The Sullivan University scholar-practitioner model is based on a combination of teaching, service (to both the university and your profession), and research. If you are like many people, though, the idea of taking the time to conduct research is generally a low-priority goal, especially given how time-consuming teaching and taking care of students (let alone your other responsibilities) can be.

For many faculty members, the only research that they have been involved in is that required during the practicum and/or dissertation phase of their doctoral studies. That can often be a stress-filled time, and the competing pressures of not enough time, spouses, and families who are feeling ignored, and the drain of paying for it all (generally while also having a full-time job) can be draining. So, it is no wonder that you probably don’t associate research with having fun.

What if we told you that research actually can be fun and can enhance your professional standing, both within the university and also among your professional colleagues? Would you stay open
minded and consider giving it a try?

Sullivan University offers many ways to help you pursue your research goals. Were you aware that we have a faculty research grant program which provides up to $5,000 in funding for each approved study? Projects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board before data is collected and include everything from research with the U.S. military to the development of a workshop on a specialized topic. Studies can include large numbers of participants or only a few (or, in some cases, even none).

The point is that many types of projects can qualify as “research” under the terms of this program. You might be surprised to find out that an idea you have had percolating for some time could qualify for funding—which you could use for needed resources (e.g. tape recorders, equipment), attendance at a conference to present your findings, and/or funding for a student assistant.

Sullivan University provides support for full-time faculty to attend professional conferences, workshops, or certification programs in order to stay current in their area of study. Please contact your supervisor for more information.

The truth is that we must make a strategic effort to stay current in our respective disciplines. It is how we remain relevant to our students and how we can best contribute to their overall academic experience, as well as our own.

What’s in it for you?

Professional development activities can help you to stay current. Moreover, by conducting your research, you can not only just stay current, but you can lead the way forward by creating new insights and answering yet-unanswered questions in your professional domain while being funded by the university—and maybe have some fun along the way. We hope that you will take the time to invest in both yourself and your professional discipline!
Academic Accolades

In this new column of the Academic Illuminator, we will highlight faculty accomplishments and current events for all Sullivan University locations, both physical and virtual, as well as information of interest to readers from our many locations.

Lexington Campus

The Unstoppable Librarian

-by David Tudor

Sullivan Lexington is home to many faculty with notable achievements that shine a positive light on this campus. Among those stars is Kandace Rogers, director of the Lexington campus’ library. Ms. Rogers joined Sullivan University in December of 2005 after leaving a position as Head of Public Services at The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, located in Abu Dhabi. She brought with her a passion for scholarship, service, and outreach. That tradition continues into 2017.

A longtime member of the Kentucky Library Association, Ms. Rogers was asked to chair the Academic Section for 2016-2017. This honor was bestowed upon her by her peers in the organization. They likely recognized her positive attitude and can-do spirit. She’ll represent the Academic Section this year at the American Library Association’s Legislative Day on May 1st and 2nd, held in Washington, D.C. Closer to home, Kandace is chairing the planning committee for the Joint Spring Conference, sponsored by Academic & Special Sections of the Kentucky Library Association and the Kentucky Chapter of the Special Library Association, where she will also be presenting a session entitled, The Curriculum Vitae: A Work in Progress. Because Kandace lives by the motto, “You’re Never Too Busy to Do More,” she is also serving as
the 2016-2017 chair of the Association of College & Research Libraries Kentucky Chapter. It has been a busy year!

Ms. Rogers’ scholarship extends into publishing for 2017. She’ll return to a familiar post as author/editor for the reference standard *Magazines for Libraries*, updating the *Beer, Wine & Spirits* chapter for the 26th edition of the book. This is the third time she’s lent her talent to this publication. She also worked on the 22nd and 24th editions of the chapter in 2013 and 2015 respectively.

Kandace often finds that service and community outreach can build bridges across campuses and programs. She is currently serving on committees: Sullivan’s Academic Council, in Louisville, and the Lexington campus’s Academic Leadership Team, and has served on Lexington’s Campus Action Initiative, Faculty Development Committee, and Appeals Committee. She has also participated in and served on the planning committee for the Bluegrass Higher Education Consortium’s Academic Leadership academy, a group that prepares today’s college faculty for leadership challenges and opportunities of tomorrow. She was also honored with the Lexington Star of the Month award in January 2014.

Kandace Rogers is a seasoned veteran of the Sullivan Lexington community. Her contributions to the success of this campus are numerous and significant. I extend my gratitude to Kandace for many years of service to the Lexington community.

Other exciting Lexington news and events:

- **Jerry Sims**, Associate Dean for COBA, has been asked to be a member of the Fayette County Schools Community Partners initiative. Eleven universities in the Fayette County area are officially community partners. Dr. Sims’ role is to provide advice and guidance to the Fayette County Public Schools on matters related to higher education. This opportunity was offered to Dr. Sims as a result of his previous work with the school system on their Equity Council.

- **Abby Helton**, Assistant Professor and Department Chair for Accounting, gave her students a glimpse of the accounting world through a series of lectures and presentations in February. They included a visit from Matthew Bowen, of Robert Half, who talked about current issues in accounting. Olivia Davis from Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) gave an overview
of what it is like to be an auditor in a public accounting firm. Students also attended a CPA Exam workshop hosted by the KY Society of CPAs. These supplemental opportunities were well-received by the accounting students. Ms. Helton plans to continue providing access to outside training each quarter.

