Stephen F. Austin State University
SACSCOC Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Focused Report

February 2021

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Standard 4.2f

The governing board protects the institution from undue influence by external persons or bodies. *(External influence)*

    _X_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The governing board has clear and concise means of protecting the institution from external influences, as evidenced by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) online training guideline and manual, the Texas Government Code, and institution's policies on ethics (2.6), nepotism (11.16), and academic freedom (7.3). THECB online training is required of all governing board members. Texas Government Code describes standards of conduct and conflict of interest, including statements that employees are not allowed to accept gifts that may influence their duties. There are numerous state (Texas Education Code 51.352, 51.923), local policies (2.6 - Ethics, 11.16 - Nepotism, 7.3 – Academic Freedom & Responsibility), and Texas Higher Education Coordination Board (THECB) trainings listed; however, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine how these policies are implemented.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

In order to implement the above statutes and university policies, the board established Policy 2.12, Compliance [01]. This policy establishes the university compliance program, which was "designed to provide a framework for promoting an institutional culture that: (1) promotes a commitment to ensure the highest level of compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, institutional policies, procedures, and other rules governing higher education, including research and health to the extent applicable and (2) prevents and detects criminal conduct inconsistent with an effective compliance program." The program consists of two main committees [02] – the Executive Oversight Compliance Committee [03], whose membership includes the president's cabinet, and the Compliance Coordinating Committee [04], whose membership includes key department heads and faculty representatives.

The compliance program website [05] provides information on how to report compliance concerns. One of these reporting mechanisms is the EthicsPoint reporting system. This system divides reports into five categories:

1. Financial – accounting or auditing matters;
2. Human Resources – misconduct, harassment, discrimination, threats, or other human resources matters;
3. Information Technology – issues relating to the misuse of technology, intellectual property infringement, or data privacy;
4. Research & Sponsored Programs – all issues dealing with the university's research department or programs;

5. Ethics and Compliance – other matters of ethics and compliance not included in the categories above.

Complaints are triaged by the general counsel and chief audit executive, meaning these two direct board-report positions determine whether the report should be sent for investigation under a university policy or investigated by them. For example, when an alleged nepotism report is submitted through EthicsPoint, [06], the general counsel and chief audit executive conduct the necessary investigation and make a determination as to whether there is a finding (EthicsPoint 10.2.15 and 7.21.17). The results of these investigations are communicated to the president (unless a conflict exists), the chair of the board, and the chair of the board's Finance and Audit Committee.

Additionally, the board established Policy 17.22, Purchasing Ethics and Confidentiality [07]. This policy identifies where a conflict of interest may exist related to the procurement of goods and services and establishes methods to mitigate risk related to conflicts of interest, such as family relationships, financial relationships, personal relationships, and commitments and outside activities. Policy 17.22 makes it clear that "it is the policy of the university that conflicts of interest should be avoided where possible or otherwise disclosed and managed." It further requires each employee to complete a disclosure form once per year, updating throughout the year as necessary. This disclosure form [08] requires the employee to disclose any employee or student who is employed by or attending the university; any activity the employee is engaged in, other than for the university, for a fee, salary, or wages; and certain relationships with vendors and other outside entities. This policy further refers to Policy 17.21, Purchases from Officers or Employees [09], which generally prohibits purchases from a university officer or employee except as provided in the policy.

With regard to compliance amongst the board, Section 10 of the Board Rules and Regulations [10] provides: "The Board of Regents shall approve no contract or agreement of any character in which a member of the board, directly or indirectly, has a pecuniary or substantial interest, without prior advice of the general counsel. Regents must self-disclose potential direct or indirect pecuniary or substantial interests in matters pending before the Board of Regents. Potential transactions with relatives of regents should also be disclosed to the general counsel for advice and counsel to avoid any conflicts of interest." This is further detailed in Section 6 of the Policy 2.6, Ethics [11]. These situations occur periodically when a board member has an actual conflict, or even the appearance of a conflict of interest. For example, Board Order 18-16 [12], concerning a Resolution to Approve Qualified Financial Institutions and Investment Brokers, provides in part the following:

Upon motion by Regent Coleman, seconded by Regent Schaefer, with all members voting aye, except Regents Alders, Garrett and Henderson who recused themselves from discussion or voting on the item, it was ordered that the following financial affairs item be approved.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE QUALIFIED FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND INVESTMENT BROKERS

Occasionally, a familial interest arises. For example, Board Order 15-40 [13], concerning the Selection of an Architect to Design the Housing Operations Facility, provides in part the following:

Upon motion by Regent Schaefer, seconded by Regent Todd, with all members voting aye with the exception of Regent Henderson, who recused herself from the discussion and vote on this item, it was ordered that the following item be approved.

SELECTION OF AN ARCHITECT TO DESIGN THE HOUSING OPERATIONS FACILITY

Along with implementing the university's compliance and ethics policies in regard to preventing any undue outside influence, the board has passed SFA Policy 7.3, Academic Freedom and Responsibility [14] to preserve and protect faculty from "the fear that others, inside or outside the university community, may threaten their professional career or the material benefits accruing from it." Examples and details as to how this policy is implemented and upheld are further discussed in the response to Standard 6.4 of this report.

As presented in the narrative above, SFA's governing board protects the institution from undue influence by external persons or bodies through the adoption and implementation of policies and procedures dealing with nepotism, ethics, conflicts of interest, and academic freedom.

Standard 6.2a

Justifies and documents the qualifications of its faculty members.
(Faculty qualifications)

    _X_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The institution has a process for documenting the qualifications of its faculty members, including forms to justify exceptional credentials. Although an example of an exceptional credential form was provided, it was not clear that the credentials had been evaluated by an appropriate authority as being sufficient. The institution has indicated that the Office of Research and Graduate Studies reviews the credentials of those teaching graduate courses, but no evidence of this review was provided. In some instances, those teaching graduate courses did not appear to have appropriate credentials. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine whether the institution consistently implements its process for the justification and documentation of the qualifications of its faculty members.

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee has identified five individuals for whom appropriate qualifications have not yet been provided. These individuals are listed on the *Request for Justifying and Documenting the Qualifications of Faculty* Form.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Evaluation of Faculty Credentials by Appropriate Authorities

SFA faculty credentials are evaluated by appropriate authorities. Specifically, three formal levels of evaluation and approval occur: academic unit, college, provost.

Academic Unit Heads are experts in their disciplines. Deans are well versed in the necessary qualifications for all disciplines housed within their respective colleges. As the chief academic officer, the Provost—in consultation with the university's SACSCOC liaison, who is specially trained to review faculty credentials—serves as the final check in this process. These experts evaluate each faculty member's credentials multiple times during an ongoing process comprised of an initial credential evaluation and subsequent semesterly and triennial reviews.

The specific approval steps for the initial credential evaluation are:

- Certification of Credentials Form is completed for new faculty.
- Academic Unit Head evaluates new faculty credentials.
- Academic Unit Head approves credentials or returns the form with credentialing recommendations. [01]
- Upon approval by the academic unit head, the Dean reviews new faculty credentials.
- The Dean approves credentials or returns the form with credentialing recommendations. [02]

- If the Dean returns the form for corrections, the process starts over.
- The Provost review is initially facilitated by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) which uses an in-depth analysis of faculty credentialing criteria set forth in policy compared to each individual faculty submitted. If criteria are not clearly met with existing documentation, OIR coordinates with deans and academic units to obtain the clarifying information for each approval submitted. The Provost delegates the Office of Institutional Research for the initial credentialing analysis and review before subsequent evaluations, signature processes, and records archival occurs.

New faculty credential records submitted for approval are reconciled at all levels.

The specific approval steps for the subsequent semesterly and triennial reviews are:

- Academic Affairs creates a report compiling all available faculty credentials for each academic unit. [03]
- Academic Unit Head reviews and evaluates faculty credentials with respect to faculty's current scheduled teaching.
- Academic Unit Head approves credentials and certifies the report with a signature or returns the report to Academic Affairs with credentialing recommendations. [04]
- Upon approval by Academic Unit Head, the Dean further reviews and evaluates faculty credentials with respect to faculty's scheduled teaching.
- The Dean approves credentials and certifies the report with a signature or returns the report to Academic Affairs with credentialing recommendations.
- Upon approval by the Dean, the Provost further reviews and evaluates faculty credentials with respect to faculty's scheduled teaching.
- The Provost approves credentials and certifies the report with a signature (as shown in Figure 1) or returns the report to Academic Affairs with credentialing recommendations. [05,06]

Triennial Verification of Faculty Credentials Approval

Stephen F. Austin State University

2019 Edition
(Sept 1, 2018 – August 31, 2019)

Verification of Credential Review: Government, College of Liberal and Applied Arts

Teaching Qualifications for the Faculty of the Academic Unit listed above have been reviewed and approved by the following:

Academic Unit Head
Signature: _____ Date: 9/25/2019
Print Name: Kwame Badu Antwi-Boasiako

Dean
Signature: _____ Date: 9-30-19
Print Name: MARK SANDERS

Provost
Signature: _____ Date: 1/3/20
Print Name: MARC GUIDRY

Office of Institutional Research
September 2019

Figure 1, Example of Triennial Review of Faculty Qualifications certified by Academic Unit Head, Dean, and Provost

Consistent Implementation

SFA's credentialing processes are consistently implemented. Credential review occurs in phases, which take place triennially, during each long semester, and when new faculty members are hired, as outlined in Figure 2.
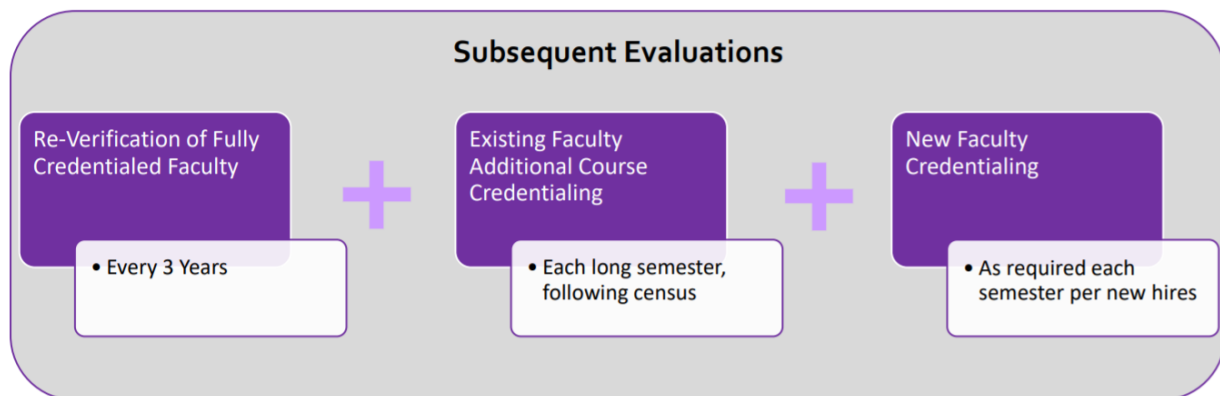

Subsequent Evaluations

Re-Verification of Fully Credentialed Faculty
- Every 3 Years

Existing Faculty Additional Course Credentialing
- Each long semester, following census

New Faculty Credentialing
- As required each semester per new hires

Figure 2, Regularly Implemented Credential Reviews as presented on SFA Institutional Research Office's website

Triennial Review

The triennial review process began in 2019. An example of an academic unit review is included [07]. During this review, all faculty credentials were reevaluated, and Academic Unit Heads, Deans, and the Provost were invited to make suggestions to strengthen their faculty members' credentials. The next triennial review of faculty credentials occurs in 2022.

Semesterly Review

Faculty credentials are evaluated each semester to determine any missing qualifications from newly assigned courses. In addition to proactive, automated course section data validity checks by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR), a specific report is run to evaluate missing faculty credentials (Course Credentialing Review report). Academic units also have on-demand access to run Course Credentialing Review reports as needed. When missing faculty credentials are identified through report runs, the OIR and academic unit coordinate to reconcile new course assignment credentials and ensure a qualified faculty is instructing each course section within the term. The Spring 2021 Department of Chemistry Course Credentialing Review report illustrates one academic unit's completed semesterly review of "Existing Faculty Additional Course Credentialing" [08]. These reports are subsequently available to the Dean and Provost and subject to respective revisions and approvals.

Ongoing Review – New Faculty

Evaluation of new faculty credentials is a continuous process. During the Fall 2020 semester alone, certification of credentials forms were approved at all levels for 35 new instructors. A certification of credentials database sample record display, including approval notations, demonstrates the ongoing review of new faculty [09].

Graduate Faculty Membership and Credential Evaluation and Evidence

In addition to the typical faculty credential evaluation and review all undergraduate faculty undergo, instructors who aspire to teach graduate courses must be approved through a separate evaluation process.

The specific approval steps for gaining membership as graduate faculty are:

- The faculty member completes and submits the Graduate Faculty Membership Application along with a curriculum vitae documenting credentials. [10]
- The existing graduate faculty members of the faculty member's academic unit evaluate the faculty member's credentials and vote to either approve or deny membership. [11]
- If approved by the department's graduate faculty, the Academic Unit Head evaluates the faculty credentials and either approves or denies membership. [12]
- If approved by the Academic Unit Head, the Dean evaluates the faculty's credentials and either approves or denies membership.
- If approved by the Dean, the Graduate Dean evaluates the faculty's credentials and either approves or denies membership.

- If approved by the Graduate Dean, the Provost evaluates the faculty's credentials and either approves or denies membership. [13]

Justifying and Documenting the Qualifications of Faculty

The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee identified five individuals for whom satisfactory teaching qualifications were not provided. These individuals' teaching qualifications are clarified below. Curriculum vitae, transcripts, course descriptions, and examples of approved Graduate Faculty Membership Applications are included, as well, in each faculty member's roster document when appropriate.

1. Dr. Hollie Smith [14] is the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and teaches COU 544 and COU 546 for SFA, as well as undergraduate psychology courses. COU 544 and COU 546 are both graduate counseling courses that focus on problems in student affairs. Dr. Smith's terminal degree with a specialization in Higher Education Administration and her ten years of experience as the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs qualify her to teach COU 544 and COU 546.

