

PROCEEDINGS

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From the President



Dr. Belle S. Wheelan

Greetings! I hope this newsletter finds your semester off to a great start. As we regroup after the Annual Meeting, we find ourselves involved in several major activities.

We are still working with the other regional accrediting organizations to follow the activities related to the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. While some of the issues that have funding attached have been resolved, some are outstanding issues still under discussion. Additionally, with the selection of Representative Boehner as Majority Leader, a new chair of the House Education and Workforce Committee will need to be selected and new staff support will have to be identified.

The Executive Council appointed a committee to review the *Principles of Accreditation*. Now that the new process has been in place for three years, they need to make some clarifications and do some “polishing.” A final report of their work will be submitted to the Commission in June and the College Delegate Assembly will be asked to vote on any recommended changes at the Annual Meeting in December 2006.

As I indicated at the Annual Meeting, we are making a few changes within the staff and in the way we communicate with our members. This electronic version of the *Communiqué* is one example of that change. Additionally, we are purchasing software that will allow members of visiting committees to

review their report and make changes electronically on a SINGLE document rather than a chair having to insert changes from each member. Online training modules related to the On-Site Review Committee, the Off-Site Review Committee, and the Quality Enhancement Plan are being developed for committee members. Finally, we are also going to implement online registration for conferences and payment for services by the time of the 2006 Annual Meeting.

I have been traveling around the region getting to know many of our members and institutions, as well as attending national meetings to familiarize myself with issues that affect our institutions. I look forward to meeting all of you and am honored to serve you. Please stay in touch and let me know how I can be of service.

Commission Elects Leadership, Modifies Policies, Takes Action on Institutions



Dr. James F. Barker-Chair



Dr. Joseph T. Barwick-Vice Chair

James F. Barker, president of Clemson University, was re-elected chair of the Commission on Colleges during the 77-member body's executive session held December 5, 2005, in Atlanta, Georgia. Joseph T. Barwick, president of Carteret Community College, was elected vice-chair. Barwick also serves as North Carolina's representative on the council.

Others elected to the 13-member 2006 Executive Council representing the 11-state region and the public include: John C. Cavanaugh, President, University of West Florida (Florida); Charles W. Gould, President, Florence-Darlington Technical College (South Carolina); Elva C. LeBlanc, President, Galveston College (Texas); Charles D. Lein, President and Chief Operating Officer, Stuller, Inc. (Public representative); Shirley A. R. Lewis, President, Paine College (Georgia); Claudia A. Limbert, President, Mississippi University for Women (Mississippi); Ernest C. McNealey, President, Stillman College (Alabama); Daniel D. Reneau, President, Louisiana Tech University (Louisiana); Paul E. Stanton, Jr., President, East Tennessee State University (Tennessee); Phillip C. Stone, President, Bridgewater College (Virginia); and James H. Taylor, President, The University of the Cumberlands (Kentucky). The Executive Council serves as the executive arm of the Commission, interpreting policies and procedures, authorizing and supervising the work of the Commission's *ad hoc* and standing committees, and acting on recommendations from the committees.

During its session, the Commission modified or approved five policies. First, it revised its current Standing Rules by voting to reduce the 33 at-large representatives on the 77-member Commission by one and adding

a commissioner to represent international institutions. The other 44 seats on the Commission will remain unchanged; that is, each of the 11 states will continue to have four representatives—one from an associate degree-granting institution, two from senior institutions, and one public representative.

Second, the Commission modified its policy, “Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges.” The change eliminates the requirement for an associate degree-granting institution approved to offer baccalaureate degrees to modify its next comprehensive review to ensure that its reaffirmation takes place within 5 years following action on the approval of the substantive change. An institution’s reaffirmation cycle will no longer be altered when it adds advanced degrees at the baccalaureate level.