- Dr. Mohamed Abualhaija has been awarded the title of Associate Professor.
- Dr. James Maxwell has had two multiple-blind peer-reviewed manuscripts accepted for presentation and publishing in the conference proceedings of the 2017 Society for Advancement of Management International Business Conference. He has been an editorial reviewer for the Advanced Management Journal, which is a Society for Advancement of Management journal publication. SAM is the oldest management society in the world, having been established by Frederick Winslow Taylor, the father of Scientific Management.
- Abby Helton has been awarded the title of Assistant Professor.

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Sullivan University Center for Learning-Northern Kentucky

Dr. Victoria Berling, Director of the Northern Kentucky location, has provided an interesting write-up on the area’s history and how the Center for Learning ties into that history.

What’s with all those “forts”?

Sullivan University is no stranger to “forts,” thanks to its long presence in Fort Knox. Now Sullivan has its second “fort” location through the Center for Learning-Northern Kentucky in Fort Mitchell. Often, people unfamiliar with Northern Kentucky will mention the seeming abundance of “forts” in the area, referencing the cities of Fort Wright, Fort Thomas and Fort Mitchell. So with so many “forts” in Northern Kentucky, there must be a large military presence, right?
Not so. Fort Wright and Fort Mitchell neighbor each other and began as Civil War fortifications. They were part of an eight-mile defensive line that prevented the Confederate army from invading Cincinnati in 1862. In fact, the Confederates turned back without ever firing a shot. Fort Wright was named for Major General Horatio G. Wright, a Union engineer responsible for building these fortifications. Fort Mitchell was named for General Ormsby Mitchel (with one “l”), who was a professor of mathematics, philosophy, and astronomy at Cincinnati College (now University of Cincinnati). He also played a role in the design of the fortifications.

Apart from the Civil War, however, neither city has ever been an active military base.

Also named for a Civil War Union General, George Thomas, Fort Thomas, on the other hand, thrived as a military base after the Civil War. It was a busy recruitment and mobilization point during the Spanish-American War and now is home to the 478th Engineer Battalion (a reserve unit) and a small office of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

What Northern Kentucky lacks in active military presence is made up for in support and pride for local veterans. According to Kentucky Veterans Affairs, there are approximately 35,000 veterans in Northern Kentucky. Local and state data indicate these veterans are more likely to be unemployed and less likely to have a college degree than the general population. That’s why the staff of the Center for Learning-Northern Kentucky actively participates in a variety of local events for veterans. This includes attending job and education fairs and making presentations about Sullivan University at veterans-serving organizations. Veterans are welcome and encouraged to apply at the Center for Learning in Northern Kentucky.

And other exciting news:

- Sullivan University recently received a favorable mention in an editorial about Sigma Beta Delta in the River City News, Northern Kentucky’s daily newspaper.
Here are some of the latest happenings with the Online team:

- Dr. Anthony Piña, Associate Provost and Distinguished Lecturer and Barry Sanford, Senior Instructional Design and Adjunct Instructor, published an article titled, “The ID Database: Managing the Instructional Development Process” that will be published in Volume 61 of Tech Trends, a peer-reviewed journal. Dr. Piña was also lead editor of the recent peer-reviewed book, “Beyond the Online Course: Leadership Perspectives on e-Learning.”

- Sullivan University Online, the College of Business Administration, and the Sullivan University Library are partnering on a pilot to embed a librarian in online courses. Librarian Nathan Ragland will collaborate with Dr. Terry Kibiloski and Robert Metry, providing library services to their online students.

- Dr. Anthony Piña received a Distinguished Service Award for service as President of the Division of Distance Learning of the Association for Educational Communications & Technology (AECT), the leading international professional association for instructional design and technology in higher education.

- The Instructional Design & Technology Team (Cassandra Black, Jeff Corkran, Cathy Crick, Diane Curtis, Kathleen Decker, Krista Lyons, Peggy Muller and Barry Sanford), completed the conversion of more than 110 online Sullivan Graduate School courses from the ANGEL platform to the new Blackboard Platform. All graduate courses will be taught in Blackboard during spring quarter. Over 400 undergraduate courses from Sullivan University, Spencerian College and Sullivan College of Technology & Designer, are currently undergoing conversion to begin deployment in Blackboard during summer quarter.
Louisville Campus

Exciting things are happening at the Louisville campus! Here are a few of them:

- Dr. Sarah Lawrence will be co-presenting a webinar entitled “Polypharmacy: What Is It and What Do We Do About It?” on March 13rd. She will discuss the use of multiple medications in the treatment of older adults with dementia and memory impairment.

- Librarians George Bergstrom, Christi Osterday, and Nathan Ragland will give a presentation entitled “Reconnecting with Our Patrons: a Confluence of Efforts by One University Library to Rebuild Its Marketing Efforts from Scratch” and a poster entitled “How Do We Measure Up: the Confluence of Marketing Methodologies” at the 2017 KLA/SLA Joint Spring Conference on March 30th. Their work was funded by a Sullivan University Faculty Research Grant.

System-Wide

New Academic Leadership at the University

Sullivan University has welcomed a new Provost, Dr. Diana Lawrence.