2. Keli Barrios [15] is an instructor in Nursing whose outstanding professional experience qualifies her to teach graduate nursing courses. Her completed and approved Graduate Faculty Membership Application and the documents which supported its approval have been added to Ms. Barrios's credentials. Also, Ms. Barrios was appointed as a Limited Member of the Graduate Faculty. In reference to this type of membership, a note on the Graduate Faculty Membership Application states, "For Limited or Affiliate Memberships, academic unit head must attach a letter specifying the proposed graduate duties of the applicant and explain why these duties cannot be performed by existing graduate faculty." The academic unit letter evidence is included in Ms. Barrios' documentation.

3. Lauren Gaudette [16] is an instructor in Nursing whose outstanding professional experience qualifies her to teach graduate nursing practicum courses. Her completed and approved Graduate Faculty Membership Application and the documents which supported its approval have been added to Ms. Gaudette's credentials. Also, Ms. Gaudette was appointed as a Limited Member of the Graduate Faculty. In reference to this type of membership, a note on the Graduate Faculty Membership Application states, "For Limited or Affiliate Memberships, academic unit head must attach a letter specifying the proposed graduate duties of the applicant and explain why these duties cannot be performed by existing graduate faculty." The academic unit letter evidence is included in Ms. Gaudette's documentation.

4. Dusty Jenkins [17] teaches psychology courses at SFA. She has a terminal degree in Human Development and Family Studies and a graduate degree (Master of Science) in Counseling. While working toward her MS in counseling, Ms. Jenkins completed over 18 graduate credit hours in psychology, qualifying her to teach psychology courses at SFA. These graduate credit hours in psychology have been noted on the Faculty Roster Form.

5. John Janda [18] served as a Clinical Teaching Field Supervisor in Spring 2020 and was listed as instructor of record for two student teaching courses (ELE 441 and SED 442). Mr. Janda's Master of Science in Educational Management has been added to his credentials and this evidence further documents qualifications to serve as a Clinical Teaching Field Supervisor for SFA.

Response Summary

The evidence provided above clarifies that SFA faculty credentials (including graduate faculty credentials) are evaluated by appropriate authorities, and that SFA implements faculty credentialing processes regularly and consistently. Additionally, the explanations and support documents for the five faculty members detail how these individuals are appropriately qualified to teach assigned courses at SFA.

Standard 6.2c

Assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination.
(Program coordination) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

_**X**_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The institution assigns program coordination duties to either the department chair or a program coordinator. When program coordinators are responsible for program coordination, they are expected to have the same qualifications as department chairs. The institution indicates that department chairs must have appropriate academic credentials that would qualify them to teach in the department or school. Preference is given to those with administrative experience. The institution included vitas of each department chair or program coordinator. Many of the vitas did not include the titles of the individuals, making it hard to determine whether individuals were coordinators or department chairs (e.g., as in Business Communication and Legal Studies, Counseling, Engineering Physics, Nursing, and many others). The automated system used to generate vitas does not include administrative coordinators (e.g., chair or coordinator).
In addition, it was not always clear who had responsibility for programs when multiple individuals (chairs and coordinators) were identified**.** In Interdisciplinary Studies (BSIS), Special Education (MED), Rehabilitation Services (BSRHB), Kinesiology (MS), and Natural Sciences (MS), for example, multiple individuals are listed, and it is not clear who has primary responsibility. In addition, the materials provided did not always indicate that administrative positions (chair versus coordinator) held by the individual assigned with responsibility to oversee the program. Also, in some cases, program coordinators were identified as being responsible for multiple programs. In a few cases (in Human Sciences, for example), it was not clear if those delegated to have program coordination duties had the actual academic qualifications that would make them qualified to coordinate all the programs (e.g., the same person is responsible for Nutrition and Human Sciences; the same person is responsible for Fashion Merchandising, Interior Design, and Construction management; the same person is responsible for Child Development and Human Sciences). The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine whether the institution assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination for each of its educational programs.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) assigns appropriate responsibility for program coordination for each of its educational programs. Faculty vitae have been updated to indicate their bearers' roles as faculty member, department chair, school director, or associate dean in addition to their duty as program coordinator. Furthermore, the appended tables 1- 6 indicate the roles of each individual listed. The responsibility for academic program coordination at SFA resides primarily with the chairs of departments and the directors of schools, as discussed in policy 4.4, Academic Unit Head - Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation [01]. However, responsibility for program coordination may be delegated to a program coordinator, who assists the chair in directing the respective program. SFA considers program coordinators academically qualified if they possess the

same qualifications ascribed to a department chair as stated in the academic unit head job description [02], a terminal degree in the field of the academic department or academic school.

To be clear, all faculty listed on the table are program coordinators in addition to their primary position within the university. Some of our programs have multiple individuals coordinating academic programs. In those cases, we have indicated who the lead program coordinator is using the role descriptor "Lead Program Coordinator" and italicizing those individuals' names in tables 1- 6 below.

The Off-site Reaffirmation Committee was not able to determine if some of the program coordinators responsible for multiple programs were academically qualified to perform program coordination duties, with the Department of Human Sciences as a specific example. An explanation of the Department of Human Sciences' historic roots as a home economics program may provide additional clarification. When home economics programs began evolving into family and consumer science programs, SFA adopted the departmental name of Human Sciences [03]. The department is closely aligned with the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. The qualification descriptions of the program coordinators listed below include the select Human Sciences faculty with multiple program coordinator responsibilities.

Mrs. Leisha Bridwell holds an MFA in interior design and is the program coordinator for our Interior Design, BS; Interior Merchandising, BS; Fashion Merchandising, BS; and Construction Management, BS. Her terminal degree in a field of the academic department qualifies her to coordinate the multiple programs.

Dr. Rachel Jumper is the program coordinator for Human Sciences, BS; and Human Sciences, MS. The Family and Consumer Sciences, BS, and Child Development and Family Living, BS programs were consolidated with the Human Sciences BS as concentrations. The Human Sciences, BS is a multidisciplinary degree within the department and has a concentration in Family and Consumer Sciences and Human Development and Family Studies. Dr. Jumper has a Ph.D. in Health Communication and a M.S. in Human Development and Family Studies. Her graduate degrees qualify her to coordinate these multidisciplinary programs.

Dr. Mary Olle is the coordinator of the Merchandising, BS, and Hospitality Administration, BS programs. She holds a Ph.D. in Family and Consumer Sciences Education, which qualifies her to coordinate these two programs.

Dr. Darla O'Dwyer coordinates the Foods and Nutrition, BS, and Dietetics and Nutritional Sciences, BS programs. Her Ph.D. in Food and Nutrition qualifies her to coordinate these programs.

Professor Christopher Talbot is the director of the School of Art and coordinates the Art, BA; Art, BFA; and Art History, BA programs. Professor Talbot has a MFA in Photography and Digital media and is qualified to coordinate these three programs.

Dr. Dan Bruton is the program coordinator of the Physics, BS, and Engineering Physics, BS programs. Dr. Bruton has a Ph.D in Physics and is qualified to coordinate these programs.

Dr. Joyce Johnston is an associate dean in the College of Liberal and Applied Arts, the director of the Division of Multidisciplinary Programs, professor of French, and program coordinator of the Liberal Studies, BA; Multidisciplinary Studies, BS; and Interdisciplinary Studies, MIS. The multidisciplinary programs with this college are housed in the Division of Multidisciplinary Programs. Dr. Johnson has a Ph.D. in French Literature. She is academically qualified to coordinate these three multidisciplinary programs.

Dr. Ann Smith has a Ph.D. in Philosophy and is the program coordinator of the Philosophy, BA program as well as the Medical Humanities, BA, and Medical Humanities, BS. The medical humanities programs and the Philosophy, BA are housed in the Division of Multidisciplinary Studies. The Medical Humanities program is oriented towards careers that support the medical field, such as pharmaceutical sales, health communication, and health insurance, and includes a critical medical ethics component comprised of philosophy courses. Dr. Smith's terminal degree in a field of philosophy qualifies her to coordinate the program.

Following are more detailed descriptions of the other program coordinators whose qualifications might not intuitively appear to be qualified on a cursory review of Table 1-6.

Dr. Wendy Killam is the program coordinator for Counseling, MA; Counseling--School Counseling, MA; Counseling—Clinical Mental Health Counseling, MA; and Counseling—Rehabilitation—Counseling MA. These four counseling graduate programs are in the process of being consolidated into one graduate counseling degree. Dr. Killam holds an M.S. in Counseling and a Ph.D. in Counselor Education, which is a terminal degree in a field of the academic department. Both qualify her to coordinate the multiple programs.

Dr. Lydia Richardson is the program coordinator for Communication Science and Disorders, BS; Pre-Audiology, BS; and Speech-Language Pathology, MS. Her M.S. and SLP.D are both in Speech-Language Pathology. Her terminal degree in a field of the academic department qualifies her to coordinate the multiple programs.

The vitae that we originally provided did not always include administrative roles (e.g., chair or coordinator). We have annotated the vitae, accessible by the hyperlinks below, to indicate the administrative roles of the program coordinators.

Table 1 - Nelson Rusche College of Business				
Academic Unit	*Program*	*CIP Code*	*Program Coordinator(s)*	*Clarification of Role*
College of Business	Business Administration, MBA	52.0201	Mitch Crocker	Associate Dean and Program Coordinator
Business Communication & Legal Studies	General Business, BBA	52.0101	Marsha Bayless	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Business Communication & Corporate Education, BBA	52.0501	Ashley Hall	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
Economics & Finance	Economics, BA	45.0601	Mikhail Kouliavtsev	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Business Economics, BBA	52.0601		
	Finance, BBA	52.0801		
	Banking, BBA	52.0803		

Academic Unit	Program	CIP Code	Program Coordinator(s)	Clarification of Role
Management and Marketing	Sports Business, BBA	52.0101	Jason Reese	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Management, BBA	52.0201	Matt Lindsey	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Human Resource Management, BBA	52.1001	Marcus Cox	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	International Business, BBA	52.1101	Rob Culpepper	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Marketing, BBA	52.1401	Charlotte Allen	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
Accountancy	Accounting, BBA	52.0301	Kelly Noe	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Accounting, MPA		Nikki Shoemaker	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Accounting, MPACY			

Table 2 - College of Education				
Academic Unit	Program	CIP Code	Program Coordinator(s)	Clarification of Role
Elementary Education[1]	Elementary Education, MED	13.1202	Erica Dillard	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
			Mark Montgomery	Faculty member and Lead Program Coordinator
	Early Childhood Education, MED	13.121	Susan Casey	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Interdisciplinary Studies, BSIS	30.999	Adam Akerson	Faculty member and Lead Program Coordinator
			Kimberly Welsh	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
			Claudia Whitley	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
			Michelle Williams	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
Human Services[2]	Special Education, MED	13.1001	Paige Mask	Faculty member and Lead Program Coordinator
			Kathy Sheriff	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Student Affairs and Higher Education, MA	13.1102	Amanda Rudolph	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Counseling, MA*	42.2805	Wendy Killam	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Counseling-School Counseling, MA*			
	School Psychology, MA		Jillian Dawes	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	School Psychology, PHD			
	Human Services, BS	44	Robbie Steward	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Communication Science and Disorders, BS	51.0201	Lydia Richardson	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Deaf and Hard of Hearing, BS	51.0202	Lindsey Kennon	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Pre-Audiology, BS		Lydia Richardson	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Speech-Language Pathology, MS	51.0203		
	Professional Counseling, MA	51.1508	Wendy Killam	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Counseling-Clinical Mental Health Counseling, MA*	51.1508		

	Counseling-Rehabilitation Counseling, MA*	51.231		
	Rehabilitation Services, BSRHB	51.5314	*Luis Aguerrevere*	Faculty member and *Lead* Program Coordinator
			Shannon Darst	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
Secondary Education and Educational Leadership[1]	Educational Leadership, MED	13.0401	Barbara Qualls	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Educational Leadership, EDD		Stacy Hendricks	Associate Dean and Program Coordinator
	Secondary Education, MED	13.1205	Linda Black	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Teaching, MAT		Chrissy Cross	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Teaching and Learning, MED			
Kinesiology and Health Science	Kinesiology, BS	31.0505	Dustin Joubert	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Kinesiology, MS		James Rowe	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
			Eric Jones	Faculty member and *Lead* Program Coordinator
	Dance, BS	50.0301	Heather Samuelson	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Health Science, BS	51	Derek Cegelka	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Athletic Training, MS	51.0913	Linda Bobo	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
Human Sciences[3]	Interior Design, BS	4.0501	Leisha Bridwell	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Family and Consumer Sciences, BS*	19.0101	Rachel Jumper	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Human Sciences, BS			
	Human Sciences, MS			
	Merchandising, BS	19.0203	Mary Olle	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Foods and Nutrition, BS	19.0501	Darla O'Dwyer	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Child Development and Family Living, BS*	19.0701	Rachel Jumper	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Dietetics & Nutritional Sciences, BS	51.3101	Darla O'Dwyer	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Hospitality Administration, BS	52.0901	Mary Olle	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Construction Management, BS (NEW in Fall 2019)**	52.2001	Leisha Bridwell	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Fashion Merchandising, BS*	52.1902		
	Interior Merchandising, BS*	52.1909		

* Phasing out or consolidation in-progress. ** Multidisciplinary Program
1. Elementary Education and Secondary Education & Educational Leadership restructured and changed its name in Fall 2020 - new name Education Studies; some programs moved to Human Services (and Educational Leadership).
2. Human Services was restructured and changed its name in Fall 2020 - new name Human Services and Education Leadership; Counseling-Mental Health Counseling (MA) and Counseling-Rehabilitation Counseling (MA) ended in 2019
3. Family and Consumer Sciences (BS) and Child Development and Family Living were phased out in 2019.

