

Basic Information

1. Name of concentration(s): NAME
Degree: DEGREE
Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP): CIP
2. Faculty contributing to this self-study: (list faculty here)
3. Catalog description: DESCRIPTION

Previous Program Review

4. Completed: YEAR
5. Feedback from review: FEEDBACK
6. Improvement plans or action items from previous program review
ITEMS
7. Progress on goals/recommendations from previous review:
(How has the AOC responded to feedback or recommendations from the previous review? What progress has been made towards goals set in previous review or effectiveness reports? Provide evidence of goal attainment, when possible. If goals have not been met, briefly explain why.)

Student Learning Outcomes and Curricular Requirements

8. Program student learning outcomes:
ALC
9. Evidence that the student learning outcomes are appropriate for a bachelor's degree in the discipline:
(Compare and briefly discuss the alignment of these student learning outcomes with recommendations from academic associations or outcomes from similar programs at other institutions. Based on this comparison, are you comfortable that your concentration's outcomes are appropriate for a bachelor's degree in the discipline? Will a student who has attained these outcomes be prepared for employment or continuing education? Note that your outcomes are NOT expected to completely mirror those from outside sources – feel free to highlight any of your concentration's exceptional outcomes.)
10. Curricular requirements, as listed in the Catalog:
ACTIVITY
ACTIVITY
ACTIVITY
ACTIVITY
ACTIVITY
ACTIVITY
ACTIVITY
ACTIVITY
ACTIVITY

Total number of required units listed: #

11. Alignment of curricular requirements with student learning outcomes:

[CURRICULUMMAP](#)

12. Evidence that the curricular requirements are appropriate for a bachelor's degree in the discipline:

(Compare and briefly discuss the alignment of these curricular requirements with recommendations from academic associations or requirements from similar programs at other institutions. Based on this comparison, are you comfortable with the breadth and depth of your curricular requirements? Are you comfortable with the number of units required in this concentration? Are you confident that students in this concentration can graduate within four years? Note that your requirements are NOT expected to completely mirror those from outside sources – feel free to highlight any of your concentration's exceptional requirements)

Student Learning Outcomes and Curricular Requirements for Joint Concentration

13. Student learning outcomes for joint concentration:

[SLOs](#)

14. Curricular requirements for the joint concentration, as listed in the Catalog:

[ACTIVITY](#)

[ACTIVITY](#)

[ACTIVITY](#)

[ACTIVITY](#)

[ACTIVITY](#)

[ACTIVITY](#)

Total number of required units listed: #

Evidence of Student Learning and Program Improvement

15. The following documents provide evidence of program assessment and improvement:

[LINK TO 2013-15 EFFECTIVENESS REPORT](#)

[LINK TO 2015-17 EFFECTIVENESS REPORT](#)

[LINK TO CURRENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN](#)

Capacity, Viability, and Resources

Instructional workload data:

[Insert workload data \(trends in course enrollment, advisees, theses sponsored, graduates\)](#)

16. Based on the data provided above, reflect on the capacity and viability of the concentration

(Capacity: Based on current resources and enrollment trends, do you believe the concentration will be able to continue to meet institutional demand for courses, advising, and service? Viability: Based on enrollment trends at NCF or trends in enrollment in this discipline at other institutions, briefly discuss student demand for courses offered by this concentration)

17. Evaluate the adequacy of current resources within the concentration. For any resources identified as inadequate, outline steps the AOC will take to reach adequacy:

Resource	Adequate?	Comments / Next Steps:
Staffing (instructional and non-instructional)	Y/N	(insert any comments or next steps here)
Facilities / space	Y/N	(insert any comments or next steps here)
Equipment / technology	Y/N	(insert any comments or next steps here)
Library and information resources	Y/N	(insert any comments or next steps here)
Resources to enhance student learning	Y/N	(insert any comments or next steps here)
Other (identify in comments)	Y/N	(insert any comments or next steps here)

Program Contribution to Institutional Strategic Plan (Achievements / Points of Distinction / High-Impact Practices)

The following responses indicate how the concentration contributes to the [2018-28 NCF Strategic Plan](#).