Dr. Lawrence comes to Sullivan University with 26 years of experience in higher education administration. She has served in roles such as Vice President, Chief Academic Officer, Dean, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Director of Career Services, Registrar, and Faculty. Earlier in her career, Dr. Lawrence served as a Vice President, Academic Affairs Specialist for Education Management Corporation (EDMC) where she led the academic efforts required to estab-
lish new campuses. In this role, she successfully implemented the academic requirements of national and regional accrediting bodies, to include SACSCOC.

Dr. Lawrence holds a Doctor of Education (D.Ed.) in Higher Education (Leadership) from Nova Southeastern University. Her office is located in the new administrative office suite on the Sullivan University Louisville campus.

Dr. Lawrence grew up in Kentucky on a farm and has a deep affinity for horses. Along with her husband and Bengal cats, Dr. Lawrence is excited to join Sullivan University and become a member of the Louisville community.

### Academic Titles

As you may have noted in this edition of *Academic Accolades*, several faculty members have been promoted into new academic titles. If you wish to petition for an academic title change yourself, begin by discussing the matter with your Dean or Director. She or he will provide you with the Petition for *Academic Title Change Form*, on which you can make your case for the new title. Once it is completed, give it to your Dean or Director, who will then pass it on to the Academic Title Committee.

Please note that the committee meets twice a year, in January and July. The deadline for consideration of your petition at the next meeting is **Monday, July 10th**.

Faculty of the Sullivan University College of Pharmacy follow a different procedure when petitioning for an academic title change. If you are a SUCOP faculty member, please consult the Constitution and Bylaws of the Faculty of The Sullivan University College of Pharmacy.
QEP Is in Full Bloom in the Spring Quarter. Check out all of the activities and assessments where students earn grades and I CARE points:

Career Exploration Activity with Career Coach
- Career Development Inventory (CDI) Parts I and II Pretest
- Career Development Inventory (CDI) Parts I and II Posttest

USA Funds Life Skills Pretest in Survey Monkey

USA Funds Life Skills Module #1
- USA Funds Life Skills Module #2
- Wonderlic Basic Skills Test Pretest
- Wonderlic Basic Skills Test Posttest
- Programmatic Portfolios - in every Associate level program
- Communication Activities
- Resume and Mock Interviews

We also had our first QEP dress down day. Remember those t-shirts don't come cheap. You must earn them. To get a QEP t-shirt you must be on the QEP committee or be a part of the team implementing the activities and assessments to Put CARE Back Into Career!

The QEP had its first dress down day.
For this installment of “Five Questions For…”, we interviewed Christian Castro, a faculty member at the College of Pharmacy. Christian is a new educator, having begun his educational career here in August of 2016. At SUCOP, he teaches Biochemistry, Medicinal Chemistry, Biotechnology and Medical Spanish, and his areas of interest include Molecular biology, virology, and cancer.

1. Where are you from originally? Where did you attend school?
   
   I was born in Colombia, South America. I got a bachelor’s degree in chemistry, also in Colombia. Then got a PH.D. in biochemistry at Baylor University in Texas, then I got a Pharm.D. at Wilkes University in Pennsylvania.

2. How did you originally get into education? What was your motivation?

   I have always been involved in education either as a student or in a job, so for me becoming a teacher was the logical next step.
3. What do you like the most about teaching? What do you find the most challenging?

The most I like is the interaction with the students. The most challenging is how to present some material in a way that is interesting to the students. Making the subject relevant to their career is the most difficult part; however, I have found that I am getting better at it as time goes by and I take notes from other teachers.

4. Do you have any heroes or role models in education or the health sciences?

My hero and someone that I would like to model my career on is Marie Roke-Thomas, a Professor at Wilkes. Besides the fact that she knew her subject and presented it very well, it was what she did out of the classroom that has impacted me more. She really cared for the students. She is one of those people who makes an effort to get to know you, even being as busy as she is. We still keep in touch and I consider her one of my good friends.

5. What hobbies or interests do you have in your off time?

In my off time I like to play with my two sons (6 and 11 years old). I also like to exercise outdoors and participate in triathlon races.
Plugged In With SUS IT

By Michael Runner, MSM
Application Support Analyst, Sullivan University System

The Sullivan University System (SUS) IT Department is excited to announce Windows 10 will be available for use by all staff and faculty in the near future! Windows 10 Enterprise is Microsoft’s latest and greatest operating system (OS), and it effectively represents a whole new generation of Microsoft. Microsoft’s newest OS unlocks fresh capabilities for SUS employees to work, connect, and collaborate like never before. Some of the exciting benefits included with Windows 10 are:

- **Microsoft Edge**: Touted by some as the fastest web browser on the market, Edge has been turning heads and making waves since its initial launch. Edge has many great and innovative features, including improved security, reading mode, and page annotation which allows you to add notes to live webpages.

- **Improved Multitasking**: Windows 10 will introduce an advanced quadrant layout, allowing you to open, view, and work in four applications simultaneously all on one screen.

- **Cortana**: Microsoft’s answer to Siri, Cortana is an extraordinarily powerful desktop search engine. Cortana’s power stems from the fact that it’s integrated with the Operating System, it’s extensible, and it supports natural, spoken language. It’s a user-focused feature and its purpose is to make sure you get the most out of Windows 10.