Table 3 – College of Fine Arts				
Academic Unit	*Program*	*CIP Code*	*Program Coordinator(s)*	
Art	Art Education, MA	13.1302	William Nieberding	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Art, BA	50.0701	Christopher Talbot	School Director and Program Coordinator
	Art, BFA			
	Art, MA		Linda Post	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Art, MFA			
	Art History, BA*	50.0703	Christopher Talbot	School Director and Program Coordinator
Theatre	Theatre, BA	50.0501	Rick Jones	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Theatre, BFA			
Music	Music, BM	50.0901	Gary Wurtz	School Director and Program Coordinator
	Music, MM			
*Phasing out				

Table 4 – College of Sciences and Mathematics				
Academic Unit	*Program*	*CIP Code*	*Program Coordinator(s)*	
College of Sciences and Mathematics	Natural Sciences, MS	30.0101	*Debbie Pace*	Associate Dean and *Lead* Program Coordinator
			Michele Harris	Associate Dean and Program Coordinator
Physics, Engineering and Astronomy	Engineering Physics, BS	14.1201	Dan Bruton	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Physics, BS	40.0801	Dan Bruton	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
Biology	Biology, BS	26.0101	Don Pratt	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Biology, MS		Matt Kwiatkowski	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Biotechnology, MS*	26.1201	Bea Clack	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
Chemistry and Biochemistry	Biochemistry, BS	26.0202	Michael Janusa	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Chemistry, BS	40.0501		Department Chair and Program Coordinator
Computer Science	Computer Science, BS	11.0101	Debbie Dunn	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Computer Information Systems, BS			Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Information Technology, BA	11.0103		Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Data Analytics, BS	11.0401		Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Cyber Security, MS	11.1003		Department Chair and Program Coordinator
Geology	Geology, BS	40.0601	Liane Stevens	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Geology, MS		Kevin Stafford	Faculty member and Program Coordinator

Mathematics and Statistics	School Mathematics Teaching, MS	13.1311	Lesa Beverly	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Mathematics, BS	27.0101		Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Mathematical Sciences, MS	27.0503		Department Chair and Program Coordinator
Nursing	Nursing, BSN	51.3801	Tamara Harris	School Director and Program Coordinator
	Nursing (Post RN), BSN			
	Family Nurse Practitioner, MSN	51.3805		

*Phasing out in 2022

Table 5 - College of Liberal and Applied Arts				
Academic Unit	*Program*	*CIP Code*	*Program Coordinator(s)*	
Languages, Cultures, and Communication	International and Intercultural Communication, BA	9.0907	Jeana Paul-Ureña	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Modern Languages, BA	16.0101	Gabriela Miranda-Recinos	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Hispanic Studies, MA	16.0908	José Neftalí Recinos	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Communication Studies, BA	23.1304	Elizabeth Spradley	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Communication Studies, BS			Faculty member and Program Coordinator
English & Creative Writing	English, BA	23.0101	Sue Whatley	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	English, MA		Liz Tasker-Davis	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Creative Writing, BFA	23.1302	John McDermott	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
Anthropology, Geography and Sociology	Sustainable Community Development, BA	30.3301	Bill Forbes	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Geography, BS	45.0701	Darrel McDonald	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Sociology, BA	45.1101	Ray Darville	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Sociology, BS			
Government	Criminal Justice-Legal Assistant, BA*	22.0302	Milton Hill	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Criminal Justice–Corrections, BA*	43.0102		Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Criminal Justice, BA	43.0104		Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Criminal Justice, BS	43.0104		Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Criminal Justice-Law Enforcement, BA*	43.0107		Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Public Administration, BA	44.0401	Kwame Antwi-Boasiako	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Public Administration, BS			
	Public Administration, MPA		Cindy Davis	Faculty member and Program Coordinator

	Political Science, BA	45.1001	Julie Harrelson-Stephens	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Political Science, BS			Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	National Security, MA (NEW in Spring 2020)	45.0902		Faculty member and Program Coordinator
History	History, BA	54.0101	Troy Davis	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	History, MA		Court Carney	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
Mass Communications	Mass Communication, BA	9.0102	John Hendricks	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Mass Communication, BS			
	Mass Communication, MA			
Psychology	Psychology, BA	42.0101	Scott Hutchens	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Psychology, BS			
	Psychology, MA		James Schaeffer	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
School of Social Work	Social Work, BSW	44.0701	Sam Copeland	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Social Work, MSW		Emmerentie Oliphant	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
Multidisciplinary Programs	Publishing, MA	9.1001	Kimberly Verhines	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Liberal Studies, BA	24.0101	Joyce Johnston	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Medical Humanities, BA	24.0199	Anne Smith	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Medical Humanities, BS			
	Multidisciplinary Studies, BS**	30.999	Joyce Johnston	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Interdisciplinary Studies, MIS**			
	Applied Arts and Sciences, BAAS**		Billy Harris	Academic Advisor and Program Coordinator
	Philosophy, BA	38.0101	Anne Smith	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
*Programs are being consolidated into Criminal Justice BA/BS, **Multidisciplinary programs				
[1]Program closure in 2019				

Table 6 – Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture				
Department	Program	CIP Code	Program Coordinator	
Agriculture	General Agriculture, MS	1	Michael Maurer	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	General Agriculture, BSAG	1	Joey Bray	Department Chair and Program Coordinator
	Agricultural Development, BSAG*	1		
	Agribusiness, BSAG*	1.0102		
	Agricultural Engineering Technology, BSAG*	1.0201		
	Agricultural Development Production, BSAG*	1.0301		
	Animal Science, BSAG*	1.0901		
	Poultry Science, BSAG*	1.0907		

	Horticulture, BSAG*	1.1103		
Forestry	Forestry, BSF	3.0501	Matthew McBroom	Associate Dean and Program Coordinator
	Forestry, MS			
	Forestry, MF			
	Forestry, PHD			
	Forest Management, BSF‡	3.0506		
	Forest Wildlife Management, BSF‡	3.0601		
	Resource Communications, MS	31.0301		
	Spatial Science, BS	45.0702		
Environmental Science	Environmental Science, BS	03.0104	Kenneth Farrish	Faculty member and Program Coordinator
	Environmental Science, MS			Faculty member and Program Coordinator
*Programs are being consolidated into General Agriculture, BSAG ‡Programs are being consolidated into Forestry, BSF				

Standards 6.4

The institution publishes and implements appropriate policies and procedures for preserving and protecting academic freedom.
(Academic freedom)

_**X**_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The institution publishes Policy 7.3 Academic Freedom and Responsibility. The policy is introduced to faculty at orientation and reviewed every three years. However, while supporting narrative regarding academic responsibility is offered, less information on academic freedom is provided. The institution indicates that they are not able to provide evidence that it has implemented the policy because they have not received any public complaints relevant to the policy. While no academic freedom grievance may have been filed, supporting details about the implementation of the policy, such as examples of the way academic freedom is preserved and protected are lacking. The policy is reviewed every three years by the institution's policy committee. However, it is not clear who is on the policy committee or the degree to which faculty are involved in reviewing the policy, making it difficult to determine the degree to which academic freedom is preserved. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine whether the institution implements appropriate policies and procedures for preserving and protecting academic freedom.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is committed to preserving and protecting academic freedom. Both in class and out of class and in publications, SFA faculty regularly speak out on controversial topics without occasion for censorship or negative repercussions. SFA faculty also take an active role in disseminating, reviewing, and maintaining SFA policy and procedure regarding academic freedom.

Examples of the Preservation and Protection of Academic Freedom at SFA

SFA is located in a rural, traditionally conservative region that is part of the Bible Belt. Nevertheless, SFA faculty are committed to the objective investigation of phenomena and the full and free exploration of ideas related to their disciplines and studies, no matter how controversial or unorthodox. For instance, for several years, the university's Department of Biology has hosted a Darwin Day program [01] with a prominent scientist as guest speaker to discuss evolution and the scientific truths of the natural world in a public forum open to students, faculty, staff, and the general public.

Another example of the exercise of academic freedom at SFA is the university's annual drama series, where theatrical productions engage controversial issues or themes in provocative ways that tap contemporary currents in society. For instance, in 2018, the SFA School of Theatre presented *(Biedermann and) The Firebugs* [02], a play about the dangers of Nazism and how

fascism can lead to bigotry and totalitarianism. The play, written from the perspective of the socialist playwright Max Frisch, advocates for perseverance of ordinary citizens against the abuses of power and threats of ideological demagoguery, and defends independent thinking, minority groups, and the powerless.

Climate change is not an issue easily received by most Texas citizens, and even secondary education science teachers [03] around the state have difficulty teaching the causes and effects of climate change in an objective and scientifically accurate manner. However, in SFA's Meteorology/Weather and Climate course (FORS 4343 [04]), anthropogenic activities affecting climate and their relationship to weather patterns are covered openly and scientifically without risk of official interference or professional disadvantage.

For many years, SFA has participated in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities' American Democracy Project [05], an initiative aimed at preparing "the next generation of informed, engaged citizens for our democracy." This is an organization dedicated to teaching and practicing freedom of expression, as evidenced in SFA's Democracy in Action panel discussions [06] over the years. In the spirit of *democracy in action*, SFA faculty are free to engage in political expression beyond the classroom, whether from the right or left of the political spectrum. For example, Dr. Donald Gooch, Associate Professor of Political Science, invited conservative pundit and blogger Bill Whittle [07] to campus in 2017 to present on "The Implications for Liberty in the Wake of the 2016 Election and President Donald J. Trump." In the same year, Dr. Heather Olson Beale, Professor of Education, hosted a teach-in in recognition of International Women's Day [08], which featured presentations by SFA faculty on topics such as intersectional feminism and sexual assault within campus Greek organizations.

A good illustration that SFA faculty feel free to publish controversial positions that could arouse opposition is the paper [09] by Dr. Justin Blount, Associate Professor of Business Communication and Legal Studies, and Dr. Stephen Shrewsbury, Assistant Professor of Business Communication and Legal Studies, "The U.S. Office of Corporate Ethics: Enhancing Officer and Director Accountability in Publicly Held Corporations." Their paper argues for more government oversight of the corporate workspace to prevent insider trading, securities fraud, price collusion, and sexual harassment. According to Shrewsbury, "When I write a paper, I do it to effect change . . . I hope it is criticized because that always generates further discussion."

Dissemination, Review, and Faculty Involvement - SFA's Academic Freedom Policy

SFA's policy 7.3, Academic Freedom and Responsibility [10] was last reviewed in May, 2019 (made official at the June, 2019 SFA Board of Regents meeting). The faculty members who participated in the review as the appointed representatives of the Faculty Senate on the Policy Committee [11] were Herbert Midgley, Lecturer of Music; Todd Barrios, Chef Instructor, Human Sciences; Edward Iglesias, Head of Digital Strategies and Content Discovery, Steen Library; and Donald Gooch, Associate Professor of Political Science. The other members of the Policy Committee are two deans and three academic unit heads. The Faculty Senate appoints four members to the Policy Committee every year, and the Academic Freedom and Responsibility policy is reviewed triennially.

Furthermore, academic freedom is discussed in section VI of the [Faculty Handbook [12]](#), which is maintained by the Faculty Senate and which was last reviewed in 2016 by the following faculty members: Lauren Brewer, Associate Professor of Psychology; Dennis Gravatt, Professor of Biology; Janice Hensarling, Instructor of Nursing; I-Juai Hung, Professor of Geospatial Sciences; and Brad Meyer, Director of Percussion Studies.

Finally, academic freedom is discussed with all incoming SFA faculty at [New Faculty Orientation [13]](#) so that new faculty members are apprised of their right to pursue scholarly inquiry without restriction and to voice and publish their ideas publicly without fear of consequences for their professional career or the benefits accruing therefrom.

Summation

SFA has not had a case where a faculty member has alleged an infringement of academic freedom or filed a grievance claiming an undue threat to the right to pursue scholarly inquiry or openly voice and publish scholarly evidence and ideas. SFA faculty regularly engage in open inquiry and the free exchange of ideas in various formats (publications, presentations, panels, etc.), and their regular practice of intellectual inquiry and participation in public discourse on controversial issues serves to preserve and maintain their right to academic freedom. Lastly, SFA faculty regularly review SFA's policy on academic freedom so that it remains vital and relevant, as well promote or discuss the proper exercise of their academic freedom through the Faculty Senate and its organs (like the Faculty Handbook) and New Faculty Orientation.

Standard 8.1

The institution identifies, evaluates, and publishes goals and outcomes for student achievement appropriate to the institution's mission, the nature of the students it serves, and the kinds of programs offered. The institution uses multiple measures to document student success.

(Student achievement) **[CR; Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

[Note: Each member institution has chosen a specific metric with SACSCOC for measuring graduation rate and analyzing that measure of student success. As part of its response to this standard, the institution should identify its chosen metric; provide appropriate data regarding its performance as measured by that metric (including its baseline data, goals, and outcomes); and discuss any changes it has made based on its analysis of this graduation-rate data. Institutions are also required to disaggregate their graduation data in appropriate ways; they should discuss that disaggregated data and any changes made as a result of analyzing that data.]

_**X**_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The institution identifies student achievement goals, evaluates data for student achievement, and publishes both the goals and outcomes. Additionally, the institution uses five overall measures with multiple sub-populations to document student success. The institution provides evidence of data and external sources used to set two evaluation levels, a threshold of acceptability, and a target. That evidence provides significant justification for both evaluation levels. The trend data provided for each of the five overall measures shows that the institution is meeting the threshold of acceptability. Additionally, the institution is meeting its more aggressive target in all but one measure—first-time undergraduate retention rate. Evidence outlining the setting of thresholds is provided in the student achievement table and trend data in the figures. Evidence for publication is provided by multiple screenshots of public-facing dashboards. The institution identified as their the [sic] specific Key Student Completion Indicator metric (IPEDS 150% within 6 years), provided data, and provided disaggregated data for sub-populations. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine whether the institution made changes based either on the analysis of graduation-rate data or on the analysis of disaggregated data.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) makes changes aimed at improving student achievement based on both the analysis of graduation-rate data and disaggregated data. In May 2017, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges requested SFA select the most appropriate student completion (graduation rate) metric. The changes noted below are a selection of the most recent examples.