18. List some notable accomplishments of students or faculty in the concentration [Strategic Plan 1(a)(iii)]

Faculty Accomplishments:

1. List a few notable accomplishments in recent years
2. You may want to refer to the FAAR dashboard
- 3.

Student Accomplishments:

1. List a few notable accomplishments in recent years
- 2.
- 3.

19. Identify the concentration's points of distinction [Strategic Plan 1(a)(iii) and 2(b)(ii)]

(In (9) and (12) you discussed the alignment of your concentration's outcomes and curriculum with those of other schools or academic associations. In this response, briefly describe any points of distinction of your concentration. Why should a student choose to attend NCF for this concentration? What comparative advantages does this program offer over similar programs at other schools? What "cutting-edge pedagogical practices" or innovations does this concentration offer?)

20. Does this concentration require or encourage students to participate in high-impact practices? [Strategic Plan 2(b)(iii)]

High-Impact Practice	AOC requirement?	Comments
Capstone Project: Completion of a semester-long senior project or thesis that is presented to faculty.	Required	All students are required to complete a thesis and baccalaureate exam
Internship: Completion of an internship (direct, supervised experience in a work setting) for academic credit.	Required? Encouraged?	(insert any comments here)
Study Abroad: Completion of at least one unit of study outside the U.S.	Required? Encouraged?	(insert any comments here)
Writing-Enhanced Course: Completion of a WEC that offers multiple, well-scaffolded formal and informal writing assignments that target specific writing outcomes and allow multiple opportunities for revision. WEC instructors attend professional development seminars facilitated by the Writing Program.	Required? Encouraged?	(insert any comments here)
Living-Learning Communities: Common intellectual experience through themed housing and co-curricular activities.	Required? Encouraged?	(insert any comments here)
Undergraduate Research: Externally-funded faculty research with active undergraduate student participation	Required? Encouraged?	(insert any comments here)
First-Year Experience: Completion of a first-year program designed to help students transition from high school to New College through common academic and co-curricular experiences.	Required? Encouraged?	(insert any comments here)
Learning Community: Completion of a learning community, where groups of students integrate learning across two or more common classes	Required? Encouraged?	(insert any comments here)

Service Learning: Completion of a service learning course, in which students master learning outcomes by addressing real problems in the community.	Required? Encouraged?	(insert any comments here)
Collaborative Projects: Completion of a one-unit project-based experience in which collaboration is assessed for students working together to solve a problem or create a product.	Required? Encouraged?	(insert any comments here)

21. Identify other ways in which the concentration and its faculty contribute to the NCF Strategic Plan.
 (Include any actions that serve to help recruit students, keep them here four years, or make their degrees more valuable. Do faculty in this concentration provide courses that serve the needs of students in other concentrations? Do faculty offer popular LAC courses? Have faculty supported student recruitment efforts?)

Final Reflection

22. Reflect on the concentration's strengths and weaknesses:
 (What questions / challenges does the AOC face and what options and improvements are being considered?)
23. Identify any significant issues the concentration would like the external review team to address
 (Examples: curriculum, AOC requirements, interdisciplinary commitments, personnel issues, future directions)

Proposals – To be completed after external review

24. Based on this self-study and feedback from the external review, identify goals you would like the AOC to accomplish over the next 3-5 years to improve effectiveness. Propose how you work to accomplish each goal and identify the resources you would need.

Goals	Proposals	Required Resources
(Identify a goal for the next 3-5 years. After those 3-5 years, how will we know if this goal has been accomplished?)	(What changes or improvements could be made to accomplish this goal? Proposals could include changes to AOC requirements, student learning outcomes, ideas for new subdisciplines, interdisciplinary opportunities, pedagogical innovations. If it's not obvious, explain how the proposal will achieve the goal. What impact will the proposal (or goal attainment) have on the AOC mission, outcomes, curriculum, capacity, viability, or resources?)	(Identify any resources you would need to implement your proposal and accomplish this goal)
(goal)	(proposal)	(resources)

Proposals to address SACSCOC standards for academic governance, educational program content, and effectiveness:

1. Task the EPC with acceptance of academic program reviews for current areas of concentration. To do this, the EPC would review and vote to accept AOC program reviews (self-studies, external review reports, and response implementation plans). The EPC may also vote to endorse items from AOC response implementation plans.
2. Task the EPC to review and vote to endorse proposals for new undergraduate areas of concentration.
3. Task the EPC to review and vote to accept changes of status for AOCs (e.g., an AOC changing from a regular concentration to a special concentration)

