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“GOOD CAUSE” REPORT

On-Site Reaffirmation Committee
March 21-23, 2005

First Monitoring Report
Submitted: September 6, 2006

Second Monitoring Report
Submitted: September 7, 2007

Third Monitoring Report
Submitted: August 28, 2008

Special Committee Visit
September 23-25, 2008

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Texas Tech University

“Good Cause” Report

Texas Tech University has been continuously accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools since 1928. In December 2005, Texas Tech received reaffirmation of accreditation from the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools along with a request from President Wheelan that Texas Tech prepare a First Monitoring Report to address four Recommendations. The First Monitoring Report failed to satisfy the Commission's concerns about those four deficiencies, and a Second Monitoring Report was requested. Texas Tech's Second Monitoring Report successfully addressed three of the four outstanding compliance issues. However, the university was placed on Probation and requested to submit a Third Monitoring Report. In a letter dated January 9, 2008 to the former president of Texas Tech, Dr. Jon Whitmore, SACS-COC President Wheelan described the single remaining compliance issue as follows:

**C.S. 3.5.1 (College-Level Competencies), Recommendation 9**

While the institution has begun many of the processes to demonstrate compliance, some have yet to be implemented. The timeline for completion was well after the due date for the present review. The institution should provide evidence that students have attained the competencies identified in the general education curriculum.

Texas Tech's Third Monitoring Report was submitted August 28, 2008. It provided extensive and substantive evidence of full compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1. It also provided detailed evidence pertaining to the sustainability of our initiatives, and reiterated our commitment to the Commission on Colleges *Principles of Accreditation*. On September 23-25, 2008, the Commission's
Special Committee visited Texas Tech University to evaluate and validate Tech’s compliance with C.S. 3.5.1. The Special Committee’s report contained the following finding:

The institution has met the intent of the Comprehensive Standard cited in the January 9, 2008 notification letter through the completion of the implementation timeline and by demonstrating minimal compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.5.1.

Pursuant to President Wheelan’s letter dated January 9, 2008, this “Good Cause” Report is being submitted should it be needed following the Commission’s review of Texas Tech’s Third Monitoring Report and the Report of the Special Committee. This report addresses the three conditions listed in the Commission's policy statement for extending the institution’s accreditation for “good cause.” Those three conditions are:

1. The institution has demonstrated significant recent accomplishments in addressing non-compliance;

2. The institution has documented that it has the “potential” to remedy all deficiencies within the extended period as defined by the Committee on Compliance and Reports....;

3. The institution provides assurance to the Commission that it is not aware of any other reasons...why the institution could not be continued for “good cause.”

This report addresses each of the three conditions to show good cause for extending SACS-COC accreditation for Texas Tech University.

Throughout 2008, Texas Tech has committed its full institutional resources to rectifying its one remaining compliance issue with the Commission on College's Principles of Accreditation. Texas Tech's Third Monitoring Report reflects substantial improvement over its previous two monitoring
reports. Indeed, the entire university community has taken this compliance issue very seriously and has invested enormous amounts of time, effort and resources in rectifying past deficiencies. The Special Committee's review and findings provide independent confirmation and validation of Texas Tech's good work in this regard and our compliance with C.S. 3.5.1.

Texas Tech University's 80-year history of compliance with the accreditation requirements of SACS-COC, as well as its current program accreditations by over 50 other nationally recognized agencies, stands as powerful evidence of this institution's deep commitment to the principles and values of the nation's accreditors in higher education. Our long and distinguished history as an accredited university and the reports submitted and reviewed in 2008 should provide ample supporting evidence of good cause for Texas Tech's continued accreditation.

1. The institution has demonstrated significant recent accomplishments in addressing non-compliance.

   The content of Texas Tech's Third Monitoring Report stands in stark contrast to its two earlier monitoring reports. It provides a thorough and well-documented account of substantial progress in achieving full compliance with C.S. 3.5.1. Key administrative changes were made at Texas Tech and planned assessment timetables were accelerated in 2008 to rectify outstanding deficiencies in compliance. Furthermore, improvements continue to be made to sustain these advances in the assessment of college-level competencies.