Changes based on graduation-rate data analysis

A few examples of institutional changes based on the analysis of graduation-rate data include implementation of the following university-wide projects:

- 15 to Finish
- Momentum Year campaign
- Degree Map development

15 to Finish

By analyzing longitudinal graduation-rate data, comparing the actual performance to targets, and recognizing the need to promote student completion throughout the educational journey, SFA employed a *15 to Finish* student success initiative in the summer of 2020 for the incoming freshman class. The effort aims to increase timely degree completion, which is measured by an increase in the number of freshmen taking 15 or more hours, and, longitudinally, improved graduation rates. A public summary, internal faculty-advisor quick reference document, and web page screenshot are evidence of this change [01] [02] [03].

Momentum Year campaign

The relationships of multiple student achievement measures, including graduation-rate and first-year retention, point to the effect of first-year student persistence upon future graduation rates. A Momentum Year campaign was employed in 2020 to address a combination of student success strategies focused on the first year of enrollment. Momentum Year efforts included organizing completion in the freshman year of first-year students' core curriculum English composition and math requirements, at least 9 hours in the college foundation and/or major, and at least 15 hours for the fall and spring terms, as well as exposing incoming freshmen to growth mindset theory (the theory that intelligence is not fixed at birth but can be grown and improved through effort). In order to implement the Growth Mindset initiative, SFA's Student Success Office partnered with the Project for Education Research that Scales (PERTS) institute, based at Stanford University, to do a workshop with incoming freshmen at the 2020 August Orientation. Results provided by PERTS indicate that the participating students' perception that intelligence can grow improved from around 50% to 66%, which is predicted to have a significant impact upon student persistence [04]. These first-year focus actions are combined with the 15 to Finish initiative. Momentum Year is designed to advance student achievement as reflected in subsequently increased graduation rates. An example internal leadership communication document notates this SFA change [05].

Degree Maps development

In an effort to continue the positive graduation trends in student achievement, SFA strives to consistently exceed the established graduation rate target. To effectively guide students towards graduation, SFA is organizing a centralized repository of degree maps for each bachelor degree program. The public facing web site is currently in development and seeks to efficiently communicate with students and provide clear degree pursuit guidance for any bachelor degree-seeking students. SFA expects the deployment of these organized degree maps to result in

reduced time to degree and increased graduation rates for years to come. The sample degree map, web page screenshot, and promotional status document provide evidence of this change in-progress [06] [07] [08].

Changes based on disaggregated graduation-rate data analysis

Select examples of changes based on disaggregated graduation-rate analysis include the following;

- Hispanic Serving Institution Readiness Team creation
- Chief Diversity Officer appointment
- Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC) action plans

Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Readiness Team and Chief Diversity Officer

The SFA Vision includes specific emphasis on improving graduation rates [09]. When focusing efforts for the SFA strategic plan goal of increasing Hispanic enrollment, the disaggregated evaluation of six-year graduation rates revealed support needed for the Hispanic population [10]. In order to address the student persistence to graduation for a growing number of SFA Hispanic students, the university created the HSI Readiness Team, which investigated and recommended strategies to more effectively recruit and retain SFA Hispanic students [11]. The HSI Readiness team completed its work and delivered recommendations [12] to the newly hired Chief Diversity Officer in summer of 2020. The Chief Diversity Officer and support team [13] are using the HSI recommendations to guide and implement changes supporting SFA Hispanic students.

Additionally, the Chief Diversity Officer is studying other disaggregated graduation rate populations in order to create supportive changes from the first year of enrollment to graduation. In Fall 2020, the Chief Diversity officer requested a detailed five-year descriptive analysis of first-year retention rates by college and race/ethnicity for insight to the greatest student success support needs [14].

The HSI Readiness Team creation and hiring of the Chief Diversity Officer are recent changes influenced by the analysis of disaggregated graduation rates and other student achievement metrics.

Academic Assistance and Resource Center Analysis and Action Plans

The Academic Assistance and Resource Center (AARC) serves as a tutoring, mentoring, and supplemental instruction group focused on student academic success. The AARC routinely evaluates disaggregated graduation and retention rate data to determine how to best serve each sub-population and ultimately ensure student graduation achievement. Based upon each AARC analysis, including student feedback, AARC may institute various changes, such as create different course tutoring options or design additional tutoring strategies. When AARC identifies a disaggregated graduation rate sub-population requiring additional success support, a deeper analysis serves as a basis for implementing dynamic changes on a continuous cycle. The example black male student AARC report is prompted by disaggregated graduation rate and retention rate analysis and is evidence of the process used for making changes [15] [16].

The examples provided demonstrate Stephen F. Austin State University makes changes for increasing student achievement based on both the analysis of graduation-rate data and the analysis of disaggregated data.

Standard 8.2

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

8.2a   Student learning outcomes for each of its educational programs.
        (Student outcomes: educational programs) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

        _**X**_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

Six example programs, as well as annual assessment reports for all academic programs, reflect that all programs have identified outcomes and ways to measure those outcomes, and that programs are conducting assessments and analyzing data. The examples provided, as well as other reports, demonstrate that a wide variety of assessment methods and analyses are used to measure and improve student learning across the programs.
However, evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of results for multiple programs, including Agribusiness, Animal Science, Banking, Business Communication & Corporate Education BBA, is absent. Additionally, some programs have multiple outcomes identified with few of them providing evidence of seeking improvement—such as Economics, which has three outcomes/objectives, but only one outcome includes a report of use of results for any of the four years of reporting cycles. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine whether the institution consistently seeks improvement based on the analysis of results for educational programs.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

As noted by the Off-site Reaffirmation Committee, SFA's assessment framework reflects a wide variety of objectives and assessment methods, as well as that all programs are disciplined in conducting assessments and analyzing data. However, as the Compliance Certification Report observes, all assessment units are not as disciplined in reporting initial and subsequent actions taken to seek improvement based on the analysis of results. Understandably, determining compliance with this missing critical evidence presented a difficult task for the Offsite Committee. All academic programs have subsequently provided information indicating what actions were taken to seek improvement based on the analysis of results [01]. Historically, the university has not required documentation for seeking improvement when the assessment criterion was met (although we are now requiring this step in our new annual academic program review), and in some cases records of the actions taken do not exist because of personnel turnover or poor record maintenance. Because of this, there are some plans that do not have documented actions for each objective and each reporting period. Institutionally, there is room for improvement in assisting some assessment units in their documentation efforts (to which

efforts our new annual academic program review will lend itself). However, you will find that every academic program at SFA uses assessment results to seek improvement.

Improvement actions based on analysis of assessment results for the five programs specifically cited by the Offsite committee are discussed below.

Agribusiness, BSAG [02]

Students in the Agribusiness, BSAG program did not meet the assessment criteria related to demonstrating the application of microeconomic principles towards economic issues in the food and agricultural industry during the AY 17 - 18 assessment cycle. The program faculty decided to create smaller content modules. This adjustment resulted in improvement during the next assessment cycle. Students completing the program in Agribusiness are expected to address basic quantitative questions in the food and agricultural industry. Students have met the criterion for this objective for the past three assessment cycles. However, after the AY 17 – 18 assessment cycle, the faculty began implementing timed submissions of the student's farm plan components to keep students on task. In AY 18 – 19, the faculty discovered that students' exam performance was falling because they were spending too much time developing their farm plans and began working with students on time management skills. At the conclusion of the AY 19-20 assessment cycle, the program faculty developed a concepts and terminology list to assist students in preparing for the final examination in Agricultural Economics 451, the program capstone course.

The program requires students to demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills. This objective is assessed in Agricultural Development 361 and 371. While students met the criterion, the faculty thought that written communication skills could be better and began requiring students to use the university's online writing lab to improve their written communication proficiency. After the AY 18 – 19 assessment cycle, the faculty incorporated additional opportunities for students to work on communication skills in their classes.

Animal Science, BSAG [03]

In an effort to improve students' ability to demonstrate competence of technical subject matter in animal and poultry sciences, the faculty in the Animal Science, BSAG program revised their pedagogy and adopted a flipped classroom approach after analysis of the AY 16-17 assessment results. Following the AY 19-20 assessment cycle, a slight drop in student performance was evident. Initially, the faculty revised course content, which resulted in the addition of a new group project. Similar to the Agribusiness, BSAG program, Animal Science students were not performing as well as faculty expected, and in an effort to improve student writing, use of the online writing lab was required by all students. At the end of the AY 19-20, the program faculty agreed to incorporate additional assignments that build students' communication skills.

Banking, BBA [04]

The Banking, BBA academic program was first offered in AY 17-18 and has a current enrollment of eight students. The first two graduates completed their degrees in Fall 2019, part of the AY 19-20 assessment cycle. This was the most recently completed assessment cycle prior to submission of the Compliance Certification Report. An additional two students graduated in

Fall 20, which is part of the AY 20-21 assessment cycle that concludes in May 2021. The program will continue assessing program learning outcomes and will develop appropriate plans when sufficient data is collected to create data informed student learning improvement actions.

Business Communication and Corporate Education, BBA [05]

The Business Communication and Corporate Education, BBA (BCCE) academic program is located within the Nelson Rusche College of Business. In the 2016-2017 academic year, the college incorporated the CAPSIM/COMP XM computer simulation. This requires students to engage in a simulated business experience in which they must use all of their business knowledge and skills. Based on the initial simulation findings in AY 16-17, the department piloted a new format for content delivery in one section of GBU 325 (Business, Ethics, and Society) in the Fall of 2018. This format involved the use of a simplified version of the CAPSIM simulation, along with an emphasis on reading and analyzing real business case studies as a pedagogical method. In an effort to improve BCCE student written communication skills, the faculty developed a standardized rough draft requirement for written reports, which led to improved student results in writing mechanics.

After student disconnects between theory and practice surfaced, the program made several adjustments. BCOM 4347 Organizational Communication faculty began placing increased emphasis on connecting textbook theory to the real-life work experience by having students conduct an experiential project where they interview a business executive or leader. The top papers produced from the experiential project are considered for one of either two or three scholarships that are offered. In Fall 2020, a $175 scholarship was awarded to the top prize and $100 to the second prize.

The program has incorporated new assignments in BUSI 3330 Principles of Employee Development that focus on real-world applications (e.g., in Fall 20 teams had to lead a live 45-minute developmental training session via Zoom) and how human resource development is utilized in organizations. The program restructured BUSI 3321 Information Technology around the development of group- and/or full-class technology prototype projects to create a more immersive teaching environment.

When oral presentation skills were found lacking, the program faculty incorporated new video recording capabilities to improve student performance in oral presentations (e.g., video carts, one-button studio, and Zoom replacing YouSeeU). These enhanced capabilities to improve student oral communication skills will be even more important moving forward. Based on feedback from program graduates and college of business advisory board members, the emphasis of BUSI 3347 Administrative Communication has shifted to oral communication in a business setting and a curricular modification of the course is in progress.

In addition to reliance on assessment of formal student learning outcomes to highlight opportunities for improving student learning, the program faculty have sought feedback from students, recent program graduates, and members of the business community. When a perception of students not correlating theory to practice emerged, program faculty partnered with Career Services to link coursework to workplace standards, incorporating peer-review based

awards for exceptional student work, and renewing emphasis on internships. Based on feedback of program graduates, faculty have incorporated pre-professional deliverables in several courses, including mock interviews and resume screening in BUSI 4361. Additionally, the focus of BUSI 3321 placed more emphasis on experiential-based learning.

In an effort to better support student schedules, the program began offering classes in 8-week terms. After a pilot study with four courses conducted by Dr. Susan Jennings and Dr. Ashley Hall, the department was ready to move to additional 8-week accelerated classes in Fall 2020 beyond the three classes in the pilot. These classes were primarily online courses that students in the online BCCE major were interested in, although traditional face-to-face students could also take the courses.

Economics, BA [06]

The Economics major is structured in a way that ensures that all students master the fundamentals of economic theory, which underlie all applications of economics, such as government policy, welfare analysis, managerial decisions, and business strategies. The program is based on students successfully completing the principles sequence, Intermediate Microeconomics, and Intermediate Macroeconomics. The latter two courses are heavy on economic theory, with some examples of applications. Students have considerable curricular flexibility in the upper-level electives: they can choose any four (or more) courses in economics, such as Labor Economics, Sports Economics, Environmental Economics, International Economics, Economics and Education, Forecasting in Economics and Business, and Managerial Economics. These courses are focused on the application of either micro- or macroeconomic theory to a specific field. The faculty have limited formal assessment of student learning outcomes to the theory courses because that is where they are guaranteed to capture all of their students, but it is far from all of the assessment they do. What follows is the result of collecting and analyzing other data, observations, and discussions with employers and former students, studying job market trends, and so on.

1. Economics students are expected to understand the Solow growth model, which analyzes changes in the level of output in an economy over time as a result of changes in the population growth rate, the savings rate, and the rate of technological progress. The AY 18-19 assessment results indicated that students were having trouble understanding the Solow model. To improve student learning, a faculty member began creating a pedagogical aid to help students understand the Solow growth model, allowing students to experiment with the model with the hope that this pedagogical aid, coupled with the lecture notes and examples provided to the students, will help them understand the material better. The AY 19-20 assessment results indicated that it took a little longer than anticipated to get the aid in place, so it could only be used in class one time. Students were able to access the aid outside of class, and some did. Preliminary analysis of the data indicated that it helped the marginal students perform better on the exam. The pedagogical aid will be fully incorporated into the lecture in AY 20-21 and will hopefully help students understand the material.

2. A curricular change was made to allow economics majors to take a finance course, Fundamentals of Banking, as one of their upper-level electives. The course provides a good introduction to the world of commercial banking and can spark interest in students who want to pursue a career in banking or further study in that field. This change was made in response to an observation that some of the students completed internships at banks and had positive experiences; others landed banking jobs upon graduation.

3. Two new elective courses have been developed, proposed, and approved through the curriculum process:

   a. Forecasting in Economics and Business

   b. Energy Economics

Both courses – but particularly the first one – rely on using data and the latest empirical techniques to apply economic theory to real issues and policy questions.