Third, the Commission adopted the policy, “Ethical Obligations of Commissioners and Peer Evaluators.” The policy is divided into three parts: (1) expectations of commissioners and peer evaluators in regards to their own integrity; (2) ethical obligations and responsibilities specific to commissioners—addressing confidentiality, conflict of interest, integrity as it relates to the commissioner’s institution, and participation responsibilities; and (3) ethical obligations and responsibilities specific to peer evaluators—addressing confidentiality, conflict of interest, and responsibilities of peer evaluators when participating in the review of an institution. The new policy replaces one approved by the Commission in December 2004 for members of its body and replaces the conflict of interest statement previously focusing on visiting committees.

Fourth, the Commission revised its policy, “Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports.” The modified policy outlines how the on-site and off-site review processes will evaluate distance learning and additional off-site locations during the reaffirmation process, and gives the president of the Commission the authority to defer action on the reaffirmation of an institution when the institution is on probation from a previous activity.

The fifth and final change made to Commission policies was the adoption of the policy, “Joint Curricular Ventures Involving the Award of Credit by Member Institutions.” It is a single policy that methodically addresses all types of contractual agreements, joint degrees, and cooperative degrees offered with regionally accredited institutions, non-regionally accredited institutions, and international entities. The document is divided into two parts: the policy statement and the guidelines. Under the policy statement, the document cross references standards in the *Principles of Accreditation* relevant to all joint curricular ventures. The guidelines, or statements of good practice, are divided into guidelines for ventures with other regionally accredited institutions, non-regionally accredited institutions, and international entities. The newly adopted policy replaced three former Commission documents: (1) “International Institutions: Affiliate or Technical Assistance Relationships,” (2) “Contractual Relationships with Non-Regionally Accredited Entities,” and (3) “International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals: Good Practices.”

The above policies can be accessed at <http://www.sacscoc.org/commpub1.asp#Policies>.

The December 2005 Commission meeting marked the third time that institutions were reviewed for reaffirmation of accreditation under the new *Principles of Accreditation*. Of the 34 institutions reviewed, 12 were reaffirmed with no additional monitoring reports; 23 with monitoring reports due in April or in September 2006; and none were denied reaffirmation of accreditation. Five institutions previously denied reaffirmation were reaffirmed and removed from sanction. The Commission welcomed four institutions as new members and one as a new candidate. A complete list of Commission actions is available at <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/05cractdec.pdf>. The list posted on the Website does not include the names of institutions required only to submit additional monitoring reports unless the review resulted in a negative action.

A Special Thanks...

Eleven individuals concluded their terms as commissioners in December. Each contributed many hours of personal time reviewing accreditation cases and proposed policies, and then participating in the important and difficult task of governing their peers. The names of retirees are listed below along with their years of service. We extend our appreciation for their commitment and leadership.

Jacqueline Addington, President, Owensboro Community and Technical College, Kentucky (6 years)

F. Stuart Gulley, President, LaGrange College, Georgia (6 years; 1 as Vice Chair of the Commission)

Jack Hawkins, Jr., Chancellor, Troy University, Alabama (5 years)

J. Patrick Lee, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Barry University, Florida (6 years)

Randy D. McCoy, Superintendent, Tupelo Public School District, Mississippi (3 years)

Leo McGee, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Tennessee Technological University, Tennessee (6 years)

Norval F. Pohl, President, University of North Texas, Texas (3 years)

Carla D. Sanderson, Provost, Union University, Tennessee (6 years)

John C. Staton, Jr., Retired Partner, King & Spalding, LLP, Georgia (3 years)

Patricia A. Sullivan, Chancellor, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, North Carolina (6 years; 3 years as one of five chairs for the Committees on Compliance and Reports)

Mary Thornley, President, Trident Technical College, South Carolina (6 years; 1 as Vice Chair of the Commission)

Michael Adams Named Recipient of the James T. Rogers Leadership Award

During the 2005 Annual Meeting, the membership of the Commission on Colleges continued its tradition of recognizing individuals whose extraordinary commitment to the peer review system exceeds normal expectations of volunteerism.