Supporting materials: Page 4: NCF Regulation 4-2002 (Academic Program Review)
Pages 5-7: Florida Board of Governors Regulation 8.015 (Academic Program Review)
Page 8: General Process for External Academic Program Review
Pages 9-10: George Ruppeiner's letter to the faculty regarding SACS issues (5/15/2017)
Page 11: NCF Faculty Handbook 3.6.1 (Educational Policies Committee)
Page 11: Guidelines for Developing a New Undergraduate AOC (AAC draft 10/13/2017)

Background: To "emphasize the assessment of student learning outcomes and continuous program improvement," Florida Board of Governors regulation 8.015 requires all academic programs to be reviewed at least once every seven years. Results from these reviews are "expected to inform strategic planning, program development, and budgeting discussions at the university level and, when appropriate, at the state level."

To meet these requirements and expectations, NCF regulation 4-2002 explains that the "President, in consultation with the Provost, shall establish review procedures consistent with the Board of Governors Regulations." The NCF regulation also outlines the following components of a program review:

- a) A review of program mission/purpose and alignment with NCF mission & BOG Strategic Plan
- b) Program goals and objectiveness for teaching, research, service, and student learning
- c) Assessment, how assessment results are used for improvement, and sufficiency of resources

A document describing our *external* academic program review process outlines three major steps:

- 1) A self-study conducted by AOC faculty (to include a-c listed above plus additional information)
- 2) An external review report (based on materials sent to a reviewer and an on-campus visit)
- 3) Follow-up, in which:
 - a) AOC faculty meet with the Division Chair and Provost to discuss their reaction to the external review report and evaluate which recommendations require follow-up actions and what resources are needed
 - b) AOC faculty report to the Division Chair or Provost (12-17 months following the previous discussion) on actions taken or ongoing as a result of the review

Problem: While self-study and external review reports provide evidence that we're following the first two steps of our academic program review process¹, we have very little (if any) evidence of the follow-up.

- What evidence do we have that this program review process results in improvement (not just *change*)?
- What evidence do we have that this process informs our planning and budgeting discussions?

More importantly, our current external academic program review procedures do not produce evidence that faculty as a whole demonstrate responsibility for the curriculum at New College (a SACSCOC expectation)². As George Ruppeiner explains in the letter he wrote to faculty last May, we need to implement an *internal* program review process to accept current programs (AOCs), accept proposals for new programs, and accept proposals to change the status of AOCs (e.g. from a regular concentration to a special concentration).

Proposed solution: If no other aspect of our external program review process were changed, a faculty vote to accept each program review would provide at least a baseline level of evidence that faculty are responsible for the curriculum. Since the charge of the EPC is to consider "all matters affecting the academic program" (including curriculum) and to make "reports and recommendations concerning policy and programs," it seems clear that the EPC should be tasked with accepting program reviews for current areas of concentration and reviewing/endorsing proposals for new undergraduate areas of concentration.

EPC, in serving in this role, would not be charged with evaluating faculty performance, individual courses, or the effectiveness of an academic program. EPC would be charged with reviewing program review self-studies, external review reports, and AOC responses to those external review reports in order to accept that a program has completed its review and is engaged in the assessment of student learning and continuous program improvement. To link program reviews to institutional planning and budgeting processes, EPC would also have the ability to endorse plans proposed by AOC faculty in response to reports from external reviewers (e.g., EPC might endorse a plan to improve program quality that requires additional funding or staffing).

If the EPC accepts current concentrations, it makes sense for the EPC to also vote to accept proposals for new concentrations. The AAC has drafted guidelines for developing a new undergraduate AOC, including a list of documents that should be prepared for the proposal. The EPC could refine this process to ensure faculty across all three divisions and the Provost have a chance to evaluate proposals and provide meaningful feedback. A rough outline of one such process could be as follows:

¹ Even this evidence shows we're *unevenly* implementing the first step. A quick review of three self-studies found that only one had articulated some goals for teaching, research, and service. None had addressed alignment with the BOG Strategic Plan.