4. The two new courses above both require Applied Business Statistics as a prerequisite, further emphasizing the focus we have adopted on teaching data skills to our students.

5. Applied Business Statistics (which is a business foundation course but has an ECON prefix and is taught by economists in the department) now requires MGMT 2372 as a prerequisite – a course with a heavy use of spreadsheets (e.g., Microsoft Excel). This was done to ensure that students in the statistics course and courses that follow have a solid background in data manipulation and the basics of data presentation and analysis.

6. A new minor in Business Analytics has been proposed and is scheduled to be implemented in Fall 2021, pending final approval. While not strictly part of the Economics program, the minor will be housed in the Economics department, delivered primarily by the Economics faculty (with several courses from other quantitative disciplines) and be specifically marketed as a valuable addition to students in the economics major.

The department organized several visits by recent graduates who have launched successful careers in the analytics/data science field. These former students visited with faculty and students, guest-lectured in several Economics classes, and even met with the college curriculum committee to specifically discuss how prepared they were for life beyond college. These visits provided a focus group for what has worked in the Economics program and what could be improved or added, helping inform some of the curricular and other changes the department made.

8.2   The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

   8.2b   Student learning outcomes for collegiate-level general education competencies of its undergraduate degree programs.
   (Student outcomes: general education)

   _**X**_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The Core Curriculum Assessment Committee (CCAC) oversees assessment of general education courses at the institution. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board mandates the core curriculum, and the institution developed general education objectives to address that core. The objectives focus on critical thinking, communication skills, empirical/quantitative skills, teamwork, social responsibility, and personal responsibility. Measures include the senior exit survey, artifact reviews, and standardized tests. The process for assessment is in place. However, the degree to which assessment evidence is used to seek improvements in learning is unclear. The institution identifies changes in learning resources but does not provide any evidence about how the results were used to improve learning. The institution provides significant detail about how the evidence was used to improve their assessment processes with the Faculty Trust Model. Less information was provided about how the results were used to improve student learning in general education courses.

In addition, the narrative highlights faculty reluctance to use core assignments approved by the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee consistently and identifies faculty control over the curriculum as a barrier. It is unclear how faculty control over the curricula limits the opportunity to assess student learning in general education courses.

The assessment plan includes a list of activities of the Core Curriculum Assessment Committee (e.g., meet to consider the results; facilitate meetings of faculty relevant to specific core objectives or component areas to consider action plans related to assessment plans based on the assessment results; develop institutional action plans for improvements in assessment methods and plans; communicate these actions to the faculty, chairs, deans, Provost; and monitor implementation and effectiveness of improvements in assessment of the core). However, no evidence is provided by the institution showing how the CCAC engages in these activities. The meeting minutes show approval of new general education courses and recertification, but it is not clear how these other activities are conducted. In addition, the combined core assessment data for the core focuses on academic years 2014-2016 (attachment 8). While some data provided post-date the 2014-2016 academic years, no assessment reports completed since that time and no example artifacts are included. It is unclear whether assessment is ongoing. Finally, no evidence of how distance learning and off-campus students and how courses are included in the assessment of the core is provided. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine whether the institution assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes and consistently seeks improvement based on the analysis of results for its general education competencies.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

The off-site Committee found SFA non-compliant ins section 8.2.b (Student outcomes: general education). Distillation of the report section yields four key areas of concern:

1. Dearth of evidence of improvement;

2. Evidence of ongoing processes;

3. Core Curriculum Committee operations;

4. Inclusion of distance learning and off-campus students.

This focused report will address these four concerns in order. Prior to the direct responses, SFA offers some perspective regarding the Texas Core Curriculum as it relates to current and former SACSCOC standards.

In early January of 2018, the policies regarding general education changed radically. In fact, SACSCOC was still introducing member institutions to the new principles [01] well into the summer of that year. Previously, general education was considered a requirement, but it was not an area requiring continuous improvement.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has standardized our general education component. In part, the Texas Core Curriculum was designed to meet SACSCOC requirements. SACSCOC required that institutions had a coherent and wide-ranging general education component to all degrees. Section 2.7.3 (page 19) of the 2012 iteration of *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* reads like this:

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)

Further, a general education component was not mentioned in Section 3.3.1. While it could be inferred that the core is a part of any educational program, the writing hinders/precludes a university-wide approach to improvement. Here is the text from page 27 of the same 2012 manual:

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

3.3.1.2 administrative support services

3.3.1.3 academic and student support services

3.3.1.4 research within its mission, if appropriate

3.3.1.5 community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

The wording from these two standards stands in sharp contrast to the current requirements of Section 8.2, including 8.2.b. Rather than providing evidence that SFA *has* an acceptable general education component for all undergraduate degrees, we now must determine how we seek improvement in general education. We believe our efforts since the rule changes have indicated strong evidence of seeking improvement in general education.

Core Curriculum Committee

As discussed in SFA's initial reaffirmation application, the current iteration of the Core Curriculum Committee carries the duties of two previous committees. The work of the committee is varied, but they hold authority designated by the Provost. Among their duties,

- The committee acts as an accountability agent for the core implementation [02].
- The committee determines which courses comprise the TCC offerings at SFA [03].
- They foster communication between members' respective colleges and the assessment staff [04].
- They control syllabus wording regarding the TCC [05].
- They determine the approach used to assess Core Objective attainment [06].

On January 12, 2021, the SFA Core Curriculum Committee held a Town Hall meeting for all SFA faculty. A serious snowstorm forced SFA to close all day on January 11 and remain closed until four hours before the Town Hall. Still, over 60 faculty, deans, chairs, and other involved staff attended the two-hour session. Participants were presented with data, charts, and tables regarding student performance in three areas:

- Upper-level faculty assessment of student core attainment;
- Core grades from the same students that were assessed by upper-level faculty;
- Student self-perceptions of their progress regarding each Core Objective.

A copy of the slide deck [07] is attached to this document. After the presentation, a lively discussion took place regarding the next steps. One chair suggested that two foci should be considered: Critical Thinking, Empirical & Quantitative Skills. There was general consensus that these two objectives offered the most room for improvement. The following day, the CCC met to discuss the proposal and agreed on a statement of recommendation.

Recommendation from the SFA Core Curriculum Committee based on information gained from the January 2021 Town Hall hosted by the committee:

The SFA Core Curriculum Committee held a town hall on January 12, 2021, to

(a) Present and discuss recent results regarding student achievement in the six objectives of the Texas Core Curriculum, and (b) Create an opportunity for faculty discussion of the results as a means to improve student attainment of core objectives. The consensus of faculty, department chairs, and deans who attended the town hall was that the data collected, analyzed, and presented using the Faculty Trust Model identified Critical Thinking and Empirical & Quantitative Reasoning as two core objectives that need to be better integrated into program learning outcomes at all levels (1000-4000 courses). All undergraduate academic programs are requested to identify, by January 22, 2021,

either Critical Thinking or Empirical & Quantitative Reasoning as the focus for program-specific improvements. Program assessment plans should be updated as appropriate by May 31, 2021.

The recommendation was approved by the Provost on January 19, and has taken effect. Departments will meet to determine the best course of action, as such decisions are internal at SFA. By January's end, departments chose their focus on either Critical Thinking or Empirical & Quantitative Skills. The attached spreadsheet [08] shows the choices the departments have made for improvement foci. By the spring semester's end, every department will have constructed or enhanced at least one learning objective and corresponding plan with an aim of improving student attainment of Critical Thinking skills and/or Empirical & Quantitative skills.

Ongoing Assessment

SFA continued the collection and assessment of Core Objective artifacts until the Fall of 2019. This is in keeping with Appendix 7 (p.22) of the original plan. In fact, SFA's core assessment practices have continued throughout the transition. Here is a chart of the activities by semester (or date, where appropriate) that SFA completed during the interim between the implementation of the 2018 standards and the current semester.

Date	Activity
Fall 2017	Collection of Communication artifacts
January 1, 2018	New Principles take effect
Spring 2018	Departments choose assignment(s). Collection of artifacts
April-May 2018	Upper-level assignments are collected
Summer 2018	Scoring Team Meets and scores Critical Thinking
Fall 2018	Collection of Communication artifacts
Spring 2019	Collection of Social Responsibility & Teamwork Artifacts

Summer 2019	Scoring Teams score Communication, Soc. Resp., & Teamwork
Summer-Fall 2019	Data analysis
October 4, 2019	Report to CCC
October-November 2019	CCC deliberation of assessment options. Create Faculty Trust Model.
December 4, 2019	Presentation to Deans Council
December 19, 2019	Approval of new system by administration
Spring 2020	Plan Development, Preparation for Implementation
Summer 2020	Proof of Concept
September 8, 2020	SFA Reaffirmation to SACSCOC
Fall 2020	First Full Data Collection
January 12, 2021	Report/Town Hall regarding data
January 13, 2021	CCC agrees on statement regarding PLO requirements
January 19, 2021	Administrative approval of PLO Requirements
2/1/2021	Faculty notified of Spring 2021 to be assessed in May

Supporting artifacts are connected to this response as a means of substantiating SFA's efforts to improve general education learning for all students. Connected artifacts from our work include the following:

1. The final data table [09] for Communication, Social Responsibility, and Teamwork objectives, including means, medians, modes, and variances;
2. A slide deck [10] from the calibration training (norming) from April of 2019;
3. The slide deck of a presentation [11] at the 2019 Higher Education Data Sharing conference in Asheville, NC;
4. The preliminary report [12] to the Core Curriculum Committee regarding the data mentioned in #1;
5. A readout [13] from LiveText regarding scores from the Critical Thinking artifacts collected in Fall 2017;
6. A list of all faculty [14] on TCC Scoring Teams since the plan's inception;
7. A copy of Appendix 7 (p.22) [15].

We believe these evidentiary documents answer the concern as to whether or not we have assessed general education outcomes since 2016.

Distance Learning and Off-Campus Students

The off-site committee, referring to standard 14.3, stated that no evidence of how distance learning and off-campus students and how courses are included in the assessment of the core was provided. As described earlier, the assessment of our general education competencies is mandated by the Texas Legislature. SFA focuses on student attainment of the Core Objectives:

- Critical Thinking
- Communication Skills
- Empirical & Quantitative Reasoning
- Teamwork
- Social Responsibility, and
- Personal Responsibility

The responsibility of developing the required knowledge, skills, and attributes of the core objectives is not under the purview of a separate university college or department of general education. Additionally, successful student attainment of the core objectives is not the sole responsibility of the individual courses that have been approved by the State to be included in the core curriculum. Every academic program is responsible for developing the required knowledge, skills, and attributes associated with the six core objectives. For this reason, graduating seniors, either through the assessment of student work or academic performance, have been included in the assessment of core objective attainment.

Under the 2014-2016 plan, student work identified for core assessment was collected from all core courses scheduled for assessment and the designated upper-level courses. This collection approach included students in online courses, as well as students taking SFA courses outside the confines of the main campus. As detailed above, the CCC determines the TCC wording in *every* core course syllabus, and *every* student in a core course was compelled to submit an artifact.

SFA's current core assessment plan, the Faculty Trust Model, includes assessment of graduating seniors' core objective attainment by faculty in their upper-level courses, across all modalities and locations. Consider the Spring 2021 Upper-Level Core Curriculum student sample spreadsheet [16] as evidence of this current practice. Nearly 70% of the students (139 of the 199) in the current Upper-Level Core Curriculum sample took a distance education course in the Fall of 2020.

All students are involved in SFA's general education assessment—including those enrolled in distance learning and in off-campus sites.

Other Issues

Overall, faculty must maintain control of the curriculum in higher education. This leads to differences in approach and assessment, and those differences have become the very foundation that makes higher education in the United States preeminent. However, because of this, the quality of artifacts varies among departments, instructors, and students. Regarding faculty control over the curriculum, the concern stems from the product emanating from the assignments. The quality of work SFA received from core assignments varied widely—to the

point where the results were not strong enough to determine any direction for improvement. Any general education assessment plan needs to account for this variation. Our 2014-2018 plan did not account for this, but our current plan does.

The new plan requires the campus community to determine areas of improvement. Two have been chosen, and final approval of this approach was given one week after the initial Town Hall. Departments had until January 27, 2021, to determine which of the two Core Objectives they will improve; departments have until May 31, 2021 to present their strategy to attain such improvement along with their internal assessment methodology.

Conclusion

A colleague in Tennessee faced the same issue SFA faces now: a major transition simultaneous with the reaffirmation process. The concern was voiced on the Accreditation in Southern Higher Education (AACHSE) listserv, and Toni L. Blum, Ph.D., from the University of Texas-El Paso put it most clearly:

> *Could you realistically claim that the new curriculum and revamped processes were partly a result of the analysis of previous results? I would imagine that you would not have undertaken such a huge task without some data to indicate you needed to do so….*

The *Principles* changed, and SFA has changed to meet the new guidelines. Our data directed us to repair and improve SFA's system of assessing the Texas Core Curriculum. The improvements are and will be the direct result of an ongoing, systematic process of general education outcomes assessment. Therefore, we confirm that Stephen F. Austin State University remains in compliance with standard 8.2.b.

Standard 8.2

The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results in the areas below:

> 8.2c   Academic and student services that support student success.
> *(Student outcomes: academic and student services)*
>
> _**X**_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

Six example academic and student services units, as well as annual assessment reports for all units, reflect that all programs have identified outcomes, ways to measure those outcomes, are conducting assessments, and analyzing data. The examples provided as well as the reports provided, reflect a wide variety of objectives, assessment methods, and analyses.

However, evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of results for multiple units, including the College of Education Dean, English Chair, and Forestry Chair, is absent. Additionally, some units have multiple outcomes identified with few of them providing evidence of seeking improvement. For example, the Geology Chair has seven outcomes/objectives but only one with a report of use of results for the three years of reporting cycles included in the report. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine whether the institution consistently seeks improvement based on the analysis of results for academic and student services units.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

As noted by the Offsite committee, our assessment framework reflects a wide variety of objectives, assessment methods, and analysis, as well as that our units are disciplined in conducting assessments and analyzing data. However, as our Compliance Certification Report reflects, not all of our assessment units were diligent in reporting initial and subsequent actions taken to seek improvement based on the analysis of results. Our academic and student service units have subsequently provided information indicating what actions were taken to seek improvement based on the analysis of results [01].

