost, in order to confirm that the assigned program coordinators perform the responsibilities expected of them by this standard. Further, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the catalog description of the Bachelor of Applied Science–Organizational Leadership and the transcripts and curriculum vita of the program coordinator. The institution did not provide sufficient evidence to support the program coordinator for the Bachelor of Applied Science–Organizational Leadership being academically qualified in the field; thus the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee cannot affirm the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

Recommendation 1: The Committee recommends that the institution assign a program coordinator for the Bachelor of Applied Science—Organizational Leadership who is appropriately qualified in the field.
[This standard is now 6.2.c in the 2018 Principles of Accreditation].

3.4.12 The institution's use of technology enhances student learning and is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs. Students have access to and training in the use of technology. **(Technology use)**

The institution provides students and faculty with a variety of technological resources. The documentation provided describes multiple computer labs, tutoring center, and training for faculty and students in the use of technology. Students have the benefit of utilizing technology resources that are available in two academic units in addition to general-purpose labs available throughout campus.

The university has staff and students who provide appropriate training in the use of technological devices and the electronic resources offered by the library. Training opportunities are available for individual or group sessions.

3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them. **(General education competencies)**

The institution identifies six general education competencies that are developed through its 42-hour general education program, with two competencies being assessed each year on a rotating basis using the ETS Proficiency Profile and the National Survey of Student Engagement. The assessments were used for the first time in 2016. Summary ETS data are presented in table form in the institutional narrative to document the extent to which graduates attain some of the identified competencies; however, no assessment data reports from ETS are provided as evidence of actual assessment data.

Other information contained in the narrative documents the extent that students achieve three of the outcomes: communication, critical thinking, and quantitative competencies. However, incomplete information was provided for the personal and social responsibility outcomes. A few departments showed some general

Form edited May 2016

education assessment; however, there was no evidence of campus-wide assessment. A writing assessment used by faculty in the Behavioral and Social Science Department was described to have resulted in students reaching a 75% target in the social responsibility competency, but not enough information was provided about the assessment tool, numbers of students, or their results. No evidence was provided that the teamwork competency has been assessed.

The Focused Report incorporated copies of ETS Proficiency Profile and National Survey of Student Engagement reports, reports from embedded assessments related to all six general education competencies, and an additional sample assessment tool. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee conducted interviews with department chairs and faculty teaching in the general education curriculum, and a printed copy of the Texas Core Curriculum Report for 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 was reviewed. A review of all documents and the interviews provided adequate information and documentation to support the establishment of campus-wide review for all competencies and supports the institution's case for compliance. However, continued assessment will be needed to develop a mature assessment program for the general education competencies to satisfy the new standard 8.2.b (*Student outcomes: general education*).

3.5.2   At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. *(See the Commission policy "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.")* **(Institutional credits for a degree)**

The institution indicates that the minimum number of credit hours required for an undergraduate degree is 120 hours. An evaluation process is described to ensure that students earning the bachelor's degree must complete at least 30 hours at the institution. The narrative indicates that an audit is conducted for all graduates to ensure that they are in compliance with this residency requirement; however, no substantiating evidence is supplied to demonstrate that this audit process actually occurs.

The Focused Report provided sample degree audits from all three undergraduate colleges at the main campus and at Rio Grande College. Each of the degree audits included documentation of a minimum of 30 hours taken in residence. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee also met with the Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Provost and Dean for Rio Grande College and with the Administrative Secretary for the Dean of Arts and Sciences and reviewed completed degree audits for several students. The Committee confirmed that degree audits included documentation that at least 25 percent of the required credit hours was earned from the institution.

3.5.3   The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. *(See the Commission policy "The Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees.")* **(Undergraduate program requirements)**

The requirements for each undergraduate program, including its general education requirements, are published in the institution's course catalog and posted on the university's website, individual program web sites, handbooks, and programs of study. In keeping with the mandate of the Texas Higher Education

Form edited May 2016

Coordinating Board, the institution instituted a 42-hour core curriculum starting fall 2014. The Core Curriculum course listing is available on the university webpage, in the course catalog, and in Degree Works. Transfer requirements for students transferring from public junior colleges conform to standard requirements authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Major requirements are set by each major following university regulations.

Any changes such as new courses and programs, changes in the number of hours in a degree, and changes in degree designation, are subject to a process of review and assessment starting with the department, college, and university, and in some cases, by the Board of Regents and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The course catalog lists every course, and course inventories are reviewed annually. The university has a seven-year program review cycle for programs not accredited by discipline-specific accrediting agencies. Samples of the BS Degree Plan, a link to the Core Curriculum 2014-16, and the Undergraduate Program Review for the Bachelor of Science in Chemistry are provided to demonstrate that program requirements conform to commonly accepted practices and standards for degree programs.

3.5.4 At least 25 percent of the course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding an appropriate terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate or the equivalent of the terminal degree. **(Terminal degrees of faculty)**

At least 25% of the discipline course hours in each major offered are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree in the program discipline. The MFA is the only master's degree that is considered to be the terminal degree in the performance areas of art, music, and theatre.

The institution provides a table showing the percentage of semester credit hours taught by terminally-degreed faculty for Fall 2016 and Spring 2017. According to this table, the institution documents that at least 25% of the discipline course hours in each major offered are taught by faculty members holding the terminal degree. A listing of faculty in each major with the appropriate terminal degree is also provided as supporting documentation.

With the adoption of revised Principles of Accreditation by the College Delegate Assembly in December 2017, this standard is no longer applicable.

3.6.1 The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than its undergraduate programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program rigor)**

The institution offers graduate degrees in the following areas: Master of Agriculture, Master of Arts, Master of Business Administration, Master of Education, and Master of Science. Dual graduate degrees are offered in Master of Science/Master of Arts in specific programs. The institution states that graduate students are required to complete assignments validating their achievement of skills in oral and/or written comprehensive exams, public thesis defense, public exhibition, performance, or recital. However, examples of these assignments were not provided.

Form edited May 2016

The institution provided evidence that students must meet advanced admission requirements. The institution also provides statements regarding smaller class sizes and physical learning environments for graduate coursework. However, no evidence was provided to support the achievement of advanced content through examples of graduate student learning outcomes or course syllabi.

The institution did not provide sufficient documentation to reflect differentiation between undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

The Focused Report provided examples of assignments to validate skill sets that included written and oral comprehensive exams or evaluations, public art exhibition, and video production. The report also included listings of undergraduate and graduate student learning objectives that demonstrated progression of content and expectations at the graduate level that was additionally supported with sample course syllabi. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee met with the Graduate Dean who affirmed that the student learning objectives and course content are reviewed for rigor in skill sets and content.