² SACSCOC (proposed) standards related to academic program review

10-4: The institution... (b) demonstrates that educational programs for which academic credit is awarded are approved consistent with institutional policy, and (c) places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.

9-1: Educational programs (a) embody a coherent course of study, (b) are compatible with the mission & goals of the institution

6-2b: For each program, the institution employs sufficient full-time faculty to ensure curriculum and program quality, integrity, and review.

- Step 1: Faculty who wish to propose a new undergraduate area of concentration (with assistance from staff) prepare the documents listed in the AAC's draft guidelines and submit them to the Provost's Office.
- Step 2: The Provost recognizes the proposal and forwards it to the Divisions for feedback. Divisions provide feedback during division meetings. EPC representatives from each division take notes and forward this feedback to the EPC.
- Step 3: EPC meets with faculty proposing the new AOC to review the proposal and ask questions. If the EPC votes to approve the proposal, it is forwarded to the Provost's Office for a final decision.

If the EPC votes to accept reviews for current concentrations and votes to accept (or approve) proposals for new concentrations, then the EPC should also vote to accept any proposals to change the status of current concentrations (from "regular" to special concentrations or vice versa). If the EPC served as the body to review and accept these proposal, it would give faculty another chance to demonstrate their responsibility for the curriculum. As a hypothetical example, the EPC may learn that an AOC wishing to convert to special status is doing so because of a lack of resources. The EPC may decide to simply accept the proposal or the EPC may decide to endorse a plan to allocate more resources to keep that discipline as a "regular" concentration. Either way, that information would flow to the Provost's Office and then to institutional planning and budgeting processes.

Improvements to Program Review Procedures:

While NCF regulation 4-2202 states the President, in consultation with the Office of the Provost, shall establish review procedures, faculty necessarily need to have deep involvement. If the EPC serves as the body to accept reviews of current and new AOCs, then the EPC would also serve as the primary source of feedback for current academic program review procedures as well as any proposed changes to those procedures. This could facilitate efforts to streamline program review and assessment processes and make them more meaningful and useful.

**NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA
REGULATIONS MANUAL**

CHAPTER 4 - Academic Affairs

4-2002 Academic Program Review

- (1) The Bachelor of Arts degree program at New College of Florida will be reviewed at an interval of no longer than seven years. The program review will ensure continuous program improvement. The President, in consultation with the Provost, shall establish review procedures consistent with Board of Governors Regulations.
- (2) The program review and continuous improvement process includes the following components:
 - (a) The review of the mission and purpose of the academic program within the context of the NCF mission and BOG's Strategic Plan;
 - (b) The establishment of teaching, research, service, and other program goals and objectives, including expected student learning outcomes; and
 - (c) An assessment of:
 1. how well the program goals/objectives are being met;
 2. how well students are achieving expected learning outcomes;
 3. how the results of these assessments are used for continuous program improvement; and
 4. the sufficiency of resources and support services to achieve the program goals/objectives.
 - (d) The College will electronically submit its program review Regulation to the Offices of Academic and Student Affairs. Thereafter, revisions and updates to the College's Regulation must be submitted to the Office of the Provost for review by December 15 of each academic year.

Authority: Article IX, Sec. 7, Fla. Constitution; Fla. Board of Governors Regulations 1.001 and 8.015

History: Adopted 05-12-12; Revised 02-24-17 (technical amendment)

8.015 Academic Program Review.

(1) Statement of Intent

- (a) Academic program review has a lengthy history in the State University System of Florida, as efforts have been made to periodically analyze how degree programs provide students with high quality education and preparation for success in our global economy. Well-aligned with regional and discipline-specific accreditation expectations, program review processes in the State University System must emphasize the assessment of student learning outcomes and continuous program improvement.
- (b) The Board of Governors (BOG) requires the periodic review of all academic degree programs in State universities at least once every seven years from the date of the preceding review or from the implementation date of new academic programs. Program reviews must document how individual academic programs are achieving stated student learning and program objectives within the context of the university's mission, as illustrated in the academic learning compacts for baccalaureate programs. The results of the program reviews are expected to inform strategic planning, program development, and budgeting decisions at the university level and, when appropriate, at the state level.
- (c) The Board of Governors supports the ongoing devolution of authority, campus-level decision making, and institutional accountability under the constitutional framework established by Floridians for their system of public universities. The Board also expects university and BOG personnel to ensure that program review processes and summary reports are of high quality and that they comply with the expectations outlined in Board of Governors and university regulations.