Historically, the university has not required documentation for seeking improvement when the assessment criterion was met, and in some cases records of the actions taken do not exist because of personnel turnover or poor record maintenance. Because of this, there are some objectives that do not have documented actions for each objective and each reporting period. Institutionally, we have room for improvement in assisting some of our assessment units in improving their documentation efforts. However, you will find that every assessment unit at SFA uses assessment results to seek improvement.

The four units specifically highlighted by the off-site committee are discussed in detail below.

College of Education Dean [02]

The Dean of the College of Education has a record of consistently seeking improvement based on the analysis of assessment results. For example, at the end of AY 16-17, the college determined that it had not maintained current articulation agreements in support of its objective of collaborating with external partners to enhance students' knowledge, skills and dispositions, and to influence the ongoing exchange of ideas for mutual benefit. To improve the maintenance of the articulation agreements, the dean moved the responsibility for collecting and managing articulation agreements to the Office of Student Services and Advising and directed the development of a flow chart for developing articulation agreements. This involved coordination with the provost's office personnel and office of legal services personnel to formalize the processes. The Deans Council was consulted to discuss standardization of processes and to identify partner community colleges. After these actions, the college coordinated with the university's general counsel and procurement office to upload articulation agreements in the iContract system for workflow through the necessary departments/offices of SFA, resulting in the provost's signature. These efforts resulted in articulation agreements being centrally managed by the provost's office.

One of the dean's objectives is to employ and support a diverse faculty committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. It will engage its faculty and staff in scholarly and creative activities to advance knowledge and to contribute to the common good. One of the assessment measures is to increase the amount of grants under contract in a fiscal year by 2%. This objective was met during AY 16-17. In response, the dean provided reassigned time to faculty writing proposals for national requests for proposals. The dean also reconsidered the 2% annual increase target noting that several large, multi-year grants were ending. As a follow up, the dean indicated that two faculty received reassigned time and that the college leadership council was notified of an anticipated significant drop in external funding due to large, multi-year grants expiring. Additionally, the associate dean for faculty & student services began providing professional development for new and recently hired faculty that includes connecting participating faculty to the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs and the services they provide.

The college did not meet the external grant criteria in AY 17-18. Actions taken to improve this result in AY 18-19 included supporting faculty attendance in grant writing workshops and working with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) to refine PIVOT reports (software that assists in finding research funding). This resulted in seven faculty members attending workshops and enthusiasm in the new faculty regarding research grants. The college also partnered with regional independent school districts to work on Texas Education Agency Grow Your Own grant initiatives.

The immediate and follow-up actions taken after AY 17-18 enabled the college to meet the external grant criterion. To maintain this momentum, the dean cultivated interested faculty in grant writing, targeting disciplines of School Psychology, Speech Language Pathology, Vision Impairment, Kinesiology, and Early Childhood. Additionally, the dean continued working with ORSP for targeted grant opportunities. These efforts resulted in research grant submissions from Human Sciences, Kinesiology, and Education Studies.

Another means of assessing the objective to employ and support a diverse faculty who are committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service is to increase faculty diversity by 1% annually. The college has had trouble achieving this criterion. After AY 16-17, the dean's office began participating in establishing search charges, emphasizing the need to seek diverse applicants. This was followed by the need to develop a search committee report to document efforts in diverse applicant recruitment and diverse applicant consideration. This resulted in the development of a search handbook in AY 17-18, which includes consideration of active recruitment of diverse applicants. The handbook was distributed to academic unit heads for use within their units and was posted on the college website for ease of reference. A retiring female academic unit head was replaced with a younger male and a retiring female associate dean was replaced by a younger female. Unfortunately, these efforts did not help the college achieve the 1% increase in diversity, which at the end of the AY 18-19 assessment period resulted in the dean disaggregating the data by full- and part-time faculty to identify trends, particularly regarding African American faculty retention. This effort was supported by personnel from the Office of Multicultural Services. As a follow-up to these actions, the faculty were informed of the services and opportunities offered by multicultural services.

The academic year 19-20 did not see the desired increase in diversity. The dean met with other college deans to discuss challenges associated with retaining faculty of color. The meeting resulted in deans reporting retention of faculty of color as a challenge in each college. Concerns included a lack of community and social supports outside the institution as well as inside the institution. Despite these efforts based on analysis of assessment results, the college continues to lose diverse faculty members to institutions located in larger metropolitan areas.

The college assesses enrollment data at fall census to determine if it achieved an overall enrollment growth of 1% annually. Over the past four years, the college has not met this objective. In AY 15-16, the college decided to disaggregate the enrollment data to identify potential trends in enrollment as well as increasing attention on community college articulation agreements, providing reassignment time to faculty to develop new curricula, and increasing support to the college retention and recruitment committee in recruiting at scheduled UIL events. In addition to these actions, the director of advising and associate dean served on the Professional Academic Advisor Council (PAAC) and shared a new advising form developed in conjunction with our information technology services; advisors attended all EAB trainings on new advising software; and a career ladder for professional advisors was developed and approved. The career ladder was developed to encourage retention of advisors, which has an influence on appropriate/accurate advising, and consistent implementation of student success initiatives aiding in retention. The college also began the development of two educator preparation dual credit courses to boost enrollment. These efforts did not improve enrollment.

In AY 16-17, the college decided to examine data from sister institutions to better understand enrollment patterns compared to others; supported advisors in their movement from schedule selectors to the concept of student success; hosted the Demographer of the State of Texas to share forecast information with faculty and institutional administrators; and implemented PCOE Graduate Faculty meetings to emphasize the critical nature of the graduate programs in the college and at SFA.

In addition to the improvement actions detailed above, in AY 17-18 amid further enrollment declines, the college began focusing attention on recovering undergraduate probationary students and moving them to good standing. The college also reached out to suspended students to invite them back and appropriately enroll at SFA. The college supported faculty in developing new degrees and/or concentrations to respond to job market trends, and the dean chaired a university-level community outreach committee to gather information across campus related to current initiatives and efforts. After these actions were implemented, the dean sought ways to fund additional professional advisor positions to reduce current advisor caseloads and approved the two educator preparation courses that were identified in AY 16-17 for dual credit students in hopes that they would create an educator preparation pathway from high school to university.

After the AY 18-19 assessment cycle, the dean invited Institutional Research personnel and Institutional Effectiveness personnel to present enrollment data and assessment/accountability data and electronic tools to faculty. The dean supports faculty in developing facility with new institutional tools supporting student success and in communicating effectively with students. The college provided promotional pull-up banners for scheduled UIL events to enhance college branding and hosted a UIL Debate Workshop to increase outreach efforts with high schools and high school students.

Post assessment actions for the AY 19-20 assessment cycle included: engaging academic unit heads and advisors in recruiting; using social media and direct contact to urge enrollment; and contacting all eligible undergraduate and graduate students who were admitted, but not yet enrolled, as well as those who had been enrolled, but were not currently enrolled. The dean sought approval for the EdD in Ed Leadership to be offered 100% online (distance ed), pursued a partnership for the BSIS degree completer program to be offered at the TX A&M Systems RELLIS campus, and cultivated a relationship with Lone Star Community College in the Houston area to bolster community college transfers into the college.

English Chair [03]

The Department of English and Creative Writing has experienced significant personnel turbulence in the chair position since August 2018. In the past 29 months (about 2 and a half years), the department has been led by two interim chairs and experienced multiple failed searches. During the first 18 months, record keeping and data entry were sub-optimal. However, the current interim chair was able to collect the information required to complete data entry requirements.

The department is seeking improvement as illustrated by the four objective examples below.

Ensure effective student advising: This assessment was temporarily discontinued for two years and no data was collected, due to the chair leaving and an interim chair taking the position for only a brief time. After the AY 18-19 assessment, the department trained the administrative assistant in basic advising procedures and made her responsible for checking CPOS Reports (for students enrolled in courses not on their degree plans) and managing the assignments for faculty advisors. The AY 19-20 assessment analysis of the data indicated that while "student surveys" regarding advising were not regularly collected, it was clear that a disparity existed in the

number of students assigned to faculty members throughout the department. Errors on Intent to Graduate packets for students nearing graduation were more frequent with faculty who had excessive advising loads (twenty or more students, as opposed to faculty with fewer than five students). The administrative assistant was trained in basic advising procedures, and she was put in charge of checking CPOS Reports and managing the assignments for faculty advisors. After this assessment, the Interim Chair provided a workshop to instruct faculty who advise students on the preferred way to arrange advising files, ways to document plans of study, and ways to complete Intent to Graduate packets.

Ensure effective teaching by departmental faculty: This objective was stagnant during the period of time that the department chair departed through the first interim chair. There were two assessment methods associated with this objective. The first was to identify any patterns in the peer evaluation rubric on teaching effectiveness for faculty falling below the departmental median. This objective was one of the factors that led to the departure of the department chair and the collection of data was suspended for a period of time. The first interim chair, in an effort to collect data after the completion of AY 17-18, planned to conduct random, periodic observations of faculty to collect data for future assessments. After random observations of teaching assistants were conducted, this practice was halted after the faculty objected. Upon the arrival of the second interim chair with no data collected for AY 19-20, the department's executive committee was charged with revising the departmental policies related to peer evaluation rubrics. The second assessment method was to use student evaluations of instruction consisting of three common items and one open-ended question, with responses to closed-ended items recorded on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Similar to the first assessment method, data collection was suspended due to chair turnover and faculty resistance. After the AY 18-19 assessment period, the interim chair reviewed this objective and the criteria used to evaluate it and adjusted how the assessment method is worded. The assessment was modified to use three college closed-ended common items recorded on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high), and ten additional department closed-ended items recorded on a scale from 1 (high) to 5 (low), and two department open-ended questions. This action allowed for data collection to occur in AY 19-20, resulting in 99% of faculty achieving a ranking of 3.5 or higher on the college items, and 82% achieving a ranking of 2.0 or lower for the department items, which met the criterion of 80% of faculty in the department achieving a ranking of 3.5 or higher on the college items, and 80% of faculty achieving a ranking of 2.0 or lower on the department items. As a subsequent action, the interim chair will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of this assessment method and consider additional changes to the student evaluations, as well as conduct random, periodic observations of all faculty in the classroom.

Promote research, scholarship, and creative activities by the department and faculty: Similar to the other departmental objectives, data collection associated with this objective suffered because of leadership turbulence. At the end of AY 18-19 after three years of stagnation, the interim chair charged the executive committee with revising all departmental policies, including the rubric used to consider merit, encouraged all faculty to increase their scholarly productivity, and recommended that the executive committee revise departmental policies to make expectations regarding scholarship clearer. These adjustments, which occurred after the AY 18-19 reporting

period, facilitated data collection in AY 19-20, with the result that all faculty members engaged in some kind of research activity. However, two tenured faculty members received "Unsatisfactory" ratings on their annual evaluations because they had listed only one research activity on their Faculty Activity Report (FAR). These faculty members claim that they have met minimum requirements for scholarly activity per departmental policy, and that policy is being reviewed for revision to make requirements clearer. Still, the vast majority of faculty (including lecturers) engage in multiple scholarly activities, showing impressive results in presentations at a variety of conferences, as well as publications of peer-reviewed articles and books.

The Department will begin offering 3000-4000 level courses online: This objective was created in 2019 with a criterion of 25% of upper-level courses being offered in online formats. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 outbreak disrupted plans, which resulted in all faculty members converting their classes to some kind of distance-education format, primarily via Zoom. However, no upper-level courses were available in a pure online format. Two faculty members are in the final stages of developing online courses for upper-level literature and creative writing courses. Subsequently, the chair has worked with faculty members who have been developing online courses for more than two years to assist them in completing their efforts. Other faculty have been encouraged to begin developing additional online courses.

Forestry Chair [04]

One of the Department of Forestry's objectives is to encourage membership and active involvement in professional organizations and support outreach to natural resource professionals and other stakeholders. While the criteria for this objective were continually met, the department felt that more could be achieved. At the conclusion of the AY 17-18 assessment cycle, during annual evaluation reviews, the department chair encouraged faculty members to seek leadership roles in professional organizations to maintain relevance in their disciplines and facilitate networking opportunities for students. The analysis of the AY 18-19 results indicated that social media could be better used for educational outreach and faculty began participating in short videos on social media. After the AY 19-20 assessment cycle, the department began incorporating students into the outreach component of this objective. The department chair plans to reevaluate this objective, as it has been met for several years and the department might be better served with an objective that is focused on student success.

The department is supposed to promote a culture that is supportive to research, scholarship, and creative activity by communicating research accomplishments, benefits, needs, and opportunities in forestry and geospatial information services to faculty, staff, and students. Although collaboration led to a sustained record of successful research grant funding for departmental programs, in an effort to boost student involvement in research activities, development and revenue funds were repurposed after the AY 17 – 18 assessment cycle to support research operations and maintenance, undergraduate research, and graduate student assistantships. Although forestry faculty typically achieve a greater than 2 to 1 ratio of external to state research funding, at the conclusion of the AY 19-20 assessment cycle, the department increased information related to McIntire-Stennis funded research on the department's web site.

Another objective of the Forestry department is to provide an exemplary learning environment for undergraduate and graduate students driven by highly qualified instructors and educational support services that prepare students for diverse career paths in Forestry and Spatial Science. As a result of assessment, the department initiated "Root Camp." This is an intensive weekend experience for new forestry students to engage in technical and team building exercises. Based on data collected during the 2018 – 2019 academic year, the department developed a student-led mentoring program for lower-level undergraduates with an aim of increasing program retention. The successes of this program led to more structure and the provision of small stipends for the participating student mentors. A critical component of assessing this objective is student feedback from an immersive 6-week field station practicum. The Covid-19 pandemic interrupted normal field station operations, and a hybrid approach was developed to remotely conduct the field station experience.