We hope you’re as excited as we are about the implementation of Windows 10 at SUS! Visit the IT Portal at [ITPortal.Sullivan.edu](ITPortal.Sullivan.edu) to stay abreast with the Windows 10 launch and all the latest technical news and updates.
Student Retention

New Challenges And A Surprising Old Solution

By James M. Kearfott, MSDR
Director of Student Retention for the Sullivan University System

Technology is here to stay in all of our classrooms regardless of the delivery method of those classes. A greater number of faculty are now teaching in live ground classes as well as online or blended classes. It is also not out of the realm of probability that, in the near future, all classes will be taught using a standardized Learning Management System, making the student experience similar whether taking the class in a classroom on campus or in a completely online environment. The challenges for the instruction and engagement of these students have been the subject of many articles over the past few years. The impact these challenges have on the University can and are having an impact on the percentages being dropped and/or withdrawing from the Sullivan University locations. It is reported, as stated by Dr. Piña, that Sullivan University’s persistence is better than the majority of online programs across the nation. This article is not to raise an alarm but to provide information, founded in research, that may help you consider how best to serve those you teach.

Universities that have moved into teaching on multiple platforms have put many tools in the hands of all learners in the hopes that students, by using the tools, will have success with their coursework. Tools like “UpSwing,” now available to all Sullivan University students, as well as a robust help desk for online learners are quality examples of the lengths provided to support student engagement. Will these tools, or others like them have the power to tip the balance and keep students in their programs?

Recent academic research suggests that, although these tools are good, it requires a stronger relationship between student and instructor to move that needle. Two studies that will be cited are “Barriers to blended digital distance vocational learning for non-traditional students,” published in the British Journal of Educational Technology, and “Factors of learner-instructor interaction which predict perceived learning outcomes in online learning environment,” from the Journal of Computer Assisted Learning.
Reading both of these studies, it was interesting to see that the issues facing many of the night school and online students are those facing individuals globally. It was also eye opening to read that one of the assumptions made about the Millennials that they are “digital natives,” and thus familiar with working with the computer, is not a certainty. The British study states “A number of studies illustrate that although students routinely use a range of digital and online technologies in their personal lives, they can be unprepared to use technologies for academic purposes (e.g., see Joint Information Systems Committee, 2008; Jones, Ramanau, Cross & Healing, 2010; Kvavik, 2010, Palaiologou, 2008; Self, 2010; Smith, Skrbis & Western, 2013)”.¹ This quote speaks to assumptions that might be made by instructors/professors about their classes and their technical abilities. Possible assumptions (speaking primarily about first and second year students):

- A student will know how to zip a PDF file
- A student will know how to attach a file
- A student will have the ability to type sufficiently to keep up with the expected work assigned

(The list could go on, but I believe the point is made.)

Having a probing discussion when working with students who may be demonstrating difficulty in fulfilling required functions in your class may uncover these weaknesses. Weaknesses that are observed in a face to face class environment can, in these cases, only be uncovered by asking open ended questions about a student’s ability.

The British study continues by dealing with a subject that all who have taught a night class should be familiar. These students had responsibilities beyond that of attending class. They chose this way to learn as the option so they could continue their employment, feed their families, deal with other life activities pulling at their time, and still strive for their academic goal. The study adds one more powerful element added to those factors mentioned and one that, it is suggested, most don’t consider. That is the feeling of isolation caused by the volume and or rigor of the work. The feelings of frustration, usually shared with peers in a ground based class, now escalate. The study states, “This ‘cognitive overload’ is a key factor in poor retention, particularly within the first few weeks of the start of a course; greater levels of persistence and completion can be achieved if students are supported to ‘anticipate, prepare for, recognize and recover from the cognitive burden they may experience as first time e-learners.”¹
It cannot be assumed that students under this kind of stress will automatically reach out for the help provided by the University. All of these great tools made available cannot have an impact if they are not used. Who then has the ability to impact a student like no other? Both studies make it clear that it is the individual instructor who builds a good educational relationship with the student who has that power.

The keys suggested here are the answers to two questions:

- How much do you know about your classes beyond the surface that might be causing issues with students’ success?
- What level of action are you willing to take to help the students in your class find a way to bridge the gaps dealing with the circumstances you uncover? (Not lowering your academic standards but helping them find the path.)

The second study cited and published in the *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning* stated the following as the outcome of their research. “Specifically, presence of instructor significantly predicted learners’ perceived satisfaction in this study, so it was found that presence of instructor during learner-instructor interaction could be an important predictor on learners; perceived satisfaction in an online learning environment.”

The power of the student teacher relationship, it is suggested, is more important in the blended and online academic environment than might be suggested by the thought of online learning. The majority of these students may not need and may be self-confident enough to survive in the online arena but it cannot be said for everyone. Sullivan University and the “I CARE” mantra makes the statement that we stand out from the crowd. That difference is exampled each class at a time. In this author’s experience, the Sullivan University faculty have always been up for the challenge.

References


Academic Council Highlights

By

Nick Riggs

As chair of the Academic Council, I am pleased to write another edition of *Academic Council Highlights (ACH)*. The goal of *ACH* is to keep faculty and other interested parties informed, on a quarterly basis, about the workings of the Academic Council (Council) and matters it addresses.