(2) Program Review Schedule

- (a) Each university must establish and maintain a schedule for submission of program review summary reports for every degree program.
- (b) Each university will ensure that each academic program is reviewed at least once every seven years from the preceding review for established programs. For new programs, a review must take place within seven years of the implementation date.
- (c) The Office of Academic and Student Affairs shall review each university's program review schedule to ensure that all programs receive sufficient review, with appropriate input from external experts, within each program's review schedule. In exceptional circumstances, institutions may request to negotiate a delay for sound business reasons (e.g., to align a review with a specialized accreditation cycle; to align reviews within like fields).

- (3) Program Review Policies and Procedures
- (a) Each university must establish and publish clearly defined policies and procedures for reviewing academic degree programs and for ensuring continuous program improvement.
 - (b) University policies and procedures must ensure that the program review and continuous improvement processes include the following components:
 1. The review of the mission(s) and purpose(s) of the program within the context of the university mission and the Board of Governors' Strategic Plan;
 2. The establishment of teaching, research, service, and other program goals and objectives, including expected outcomes, particularly in the area of student learning;
 3. An assessment of:
 - a. how well program goals/objectives are being met;
 - b. how well students are achieving expected learning outcomes;
 - c. how the results of these assessments are used for continuous program improvement; and
 - d. the sufficiency of resources and support services to achieve the program goals/objectives.
 4. For baccalaureate programs, a review of lower level prerequisite courses to ensure that the program is in compliance with State-approved common prerequisites and (if appropriate) a review of the limited access status of the program to determine if such status is still warranted.
 - (c) The Office of Academic and Student Affairs shall review all university program review policies and procedures.
 - (d) Each university must submit a current electronic version of its program review policies and procedures to be included in the Board of Governors Academic Program Review Database. Revisions and updates to university procedures must be submitted to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs for review by December 15th of each year.
- (4) Program Review Summary Reports
- (a) A program review summary report must be completed for every program review and must include the following components:
 1. The CIP/degree combinations for the program that is reviewed.
 2. An electronic copy of the current Academic Learning Compact for each reviewed baccalaureate program.
 3. An indicator identifying whether or not the program review was conducted in conjunction with any external reviews (e.g., accreditation reviews).
 4. The date of the last review of this program.
 5. A brief description of major changes made since the previous program review.

6. A summary of the current strengths of the program.
 7. A summary of the current weaknesses of the program.
 8. A summary of the recommendations and/or proposed action plans made as a result of the review.
 9. An official signature of the university provost that will verify that the program review included all of the processes outlined in this BOG regulation and was conducted according to approved university policies and procedures.
- (b) A copy of all full program review reports must be maintained at a campus location specified by the university provost.
- (5) Program Review Summary Report Submission
- Each university must provide its schedule for program review summary reports in a prescribed electronic format to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs by April 1, 2015. Thereafter, revisions and updates to the university's schedule should be submitted to the Office for approval by December 15 of each year of the cycle.
- (a) A program review summary report must be electronically submitted to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs during the year in which the summary report is scheduled for submission.
 - (b) The Board of Governors home Website will have a link to a secure Academic Program Review Web page that will contain a standardized Summary Report template. This form will be accessible by university program review administrators and will allow each university's program review summary reports to be submitted online to the BOG office, according to the timeline expressed in the university's schedule for the submission of program review summary reports and in this Board of Governors regulation. The template will contain the components of the summary report listed in (4)(a).
 - (c) The Academic Program Review Website and all submitted university program review summary reports will be maintained by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs.
 - (d) The program review summary reports will be utilized by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs to gain knowledge of specific discipline or system-wide issues and to review topics or issues that cross over programs within a university or that cross over universities within the State University System.

