

**FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES - EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 21, 2012  
CONFERENCE CALL AT 11:00 AM**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Sandra Featherman at 11:03 a.m. Monoka Venters called the roll and committee members phoning in for this meeting were: Dr. Sandra Featherman and Dr. Dick Hallion. Also calling in were; Chair Rob Gidel and Don Wilson from the board, Drs. Whelan and Chard from SACS and Ava Parker.

2. Conference Meeting with Members of SACS

After thanking both Dr. Ann Chard and Dr. Belle Whelan from SACS for agreeing to meet with them, Dr. Featherman wanted to discuss the audits. The first audit can take place prior to students enrolling for classes. This audit looks at the overall health of the institution while the 2<sup>nd</sup> audit will focus on operations and takes place after students enroll.

Chair Gidel asked how we report those specific resources and Dr. Chard clarified that the first audit reflects allocations and expenses that Florida Poly has and can be completed prior to students enrolling. According to Dr. Chard, predecessor reports are not needed because we have to begin anew.

There was a brief discussion about Georgia Gwinnett College in the Atlanta area being a good resource for the Accreditation process as they moved through the process in record time. Georgia Gwinnett submitted their application in the summer of 2007, was authorized for candidacy visit in December 2007, was granted initial candidacy in June 2008 and finally granted initial accreditation in June 2009. A good part of their success can be contributed to the person putting together the application.

Once application is made, Dr. Chard reviews the application. Either Dr. Chard or the Board approves, however, the Board only meets in June and December. This process usually takes about 6 months. A question was raised as to how long students must be enrolled before we can apply. Students must be enrolled for one year, but you can begin work on the application during that year. Dr. Featherman wanted to confirm that after candidacy status, we could be accredited within 2 years assuming that we have met all of the requirements. Once you have candidacy status, you can apply for Federal Financial Aid which is not retroactive. Dr. Whelan recommended that as soon as the application process is started with SACS that we contact the Department of Education let them know we are in the process. This step could speed our application for Federal Financial Aid.

The SACS representatives highly recommend we get our programs in place before we start the process. Programs cannot be added or changed until after accreditation is

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granted, otherwise it is considered a substantive change. If you start at junior year, you cannot add Gen Ed until you are accredited.

Chair Gidel questioned whether there are upper division only institutions. Dr. Chard said they do, but not as many anymore.

Dr. Hallion thanked the SACS representatives for their time asked if there were any particular challenges or concerns unique to STEM institutions while moving through the accreditation process. Dr. Whelan did indicate that some programs have requirements for specialized accreditation in order for students to sit for licensure exams.

Chair Gidel questioned how offsite programs and online classes are viewed. Dr. Chard recommends we make sure SACS is aware of these alternative classes and make sure they are of the same quality as those taught on campus. Chair Gidel also brought up the possibility of a collaborative partnership with UF or UCF engineering departments and wanted to know if this type of arrangement would be acceptable. Dr. Whelan clarified if you share faculty or they give credit there must be formal agreements documenting what we plan to do and what role those institutions will play. This type of agreement must be included with the application to SACS. SACS would be monitoring the other institution's quality as well. These are Department of Education requirements and this may constitute a substantive change.

There was some discussion about a situation with an unapproved site at an Atlanta Church for a North Carolina school. They had to pay back \$1.3 million in federal financial aid because the DOE and SACS were not notified of the agreement between the Pastor of the Church and the school. Chair Gidel assured the SACS representatives that we plan to "color within the lines".

Dr. Whelan stressed how important it is to have the basics in place. Pay particular attention to Part A of the application which asks:

- Who we are
- What we are doing
- What are the programs we offer
- Where we are located

Discussion now moved to the Pre-Applicant Workshop scheduled for February 6, 2013. The SACS representatives encouraged us to sign up for this workshop. This is a critical first step. Even if we don't have a Chief Academic Officer on board yet, we should still register. We can add a name at a later date.

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The question of using a consultant to help with the application process was raised. Is it better to move through the process without outside assistance. The SACS representatives didn't really suggest a consultant but stressed that the person tasked with putting the application definitely needs to attend the workshop. Both Dr. Chard and Dr. Whelan offered their help. They also suggested that Donna Barrett with their Financial Department would be very helpful in answering our financial questions.

Both Drs. Chard and Whelan suggest Ava, as COO, go to the Pre-Applicant workshop. They recommend the workshop as the first and most important step. Contacting Georgia Gwinnett College can be contacted after the workshop as you will then have more appropriate questions for Georgia Gwinnett.

Chair Gidel stressed that we are going to do this right rather than trying to move too quickly and making mistakes. Dr. Chard added that what you do now will determine the culture of your institution in ways you cannot imagine. Take your time and get it right.

Both representatives from SACS left the conference call at 11:45 a.m.

3. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Dr. Featherman would like to schedule the next meeting to discuss the CAO. The next meeting of the Educational Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, November 28, 2012, at 10:00 AM.

Monoka will notice this meeting.

Monoka will also email Georgia Gwinnett to get a contact name and number.

Dr. Featherman welcomed Ava to Florida Polytechnic. Ava told Dr. Featherman that she hopes to lift some of the burden off the Committee Members.

With no further business to discuss the Educational Committee Meeting was adjourned at 11:51 am.