3.6.2   The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences. **(Graduate curriculum)**

The institution currently offers five categories of graduate degrees and a dual degree option through its three colleges - College of Agricultural and Natural Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Education and Professional Studies. The university offers concurrent dual degree graduate programs in Master of Science in Criminal Justice and Public Administration, and the Master of Science in Homeland Security and Public Administration.

The narrative provides a listing of programs and required courses within each program that prepare students to engage in research and/or professional practice. It provides a link to the university library webpage as well as sample titles of capstone projects. Student research theses are uploaded into ProQuest, and a sample of a student thesis is provided as evidence.

While the narrative provides a list of the courses, it is not evident how the knowledge of the literature of the discipline is incorporated into the curriculum requirements by individual programs. Documentation such as copies of syllabi would be beneficial to demonstrate compliance.

Current examples were not provided. The two theses provided as examples are from 2008 and 2010.

The Focused Report provided course syllabi from Natural Resource Management, Animal Science, Political Science, Communication, and Criminal Justice that illustrate incorporation of literature within the disciplines and outline assignments and activities that support research and professional training and practice. The report also included thesis samples from 2012-2017. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee met with the Dean of Graduate Studies who provided a printout of 26 additional theses published by ProQuest from 2014-2017.

3.6.3 At least one-third of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. *(See the Commission policy "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.")* **(Institutional credits for a degree)**

The university offers graduate degrees that require between 30 and 36 hours and will accept a maximum of nine and 12 transfer hours respectfully toward the degree. This requirement thus ensures that at least one-third of credits must be earned through instruction offered by the university. Compliance with this requirement is ensured through an online degree auditing system; a redacted example produced by this system was provided.

3.6.4 The institution defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-graduate professional programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program requirements)**

The institution states that it defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-baccalaureate degree programs. Although the institutional submission for this standard did not provide a clear link to the publication of these various program requirements, the Off-Site Committee found such requirements published in the catalogs provided elsewhere. The institution did provide evidence from internal processes and external reviews to demonstrate that graduate program requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs.

3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. *(See Commission guidelines "Faculty Credentials.")* **(Faculty competence)**

The University's mission indicates that it is primarily a teaching and learning institution and that qualified competent faculty are recruited, appointed and evaluated to allow the institution to complete this mission. The narrative indicates that the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost maintains files of faculty credentials that include official copies of all degree transcripts, a letter of application, a vita, and documentation of any exceptional qualifications for individuals who lack the terminal degree. While the majority of the faculty appear to be well qualified to teach the courses assigned to them, questions remained about a few. These are noted on the Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty form located at the end of this report.

In its Focused Report, the institution provided additional documentation and justification for the faculty identified by the Off-Site Committee. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the faculty files of two faculty noted on the Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty form, three faculty on the

Faculty Roster in the institution's Compliance Certification, and one faculty member provided to the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee by the institution.

Evidence provided to the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee supports the institution's case for compliance with this standard. However, the institution may wish to consider including a faculty qualification review in the faculty file for each faculty member whose qualifications may require explanation or justification.

3.7.2 The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. **(Faculty evaluation)**

In Fall 2016, 76 full-time faculty and 117 part-time faculty were employed. All faculty members, including both tenure track and non-tenure track, are evaluated annually by the program administrator.

The Faculty Handbook describes the faculty evaluation process based on four criteria: teaching/job effectiveness, scholarly/artistic endeavor, professional growth and activities, and activities supportive of the University. The evaluation process starts in the Spring semester every year with faculty members submitting a Faculty Evaluation Form describing their accomplishments to the Chair who evaluates the faculty member's performance applying the levels of "meritorious," "merit," or "no merit." The Chair's evaluations, along with student course evaluations, are then submitted to the Dean, the Provost, and finally to the President of the University, who makes the final determination which is then communicated to the faculty member. Faculty applying for promotion/tenure are also evaluated by the department, college, and university tenure and promotion committees.

Student course evaluations are completed for every course. While the narrative states that results from student evaluations are published on the university's website each semester, the screen shot to the link does not provide the information.

While part-time faculty are evaluated, the narrative does not clarify how often adjunct faculty are evaluated after their first time teaching a course. The documentation provided did include redacted sample evaluations of faculty in several categories.

In the Focused Report, the institution provided examples of student evaluations and a revised policy for evaluation of adjunct (part-time) faculty that states that department chairs provide "each part time faculty member with an evaluation at the end of each semester taught." The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed examples of the implementation of the revised policy, as well as examples of evaluation of tenure and promotion applications and discussed the promotion and tenure process with the Executive Vice President and Provost and with the Chair of the Faculty Council, and confirmed that the institution's policy for tenure and promotion is implemented.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the institution's post-tenure review policy (Performance Evaluation of Tenured Faculty). The institution has not placed a faculty member on post-tenure review since the last reaffirmation.

Form edited May 2016

3.7.3   The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. **(Faculty development)**

The university supports professional development of its faculty through several avenues including Technology Workshops, Research Enhancement Awards, and Teaching Council Grants. These opportunities are made available to faculty through written and electronic formats with the goal of facilitating the continued development of faculty to produce high quality teaching and research.

3.7.4   The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. **(Academic freedom)**

The institution adheres to the Texas State University System rules and regulations regarding academic freedom. Specifically, these items are addressed in Section 4.7. This document was originally adopted in 1980 and amended in May 2017. The institution also addresses academic freedom through the Faculty Handbook Section 2.07. This publication is available to all faculty through online. The institution reports that no instances of alleged academic freedom violations have arisen.

3.7.5   The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. **(Faculty role in governance)**

The faculty have significant authority and responsibility in academic and governance matters through its two principal governance organizations: the Faculty Assembly at Alpine and the Faculty Senate at the Rio Grande College. The Faculty Assembly and the Faculty Senate employ a system of councils and committees whose primary role is to advise the university administration on matters related to the academic mission of the university. The roles and responsibilities of the councils are described in the Faculty Handbook. The narrative lists 13 Councils of the Faculty Assembly. The Constitution of the Faculty Senate of Rio Grande College requires standing committees to include faculty members. Links to the Faculty Assembly Website and the Faculty Senate Website, in addition to the Statement of Governance and the Policy on Faculty Governance and Councils, are provided to demonstrate how the various faculty groups exercise their assigned responsibility and authority.