Authority: Section 7(d), Art. IX, Fla. Const., 1001.705(1)(b)8, F.S.; History: New 3-29-07, Amended 1-22-15

General Process for External Academic Program Review

Self Study Conducted by Faculty in AOC or AOC Cluster

- A statement of the mission and purpose of the AOC or AOC Cluster within the context of the New College of Florida mission
- A statement of teaching, research, service, and other AOC or AOC Cluster goals and objectives, including expected student learning outcomes.
- How are the curriculum and pedagogy designed to achieve these goals?
- How are the curriculum and pedagogy similar and different from those at other colleges?
- How does the AOC/AOC Cluster assess whether it is successful in achieving its goals?
- What do these assessments indicate about:
 - how well program goals/objectives are being met;
 - how well students are achieving expected learning outcomes;
 - how the results of these assessments are used for continuous program improvement; and
 - the sufficiency of resources and support services to achieve the program goals/objectives.
- Based on this, what are the AOC/AOC Cluster's strengths and weaknesses? What questions/challenges does it face and what options and improvements are being considered?
- What significant issues would the Cluster/AOC like the external review team to address? (curriculum, AOC requirements, interdisciplinary commitments, personnel issues, future directions, other issues)

Choosing Reviewers

- Faculty Identify potential reviewers
- Division Chair and Provost choose who to invite to join the review team.

Material for Review Team

(Send this background material to reviewers a month before the visit)

- AOC or AOC Cluster self study (developed by the AOC or AOC Cluster)
- Questions and issues the Provost would like the team to address (developed by the Provost)
- AOC Effectiveness Assessments and Academic Learning Compacts (updated by the AOC faculty with support from the Provost and Office of Institutional Research and Assessment - IRA)
- AOC data compiled by IRA (AOC graduates, Thesis Titles, courses and tutorials taught, enrollments)
- Faculty CV's (provided by Division Office or Faculty)
- Most recent FAAR forms for faculty (provided by IRA)
- Class Syllabi (Provided by Division Office or Faculty)
- Course Catalog - list of courses regularly taught by whom (provided by IRA or Registrar)
- Academic Master Plan and Institutional Strategic Plan (provided by Provost's Office)

Visit

- Division Chair and Provost have a preliminary meeting with the review team to go over the scope and process of the review and share any concerns or questions.
- Individual meetings with each faculty member (including regular, visiting, and instructors)
- Students in the AOC or AOC Cluster
- Anyone else who wants to meet
- Division Chair
- Provost and Associate Provost
- Final meeting with all faculty in the AOC Cluster or AOC
- Exit meeting with the Division Chair and Provost.
- Exit meeting with the President
- The completed report comes to the Division Chair for review before being sent to the AOC or AOC Cluster Faculty

Follow-up

- AOC or AOC Cluster faculty, Division Chair and Provost meet as a group to discuss their reaction to the report.
- Evaluate which recommendations require follow-up actions and what resources are needed to take these actions.
- AOC or AOC Cluster faculty and Division may not accept all of the recommendations, but they should all be discussed and evaluated.
- 12 -17 months later, the AOC or AOC Cluster faculty should report (written or in a meeting) to the Division Chair or the Provost on the actions taken or ongoing as a result of the review.

To: New College Faculty
From: George Ruppeiner, Professor of Physics
Date: May 15, 2017
Re: SACS Reaccreditation Issues

As a member of the SACS Reaccreditation Committee, I would like to report some problems I perceive in our SACS reaccreditation application process. I speak only for myself; no one should assume that the other members of the committee share my concerns.

The SACS accreditation committee last met March 15, when we drafted our thoughts on the Joint Disciplinary AOC and the General Studies AOC for presentation to the faculty. Our efforts led to productive discussions at the April division meetings. There are clearly wide variations in how the Joint Disciplinary AOC is understood and implemented. Both faculty and students would welcome clarity in the form of a modification to the Faculty Handbook. The SACS committee was in a good position to draft new language and work with the EPC toward its implementation. Unfortunately, the SACS committee has not met since March, and to my knowledge there are no plans to meet again. I am not aware of any efforts to address the issue of the Joint AOC. It also appears that the SACS committee has ceased to function, leaving the faculty without a clear voice in the overall reaccreditation process.