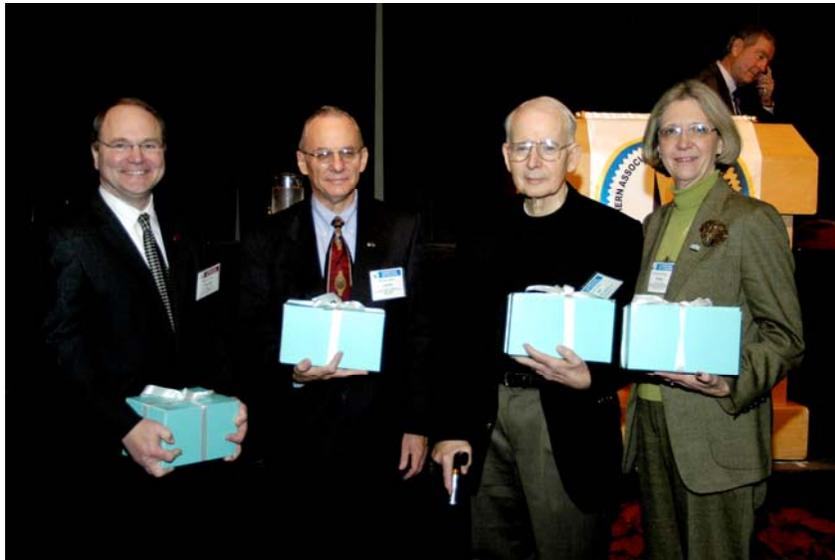
Dr. Michael F. Adams

The James T. Rogers Distinguished Leadership Award—the highest public recognition given by the Commission and reserved for extraordinarily distinctive and effective leadership—was awarded to Dr. Michael F. Adams, President, University of Georgia. Active in Commission affairs for nearly 15 years, Dr. Adams made his most important contribution while he served on the Executive Council and as chair of the Commission on Colleges. During his tenure as chair, the membership adopted a dues formula that ensured a more consistent flow of revenue for the operations of the Commission and created a process that fairly assessed institutions according to their ability to pay to support the self-regulatory organization. Prior to the formula, dues were based exclusively on enrollment.

Dr. Adams is a staunch advocate for standards that demand more of institutions and of processes that ask institutions to take more responsibility for the quality of their own institutions without relying on the prescriptive statements of good practice of the *Criteria for Accreditation* (the precursor to the *Principles of Accreditation*). It was his thought that new standards could be created that would allow institutions more flexibility to demonstrate quality and to benefit more from the review process. To that end, he appointed the Steering Review Committee and task forces of the Accreditation Project—the groups that eventually developed the *Principles of Accreditation*.

Both the dues formula and the standards revision were bold moves, and it took his visionary leadership to introduce them. Because of this vision and his strong support and promotion of accreditation at the regional and the national level, Dr. Adams's distinguished leadership will continue to affect the quality of the Commission for years to come.

Meritorious Service Award Recipients



L-R: **Dr. Marshall W. Smith, Dr. Charles D. Fiskeaux, Dr. William Moran, Dr. Wilsie Bishop, and Dr. Patricia P. Cormier** (photo not available)

Commission Chair James Barker, president of Clemson University, also presented the Commission's seventh Meritorious Service Awards to the following outstanding individuals who truly personify the ideals of the Commission and embody in singular ways the best principles of the academy and of accreditation:

Wilsie S. Bishop, Vice President for Administration and Chief Operating Officer, East Tennessee State University, Tennessee

Patricia P. Cormier, President, Longwood University, Virginia

Charles D. Fiskeaux, Vice President for Business Affairs and Treasurer, Asbury College, Kentucky

William Moran, President Emeritus, Lander University, South Carolina

Marshall W. Smith, President, John Tyler Community College, Virginia

College Delegate Assembly Elects New Commissioners, Appeals Committee Members

At its business meeting on December 6, 2005, the College Delegate Assembly elected 12 new commissioners and reelected 15 to its 77-member representative body. Commissioners are responsible for taking final action on the accreditation of institutions, for reviewing changes to standards and dues before forwarding them to the membership for a final vote, and for electing the 13-member Executive Council, its chair, and vice chair.