3.8.1   The institution provides facilities and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission. **(Learning/information resources)**

The university provides students with learning resources to promote academic enhancement through the library, McNair Scholars program, research center and the LoBo Den freshman advising center, classrooms and other listed facilities. Students can receive tutoring, advising, opportunities to participate in research, and other academic support services. The institution provided results from user surveys to indicate that such services appropriately support the institutional mission.

3.8.2   The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources. **(Instruction of library use)**

Form edited May 2016

The university librarians regularly provide students and faculty instruction on the use of library databases and other resources. In addition to traditional training, the users may access tutorials through the help function in various databases. Librarians are available to assist by phone as well for those users who are not on campus. Students may also secure a Texshare card that permits them to access collections at other partner schools.

3.8.3 The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources— to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

The library employs at least 14 employees. All librarians have the appropriate degree and years of experiences in the area in which they are employed. The support staff had sufficient years of experience to document qualification for employment in either tech services, public services, or administrative support.

3.9.1 The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community. **(Student rights)**

The institution clearly publishes and promotes its policies related to student rights and responsibilities in its Student Handbook, which is updated every two years. All related information, including student obligations, is listed in its student handbook and covered at orientation. Each campus has a student handbook. The formal review process is mandated by the Texas State University System and reviewed by the general counsel. While the institutional submission for this standard provided no evidence to document the implementation of policies related to student rights, an example of how a student grade complaint was addressed was provided in relation to FR 4.5.

3.9.2 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains security measures to protect and back up data. **(Student records)**

The institution provided its policies and copies of the access application, record retention schedule, and statement of student records confidentiality used to protect student records. The institution uses appropriate software and methods for the protection, back up, and emergency response to possible breaches in the security of its data systems.

3.9.3 The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experience in the student affairs area—to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

The institution has an appropriate number of staff in place to provide programs and services that support students and the institutional mission. Staff members appear to have appropriate levels of education and experience. Student affairs staff are encouraged to engage in professional training and development.

3.10.1 The institution's recent financial history demonstrates financial stability. **(Financial stability)**

Form edited May 2016

Based on the evidence supplied, most of the revenue sources will vary a bit from year to year, but overall revenue has been somewhat flat. Enrollment has been stable, and with the exception of one year (2013), the institution has generally reported a surplus/increase in net assets annually. The institution's debt level is low, and overall it appears from the supporting documentation provided that the institution is fiscally stable. The On-Site Committee must review the pending 2017 fiscal year audit report to confirm compliance (See CR 2.11.1).

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed a number of documents related to the financial standing of the institution and confirms that the institution does operate from a position of financial stability. See narrative for CR 2.11.1 for additional information on compliance with this standard.

*3.10.2 The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. (Financial aid audits)

SRSU is part of a system, and is reviewed as part of the federal A-133 audit overseen by the Texas State Auditor, a process that includes a review of compliance and controls over the State's federal awards and an audit of the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards. During 2015 the institution received findings related to its financial aid program, but subsequent reviews by the Texas State Auditor, and independent accounting firm, Deloitte, showed no indications of noncompliance, and the issues appear to have been resolved.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee confirms that the institution has met the requirements for financial aid program audits. The State of Texas audits public universities in reference to OMB Circular A-133, the Student Financial Assistance Cluster, most recently in 2015 and 2016. Four findings were determined for Sul Ross State University, and as a result SACSCOC required a SACSCOC monitoring report in 2017. In February 2018, a report by the Texas State Auditor on the State of Texas Compliance with Federal Requirements for the Financial Assistance Cluster for the Fiscal Year Ended August 31, 2017 indicates that corrective action was completed for all outstanding issues.

3.10.3 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources. (Control of finances)

The institution has adequate policies and procedures governing the various relevant processes such as but not limited to the handling of cash, budgeting, risk management, payroll, and procurement. The Internal Audit office reports directly to the board, and from its quarterly report its audit program appears robust. Finance and administrative staff appear qualified. However, the institutional audit report and management letter were not included in the narrative, which might have provided external validation of the institution exercising appropriate control. The On-Site Committee's review of the 2017 financial audit report will be necessary to confirm current compliance with this standard.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Independent Accountant's Review Report submitted to the institution by BKD CPAs & Advisors of San Antonio, Texas, on January 30, 2018. Also reviewed was the Management Letter submitted by BKD, the SRSU 2017 Financial Statement and the Statement of Assets, Liability and Net Position. While on campus the Committee interviewed

Form edited May 2016

the Chief Financial Officer, who responded to questions concerning the reports submitted, as well as the University's budgeting process.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee received the audited financial statement and associated management letter dated January 30, 2018 for the year ending August 31, 2017, prior to the site visit. The report accurately reflects current financial status, and identified no major issues related to control of finances.

3.10.4 The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs. (**Control of sponsored research/external funds**)

The institution has adequate policies and procedure governing the handling and control of external funds and items such as indirect costs. The Internal Audit Department audits the sponsored research programs and for the past few years there were no findings noted. There were also no findings for the institution in the State of Texas Financial Portion of the Statewide single audit for fiscal year 2016. The On-Site Committee should review the 2017 management letter and financial audit report to confirm compliance.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed information supplied by the institution in the Focused Report and Addendum and conducted interviews with appropriate individuals to confirm the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

3.11.1 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its physical resources. (**Control of physical resources**)

The institution has adequate policies and procedures in place to maintain control over its physical resources. Inventories are conducted annually, and the condition of each asset is reported on the inventory sheets, and by policy described in the narrative, new items that cost more than $5,000 are tagged. Disposals, surplus, and transfers of property are also governed by the policies, and overall the university appears to have adequate controls in place.

3.11.2 The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community. (**Institutional environment**)

The institution has programs in place regarding public safety and mental health and wellness. However, the institutional submission did not provide adequate supporting evidence to demonstrate the safety of its physical facilities and its environmental health and safety programs.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the results of the Survey on Satisfaction for Campus Outdoor Lighting, the results of the Student Focus Groups On Campus Safety, the 2017 Annual Security and Fire Safety Report and the Crime Statistics Reports for the Alpine, Uvalde, Del Rio and Eagle Pass Campuses. While on campus the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee interviewed the Associate Vice President for Facilities, to whom campus safety reports. The results of the interview and the reports reviewed provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the safety of the institution's physical facilities and its environmental health and safety programs.

Form edited May 2016

The institution provided additional information, including evidence of focus group activities, new emergency phones, and a lighting survey, along with evidence of improved campus safety from their 2017 Cleary Report.