I. As part of reaccreditation, the SACS Principles of Accreditation require us to demonstrate the following:

3.4.10 The institution places primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty. (Responsibility for curriculum)

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)

New College has chosen to meet this requirement by having faculty in the various disciplines and interdisciplinary programs self-assess their AOCs, a process that has been both time-consuming and seemingly pointless. In a document entitled “AOC Assessment – Plan for 2017” that he presented to the Division meetings on May 10, Brad Thiessen described a new process designed to make AOC assessment not simply less onerous, but also meaningful as well as useful. This effort responds to many of the concerns expressed by the SACS Committee, and I am happy to see this plan move forward. At the same time, I note that several important questions remain to be addressed.

According to the new process described in Dr. Thiessen’s document, the designation of an AOC as “regular” indicates an “institutional commitment to the AOC,” defined as follows:

Faculty commit to offer courses (as listed in a plan-of-study) to ensure students can complete curricular requirements at New College and graduate on-time. Faculty also commit to regular program assessment. This commitment is evidenced by an approved ALC, an approved assessment plan, and a scheduled internal program review.

Note that the institutional commitment is actually defined as a faculty commitment; there is no assurance that the institution will provide the support necessary to offer the program of courses that the faculty have agreed to teach. In any case, there is no description of the internal process for approving the ALC and the assessment plan, nor is it made clear who will conduct the required internal program review. This is part of a larger problem: In my opinion, we are clearly out of compliance with SACS guidelines in regard to internal approval and assessment of AOCs. SACS clearly requires an internal institutional review mechanism by which faculty and administration approve the establishment of AOCs and conduct regular reviews. We have no clear method for determining which of our AOCs we support, for deleting AOCs no longer supported, for assuring that AOCs are clearly described and are feasible for us to offer, for assuring that they correspond to what is offered elsewhere, and for sorting out AOCs that overlap with each other. The SACS language quoted below appears to indicate that self-assessment and self-designation by individual AOCs are not sufficient, and that “faculty as a body have responsibility and accountability for the curriculum” (as stated in Brad Thiessen’s document, “AOC Assessment – Plan for 2017,” presented to the Divisions on May 10).

3.4.1 The institution demonstrates that each educational program for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration. (Academic program approval)

3.5.3 The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. (See Commission policy “The Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees.”) (Undergraduate program requirements)

There is nothing in our Faculty Handbook, and nothing in the new AOC Assessment Plan, describing a specific internal approval and review mechanism clarifying the role and authority of faculty and administration in relation to individual AOCs and the overall curriculum. It is not even clear who will ever read the documents that the faculty produce. An assessment process with no serious internal review mechanism leaves us out of compliance with SACS accreditation guidelines. More importantly, it does not live up to the promise to make this assessment process meaningful and useful.

II. My second major area of concern centers on the issue of who can teach classes here, and who ascertains that these courses are at college level. Our website lists the regular faculty, all of whom have been hired according to the faculty hiring procedure described in Section IV of the Faculty Handbook. The faculty credentials are impressive, with most having terminal degrees in their respective areas. But beyond this list of regular faculty things get hazier. The Faculty Handbook lays out procedures for hiring visiting and adjunct faculty, but we have no policy or principles outlining the appropriate use of adjuncts in our curriculum. The Faculty Handbook describes a “signing for” procedure in which a faculty member can delegate the teaching of a course to someone else, including a student. (Such offerings must be discussed and approved by divisional faculty, but this provision is often ignored in practice). By tradition, faculty at New College are free to offer courses or tutorials on any topic they choose. At no point does the Faculty Handbook establish that course offerings should correspond to college level courses in disciplines that are represented by the faculty or that correspond to disciplines that are standard elements of the academic curriculum at comparable liberal arts colleges. In a new development, the AAC this year appears to have approved the principle that any person working for our institution can teach courses for academic transcript credit, provided only that their supervisor either approves the course, or includes teaching in the job description for their position. Approval by an appropriate academic division is apparently no longer necessary. These scenarios speak to an academic program out of faculty control. They also appear to contradict the SACS requirement that institutions document the professional qualifications of the faculty:

*3.7.1 The institution employs competent faculty members qualified to accomplish the mission and goals of the institution. When determining acceptable qualifications of its faculty, an institution gives primary consideration to the highest earned degree in the discipline. The institution also considers competence, effectiveness, and capacity, including, as appropriate, undergraduate and graduate degrees, related work experiences in the field, professional licensure and certifications, honors and awards, continuous documented excellence in teaching, or other demonstrated competencies and achievements that contribute to effective teaching and student learning outcomes. For all cases, the institution is responsible for justifying and documenting the qualifications of its faculty. (See Commission guidelines “Faculty Credentials.”) (**Faculty competence**)*

