

***DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY
2002-03 SELF-STUDY MANUAL***

I. Purpose and Goals of the Self-Study

During the process of its institutional self-study, Delta State University seeks to accomplish the following goals:

1. Demonstrate that the institution is in substantial compliance with accreditation requirements in SACS Principles of Accreditation. The self-study report will provide documentation for use by the SACS Reaffirmation Committees.
2. Develop a "Quality Enhancement Plan" (QEP), identifying one or more significant issues of the University related to student learning and devising a plan for addressing those issues.
3. Develop an enhanced sense of cohesiveness among all members of the institutional community, especially as it relates to the ownership of the QEP.

The primary purpose of the self-study is institutional improvement, not just a determination of compliance with SACS Principles. It is intended to be comprehensive, focusing on an analysis of all significant issues at Delta State University.

II. Tentative Timetable

September 2002	Appoint self-study committees
January 2003	Visit by SACS staff representative, David Carter. Preliminary report of compliance audit.
May 2003	Audit Committees submit final reports
August 2003	Submit Compliance Audit to SACS
September 2003	Review of Compliance Audit by Off-site Peer Review Committee, Atlanta, GA
January 2004	Submit QEP to SACS
March, April 2004 September 2004	On-site Reaffirmation Committee visit Submission of response to

Reaffirmation Committee

December 2004

Review and action by Commission on Colleges

2004 and beyond

Implement recommendations developed in the self-study process.
Implement QEP.

III. Organization

Leadership Team

Dr. Dick Myers, SACS Liaison

Dr. David Potter

Dr. John Thornell

Dr. David Schubert

Ms. Elise Jenkins

Dr. Michelle Roberts

Dr. Bill Spencer, SACS Liaison as of July1, 2003

Committee Chairs

Compliance Audit

David Schubert, Overall Chair

Rose Strahan, Core Requirements

Beverly Moon, Mission, Governance, and Effectiveness

Susan Allen Ford, Educational Programs

Milton Wilder, Faculty

Rick Torgerson, Library and Student Affairs

Myrtis Tabb, Resources

Mark Steele, Federal Mandates

Bill Spencer, Editor

Quality Enhancement Plan

Elise Jenkins, Overall Chair

IV. Guidelines for Self-Study ----- How to do it.

According to SACS, the following results may develop from the self-study:

1. the reexamination of the institutional statements of purpose and goals;
2. the systematic evaluation of educational programs, faculty, educational support services, administrative processes and financial and physical resources;
3. the systematic evaluation of all institutional policies, procedures, practices, and services;
4. the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution;
5. the assessment of the extent to which the institution meets or exceeds accreditation standards;
6. the development of an enhancement plan with special attention to student learning;
7. the production of reports useful to the reaffirmation committees.

Departmental Studies

No specific reports are required of the departments, divisions, and units of the University. However, they may be called upon to provide evidence and documentation to the principal committees.

Activities of the Principal Study Committees

General Duties of the Principal Study Committees

The Compliance Audit committees have two principal duties: to determine the extent of compliance with the SACS standards and to provide documentation supporting that determination.

The committees should plan well. Remember that this self-study is our self-study; it is not SACS's self-study. Consequently SACS does not prescribe the methods to be used or the form the study will take. It is our responsibility to plan and carry out the study. Planning should include the following kinds of activities:

- determination of data needs,
- methods of collecting needed data,
- assignment of duties to members or subcommittees,
- decision about what questions must be answered, what opinions and reactions must be sought,

determination of level of compliance,
materials to be drafted and edited,
production of a final committee report.

Preparing the Self-Study Report

The self-study report should follow the guidelines and format suggested by the Editorial Committee. The final report should be concise, yet thorough, as it addresses SACS standards. To the extent possible the report will be electronic and web-based. Because the SACS peer review committee will not be familiar with DSU, the report must be clear.

The committee should study each standard and determine the extent to which Delta State University is in compliance (compliance, partial compliance, and noncompliance). It should provide a concise statement providing the rationale for why the committee arrived at its conclusion about the level of compliance. The committee should identify sources of documentation.

Step 1. Study the Standards

Some standards use qualitative terms such as

adequate
sufficient
appropriate
effective
acceptable
qualified.

The committee with the help of the Leadership Team should define what these terms mean for Delta State University. National or regional norms, common practice, and peer institutions may be used to formulate definitions.

Step 2. Identify Evidence and Documentation

Find the evidence and documentation available from DSU sources and other sources. Determine what information is missing and how to collect it. Make your needs known to the Leadership Team which, can assist in finding information.

If evidence is not written, it cannot be used.

To the extent possible we will place all documentation on the web. ITS will assist persons, offices, and units in putting the necessary information on the web. A copy of documentation which cannot be put on the web must be secured for use in the SACS reference room if possible. Otherwise the location must be clearly specified.

Step 3. Determine the level of Compliance

Analyze the evidence to determine if it supports compliance with standards. The committee decision will be

compliance

partial compliance

noncompliance

Notify the Leadership Team as the committee makes its determination.

Write a concise narrative clearly stating the rationale for the committee decision about the level of compliance. Any standard judged to be in partial compliance or noncompliance should be reported to the QEP committee and to the Leadership Team for their consideration.

V. Resources

General Data Needs

The data necessary for the self-study may be related to several subjects: descriptions of things (sizes, trends, teaching loads, credit hour production, majors, completions, characteristics of students, goals achievement, processes, etc.), ideas, issues, and problems. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning will assist with finding data. Each committee should make its data needs known to the Leadership Team, which will assist in collecting the data.

Staff

The institutional self-study has administrative and secretarial support through the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Budget

The budget for the self-study is provided through the Office of Academic Affairs. The budget provides for the activities of the various committees, including funds for postage, supplies, and photocopying.

Reference Room

A centralized location will be provided to house all the non-electronic documents and exhibits needed by the visiting committee.