*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. **(Physical facilities)**

From the survey data in the institutional submission, the campus community appears to be satisfied with the physical appearance of the buildings and grounds and there is a capital plan in place. However, there was insufficient evidence regarding current adequacy of classroom space or technology infrastructure in meeting the needs of the campus community and the institution's various programs and services.

From the survey data in the institutional submission, the campus community appears to be satisfied with the physical appearance of the buildings and grounds and there is a capital plan in place. However, there was insufficient evidence regarding current adequacy of classroom space or technology infrastructure in meeting the needs of the campus community and the institution's various programs and services.

The Focused Report provides information regarding classroom and class laboratory utilization rates from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that indicates average classroom and class laboratory percent filled at less than 50% for both classrooms and class labs on both the Alpine and Rio Grande campuses, compared to the statewide average of 67% for classrooms and 71% for class labs.

On-Site Reaffirmation Committee members toured the campuses and evaluated technology, campus safety items, building infrastructure, progress with the Campus Master Plan and outstanding deferred maintenance projects. Data shared with the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee indicate that the College has a working infrastructure and ongoing refresh cycle for the next 3—5 years that will continue to upgrade physical plant, classroom and class lab technology. Major deferred maintenance projects are scheduled for the next 3-5 years as well, and safety issues such as fire alarms and card swipes are resolved as identified.

3.12.1 The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the Commission's substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. *(See the Commission policy "Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions.")* **(Substantive change)**

The institution has in place a well-publicized policy and procedure for reporting substantive changes to SACSCOC. Examples of numerous substantive changes are documented by letters in consultation with SACSCOC for substantive changes over the last several years. These documents indicate that the institution understands the scope and responsibility of reporting substantive changes to SACSCOC.

3.13.1 The institution complies with the policies of the Commission on Colleges. **(Policy compliance)**

Form edited May 2016

*3.13.1. "Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies"

Applicable Policy Statement. Any institution seeking or holding accreditation from more than one U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting body must describe itself in identical terms to each recognized accrediting body with regard to purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituencies, and must keep each institutional accrediting body apprised of any change in its status with one or another accrediting body.

Documentation: The institution should (1) list federally recognized agencies that currently accredit the institution or any of its programs, (2) provide the date of the most recent review by each agency and indicate if negative action was taken by the agency and the reason for such action, (3) provide copies of statements used to describe itself for each of the accrediting bodies, (4) indicate any agency that has terminated accreditation, the date, and the reason for termination, and (5) indicate the date and reason for the institution voluntarily withdrawing accreditation with any of the agencies.

The institution has one federally recognized agency that provides accreditation review for the university's nursing program at Rio Grande College. The institution provided documentation that this program received initial accreditation in April 2017 with reports of the accrediting agency review due in 2021. The institution has accurately described its status with this accrediting body.

Upon review by the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee it was determined that the institution did not accurately and clearly represent itself to the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) when seeking accreditation for the RN to BSN Nursing program offered at the Rio Grande College location.

Recommendation 2: The Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate it has clarified its institutional status with CCNE and accurately represents itself to the accrediting body.
[This standard is now 14.4.a in the 2018 Principles of Accreditation].

3.13.2 "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures"

Applicable Policy Statement. Member institutions are responsible for notifying and providing SACSCOC with signed final copies of agreements governing their joint and dual academic awards (as defined in this policy). These awards must address the requirements set forth in the SACSCOC policy and procedures. For all such arrangements, SACSCOC-accredited institutions assume responsibility for (1) the integrity of the awards, (2) the quality of credits recorded on their transcripts, and (3) compliance with accreditation requirements

Documentation: The institution should provide evidence that it has reported to the Commission all dual and joint awards (as defined in this policy) that included signed final copies of the agreements outlining the awards In addition, the institution should integrate into the Compliance Certification a discussion and determination of compliance with all standards applicable to the provisions of the agreements.

No submission was provided for this standard in the Compliance Certification.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed SRSU policies on Transfer and Award of Credit and the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. The Committee also reviewed the Co-operative College Education Agreement Between Heze University China and Sul Ross University U. S. A. on Major of

Form edited May 2016

Biology and the September 14, 2017 letter from SRSU to SACSCOC concerning this agreement. While on campus, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee interviewed the Provost who answered questions related to the agreement and the measures in place to insure compliance with accreditation requirements. Based upon the review of documents and the interview conducted it appears that appropriate standards and procedures are in place at the institution.

*3.13.3 "Complaint Procedures Against the Commission or Its Accredited Institutions"

Applicable Policy Statement. Each institution is required to have in place student complaint policies and procedures that are reasonable, fairly administered, and well-publicized. *(See FR 4.5)*. The Commission also requires, in accord with federal regulations, that each institution maintains a record of complaints received by the institution. This record is made available to the Commission upon request. This record will be reviewed and evaluated by the Commission as part of the institution's decennial evaluation.

Documentation: When addressing this policy statement, the institution should provide information to the Commission describing how the institution maintains its record and also include the following: (1) individuals/offices responsible for the maintenance of the record(s), (2) elements of a complaint review that are included in the record, and (3) where the record(s) is located (centralized or decentralized). The record itself will be reviewed during the on-site evaluation of the institution.

No submission was provided for this standard in the Compliance Certification.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the institution's policy regarding student complaints that covers complaints about discrimination and complaints regarding academic procedures. The policy is clearly stated in an online policy manual that is referenced in the student handbook and the catalogs for the Alpine campus and the Rio Grande College. The institution provided evidence of compliance in the form of flow charts, case examples, and logs of complaints that were reviewed by the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

3.13.4 "Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports"

*3.13.4.a. Applicable Policy Statement. An institution includes a review of its distance and correspondence education programs in the Compliance Certification. An institution includes a review of all its branch campuses and its off-campus instructional sites.

Documentation: In order to be in compliance with this policy, the institution must have incorporated an assessment of its compliance with standards that apply to (1) its distance and correspondence education programs and courses, (2) its branch campuses, and (3) its off-campus instructional sites. The institution should describe its process for incorporating the review and analysis of these programs.

No submission was provided for this standard in the Compliance Certification.

Because the institution did not address how off-campus instructional sites are in compliance with standards that apply to distance education and off-campus instructional sites, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine the extent to which the institution applies all appropriate policies and standards to off-campus instructional sites. The institution provided information for distance education, but did not address off-campus sites.