III. A third issue concerns the place of tutorials in the accreditation process. It is my understanding that we have never raised the issue of tutorials with SACS, and they are unaware of the role played by tutorials in our curriculum. But regardless of SACS requirements, faculty and administration should be very concerned by our failure to provide a clear definition of what constitutes a tutorial or to explain its role in our overall curriculum. We have not differentiated between individual tutorials, group tutorials, and independent reading projects. Nor do we explain how these differ from regular courses. Each of these undertakings is given 1 unit credit, equivalent to a regular course, on the assumption that all of these activities involve 12 hours of student work per week; no further information or guidance is provided (FH 6.2). Note the following language from SACS:

*3.4.6 The institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded for courses, regardless of format or mode of delivery. (**Practices for awarding credit**)*

In conclusion: I fear that with a few simple questions, any competent SACS reviewer could find major holes in our compliance with SACS guidelines. We are in a position where we must simply hope that this does not happen. But of most importance to me is the sense that faculty have lost control of the academic program: although we still determine what courses we teach and are free to craft the content of our own syllabi, it is increasingly the case that decisions on the curriculum are being made by administrative bodies without faculty representation. These decisions will inevitably impact our overall academic program and institutional identity. It may well be the case that SACS fails to notice any of the problems I have outlined, and that we can simply continue to proceed as we have in the past. But I believe that if we as faculty fail to develop effective and collegial mechanisms for addressing these and other issues, we will eventually find ourselves at an institution where the integrity of the academic program has been seriously compromised.

3.6.1 Educational Policy Committee (EPC)

Membership: Six faculty, two from each Division; three student members, to be chosen by student-determined procedures. Elections for the faculty representatives are conducted by the FASC during the seventh week of the Spring semester, after the election of the PAC. (Section 3.7.3). Faculty are not required to stand for election to the EPC. Faculty representatives are elected for staggered terms by the entire voting faculty. EPC members serve two-year terms but are not eligible for successive terms. Service on the EPC excuses faculty members from standing for election to the PAC during the time of service on the EPC. The Provost is an ex-officio, non-voting member. The Provost is responsible for ensuring that matters appropriate to the EPC, in its function as the College-wide committee charged with matters pertaining to the academic program (curriculum, policy, and personnel), are brought to that committee for deliberation and presentation to the faculty.

Charge:

1. To consider all matters affecting the academic program (curriculum, policy, and personnel) and to make reports and recommendations concerning policy and programs to the faculty. This includes such matters as long-range academic program planning; growth (faculty line allocations [4.2] and student enrollment); admission and financial aid policies and procedures; educational policy; special programs, such as those for first-year seminars and cross- or multi-disciplinary courses; summer school programs and activities; off-campus study; advising; student academic status criteria; and other relevant areas as they become apparent.
2. To serve as a forum for faculty and student discussion of all matters affecting the academic program (curriculum, policy, and personnel);

New College Guidelines for Developing a New Undergraduate Area of Concentration (AAC draft 10/13/2017)

Faculty members who wish to propose a new undergraduate Area of Concentration are required to prepare the documents listed below.

- An Academic Learning Compact for the new AOC, defining student learning outcomes.
- A General Catalog description for the new AOC, including graduation requirements.
- A forward-looking assessment plan for the new AOC.
- A proposed date for an internal program review for the new AOC., within 5 years of approval
- A 4-year plan of courses and educational activities that will allow students to meet the learning outcomes and graduation requirements of the new AOC.
- Answers to a checklist of questions addressing the following administrative considerations:
- How will the new AOC prepare a graduate for what follows - further enrollment, a career, or a civically engaged good life, joy of learning?
- What new, additional resources will the new AOC need in order to be successful (faculty, library resources, facilities, equipment, staff support)?
- What are the current and anticipated levels of student interest in the new AOC?
- Will this new AOC pull students away from current AOCs?

A proposal containing these documents should be submitted to the Provost's Office and the Educational Policy Committee for review and approval.