   For example, Texas Tech University recently made significant structural changes to ensure its continued compliance with C.S. 3.5.1. In June 2008, the former General Education Committee (GEC) was replaced by the Core Curriculum Committee (CCC). Previous GEC membership was organized by College, not Core areas, and core area expertise was not a requirement for appointment. Now, the membership in the CCC is composed of faculty who teach within the Core and who are familiar with the content of
the area for which they are responsible. While the former GEC was composed of 15 members, the new
CCC has 70 members led by a Steering Committee composed of the chairperson from each Core Task
Force. The current CCC is clearly a more participatory body with a vested interest in improving the Core
at Texas Tech. The CCC is composed of nine task forces that represent each Core area: Multicultural,
Foreign Language, Natural Sciences, Technology and Applied Science, Social and Behavioral Sciences,
Communication, Mathematics, Humanities, and Visual and Performing Arts. (See the Core Curriculum
Committee web-site at http://www.depts.ttu.edu/provost/councilscmtes/ccc/ for more information.)

The new CCC is charged with implementing assessment findings and reviewing the current Core
curriculum. Over 200 courses were eliminated from the Core Curriculum in the spring of 2008, and that
process continues in the fall of 2008 under new committee membership and leadership. To manage and
lead these efforts, Texas Tech University created a new full-time position focused on the Core
curriculum, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, which was filled by Dr. Gary Elbow on
September 1, 2008.

Task forces in each of the nine Core areas are moving forward on their assessment agendas. For
example, the Multicultural task force is currently conducting direct assessment and a meta-analysis
across all Multicultural Core courses, and is working with the Office of the President to revise Texas
Tech’s Multicultural Requirement statement, which was authored in 1994. To support the efforts of the
Multicultural task force, a graduate assistantship has been assigned from the Office of Planning and
Assessment. As discussed in Texas Tech’s Third Monitoring Report on pages 19-20, all Core areas are
continuing to be assessed using focused, direct, embedded assessment methods, as well as commercial
assessment instruments, as documented in the “Texas Tech General Education Competency Assessment
Cycles” (2002-2012).
2. The institution has documented that it has the “potential” to remedy all deficiencies within the extended period as defined by the Committee on Compliance and Reports....;

Not only has Texas Tech documented its "potential" to remedy the deficiency of evidence for C.S. 3.5.1, it also realized that potential in 2008. Texas Tech's Third Monitoring Report contains extensive evidence supporting full compliance with this Comprehensive Standard. Previously submitted timelines for the assessment of identified college-level competencies were accelerated so that multiple measures of assessment data for all of Texas Tech's college-level competencies could be assembled, analyzed and utilized for educational quality enhancement in 2008. Independent confirmation of that achievement was provided this fall by the Commission's Special Visiting Committee. In addition, this “Good Cause” report contains more evidence that Texas Tech's compliance efforts are continuing and sustained.

For example, in order to ensure adequate support to the faculty conducting assessment of the Core Curriculum, the Office of Planning and Assessment (OPA) was created in January 2008. In addition to the Office of Institutional Research and Information Management (IRIM), this office was established to provide leadership and support for institutional effectiveness. In July 2008, the role of Vice Provost for Planning and Assessment was created to head OPA, and Dr. Valerie Paton, former Associate Vice Provost of Outreach and Distance Education, was appointed to that new position. Prior to coming to Texas Tech, Dr. Paton served as a SACS-COC liaison and was active in SAIR. In addition to Dr. Paton, several OPA staff have been hired since January 2008, including an Associate Director, two Planning and Assessment Analysts and a Senior Administrative Assistant. In addition, several Graduate Assistants have been hired by OPA to assist with college-related data analysis. A secondary benefit of graduate student involvement in OPA is the enrichment provided for assessment training of TTU doctoral students. In September, the Commission's Special Committee suggested the addition of a second
assessment “methodologist” to the OPA team, and the university complied immediately by beginning the personnel posting process.

OPA’s mission is to promote institutional effectiveness through planning, assessment, use of findings for improvement, and related resource issues in academic, administrative and institutional environments. Specifically, the Office of Planning and Assessment:

• Supports the Offices of the President and Provost in the development and assessment of long-range, strategic, contextual and tactical planning.
• Consults with and provides support to administrative units in planning, assessment and use of findings for improvement.
• Consults with and provides support to faculty, academic and educational support services units in planning, conducting, and maintaining assessment activities.
• At the request of faculty, deans and the Office of the Provost, coordinates and supports university-wide academic assessment activities.
• Serves as a specialist on administrative and academic assessment issues (e.g., assessment workshops, newsletters, online tools, etc.).
• Supports academic and administrative units to prepare documentation for accreditation bodies.
• Works on a variety of special projects, as requested.