Form edited May 2016

In the professional judgment of the On-Site Committee, it is not generally accepted practice in higher education that the institution have separate and distinct practices for the off-campus instructional sites in the following areas:

- Identification of the off-campus instructional sites as a distinct college (Rio Grande College) that appears separate from the rest of the institution
- Separate University Catalogs for Alpine and Rio Grande College that include different course prefixes and descriptions
- Degree plans, inventories, curriculum, student learning outcomes, degree requirements, program quality and program coordination for the same degrees offered at the off-site locations
- Faculty governance (two separate Faculty Senates)
- Student support activities

These areas relate to several standards but are not limited to: 3.3.1.1, 3.4.9, 3.4.11, 3.5.3, and 3.4.5.

Recommendation 3: The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that it applies all appropriate standards and polices to its off-campus instructional sites.
[This standard is 14.3 in the 2018 Principles of Accreditation].

3.13.4.b. Applicable Policy Statement. If an institution is part of a system or corporate structure, a description of the system operation (or corporate structure) is submitted as part of the Compliance Certification for the decennial review. The description should be designed to help members of the peer review committees understand the mission, governance, and operating procedures of the system and the individual institution's role within that system.

Documentation: The institution should provide a description of the system operation and structure or the corporate structure if this applies.

No submission was provided for this standard in the Compliance Certification.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the Texas Education Code Sec. 95.01 that establishes a Board of Regents that governs the Texas State University System. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee also interviewed the President who provided additional documentation from the TSUS website showing the mission statement of the system that clearly delineated the member institutions and showed a clear organizational chart that shows the institution's position within the system. The institution and system appear to be operating in a manner consistent with the requirements of the standard.

3.13.5 "Separate Accreditation for Units of a Member Institution"

*3.13.5.a. Applicable Policy Statement. .All branch campuses related to the parent campus through corporate or administrative control (1) include the name of the parent campus and make it clear that its accreditation is dependent on the continued accreditation of the parent campus and (2) are evaluated during reviews for institutions seeking candidacy, initial membership, or reaffirmation of accreditation. All other extended units under the accreditation of the parent campus are also evaluated during such reviews.

Documentation: For institutions with branch campuses: (1) The name of each branch campus must include the name of the parent campus—the SACSCOC accredited entity. The institution should provide evidence of this for each of its branch campuses. (2) The

institution should incorporate the review of its branch campuses, as well as other extended units under the parent campus, into its comprehensive self-assessment and its determination of compliance with the standards, and indicate the procedure for doing so.

No submission was provided for this standard in the Compliance Certification.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee met with the President and Provost. Both officials asserted in clear terms that the institution has no branch campuses. Since the institution has no branch campuses, the standard is not applicable.

3.13.5.b. Applicable Policy Statement. If the Commission on Colleges determines that an extended unit is autonomous to the extent that the control over that unit by the parent or its board is significantly impaired, the Commission may direct that the extended unit seek to become a separately accredited institution. A unit which seeks separate accreditation should bear a different name from that of the parent. A unit which is located in a state or country outside the geographic jurisdiction of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and which the Commission determines should be separately accredited or the institution requests to be separately accredited, applies for separate accreditation from the regional accrediting association that accredits colleges in that state or country

Implementation: If, during its review of the institution, the Commission determines that an extended unit is sufficiently autonomous to the extent that the parent campus has little or no control, the Commission will use this policy to recommend separate accreditation of the extended unit. *No response required by the institution.*

Not Applicable

3.14.1 A member or candidate institution represents its accredited status accurately and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in accordance with Commission requirements and federal policy. **(Publication of accreditation status)**

The institution appropriately publishes its accreditation status with SACSCOC, along with contact information for the accrediting organization, on its institutional effectiveness web page and in its undergraduate and graduate course catalog.

D. Assessment of Compliance with Section 4: Federal Requirements

*4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Criteria may include: enrollment data; retention, graduation, course completion, and job placement rates; state licensing examinations, student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals. **(Student achievement)**

The institution provides student achievement data from national, state, and local sources. Data on retention and graduation rates that was reported to IPEDS across six years and SAM for one year was included. The Texas State University 2020 Performance Metrics Report showed one-year change statistics from the 2016 baseline to 2017 actuals and progress toward the 2020 target. The institution also uses the ETS Proficiency Profile to benchmark its students nationally. The institution provides data on job placement rates reported by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that are broken out by degree level and field. The Texas Consumer Resource for Education and Workforce Statistics

Form edited May 2016

track the overall salaries of the institution's graduates and the top producing programs.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including data tables and reports, and conducted an interview with the Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Committee.

*4.2   The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the mission and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. (Program curriculum)

The institution has as a mission to produce graduates who are effective leaders with effective communication skills and have a commitment to serve their communities. The curricula are structured to meet this mission by delivering a course of study that results in a life changing high quality educational experience. To facilitate this goal, a seven-year review cycle is described in which undergraduate curricula are reviewed by institutional research and program coordinators, and graduate curricula are reviewed by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The acquisition of program accreditations is also cited as documentation that curricula are appropriate to the mission and goals of the institution.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including the institution's Course Catalog, the Faculty Handbook, and mission statement, and conducted an interview with the Executive Vice President and Provost in support of the institution's case for compliance.

*4.3   The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. (Publication of policies)

The institution publishes its calendar, grading policies, and refund policies in its university catalog, student handbook, and websites. It provided evidence of these postings, publications, and its guidelines and printing procedures for university publications and marketing materials.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including University Catalogs, the institution's website, student handbook, and Administrative Policy 2.16, in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

*4.4   Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs. (Program length)

The university indicates that program length for each of its programs is in line with state policies as required by the Texas Education Coordinating Board. Since 2005, these policies prohibit institutions from requiring more than the minimum number of hours required by SACSCOC unless compelling justification is presented for an exception. Correspondingly, the minimum number of hours required for undergraduate program is 120. Only two undergraduate programs require more than 120 hours.

Form edited May 2016

The number of hours required for graduate degrees range from 30 to 36 hours, which is consistent with state requirements, ensures mastery of discipline content, and is also in compliance with SACSCOC requirements.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including University Catalogs; Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board SRSU Inventory of Programs-Authorized Program Length; and statutes, codes, policies and procedures from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and conducted interviews with the Executive Vice President and Provost, Graduate Dean, Faculty Assembly Officers, in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

*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. (*See the Commission policy "Complaint Procedures against the Commission or its Accredited Institutions."*) (**Student complaints**)

The institution makes its policies and procedures for addressing student complaints and grievance process accessible online in its student handbook, faculty handbook, and administrative policy manual. It recently updated a policy related to grievance of grades and professional conduct of the faculty. The institution shared an appropriate example of a complaint filed and follow-up provided.