We are entering a new era at Sullivan with the selection of Dr. Diana Lawrence as our new Provost. We warmly welcome her to the university and extend to her our best wishes for success.

As the chief academic officer of the university, Dr. Lawrence will guide the faculty and others into the future. With that in mind, I asked her to respond to some questions that would shed light on her views on faculty matters and the role of the Council. Here are the questions posed to her and her responses:

◊ **As the new Provost, how do you feel about your first few weeks at Sullivan?**

In the 26+ years working in higher education, I have been privileged to work with many talented and passionate people. However, I have to say that the Sullivan University System and its employees are in a league of their own. The commitment to our students and the pursuit of excellence are not only visible in day-to-day activities, but in the long-term outcomes as well. Over the next few months, I will be absorbing as much information as possible and look for ways to improve our processes and, in turn, our infrastructure to support our team,
the students and our institutional effectiveness.

◊ **As the new Provost, what did you know coming in and what have you learned about Sullivan’s faculty?**

   Through many “Getting to Know You” meetings, the commitment to student outcomes, assessment and continuous improvement is a consistent message.

◊ **What have been some of your past experiences with faculty at previous institutions?**

   I have always been very hands-on in my approach, which should not be confused with micro-managing. However, from my perspective, to *know* an institution is to know and understand its faculty. The entire staff (Admissions, Campus Safety, Career Services, Enrollment Services, Financial Planning, Student Services, etc.) provides essential activities and support, but the success of an educational institution begins in the classroom.

◊ **How would you characterize the expected relationship between a Provost and the faculty she leads?**

   My expected relationship can be summed up by a quote from Vala Afshar, “We are not a team because we work together. We are a team because we respect, trust, and care for each other.”

◊ **Generally, what is your view on the role of faculty in matters relating to institutional governance?**

   The Academic Council ensures that faculty has participation in the institution’s governance. The Provost and the Academic Council must collaborate to foster an environment of continuous improvement.
Do you believe that the structure of Sullivan’s Academic Council is an appropriate mechanism for SU faculty to be effectively engaged in institutional governance?

Yes, the Academic Council is an appropriate mechanism. As a representative of the entire faculty, the Academic Council provides a faculty perspective on important issues and provides suggestions and recommendations to the Provost, as well as promotes communication from the Provost to the faculty.

At this early stage, do you have any suggestions for building on the relationship that presently exists between faculty and the administration, whether through the Academic Council or via other means?

Throughout my career, I have found that the key to a successful relationship is to listen and truly “hear” and understand the perspective of the other. Communication must flow in both directions. Through effective listening and collaboration, all things can be accomplished. I do not believe in change for the sake of change. However, I do agree that all systems and units must be evaluated on a continuous basis and that flexible relationships are the key to effective change in today’s environment. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus (c. 535 – c. 475 BC) is quoted as saying, "change is the only constant in life."

In conclusion, rest assured that the Council has lively debate and discussion at all meetings and regularly sends important matters to the Provost for consideration and requested action. With that in mind, please don’t hesitate to send me an item for Council deliberation at nriggs@sullivan.edu. The Academic Council is here to serve you!

Submitted 03/01/2017
New Day Student Registration (Louisville and Lexington) ........................................ March 22, 2017
New Night Student Registration ................................................................. March 22, 2017
New Housing Student Registration .......................................................... March 22, 2017
New Student Orientation – Graduate (Lexington) .................................... March 22, 2017
New Student Orientation – Undergraduate (Lexington) ............................ March 23, 2017
Late Registration ....................................................................................... March 25, 2017
First day of classes ................................................................................... March 27, 2017
Last day that a student can enter an online class ..................................... March 30, 2017
International Orientation (Louisville and Lexington) ............................... March 31, 2017
Last day students can engage in an online class ...................................... April 2, 2017
QEP Committee Meeting, Louisville (2:00-3:00, Room 121) ................. April 4, 2017
QEP Committee Meeting, Lexington (2:00-3:00, Conference Room) ...... April 5, 2017
Last day that a student can enter a day class* ....................................... April 4, 2017
Last day that a student can enter an evening or weekend class .............. April 6, 2017
Academic Council Meets (2:00, Room 121, Louisville Campus) .......... April 13, 2017
Graduate School Event with Becker (Louisville Campus) ....................... April 18, 2017
International/Hybrid Weekend (Louisville and Lexington) ................. March 31-April 1, 2017
International/Hybrid Weekend (Louisville and Lexington) ................. April 28-29, 2017
Academic Council Meets (2:00, Room 121, Louisville Campus) ......... May 18, 2017
International/Hybrid Weekend (Louisville and Lexington) ................. May 19-20, 2017
Master's Monday (Louisville Campus, 6:00-8:00 PM) ......................... May 22, 2017
Last day that a student can withdraw and still receive a “W” ................ May 26, 2017
Lexington Faculty In-service (10:00 AM, Oak Room) ......................... June 9, 2017
Summer Break ......................................................................................... June 12-23, 2017
First Day of Spring 2017 classes ............................................................. June 26, 2017

Note: For night/weekend classes, a roster will be placed in the instructor’s mailbox on each
day of his or her class and that same roster with signatures is to be returned to Enrollment
Services after each class by the instructor.
SACSCOC (STILL) MATTERS:
An ongoing column addressing compliance issues

Federal Requirements: 4.1 - 4.9

By
Charles Brown
Dean, University Libraries

In a column many quarters ago, I discussed the principle of complementarity between some SACSCOC Core Requirements (CR) and some Comprehensive Standards (CS). In so doing, I formulated the following table which details CR cross references to others of the approximately 100 SACSCOC standards.

