



- IAO Home
- Strategic Plan
- SACS: Then and Now
- SACS Website
- Contact Us

Welcome to Affirming SFA Success!

Fall is a time on campus when we think of new beginnings. New colleagues to meet and get to know, new courses to plan, and new opportunities associated with our roles at the University all come to mind. An emerging “new opportunity” for all of us this year will be to spend more time addressing strategic planning and sharpening our focus on compliance related materials associated with the SACS reaffirmation in 2011. That may seem a long way off, but it is not. Both initiatives will be a forum for the exchange of ideas fostering improvement of our programs and departments.

An Opportunity For SFA to Showcase Success.

It is essential to Stephen F. Austin that the [Commission on Colleges \(COC\)](#) of the [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools \(SACS\)](#) reaffirm our accreditation during the 2011 academic year. Maintaining regional accreditation is directly related to SFA’s continuous improvement as an institution of higher education and will also provide SFA with an opportunity to showcase its decades of impressive successes. SFA can expect to receive the final report from the Commission on Colleges in December 2011.

The Process for Positive Results Has Begun.

We have already begun the process for reaffirmation. The measurement of institutional effectiveness was part of the University’s annual assessment process even before the last SACS reaffirmation in 2000, and it continues as a primary means of program appraisal. Other significant components include program review, already on a regular cycle for each academic department, and assessment of the core curriculum, which is moving into its fifth year. In the Spring of 2007, President Pattillo named a [Strategic Planning Committee](#). The Strategic Planning Committee will very soon be asking the campus community for suggestions and feedback in the compiling a new strategic plan.

Recently, the Provost established the [Institutional Accreditation Office \(IAO\)](#) as a clearinghouse for matters related to the reaffirmation of the accreditation effort. The mission of IAO is to provide compliance coordination and support to all units of the University. The Provost also named a preliminary [IAO staff](#), with the possibility of adding others as specific needs are identified. You are invited to visit the IAO website from time to time. The material posted on the site is intended to keep communication about SACS reaffirmation before the SFA community. You might want to take a look at [“SACS Then and Now,”](#) a piece that contrasts the SACS “must” statements from the 90s, with the current [The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement](#). The comparison you will note highlights the focus that reaffirmation will have over the next few years.

The Office of Institutional Research has published a [Reaffirmation Time Line](#), which marks the milestones along the way to the “finish line” also posted on the IAO web pages. Preparation and keeping to the time line should lead to a positive outcome of this University-wide effort. The total endeavor will require an immense amount of coordination and hard work. The combined effort leading to COC reaffirmation will involve everyone on campus to some degree.

Teams and Resources.

Reaffirmation activity should increase, in the near future, when the University names a Reaffirmation Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will guide the reaffirmation effort by coordinating and managing the internal review process. It will have representation from all divisions of the University. This group will be providing the campus with SACS reaffirmation expectations and reporting guidelines.

Keeping “In the Loop”.

This e-mail newsletter will be distributed bi-monthly over the next few years. Its purpose is to keep everyone “in the loop” and involved on the reaffirmation effort as the process gains momentum. We will all be working toward the common goal of SFA SACS-cess!