The institution provides a policy for student complaints online. The policy addresses complaints related to perceived discrimination based on federal laws and a new section on student complaints about academic procedures. The institution provided evidence of a systematic approach to student complaints related to discrimination and provided a logbook of these complaints and information and examples of how complaints have been resolved. Complaints related to academic functions are to be addressed by the colleges. The Executive Vice President and Provost provided evidence of a systematic approach to addressing these student complaints, along with examples and a written record of the complaints that have been received and addressed by the colleges.

Based on its review of information provided in the Focused Report and the review of documents while on site, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee concluded that the evidence was sufficient to affirm the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

*4.6   Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. (**Recruitment materials**)

The university provided evidence of consistency in its recruitment materials through a variety of submitted materials. Recruiting materials, webpages, university course catalog information, and other materials all show a consistent message in relation to mission, affordability, and academic practices. The institution also has policies and evidence of seeking consistency and accuracy through the work of a marketing committee, use of marketing and branding standards, and guidelines and printing procedures for university publications.

Form edited May 2016

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the recruitment materials for the university at the Rio Grande campuses and the Alpine campus. Interviews were conducted with the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Director of Admissions to confirm recruitment practices and to discuss recruitment materials. Students at all campuses also verified that recruiting materials accurately reflect the program offerings of the institution.

*4.7 The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended. (In reviewing the institution's compliance with these program responsibilities, the Commission relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U.S. Department of Education.) **(Title IV program responsibilities)**

As evidenced from documentation provided, in 2016 the university was re-certified to participate in Federal Student Financial Aid programs through June 2018. The Texas State Auditor's 2015 federal audit resulted in the institution receiving four findings related to financial aid. However, the university implemented process changes, and subsequent reviews by the State Auditor in 2016, and an independent accounting firm in early 2017, found no instances of non-compliance in the areas which were previously deficient. The On-Site Committee must review the pending 2017 audit report to confirm current compliance.

The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended. The US Department of Education's Dallas School Participation Team completed a review of Sul Ross' application to participate in the Title IV, Higher Education Act Programs in January 2016. The review indicated that Sul Ross meets the requirements of institutional eligibility, administrative capability, and financial responsibility as set forth in CFR Parts 600 and 668[7].

The State of Texas audits the universities in reference to OMB Circular A-133, the Student Financial Assistance Cluster, most recently in 2015 and 2016. Four findings were determined for Sul Ross University, and as a result SACSCOC required a monitoring report in 2017. In February 2018, a report by the Texas State Auditor on the State of Texas Compliance with Federal Requirements for the Financial Assistance Cluster for the Fiscal Year Ended August 31, 2017 indicates that corrective action was completed for all outstanding issues.

*4.8 An institution that offers distance or correspondence education documents each of the following: **(Distance and correspondence education)**

  4.8.1 demonstrates 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 (a) a secure login and pass code, (b) proctored examinations, or (c) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

    The university uses three levels of security to ensure that a student who registers in a distance education course is the same student who

        Form edited May 2016

participates in and completes the work for the course. These levels of security include 1) secure login, 2) pass codes and 3) human examination proctors. Detailed technical information is described in the narrative to explain the secure login and pass codes security measures and their role in verifying the identity of students enrolled in courses using distance education delivery systems.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including data tables and reports, and conducted an interview with the Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Committee.

4.8.2   has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.

The university cites two technology policies under which it operates to ensure the protections, as required by FERPA, of the privacy of students enrolled in distance education courses. These policies include the Information Security policy, and the Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources policy. Network and information systems undergo regular audits and tests using recognized industry tools and services to ensure the integrity of the University's technology services.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed policy documents, and conducted an interview with the Chief Information Officer in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Committee.

4.8.3   has a written procedure distributed at the time of registration or enrollment that notifies students of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.

The institution indicates that it does not charge any fees to verify the identity of students enrolled in distance education courses.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including the catalog and conducted an interview with the Chief Information Officer in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Committee.

*4.9   The institution has policies and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs that conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education and to Commission policy. *(See the Commission policy "Credit Hours.")* **(Definition of credit hours)**

The institution follows the Carnegie standard that defines one semester credit hour as a 50-minute class session (and additional time spend outside of class). Evidence was provided through the Administrative Policy 4.15 that the institution clearly defines credit hours including contact hours. Additionally, the institution documented the steps for the determination of credit hours as part of the course development process. Further, the policies translate and apply the definition to the various alternate course formats offered across the institution.

                                    Form edited May 2016

The university provided published documents, and sample "Curriculum Action Forms," to document the implementation of adequate procedures to ensure that its credit-hour policies are enforced.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents including the University Catalog, Administrative Policy 4.15, the Texas Administrative Code, Faculty Handbook Section 4.01 Curriculum Development, and sample curriculum action forms, and interviewed the Executive Vice President and Provost in support of the institution's case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

E. Additional Standards from the 2018 *Principles of Accreditation*

Section 4: Governing Board

2.   The governing board

    g.   defines and regularly evaluates its responsibilities and expectations.
            (Board self-evaluation)

            The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed the reports of the Board Evaluation instrument that showed a strong sense that the governing board was functioning well. The Committee conducted a conference call with the Chairperson of the Board of Regents of the Texas State University System who indicated that the Board had implemented a self-evaluation process to take place every three years. The results of the initial self-evaluation were both strong and instructive. The Chair listed a number of recommendations received from individual Board members through the evaluation process that had been well received and were expected to be implemented in the coming year.

Section 7: Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

2.   The institution has a Quality Enhancement Plan that (a) has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes; (b) has broad-based support of institutional constituencies; (c) focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (d) commits resources to initiate, implement and complete the QEP; and (e) includes a plan to assess achievement.
        (Quality Enhancement Plan)

        The institution ha developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan with the exception of part (e). See Part III for additional details.

Recommendation 4: The Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution develop an adequate assessment plan for the QEP.

Section 12: Academic and Student Support Services

6.   The institution provides information and guidance to help student borrowers understand how to manage their debt and repay their loans.
        (Student debt)

Form edited May 2016

The institution provided evidence that it provides mandatory entrance counseling for all first-time borrowers, which includes financial awareness counseling and calculation of a repayment estimate. The institution also demonstrated that it requires all graduating students to complete mandatory exit counseling regarding financial obligations and places a hold on future registration and transcript requests if this counseling is not completed. Financial Literacy was shown to be covered in the First-Year Seminar for students on the Alpine Campus and in financial literacy workshops on the Rio Grande campuses.