Geology Chair [05]

In AY 18-19, the Department of Geology met its objective to cultivate curricular innovation through high impact teaching practices and evaluation. Annually, the department conducts a review of a specific aspect of the undergraduate or graduate geology programs, including analysis of relevant professional or industry standards in relation to student outcomes, teaching, and curriculum. If more than 20% of the full-time faculty of the department agree that the reviewed aspect of the program needs revision, a detailed action plan is developed. The department underwent a significant curriculum review of its undergraduate program in response to decennial program review (2015-2016) and enrollment fluctuations. This resulted in a streamlined degree program that increased the depth and breadth of knowledge and skills of majors, a modified Geology minor that was more inclusive, and the creation of a Geoscience concentration as an option for majors. These curriculum changes emphasize scientific communication, geoscience skills, and research. The curricular modifications were complete in Fall 2018 and included the modification of 43 existing courses and the development of 8 new courses to be offered in Fall 2020. Actions based on the results of this assessment included an incremental rollout of the revised Geology BS program, Geoscience concentration, and minor to incoming first-year students and transfer students in Fall 2019. As of Fall 2020, the department has 17 of their majors enrolled in the Geosciences concentration.

In AY 19-20, in response to the improvement objective focused on the department's graduate program, a review of graduate procedures and policies was conducted to clarify expectations for thesis and non-thesis track options for graduate students, including graduate admission requirements, the use and timing of the department diagnostic exam, graduate seminars, two-year rotation of graduate courses, and project and theses examinations. The committee met through the Fall 2019 semester and finalized the policies in January 2020. This review resulted in a 2-year course rotation for all current and proposed graduate classes. Also, a diagnostic exam was developed online and will be administered through the Geoscience Research Seminar course in Brightspace D2L. The department's follow-up report stated that the new graduate policies, course rotation, and information regarding the diagnostic exam have been posted to the Geoscience Research Seminar course in D2L.

Another improvement objective of the Geology Department is to "Support full-time Faculty of Geology members in research and scholarly activities." This is assessed by reviewing annual faculty activity reports to evaluate full-time faculty research productivity. The quantity of research grant proposals submitted, research projects completed, research theses supervised, publications submitted, and presentations given will all be considered as indicators of research productivity. The success criterion is that at least 80% of the full-time faculty of Geology will produce at least two of the following research activities during the year: research grant proposals submitted, research theses supervised, research projects completed, publications submitted, or presentations given. Although this criterion was met in AY 16-17, the department wanted to increase grant productivity and made plans to contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (OSRP) and ask for resources to boost research funding opportunities. Subsequently, ORSP presented a workshop on PIVOT and provided resources for faculty interested in applying for grants outside of the university. This objective was also met in AY 18-19, but in seeking continued improvement, the department realized that faculty equipment requirements needed to be upgraded to complete work on a Texas Department of Transportation grant. With the addition of new graduate faculty, the department needed a new truck to haul equipment and core samples. In 2019, internal and external grants were used to update the onboard camera and recording capabilities of the department's drone and a new Dodge pick-up truck was added to the geology fleet.

At the end of the AY 18-19 assessment cycle, the department created a Recruitment and Retention committee that reviewed all materials and revised the prospective student card from a survey type instrument to student information instrument. This card can be used at academic fairs and conferences. The cards were subsequently revised to collect meaningful data more accurately as part of a strategic recruitment and retention plan. These actions were taken to improve student recruitment activities through department outreach and information accessibility based on that year's successful assessment results. The following year (AY 19-20), the department decided to review the assessment method associated with this objective to capture more meaningful data and noted that as their recruitment methods evolve, they will need to track engagement at a variety of events. Many of their data gathering instruments will be revised to capture information about student interest so they can engage with prospective students in a more strategic manner.

Standard 9.6

Post-baccalaureate professional degree programs and graduate degree programs are progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs, and are structured (a) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (b) to ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training.
(Post-baccalaureate rigor and curriculum)

_X_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The institution cites the mission of its graduate school as an example of its commitment to providing rigorous graduate programming informed by disciplinary research. The institution provides examples of course descriptions and degree programs at different levels as evidence of a higher level of rigor in the graduate courses. In addition, the institution identifies how learning outcomes vary between cross-listed undergraduate/graduate and master's/doctoral courses.

The two syllabi provided for the cross-listed EPS courses show a difference in learning outcomes, but the rigor appears to be the same in both courses as the assignments are identical. It is not clear how an additional learning outcome can be met if the same assignments and same content is provided to all students in the cross-listed course. Examples of how the additional learning outcome is met and assessed through the same assignments for master's and doctoral courses are lacking. Rubrics and completed assignments by master's and doctoral students in cross-listed courses would help to determine whether the doctoral courses are progressively more advanced than the master's sections.

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies is responsible for ensuring that those teaching graduate courses are qualified for the rigors of graduate instruction. Ample evidence about the process for approving graduate instructors and their backgrounds is provided.

Periodic academic program reviews are also conducted to assess programs. An example of the Master of Music program review is provided. However, no evidence about how those reviews inform graduate level rigor is provided. In addition, no assessment data showing higher levels of rigor across degree program levels is provided. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine whether the academic rigor of doctoral programs was more advanced than master's programs offered by the institution.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

The university's graduate programs include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and ensure engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training for students.

The primary question from the Offsite Reaffirmation Committee regards whether Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) ensures the progressive advancement of academic content from one level to the next. This response will clarify that post-baccalaureate professional degree

programs and graduate degree programs at SFA are progressively more advanced in academic content from one level to another.

In particular, the Offsite Reaffirmation Committee questioned whether two provided syllabi — from EPS 502 and EPS 602 —demonstrate true differentiation in academic rigor. As no syllabus can adequately convey the full dimensions or complexity of a course, we are providing additional documentation from these two courses that illustrate a substantial difference in requirements and rigor.

A key distinction lies in the differing nature of a key assignment: The Functional-Based Intervention Plan. Unlike the master's students, doctoral level students in EPS 602 [01] must work in teams to develop an intervention for an actual client. They must observe this client at length in order to develop the appropriate experimental manipulation of conditions to treat the client. The master's students in EPS 502 [02] create an intervention plan for a hypothetical client that requires a lower level of analytical analysis. Moreover, the syllabus for EPS 602 [03] contains three additional reading assignments not included in EPS 502 [04], including an entire textbook: *Ethics for Behavior Analysts* (Bailey and Burch).

The Offsite Reaffirmation Committee also commented that the example of the Master of Music (MM) academic program review does not contain evidence about graduate level rigor. SFA's MM program holds NASM accreditation [05]. Reaffirmation requires an outside expert to complete a full program review. While it is true that the MM review does not interrogate the issue of graduate level rigor at length, the external reviewer does affirm the overall appropriateness of SFA's MM curriculum as a vehicle for graduate level student research:

> *The graduate music curriculum combines core study in music theory and music history with focused areas comparable to similar degrees from quality national institutions and whose curriculum lies well within guidelines of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), the national accrediting body for music units. Programs offer many options for thesis and non-thesis tracks in a manner common and appropriate depending on the research focus of the student . . . The bibliography course, central to all quality masters level curricula, appears appropriately in all degree tracks, as it serves as the opening to quality research in all graduate music experiences.*

In addition to this general affirmation, we provide a spreadsheet [06] discussing the difference in the level of rigor and expectations for master's level music courses cross-listed with undergraduate music courses. The spreadsheet also includes examples of progressive rigor in cross-listed courses from the other two academic units within SFA's College of Fine Arts: The School of Art and the School of Theatre. For master's level music performance courses, the difference lies in an additional level of teaching, conducting, and leadership responsibilities placed upon graduate students. Teaching or conducting undergraduate students necessitates a high grasp of music material and a strong synthesis of how an ensemble works together. These demands go well beyond the understanding of one's own part in a musical piece. Also, graduate music majors typically hold higher status within performance groups. Thus, they must master

more difficult parts. Finally, graduate music majors typically must play in more ensembles than undergraduate students.

Graduate syllabi reflect the use of literature of the discipline and detail student engagement in research and/or professional practice or training occurring within the course by adhering to the graduate syllabus guidelines [07]. To ensure that the guidelines are consistently followed, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies performs random checks of graduate syllabi annually.

To demonstrate this practice, the following examples of a difference in content, rigor, and requirements in SFA courses at different levels are provided. Most of these courses are regularly cross-listed. Those that are not cross-listed are essentially the same course in terms of subject matter, but with variations in learning objectives, content, and/or assignments due to the greater demands placed upon students taking the course at the higher level. All six of SFA's colleges are represented in the samples (above and below) included in this response. Please note that some of the samples bear the three-letter/three-digit course prefix under the course numbering system SFA used prior to Fall 2020. Any samples from Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 bear SFA's new four-letter/four-digit course prefixes (which adhere to the Texas Common Course Numbering System).

FINC 3373/5314: Intermediate and Advanced Financial Management

- The textbooks for the two courses differ, with the graduate text being oriented more towards the application of financial management concepts; the graduate course also requires a set of cases from Harvard Business Publishing.
- The grade for the undergraduate version is comprised of two exams and ten home works, whereas the grade for the graduate version is comprised of exams as well as a series of eight dividend policy case write ups.
- The learning objectives of the undergraduate version are aimed at the level of comprehension of the course content, whereas the learning objectives of the graduate version are aimed at the higher level of application of the course content.
- Supporting documents: FINC 3373 syllabus [08]; FINC 5314 syllabus [09]

FORS 5365/6365: Advanced Range Development and Improvement

- The doctoral version includes a term paper on a range improvement topic of the student's choice not assigned in the master's version.
- Supporting documents: FORS 5365 syllabus [10]; FORS 6365 syllabus [11]

GOL 445/545 (Fall 2019) - Geochronology

The Geochronology course is cross-listed for undergraduate (GOL 445) and graduate students (GOL 545) (now GEOL 4345 and GEOL 5345). Differences between the two courses and the increased expectations for graduate students in GEOL 545 are outlined below. Major differences between the courses are highlighted (yellow) in the supporting course documents for GOL 545.

Syllabus: Student learning outcomes vary between the courses, with deeper understanding expected in the graduate course. For example, undergrads will be able to "explain the

fundamental principles of radiogenic isotope geochemistry and geochronology," while graduate students will be able to "describe how the fundamental principles of radiogenic isotope geochemistry enable modern approaches to numerical geochronology." Graduate students engage with and analyze course concepts more deeply than undergraduate students. This is implemented through differences in problem sets, advanced summary of scientific papers, discussion leadership and participation, and more detailed application of course concepts in exams. Additionally, the graduate course grade weighs scientific paper summaries more heavily than for the undergraduate course. (*See Syllabus documents for GOL 445, GOL 545.*)

Problem Sets: There are differences between problem sets, where appropriate. In Problem Set #1, both courses are assigned the same first problem; while undergraduate students are given a second, relatively straightforward problem to analyze, graduate students have several more challenging spreadsheet-based problems requiring deeper analysis. (*See ProbSet1 documents for GOL 445, GOL 545.*)

Paper Summaries: In both courses, students produce paper summaries. In the undergraduate course, this involves an introduction to reading scientific papers through annotation (active reading) and answering basic questions in preparation for discussion. Graduate students interact with the scientific paper as the undergraduate students do, but also delve more deeply into the paper details and implications to produce a thoughtful, one-page summary. Graduate students also lead in-class or online discussions by initiating topics of conversation, commenting, and asking questions. Students prepare five paper summaries (~8 papers) during the semester; they were given written instructions for the first assignment of the semester. (*See PaperSummary1 documents with instructions and rubrics for GOL 445, GOL 545*).

Exams: Both courses have midterm and final exams. The undergraduate exams assess learning at the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy (remember, understand) using a variety of question formats, including multiple choice, short answer, and fill-in-the-blank. The graduate exams assess learning at higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy (remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate) through several essay questions. (*See Midterm Exam and Final Exam documents for GOL 445 and GOL 545.*)

Supporting documents attached:

- GOL445Syllabus_Geochronology_Fall2019Stevens.pdf [12]
- GOL545Syllabus_Geochronology_Fall2019Stevens.pdf [13]
- 03_ProbSet1_Concordia_GOL445.pdf [14]
- 03_ProbSet1_Concordia_GOL545.pdf [15]
- PaperSummary1_GOL445.pdf [16]
- PaperSummary1_GOL545.pdf [17]
- MidtermExam_GOL445 [18]
- MidtermExam_GOL545 [19]
- FinalExam_GOL445 [20]
- FinalExam_GOL545[21]

HIST 3349/HIS 547: African American History

- The undergraduate version requires 3 books for assigned reading; the graduate version requires 12.
- The graded assignments for the undergraduate version include only two writing assignments (book essay and notebook) and no oral presentations, whereas all of the graduate version's graded assignments include several writing assignments (multiple precis, two book reviews, and a seminar paper) as well as a discussion lead.
- Only the graduate version contains student learning outcomes expecting students to be able to evaluate cultural history through the lens of race and to demonstrate in writing a mastery of the historical concepts involved in producing historical scholarship—incorporating high level skills of evaluation and synthesis, as well as a higher level of written communication.
- Supporting documents: HIST 3349 syllabus [22]; HIS 547 syllabus [23]

Standard 11.2

The institution ensures an adequate number of professional and other staff with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources to accomplish the mission of the institution.
(Library and learning/information staff)

_**X**_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The qualifications, job assignments, responsibilities, and duties of librarians and library support staff are relevant and effectively support the library's mission. All librarians, including the library director, have an earned master's degree from an institution accredited by the American Library Association. A policy is in place governing criteria for appointment as a librarian, promotion eligibility, annual evaluations of librarians, compensation, and workload. Librarians attend conferences and workshops to stay abreast of current technologies and to present their research. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to find evidence of whether the institution evaluates and provides professional development and training activities for support staff.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) evaluates and provides professional development and training activities for library support staff. In accordance with SFA Policy 11.20, Performance Management Plan [01], all library support staff receive an annual performance evaluation and participate in the goal-setting process. Library support staff are also presented with opportunities throughout the year to participate in professional development conferences, workshops, and training activities.