The newly elected commissioners are: William T. Abare, Jr., President, Flagler College, St. Augustine, Florida; Michael A. Battle, President, Interdenominational Theological Center, Atlanta, Georgia; Roger G. Brown, Chancellor, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Chattanooga, Tennessee; Diane M. Calhoun-French, Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, Jefferson Community and Technical College, Louisville, Kentucky; Blandina Cardenas, President, The University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas; Franklyn M. Casale, President, Saint Thomas University, Miami Gardens, Florida; William R. Crowe, President, Tyler Junior College, Tyler, Texas; Michael A. Gerber, President, Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education, Atlanta, Georgia; Kenneth H. MacKay, Jr., former Lieutenant Governor of Florida, Ocklawaha, Florida; Sidney A. McPhee, President, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Bruce Murphy, Chief Academic Officer, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama; Charles P. Teague, President, Spartanburg Methodist College, Spartanburg, South Carolina; and Robert Ward, President, Windmill Properties, Inc., Meridian, Mississippi.

Commissioners reelected to a second 3-year term include: Joseph T. Barwick, President, Carteret Community College, Morehead, North Carolina; David L. Beckley, President, Rust College, Holly Springs, Mississippi; Ray L. Belton, Chancellor, Southern University at Shreveport, Shreveport, Louisiana; Mark R. Foley, President, University of Mobile, Mobile, Alabama; Martin Gonzalez, Provost, Milton Campus, Pensacola Junior College, Milton, Florida; Carl M. Hite, President, Cleveland State Community College, Cleveland, Tennessee; Elva C. LeBlanc, President, Galveston College, Galveston, Texas; Eric B. McKeithan, President, Cape Fear Community College, Wilmington, North Carolina; Royce L. Money, President, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, Texas; Vivian M. Presley, President, Coahoma Community College, Clarksdale, Mississippi; Daniel D. Reneau, President, Louisiana Tech University, Ruston, Louisiana; Beheruz N. Sethna, President, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, Georgia; Milton R. Sewell, President, Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, Tennessee; and Henry N. Tisdale, President, Claflin University, Orangeburg, South Carolina.

In addition, the membership elected three presidents to the 12-member Appeals Committee of the College Delegate Assembly: Mickey L. Burnim, Chancellor, Elizabeth City State University, Elizabeth City, North Carolina; C. Paul Conn, President, Lee University, Cleveland, Tennessee; and Patricia P. Cormier, President, Longwood University, Farmville, Virginia.

The Executive Council—the 13-member body that serves as the executive arm of the Commission—took the following actions during its sessions:

- Directed staff to develop a policy that would allow the Commission to charge institutions for administrative overhead if called in as third party or if documents were solicited for such cases.
- Established a subcommittee of its own to review the Commission's current standing rules and to propose language that would clarify that it is Council's responsibility to select and evaluate the president of the Commission.
- Endorsed the president's decision to defer reaffirmation or defer submission of selected reports for those institutions directly affected by the 2005 hurricanes.

- Modified the “Records Maintenance” policy by allowing the Commission to discard an institution’s application or prospectus if a committee to review substantive change is not authorized.
- Endorsed the Commission staff’s recommendation for a Quality Enhancement Summit that would recommend means to enhance the focus, assessment, and value of the Quality Enhancement Plan for institutions and for the Commission.
- Voted to allow chairs of On-Site Reaffirmation Committees the option of conducting a preliminary visit and asked the staff to define the role of the chair for this activity.
- Voted to continue staff advisory visits to institutions requesting such during the reaffirmation process. Institutions would continue to attend the Leadership Team orientation sessions held in Atlanta.
- Endorsed the staff’s recommendation that an institution moving from Level I to Level II not be required to change its name if it has “community college” as part of it.
- Voted to place all Commission handbooks and manuals on its Website so that institutions would have access to them. The Commission would also continue to produce print copies for sale.

First Time CDA Election of Commission Representatives to the SACS Board

For the first time in the history of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the Commission’s College Delegate Assembly directly elected its representatives to the SACS’ Board of Trustees. This action was the result of a change in bylaws that took effect in July 2005.