F.   Additional observations regarding strengths and weaknesses of the institution. (*optional*).

C.S. 3.4.6 – Practices for Awarding Credit
The narrative for 3.4.6 states that the University does not award academic credit for experiential learning. However, narratives for 3.4.4 and 3.4.8 include statements to the contrary. Additionally, the Transfer and Award of Academic Credit policy addresses Credit for Prior Learning. The institution did not appear to be consistent in its representation of this issue. For subsequent reporting, the institution may wish to remedy this issue to minimize confusion.

Also, while the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee determined that the physical plant and technology infrastructure are adequate, it should be noted that additional funding for maintenance and improvement of the institution's bricks and mortar and especially technology systems likely will be required in the near future.

Part III.   Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan

Brief description of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan

The Sul Ross State University's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), *Compass: Navigating Excellence through Effective Communication*, aims at improving its students' competency in communication. It focuses on written, oral, and visual communication as the key facets of effective communication and targets upper-division students. The QEP is designed to impact student learning across campuses through faculty development.

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee concluded that the institution has developed an acceptable QEP.

Analysis of the Acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan

A.   ***Topic Identification.***   *The institution has a topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes.*

The institution used available institutional data on student learning and involved broad constituencies to determine its QEP topic. The institution began its QEP planning process in 2015, using its institutional data (such as core curriculum assessment data, student survey, ETS results and NSSE survey) to solicit QEP topic ideas from all faculty, students and staff. The institution formed a QEP oversight committee and a QEP planning committee with broad representations of faculty, staff, and students. Based on the all-campus survey, the institution identified six areas of needs for student learning:

communication, writing, reading, leadership, research, internship, and community service. The institution formed four subcommittees with broad representation to explore these areas of needs and narrowed the QEP topic to communication.

B. **_Broad-based Support_**. *The plan has the broad-based support of institutional constituencies.*

The institution has provided evidence of broad support for the QEP among institutional constituencies. This evidence includes multiple meetings with the Faculty Assembly, Faculty and Staff meetings, involvement with deans, department chairs, and academic planning committees, as well as the Faculty Senate. QEP information has been shared with students in Informational Fairs in early 2018. Faculty have participated in subcommittees working on literature reviews, faculty development, student learning outcomes and assessment, budgeting, and marketing and communications. The membership of the institution's QEP Executive Committee provides further evidence of broad-based support since it includes the SGA President and faculty members. Interviews with students at the Uvalde, Del Rio, and Alpine campuses all confirmed student support for the QEP.

C. **_Focus of the Plan_**. *The institution identifies a significant issue that focuses on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success.*

The institution identified three student learning outcomes as well as outcomes for improving learning environment. The three learning outcomes specify the areas of communication (written, oral, and visual) for student improvement.

Student Learning Outcomes:
*   Demonstrate effective development and expression of ideas in writing
*   Exhibit skills in prepared, purposeful oral communication of materials or concepts
*   Create and deliver visual works that facilitate audience understanding of a central message or purpose

Program Outcomes:
*   Increase opportunities for students to demonstrate competency in written, oral and visual communication through peer-reviewed or other externally-validated scholarship
*   Enhance the capacity of educators to teach communication skills through increased professional development opportunities via the development of a university-wide showcase of faculty innovation and scholarship in communication instruction

Key QEP implementation strategies:
*   Standardized assignments and rubrics to provide consistent learning experiences and assessment
*   Faculty Development to provide resources (stipend, teaching techniques, mentorship)
*   Public Exhibits to showcase student learning and faculty development

D. **_Institutional Capability for the Initiation, Implementation, and Completion of the Plan_**. *The institution provides evidence that it has committed sufficient resources to initiate, implement, sustain, and complete the QEP.*

Form edited May 2016

The documentation and multiple interviews on site determined that the administration provides supports for the QEP plan. There are two QEP coordinators to oversee the QEP implementation in Alpine and Rio Grande campuses, and the institution has established procedures for Compass Guide and Navigator for faculty to apply and become the QEP mentor and/or QEP faculty to implement the QEP. The institution provided the yearly budget plan and demonstrated that it has allocated adequate funding for the implementation of the QEP. The QEP document and the on-site interviews provide the evidence that the IE office oversees the assessment data collection processes and has identified a data collection platform already in use at the institution.

E. *Assessment of the Plan*. *The institution has developed an appropriate plan to assess achievement.*

The institution developed an assessment plan for the QEP. The plan identifies three assignments and three rubrics. However, upon reviewing the QEP document and interviewing faculty, student and staff, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee determined that the rubrics developed by the institution do not align with the assignments as well as the learning outcomes. The assessment plan was not detailed enough to confirm that the institution will be able to measure student success. There was limited baseline data available which may also impact determining the level of success of the QEP.

Recommendation 4: The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution develop an adequate assessment plan for the QEP.

Additional Analysis and Comments for Strengthening the QEP

The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to identify plans for online and off-campus students, and recruiting faculty and overseeing QEP implementation at multiple instructional sites may pose additional challenges. The requirements for QEP courses may be too prescriptive for the QEP to successfully recruit faculty for participation. The assessment plan to require faculty to do the pre- and post- test in each of the QEP courses may also pose additional challenge in ensuring the quality of data and continuous faculty participation. While QEP faculty are expected to implement the three pre-designed assignments and collect data during the entire QEP period, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee did not find a plan to ensure this commitment.

Other Comments
The institution might benefit from consultations with external experts early-on to plan and clarify some of the concerns mentioned above.

The institution should seek ways to make this QEP sustainable. For example:
- allowing faculty more autonomy in determining how they integrate the communication skills as a part of their existing assignments;
- reducing the amount of assessment required by each individual faculty member;
- holding assessment days to assess student learning rather than pre- and post-tests;
- establishing yearly benchmark goals for the QEP implementation; and
- identifying specific courses in each department/ program where the QEP might be implemented.

The institution might consider narrowing the scope of the QEP. Each student learning outcome is a substantive area of learning, and the institution may consider identifying learning outcomes that are not specific to the mode of communication (oral, visual, written). The institution may

Form edited May 2016

consider consolidating the three rubrics into one that assesses essential communication skills applicable across the modality of communication. Simplified assessment may allow the institution to overcome some of the potential challenges noted above.

Part IV.   Third-Party Comments

If an institution receives Third-Party Comments, the institution has an opportunity to respond to those comments and the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviews the response as part of its comprehensive evaluation of the institution.