Evaluation of Support Staff

As stated in Policy 11.20, annual performance reviews at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) are required for "all non-faculty employees, excluding academic department chairs, deans, library director, charter school teachers, and all coaches . . . that have completed their initial employment probation prior to the beginning of the annual evaluation period." The university's performance management plan consists of an annual performance evaluation to ensure that all employees receive a timely and objective review of their job performance each year. Through the interactive goal-setting process, supervisors identify employees whose job-related performance and conduct does not meet established objectives or contribute effectively to the university. Evaluations ensure that job performance is measured effectively for compensation purposes. The most recent performance review [02] of each library support staff is provided.

Training and Professional Development

To ensure the continued development and performance of employees, departments follow the Training Procedures for University Employees [03]. The university has established the myTraining portal for employees to review and complete required and supplemental trainings. Training subjects include accounting and finance; human resources; customer service; management and leadership; and technical, legal, and information technology. Staff have year-round access and receive email notifications to complete annual and bi-annual mandated trainings. Additionally, a supplemental form of cost-effective professional development and training is available through the university's partnership with Go2Knowledge [04]. Enrollment and completion of online developmental webinars are voluntary and are self-paced. Staff members can sign in and select webinars related to such topics as student success, Title IX, campus safety and security, special student populations (veterans, first-generation, students of color), and mental health issues.

Professional development opportunities are also made available to support staff in the form of conferences and workshops. For example, library support staff in the Acquisitions and Cataloging area received an email invitation [05] to attend a technical services online conference. Additionally, staff members may travel to attend conferences [06] and have the opportunity to share with the rest of the support staff any information, updates, and materials received while attending a conference. Lastly, the Center for Teaching and Learning offers numerous educator development sessions [07] throughout the year that support the staff in the use of digital instructional tools (e.g. Brightspace, Zoom, Flipgrid, Quizziz, etc.).

As evidenced in this response, all library support staff are evaluated in adherence to Policy 11.20, Performance Management Plan with an annual performance review. Additionally, library support staff receive numerous opportunities to attend professional development conferences and workshops. They also complete the university's annual training requirements for all SFA employees.

Standard 13.6

The institution (a) is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended and (b) audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. In reviewing the institution's compliance with these program responsibilities under Title IV, SACSCOC relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U. S. Department of Education.
(Federal and state responsibilities) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

_**X**_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The Approval letter from the United States Department of Education provided as evidence states in the Automatic Termination of Approval section that the approval for the institution's participation in Title IV, HEA programs automatically terminates on September 30, 2020. A Program Participation agreement shows a reapplication date of June 30, 2020. While several years of the annual Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP) are presented, none for the current period are provided.

Audit findings in 2017 resulted in the institution taking corrective action to accurately determine return of Title IV funds. The institution was selected to be included in the Texas Statewide Single Audit in September of 2020 with results available in Spring of 2021. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine if corrective actions required by the state auditing office have been implemented.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Title IV Approval

SFA is compliant with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act. As indicated in the Recertification Approval letter [01] from the U. S. Department of Education (ED) and Eligibility and Certification Approval Report [02], SFA is approved to participate in Title IV programs.

Current Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate Submission

The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, as required, submits an annual Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP) used by the U. S. Department of Education to determine annual funding allocations. As noted by the Off-Site Review Committee, several years of FISAP reports were presented with the Compliance Certification Report; however, the FISAP report for the current period was not available at the time of submission. The 2019-2020 FISAP report [03] is provided for the committee's review.

Title IV Fund Corrective Action Implementation

As a result of the statewide audit [04] conducted by the Texas State Auditor's Office (SAO) in the fiscal year 2017, SFA was recommended to take the following corrective actions in response to the findings of miscalculations in days and return of Title IV funds:

- Strengthen procedures to accurately determine the number of days in scheduled breaks and calculate returns accordingly;
- Strengthen procedures to determine the amount of Title IV funds earned and the amount of returns for students who withdraw.

To correct the 2017 Audit Findings regarding the R2T4 Process, SFA's Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships implemented a Return of Title IV Review Process to be conducted by members of Financial Aid management at the end of the fall and spring semesters. The Quality Assurance Review Process includes a 10% sample of all R2T4 calculations completed for the semester, with corrections immediately implemented. This process was added to the department's Policy and Procedures manual (p. 4) [05] on May 14, 2018. Quality Assurance Checks [06] were performed according to the updated policy and procedures for each of the spring and fall semesters following the revisions.

Texas Statewide Single Audit Results

As noted in the Compliance Certification Report and in the Offsite Review Committee's comments, SFA was selected to be included in the Texas Statewide Single Audit in September of 2020 with results available in the Spring of 2021. At the time of this report, however, the audit findings were not made public and could not be released. Prior to the final report release, the audit report drafts, findings, and responses are considered confidential under Texas Government Code Section 552.116 [07]. The State Auditor's Office hopes to have the final report completed and released around February 28, 2021. A copy of the audit report will be available for review during the On-Site Review Committee's visit.

As evidenced in this response, SFA is compliant with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act. Additionally, SFA audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations and implements the appropriate and necessary corrective actions based on the findings.

Standard 13.7

The institution ensures adequate physical facilities and resources, both on and off campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution's educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities.
(Physical resources) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**

　_**X**_ Compliance　　　___ Non-Compliance　　　___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The Building Inventory lists the 157 buildings and 4.8 million gross square feet of space and includes a column labeled "Cond" for condition. However, no explanation of its definition or the meaning of the scores in the column are provided, therefore it is difficult to assess the condition and adequacy of all buildings supported by the institution.

Building assessment seems to be conducted through general inspection and by asking each member of the physical plant team to report issues on a regular basis. Aging buildings and infrastructure are part of a systematic approach to grade systems needing replacement and are presented to the Board of Regents on an annual basis for funding.

The Master Plan presents an informed and flexible avenue to guide institutional leadership in making sound decisions consistent with their mission in a time of economic uncertainty. The institution's Space Usage Efficiency report should serve as a valuable tool in educating faculty, staff, and students on the availability of laboratories or classroom space. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine the condition and adequacy of all building supported by the institution from the evidence provided.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS
Building Condition is reported in the Facilities Building Inventory Report [01] to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (CBM014). Based on the judgment of those responsible for campus planning and development, a code is selected based on the physical status of a building at the time of the report, as defined by Appendix H [02] of the *Reporting and Procedures Manual for Texas Public Universities*. Thus, the data field in question refers to the physical status and quality of a building at the time of the inventory. The codes for the "Cond" column are below.[1]

Code 1 Satisfactory – the facility is suitable for continued use with normal maintenance.

Code 2 Remodeling A – the facility requires restoration to acceptable standards without major room changes, alterations, or modernizations. The approximate cost of Remodeling A is less than 25 percent of the estimated replacement cost of the building.

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[1] Additionally, this list can be located at https://www1.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/facinv/inst.cfm?ID=69.

Code 3 Remolding B – the facility required major physical updating and/or modernizations. The approximate cost of Remolding B is greater than 25 percent and less than 50 percent of the estimated replacement cost of the building.

Code 4 Remodeling C – The facility requires major remodeling. The approximate cost of Remodeling C is greater than 50 percent of the estimated replacement cost of the building.

Code 5 Demolition – The facility should be demolished or abandoned because it is unsafe or structurally unsound regardless of the need for space or the availability of funds for its replacement. This code takes precedence over codes 1, 2, 3, and 4. If a building is scheduled for demolition, its building condition is Demolition, regardless of its actual physical condition.

Code 6 Termination – Termination or relinquishment of occupancy of the building is planned for reasons other than safety or structural unsoundness, such as abandonment of temporary units or vacating leased space. This code takes precedence over codes 1, 2, 3, and 4. If a building is scheduled for termination, its building condition is Termination, regardless of its actual physical condition.

Code 7 Mothballed – The facility is not currently in use nor has it been scheduled for demolition or termination. A mothballed facility is excluded from routine operation and maintenance expense; therefore, this code excludes any NASF[2] in the building from the E & G[3] algorithm."

The codes above when applied to the inventory [03] in our CCR clearly indicate that the overall physical facilities of the institution are adequate in quality, scope, and condition to support the mission of our programs and services.

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[2] **NASF** = Net Assignable Square Feet: The sum of all areas within the interior walls of rooms on all floors of a building assigned to, or available for assignment to, an occupant or use, excluding unassigned areas. NASF includes auxiliary space and E&G space.)

[3] **E&G** = Education & General: Space used for teaching, research, or the preservation of knowledge, including the proportional share used for those activities in any building or facility used jointly with auxiliary enterprise, or space that is permanently unassigned. E&G space is supported by state appropriations.)

Standard 14.4

The institution (a) represents itself accurately to all U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting agencies with which it holds accreditation and (b) informs those agencies of any change of accreditation status, including the imposition of public sanctions. (See SACSCOC policy *Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies*.)
(Representation to other agencies) **[Off-Site/On-Site Review]**
[Note: Institutions responding to part (a) of this standard should provide evidence (e.g., appropriate portion of the most recent self-study, report from the other accreditor, etc.) that demonstrates the accurate representation to other U.S. DOE recognized agencies with regard to such things as institutional purpose, governance, programs, and finances.]

_**X**_ Compliance   ___ Non-Compliance   ___ Partial Compliance

Narrative:

FINDINGS OF THE OFF-SITE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

The institution maintains its accreditation statuses on a publicly available institutional website, and has procedures in place to remind academic units of the need for accurate and consistent reporting of its SACSCOC accreditation status. The institution has not been involuntarily terminated nor received any negative action by any accrediting agency. In 2018, the institution voluntarily withdrew its English Language Institute from the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation without notifying SACSCOC. SACSCOC learned of this through an unsolicited information. Since that time, the institution has implemented additional measures to ensure that all changes are reported in a timely manner. However, the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee was unable to determine whether the institution accurately represents itself to all U.S. DOE recognized accrediting agencies other than SACSCOC.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) accurately represents itself to all U.S. DOE recognized accrediting agencies. SFA remains in good standing with all U.S. DOE recognized accrediting agencies that accredit one or more of its programs. Following is a table of all U.S. DOE recognized accrediting bodies affiliated with SFA, including:

- the program(s) each agency accredits;
- the last year each agency conducted a review of the respective SFA program(s);
- the year of the next accreditation review;
- links to the most recent self-study from each accrediting agency;
- links to the most recent reaffirmation of the respective accreditation.

Accrediting Agency	Institutional/ Program(s) Accredited	Year of Last Review	Next Accreditation Review	Self-study	Most Recent Letter of Reaffirmation
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)	Institutional	2011	2021	Compliance Certification Report 2020	SACSCOC Approval Letter 2012 & 2018
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND)	Didactic Program in Dietetics (Dietetics and Nutritional Sciences, BS)	2017	2022	DPD Program Assessment Report 2017	DPD Accreditation Letter 2018
	Dietetics (DIETI) - Dietetic Internship	2018	2023	ACEND Dietetic Internship Self-Study Report, 2012	ACEND Accreditation Letter 2018
Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN)	Nursing (MNUR) - Master's program (Nursing, MSN)	2019	2024	ACEN Self-Study MSN, FNP 2019	ACEN Accreditation Letter 2020
	Nursing (NUR) - Baccalaureate Program (Nursing and Post-RN, BSN)	2013	2021	ACEN Self-Study BSN 2013	ACEN Accreditation Letter 2016
Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association	Speech-Language Pathology (SLP) - Graduate degree programs (Speech-Language Pathology, BS)	2014	2021	CAA Annual Report 2020	CAA Accreditation Letter 2019

Accrediting Agency	Institutional/ Program(s) Accredited	Year of Last Review	Next Accreditation Review	Self-study	Most Recent Letter of Reaffirmation
National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), Commission on Accreditation *	Bachelor of Science-4 years: Interior Design. (Interior Design, BS)	2013	2022-2023	NASAD Self Study 2013	NASAD Commission Action Report 2015
National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), Commission on Accreditation*	Master of Science-2 years: Interior Design (Non-Thesis, Thesis). (including Distance Learning). (Interior Design, MS) Bachelor of Arts-4 years: Studio Art. Bachelor of Fine Arts-4 years: Studio Art (Art, K-12 Certification). (Art, BA BFA) Master of Arts-1 1/2 years: Studio Art. Master of Fine Arts-2 to 3 years: Art (Filmmaking); Studio Art. Certificate-1 year: Museum Studies (Graduate). Certificate-1 year: Museum Studies (Graduate). (Art, MA MFA) Master of Arts-1 1/2 years: Art Education (Studio Option, Research Option). (Art Education, MA)	2013	2022-2023	NASAD Self Study 2013	NASAD Commission Action Report 2015

Accrediting Agency	Institutional/ Program(s) Accredited	Year of Last Review	Next Accreditation Review	Self-study	Most Recent Letter of Reaffirmation
National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), Commission on Accreditation*	Composition, Music Education, Performance, Sound Recording Technology, Piano Pedagogy Certificate (Undergraduate)(Music, BM)	2012	2022	NASM Self-Study 2012	NASM Commission Action Report 2012
National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), Commission on Accreditation*	Bachelor of Arts-4 years: Theatre (General, All-Level Teacher Certificate) (Theatre, BA)	2014	2024	NAST Self-Study 2014	NAST Approval Letter
National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST), Commission on Accreditation*	Bachelor of Fine Arts-4 years: Theatre (Design and Technical Theatre, Performance, Stage Management) (Theatre, BFA)	2014	2024	NAST Self-Study 2014	NAST Approval Letter
American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation (APA)	Professional Psychology (IPSY) - Predoctoral internship programs (School Psychology, Doctoral Internship related to PHD)	2019	2020	NASP Program Report 2020	NASP Program Recognition Letter 2020

* U.S. Department of Education (ED) database query listing is not completely reflecting these DE-recognized organizations; evidence linked shows DE-recognition and SFA affiliation.