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I had gathered these cross references from the SACSCOC Resource Manual (RM), which provides cross-referenced correlation between standards regardless of their designation as a “Core Requirement” [CR], a “Comprehensive Standard” [CS], or a Federal Requirement [FR].

As you may remember from past columns, the three distinct categories of SACSCOC standards are uniquely enumerated, ostensively, because each category IS unique, but it also permits each category of standards to be readily identified, viz.: CR numbering begins with a two (e.g., 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, etc.); CS numbering begins with a three (3.1, etc.); and, FR numbering begins with a four (4.1, etc.). Unlike many accreditors’ standards, this stratification sui generis to SACSCOC.

SACSCOC states that “Accreditation is a higher education self-regulatory mechanism that plays a significant role in fostering public confidence in the educational enterprise and student learning, in maintaining minimum standards, and in enhancing institutional effectiveness. It also serves as a means by which institutions recognize and accept one another.”

http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Guidelines%20for%20Addressing%20Distance%20and%20Correspondence%20Education.pdf

This begs several beguiling questions: why do Federal Requirements exist and what are Federal Requirements and how – if at all – do they differ from a Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards?

WHY?

As Paul L. Gaston notes in his recently published book, Higher Education Accreditation: How it’s changing, why it must (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC, 2014), several pieces of “landmark legislation” have predicated accreditors as quasi-governmental gatekeepers for institutions wishing to access sine qua non Title IV funds: the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (AKA “The GI Bill”); the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 which funds NDEA fellowships and college loans; and, the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, renewed
several times – most recently in 2008 (NOTE: Current authorization for HEA programs expired at the end of 2013, but has been extended through 2015 while Congress prepares changes and amendments), which established additional review of accredited institutions in order for receipt of Title IV funds. HEA (1965) was intended “to strengthen the educational resources of our colleges and universities and to provide financial assistance for students in postsecondary and higher education.” Paramountly, this law authorized Title IV funds, which are the indispensable fiscal life-blood of many higher education institutions.

As Gaston observes:

*Title IV, one part of the Higher Education Act of 1965, authorizes the distribution of federal financial aid in higher education. Having defined the purpose of Title IV as the extension of “the benefits of postsecondary education to eligible students,” the law identifies five approaches: federal Pell Grants; “supplemental educational opportunity grants to those students who demonstrate financial need”; payments to states “to assist them in making financial aid available”; “providing assistance to institutions of higher education”; and, perhaps most notable, the “trio” of “special programs and projects designed to (a) identify and encourage qualified youths with financial or cultural need with a potential for postsecondary education, (b) prepare students from low-income families for postsecondary education, and (c) provide remedial (including remedial language study) and other services to students” (Sec. 400 [20 U.S.C. 1070]. There are now eight such programs, rather than three, but “Trio” survives as the collective designation. To avoid the necessity of creating a new bureaucracy or further burdening an existing one, the law provided that accrediting organizations recognized by the USDE would determine eligibility for such funds. Hence, if their students are to be eligible for federal student aid under Title IV, programs and institutions must be accredited by a recognized agency.*

**WHAT?**

Both the SACSCOC Resource Manual and the SACSCOC Handbook for Institutions Seeking Re-affirmation (but not the SACSCOC Principles) provide the following definition of Federal Requirements:
However, the SACSCOC Principles, do provide a multi-paragraph, explanatory introduction to each subset of CR/CS/FR standards. The following three paragraphs constitute SACSCOC verbatim introduction to the Federal Requirements section of the Principles:

The U.S. Secretary of Education recognizes accreditation by SACS Commission on Colleges in establishing the eligibility of its accredited institutions to participate in programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, as amended, and other federal programs. Federal statutes include mandates that the Commission review an institution in accordance with criteria outlined in the federal regulations developed by the U.S. Department of Education. As part of the review process, institutions are required to document compliance with those criteria responding to federal mandates and the Commission is obligated to consider such compliance when the institution is reviewed for initial membership or continued accreditation.

Application of the Requirements. The Commission on Colleges bases its accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions and entities on requirements in the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement. These requirements apply to all institutional programs and services, wherever located or however delivered. This includes programs offered through distance and correspondence education, and at off-campus instructional sites and branch campuses. Consequently, when preparing documents for the Commission demonstrating compliance with the Principles of Accreditation, an institution must include these sites and programs in its “Institutional Summary Form Prepared for Commission Reviews” and address them in its analysis and documentation of compliance. (See Commission policy “Distance and Correspondence Education.”)

The Requirement of a Policy. Implicit in every Federal Requirement mandating a policy or procedure is the expectation that the policy or procedure is in writing and has been approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and imple-
mented and enforced by the institution. At the time of review, an institution will be ex-
pected to demonstrate that it has met all of the above elements. If the institution has
had no cause to apply its policy, it should indicate that an example of implementation is
unavailable because there has been no cause to apply it. (See Commission best practic-
es, “Developing Policy and Procedures Documents.”)