The revised bylaws recognize two organizational entities under the umbrella corporation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools: the Commission on Colleges (COC) and the Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (CASI). CASI replaces the Commission on Elementary and Middle Schools and the Commission on Secondary and Middle Schools. With this change, the SACS bylaws give the Commission and the Council equal representation on the Board of Trustees and give each the authority to nominate and elect their own representatives. In the past, names of nominees from each of the three commissions were forwarded to the total SACS membership for a vote.

The Commission’s College Delegate Assembly elected the following individuals as members of the SACS Board of Trustees:

- Elected as vice chair of the board and chair-elect: John E. Pickelman, Chancellor, North Harris Montgomery Community College District, the Woodlands, Texas
- Elected as institutional representative: Dorothy Cowser Yancy, President, Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, North Carolina
- Elected as public representative: Dwain Beydler, Principal Consultant, The Workforce Consortium, Eads, Tennessee

The three individuals above will join Commission chair James F. Barker, President of Clemson University in South Carolina, and faculty representative Alice S. Mandanis, Professor of English and Provost Emerita from Marymount University, Arlington, Virginia, who will continue their terms on the board.

Commission Dateline

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| February 25–28 | Meeting of the Executive Council of the Commission |
| March 1 | Fifth-Year Follow-Up Reports due <i>(as requested by the Committees on Compliance and Reports)</i> |
| March 15 | Compliance Certifications due: 2007 reaffirmation class, Track A |
| March 24 | Meeting of the <i>Principles</i> Review Committee |
| April 14 | Monitoring Reports due <i>(as requested by the Committees on Compliance and Reports)</i> |
| April 15 | Fifth-Year Follow-Up Reports due <i>(as requested by the Committees on Compliance and Reports)</i> |
| April 20 | Workshop for pre-applicant institutions |
| May 8 | Last day for adding institutional cases to the June 2006 agenda of the Committees on Compliance and Reports |
| May 15 | Meeting of the <i>Principles</i> Review Committee |
| May 15 – 18 | Off-site reviews conducted for 2007 reaffirmation class, Track A |
| May 22 – 23 | Leadership training for new commissioners <i>(by invitation only)</i> |
| June 12 | Leadership Team orientation for 2008 reaffirmation class, Track B <i>(by invitation only)</i> |
| June 20 – 22 | Summer Meeting of the Commission on Colleges |
| June 26 | Posted on the Commission’s Website: actions on institutions taken by the Commission on Colleges on June 22 |
| July 15 | Financial Institutional Profiles due |
| July 30 – August 2 | Institute on Quality Enhancement and Accreditation |

Attention: Chief Academic and Student Affairs Officers

PENN STATE CENTER TO STUDY THE FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE

The Penn State Center for the Study of Higher Education announces *Parsing the First Year of College*, a three-year project supported by The Spencer Foundation and now seeking participating institutions. Perhaps the most comprehensive, longitudinal study of its kind, the project will map the influences shaping student learning and persistence during the first year of college. Focal areas will include students' experiences, the peer environment, faculty members' values and activities, and internal institutional structures, practices, and policies. The Project, directed by Patrick T. Terenzini and Robert D. Reason of the Penn State Center for the Study of Higher Education, will involve 40 four-year colleges and universities nationwide.

Institutions meeting the eligibility criteria and selected for participation will receive:

- Information about the educational effectiveness of their current programs and policies;
- Extensive quantitative data to guide enhancement of local retention efforts;
- Participation at no cost in the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE);
- Subsidized pricing for use of ACT's Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency;
- A copy of their own dataset for additional, institution-specific analyses;
- Information for comparing local performance with that of similar institutions;
- National visibility.

Participation in the study is restricted to **4-year colleges and universities that rely on the ACT Assessment** as their primary quantitative measure for admissions decision-making. More information on the project, including information about participating in the study, is available at <http://www.ed.psu.edu/cshe/Parsing/home.html>.

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