Although the mission of the Office of Planning and Assessment is to facilitate institutional effectiveness campus-wide, compliance with C.S. 3.5.1 has been the focus of its efforts throughout 2008. In preparation for the successful completion of Texas Tech’s Fifth Year SACS-COC Interim Report, which will be due in 2010, OPA has audited institutional effectiveness processes across the institution
and found that software solutions were needed to improve support of the university’s ongoing assessment efforts, strategic planning, and faculty credentials monitoring.

Using the results of OPA’s assessment, Texas Tech recently invested in key software acquisitions to improve the university’s capability for electronic tracking of assessment activities and the archiving of data and documentation. IT staff (who tested and evaluated the security and stability of available products), faculty, department chairs, and deans were involved with OPA in the software selection process. That selection focused on reaching consensus about the best software product to support documentation and improvement of assessment activities. Criteria representing identified needs of the university were compiled and totaled 51 items. Those 51 items were included within a rubric that was developed to ensure that the software would meet the needs of the university. This process resulted in the purchase of TracDat, a software solution for institution-wide planning and assessment support. A similar selection process was followed for the acquisition of DigitalMeasures, a software solution that will serve as the repository for all instructional personnel’s research, service and teaching contributions, as well as providing documentation to satisfy accreditation of academic programs.

TracDat and DigitalMeasures were purchased in August 2008, configured in September and October, and introduced to lead representatives from each College and School in mid-October. Field training with faculty and deans begins in November 2008.

Since the inception of OPA, many of its initial goals have been met including the following:

- Creation of the departmental website (www.depts.ttu.edu/opa/)
  - provides assessment resources
  - provides links to assessment instruments currently in use at TTU
  - assessment newsletter
• Software evaluation, acquisition, implementation
  o assessment tracking software (Nuventive - TracDat)
  o faculty credentialing software (Digital Measures)

• Sponsored workshops and training
  o Course- and program-level assessment
  o software use to support assessment
  o Critical thinking and diversity

• Developed annual assessment symposium to be held December 11, 2008

• Awards and Stipends
  o Award of $1500 stipends to each Core area upon receipt of application
    ▪ Stipends used to enhance and support assessment activities for 2008-2009
  o Travel awards
    ▪ offered to Core Curriculum Committee members to state and national assessment conferences
  o Planning for future exemplary departmental assessment award

• Evaluation and administration of assessment instruments
  o Evaluation of several instruments
    ▪ CLA
    ▪ CAAP
    ▪ MAPP
    ▪ Internally developed
  o Administration of 2007-08 Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA)
  o Administration of 2008-09 Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA); freshmen completed October 2008
- Administration of Core Curriculum Essay and subsequent data analysis completed June 2008
- Development and administration of the Online Senior Assessment and subsequent analysis of data completed June 2008
- Assessment documentation for the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) web-site
- Provided support to QEP activities and assessment
  - Website development
  - Spring workshop with Dr. Gerard Dizinno, Associate Vice Provost, UTSA
  - QEP summit, October 2008
  - Archiving of key historical documents
- Creation of university-wide accreditation and reaffirmation schedule system
  - Developed plan for tracking all accreditations annually
  - Created administrative repository for documentation
- Conference proposals submitted by OPA staff to state and national assessment conferences (i.e., SAIR, TAIR, SCUP, Texas A & M Assessment Conference)
- Supports the Vice Provost for Planning and Assessment in the development and assessment of long-range, strategic, contextual and tactical planning.
3. **The institution provides assurance to the Commission that it is not aware of any other reasons...why the institution could not be continued for “good cause.”**

   Texas Tech has not made substantial changes in its mission, programs or services nor had any reductions in its financial resources since it received reaffirmation of accreditation in December 2005. We have worked closely with our SACS-COC representative, Dr. Joseph Silver, to ensure that all substantive changes have been documented and approved by SACS-COC. We are not aware of any other reasons why the institution could not be continued for “good cause.”