Of the major regional U.S. accreditors, SACSCOC is the only one who parses its standards into
a discrete and consciously identifiable Federal Requirements section. Many of these DOE-
mandated requirements emanate from part 34 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR),
which deals with EDUCATION, such as: 34 CFR 602, which delineates THE [DOE] SECRETARY’S
RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITING AGENCIES. The Code of Federal Regulations constitutes the
codification of the general and permanent rules and regulations (sometimes called administra-
tive law) as published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of
the federal government of the United States. The CFR is divided into 50 titles that represent
broad areas subject to federal regulation.

Apparently, the other regional accreditors, which DO address these topics, incorporate any
such DOE-mandated strictures into their respective existing standards’s algorithms. The
SACSCOC Federal Requirement comprise standard 4.1 - 4.9, and cover the following topics:

⇒ FR 4.1 (Student achievement)
⇒ FR 4.2 (Program curriculum)
⇒ FR 4.3 (Publication of policies)
⇒ FR 4.4 (Program length)
⇒ FR 4.5 (Student complaints)
⇒ FR 4.6 (Recruitment materials)
⇒ FR 4.7 (Title IV program responsibilities)
⇒ FR 4.8 (Distance and correspondence education)
  • 4.8.1 (identity of a student who participates in class or coursework)
  • 4.8.2 (written procedure for protecting the privacy of students)
  • 4.8.3 (written procedure distributed at the time of registration or enrollment that
    notifies students of any projected additional student charges)
⇒ FR 4.9 (Definition of credit hours)
However, based on one of my prior years’ SACSCOC on-site assignment sheets, the following CR/CS standards also possess a DOE-mandated review component:

2.8 The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs. (Faculty)

2.10 The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. (Student Support Services)

3.2.8 The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience, competence, and capacity to lead the institution. (Qualified administrative/academic officers)

3.3.1 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 educational support services
3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission, if appropriate

3.4.3 The institution publishes admissions policies that are consistent with its mission. (Admissions policies)

3.4.11 For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. (Academic program coordination)

3.10.3 The institution audits financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. (Financial aid audits)

3.11.3 The institution operates and maintains physical facilities, both on and off
campus, that appropriately serve the needs of the institution’s educational programs, support services, and other mission-related activities. (Physical facilities)

To achieve compliance, all FR’s must receive the same scrupulous attention as the CR’s and CS’s irrespective of the specific focus of their topic.

Anyone who has served on a SACSCOC onsite committee will also tell you that the Federal Requirements are one that committee members need to review in person while on site. These standards are often designated with an asterisk, e.g. *4.1. SACSCOC’s DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETION OF THE REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE: For Off-Site and On-Site Reaffirmation Committees delineate the protocols for use with these standards, viz.:

Protocol 3 – Standards Preceded by an Asterisk: All standards marked with an asterisk must be reviewed on site regardless of the judgment rendered by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee. The function of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee is to make an informed independent judgment regarding compliance.

a. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee finds compliance for standards with asterisks and the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee also finds compliance. The narrative of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee will be retained in the final report substantially as originally written. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee conducts its review in accord with Commission practices, enhances the narrative only if needed and adds the following macro: “The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviewed documents and conducted interviews in support of the institution’s case for compliance and affirms the findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee.”
b. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee finds compliance for standards with asterisks but the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee finds non-compliance. The narrative of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee will be retained in the final report substantially as originally written; the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee conducts its review in accord with Commission practices, adds its findings and documentation, and then states its recommendation.

c. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee finds non-compliance for standards with asterisks and the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee also finds non-compliance. The narrative of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee will be retained in the final report substantially as originally written; the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee conducts its review in accord with Commission practices, adds its findings and documentation, if needed, and then states its recommendation.

d. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee finds non-compliance for standards with asterisks and the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee finds compliance. The narrative of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee will be retained in the final report substantially as originally written. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee conducts its review in accord with Commission practices and adds its findings and documentation.

On the SACSCOC.org web page, the Commission posts an image file of its superannuated Criteria for Accreditation, 11th edition, 2nd printing, which were approved by the College Delegate Assembly on December 1984. The Criteria constituted the historical antecedents of the Principles of Accreditation. As such, one might review the Criteria Table of Contents for enumeration of any forerunners of the current Federal Requirements (there were none) as well as for the word “federal,” which appears in the fol-
ollowing prefaced statement:

*Statements throughout the Criteria which are bolded and italicized are criteria mandated by the 1992 Higher Education Amendments. Institutions participating in Title IV Programs are required to meet these criteria. If the federal government alters the regulations, the Commission will apply the criteria in accordance to changes in the regulations.*

So, then as now, the exigencies associated with disbursal of Title IV drives much of the feds’ involvement in higher education, particularly for for-profit universities. If I remember correctly, at the time of SU’s 2005 Compliance Certification report, only federal requirements 4.1 through 4.6 existed. That means FR 4.7, FR 4.8.1 - .3, and FR 4.9, see below, have been added since 2005, presumably to maintain federal control over the dynamics associated with higher education’s dramatic e-learning increase:

- FR 4.7 (Title IV program responsibilities)
- FR 4.8 (Distance and correspondence education)
  - 4.8.1 (identity of a student who participates in class or coursework)
  - 4.8.2 (written procedure for protecting the privacy of students)
  - 4.8.3 (written procedure distributed at the time of registration or enrollment that notifies students of any projected additional student charges)
- FR 4.9 (Definition of credit hours)

Accordingly, I asked the university’s SACSCOC VP at the 2015 SACSCOC conference if/when SACSCOC anticipated adding any new Federal Requirements (such as FR 4.10). She did not have a definite answer, although we all agreed that federal oversight of higher education appears to be racketing up in advance of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act precipitating SACSCOC’s own review its *Principles of Accreditation*. Timeline for that Project: Review by the Principles Review Committee and the Membership of any proposed changes: March 1, 2016- through March 1, 2017; Review and adoption by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees: June 2017; review and final vote of adoption by the member institutions of SACSCOC: December 2017 during the Annual Meeting.
The creation of the new federal requirements applicable to all DOE-recognized accredi-
tors went into effect on July 1st, 2011 and the more recent “gainful employment/public
disclosure” issues effective in 2014. A useful source for additional insights is the Coun-
cil for Higher Education Accreditation’s Federal Update Newsletters (http://
www.chea.org/Government/index.asp#FedUpdate), such as these following from last
year (2015):

CHEA Federal Update Newsletter
- **Number 50, November 16, 2015**
  U.S. Department of Education announces agenda of transparency and outcomes for
  accrediting organizations and reports on other federal issues.
- **Number 49, October 8, 2015**
  Senators Bennet, Rubio introduce bill to create alternative to accreditation and re-
  ports on other federal issues.
- **Number 48, July 9, 2015**
  Reports on CHEA 2015 Summer Workshop, recent Senate HELP Committee hearing,
  National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) meeting
  and other federal issues.
- **Number 47, March 13, 2015**
  CHEA sends letters supporting higher education regulatory relief bills in the U.S.
  House of Representatives and Senate and updates on other federal issues.
- **Number 46, January 13, 2015**
  USDE releases framework for college ratings system and updates on other federal is-
  sues.

In its *Resource Manual*, SACSCOC includes APPENDIX C, which contains the following evalu-
ators’ *Guidelines for Addressing Distance and Correspondence Education*

For purposes of this essay, interestingly, this covers Federal Requirements as it “provides as-
sistance for committee members when preparing to serve as evaluators of distance and corre-
spondence education. It should be used in conjunction with the *Principles of Accreditation*, the *Resource Manual*, and the *Handbook for Peer Evaluators* as well as the Commission policy “Distance and Correspondence Education.” It is divided into four sections, one of which provides the following potentially insightful expectations and follow-on questions exercise:

**Federal Requirements**

**Expectation 1:** The institution is expected to provide distance education students with processes by which they can submit complaints.

Questions: Do distance education students know how they may file a complaint and receive feedback on resolution of the complaint?

Is there a process by which a distance education student may file a complaint and receive response within a reasonable time is provided to the student upon registration?

Does documentation exist indicating that institutions are responsive to student complaints and to resolving the complaint within a reasonable time period?

**Expectation 2:** All recruitment materials accurately represent the institution’s practices and policies.

Questions: Who is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of materials used for the recruitment of students? What is the process for maintaining accuracy?

Are recruitment materials accurate?

**Expectation 3:** An institution that offers distance or correspondence education demonstrates that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or programs is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using such methods as (1) a secure login and pass code,

(2) proctored examinations, or (3) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

Questions: What are the methods used by the institution to verify student
identity?

Are the methods adequate and effective?

**Expectation 4:** The institution has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or program.

Questions: What is the procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in these courses? Is the procedure adequate and effective?

**Expectation 5:** The institution has a written procedure distributed at the time of registration or enrollment that notifies students of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity (if a charge is assessed).

Questions: What is the procedure for notifying students regarding additional student charges associated with such verification? Where is it written and how is the student notified? What is the timing of notification?

I hope these insights into this particular grouping of Federal Requirements have been helpful. If you have questions, kindly let me know.
THE ACADEMIC ILLUMINATOR

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The Academic Illuminator is an informational publication for faculty members at Sullivan University. Issued before the start of each academic quarter, the Illuminator covers topics such as news and events of interest to faculty, policy changes, compliance with regulatory bodies, the ongoing process of accreditation, the activities of the Academic Council, and upcoming events. Back issues of the Academic Illuminator can be found at http://library.sullivan.edu/archives/sulou_illuminator.asp.

Questions, comments, requests for article coverage, and article submissions may be sent to editor Nathan Ragland, at nragland@sullivan.edu.

NOTES TO THE FACULTY

- Please remember to submit your gradebooks at the close of every quarter. Timely submission of gradebooks is mandatory for all instructors. This may not seem to be an important task, but it is critical. Every gradebook needs to be in the gradebook repository in order to meet Department of Education regulations on the matter.

- Reminder: Employees and students at Sullivan University must wear their identification badges at all times. NCHS students who have their names embroidered on their uniforms are exempt from this policy while wearing said uniforms.