The Committee should check one of the following:

___*___   No Third-Party Comments submitted.

_____   Third-Party Comments submitted. *(Address the items below.)*

> *1. Describe the nature of the Comments and any allegations of non-compliance that may have been part of the formal Third-Party Comments;*
>
> *2. Indicate whether the Committee found evidence in support of any allegations of non-compliance.*
>
> *If found to be out of compliance, the Committee should write a recommendation and include it in Part II under the standard cited with a full narrative that describes why the institution was found to be out of compliance and the documentation that supports that determination. In this space, reference the number of the Core Requirement, Comprehensive Standard, or Federal Requirement and the recommendation number cited in Part II.*
>
> *If determined to be in compliance, explain in this space the reasons and refer to the documentation in support of this finding.*

Form edited May 2016

APPENDIX A

Roster of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee

Dr. William A. Meehan - CHAIR
President Emeritus
Jacksonville State University
Jacksonville, AL

Dr. Constance G. Bland
Vice President, Academic Affairs
Mississippi Valley State University
Itta Bena, MS

Dr. Joy Borah
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of North Alabama
Florence, AL

Dr. Cheryl D. Dozier
President
Savannah State University
Savannah, GA

Mr. Clayton A Gibson *
Vice President for Business and Finance
Alabama A&M University
Normal, AL

Dr. Bonnie J. Jones
Assistant Vice President, Institutional Research
and Effectiveness
University South Florida Sarasota-Manatee
Sarasota, FL

Mrs. Shatiqua A. Mosby-Wilson
Library Director
Southern University at New Orleans
New Orleans, LA

Dr. Jackie L. Smith
Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and
Accreditation Liaison
Athens State University
Athens, AL

Dr. Robin M. Williamson
Dean of Student Affairs
New College of Florida
Sarasota, FL

SACSCOC Staff Coordinator
Dr. Crystal A. Baird
Vice President
Decatur, GA

Roster of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee

Dr. Warren J. Carson - CHAIR
Senior Associate Vice Chancellor, Academic
Affairs, and Chief Diversity Officer (Retired)
University of South Carolina Upstate
Spartanburg, SC

Dr. John R. Dew
Senior Vice Chancellor for Student Services
and Administration
Troy University
Troy, AL

Dr. Robert K. Glenn
President
Athens State University
Athens, AL

Ms. Julia M. Jakway
Vice President, Business and Administrative
Services
State College of Florida
Bradenton, FL

Dr. Tisha M. Paredes
Assistant Vice President, Institutional
Effectiveness and Assessment
Old Dominion University
Norfolk, VA

Dr. Sherry L. Robinson
Vice Provost/SACSCOC Liaison
Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, KY

Dr. Victoria S. Seng
Associate Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs
University of Tennessee at Martin
Martin, TN

QEP EVALUATOR
Dr. Mariko Izumi
Professor of Communication
Columbus State University
Columbus, GA

SACSCOC Staff Representative
Dr. John S. Hardt
Vice President
Decatur, GA

Form edited May 2016

Off-Campus Sites or Distance Learning Programs Reviewed

Members of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee visited off-campus instructional sites at Uvalde, Texas, and Del Rio, Texas. In both cases, Committee members participated in a tour of the facilities and met with faculty, students, and administrators who study or work at the location.

UVALDE

The Uvalde site is housed on a junior college campus (Southwest Texas Junior College) and offers only upper-division and graduate-level courses. Committee members confirmed that there are adequate classrooms, computer labs, faculty offices, and administrative space to support the academic mission at this location. The Uvalde site supports students who are working adults by offering academic programs in class in the daytime and evening, as well as some classes that are provided online. Additionally, students can take classes at Del Rio and Eagle Pass (another off-campus instructional site), and many commute an hour or more to reach the Uvalde location. Committee members saw evidence of up-to-date technology in classrooms and computer labs, but faculty indicated there are difficulties obtaining IT support for classroom offerings in the evening.

Faculty at Uvalde indicated an acceptable number of full-time faculty to support academic programs and student advising. This view was confirmed in an interview with students. Sul Ross provides a Writing Center at Uvalde and a Math tutor for students in the evening. The Uvalde site uses a library provided by the community college and pays for access to additional online scholarly materials required for upper-division and graduate courses. The students confirmed that library resources met their needs and observed that they can also access materials from the University's library in Alpine, TX through interlibrary loan.

Students did report some weaknesses in support services. Some did not have degree plans, and some expressed concerns regarding some faculty who do not interact with students or provide advising outside of class. Students noted that it is easy to transfer from the community college into Sul Ross. Recruiting materials were consistent with the programs offered by the university.

There are some questions regarding the identity of the three off-campus instructional sites that constitute Rio Grande College. Faculty at Uvalde, Del Rio and Eagle Pass have a separate Faculty Senate from the Alpine campus and stated that the curriculum for the degrees differed from the same degrees offered at Alpine in order to meet different learning needs of the working adult students. For additional information, see CS 3.13.4a above and Recommendation 3.

Faculty and staff at Uvalde expressed the view that the QEP will be very beneficial to the working adult students on their campus.

DEL RIO

Like Uvalde, the off-campus instructional site in Del Rio is located on a community college campus, but consists of multiple buildings. Facilities included up-to-date classrooms, a modern biology lab, computer labs for undergraduate and graduate students, an auditorium, faculty offices, administrative offices, and a student lounge area.

Form edited May 2016

Del Rio students take upper-division courses as well as graduate courses and can take classes on the campus or online to complete their degree. Students at Del Rio have access to Blackboard Connect for their online courses. Library resources are available from the community college library and from the Alpine campus library through interlibrary loan. Del Rio students have access to a Writing Center as well as SmartThinking Online. Funds are also available for Math tutors.

Similar to Uvalde, the Del Rio campus has up-to-date technology for classroom teaching and computer labs, but lacks adequate IT resources to address technology issues in the evening classes.

Faculty and staff at Del Rio expressed support for the QEP, which they think will be beneficial to their students who are mostly working adults. Like at Uvalde, faculty at Del Rio are engaged with teaching and advising their students, whom they know well due to small class sizes.

Form edited May 2016

APPENDIX C

List of Recommendations
Cited in the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee

6.2.c (*Program Coordination*) **Recommendation 1:**

The Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution assign a program coordinator for the Bachelor of Applied Science--Organizational Leadership who is appropriately qualified in the field.

14.4.a (*Representation to other agencies*) **Recommendation 2:**

The Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate it has clarified its institutional status with CCNE and accurately represents itself to the accrediting body.

14.3 (*Comprehensive institutional reviews*) **Recommendation 3:**

The Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that it applies all appropriate standards and polices to its off-campus instructional sites.

7.2.e (*Quality Enhancement Plan: assessment plan*) **Recommendation 4:**

The Reaffirmation Committee recommends that the institution develop an adequate assessment plan for the QEP.

Form edited May 2016