



ALAMO COLLEGES DISTRICT

San Antonio College

MONITORING REPORT

September 1, 2017

Contact:

Dr. Lisa K. Zottarelli

SACS-COC Institutional Liaison

210.486.0992

LZottarelli@alamo.edu

1918 N. Main Ave.

San Antonio, TX 78212

Page Intentionally Left Blank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from SACSCOC, January 11, 2017	4
Comprehensive Standard 3.2.6	8
Comprehensive Standard 3.4.4	10
Comprehensive Standard 3.4.5	12
Comprehensive Standard 3.4.10	14
Comprehensive Standard 3.13 (Hiring)	15
Comprehensive Standard 3.13 (Branding)	16
Federal Requirement 4.7	18
List of Appendices	20



January 11, 2017

Dr. Robert Vela, Jr.
President
San Antonio College
1819 North Main Avenue
San Antonio, TX 78212

Dear Dr. Vela:

The following action regarding your institution was taken by the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges during its meeting held on December 4, 2016:

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees continued accreditation, denied reaffirmation, and placed the institution on Warning for 12 months for failure to comply with Comprehensive Standard 3.2.6 (Board/administrative distinction), Comprehensive Standard 3.4.4 (Acceptance of academic credit), Comprehensive Standard 3.4.5 (Academic policies), Comprehensive Standard 3.4.10 (Responsibility for curriculum), Comprehensive Standard 3.13 (Policy compliance: "Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports"), and Federal Requirement 4.7 (Title IV program responsibilities) of the *Principles of Accreditation*. This action followed a June 2016 decision to defer action on reaffirmation pending the receipt and review of a monitoring report and a Special Committee Report on issues regarding institutional autonomy.

The Commission did not authorize a second Special Committee to visit the institution.

The Commission requested that the institution submit a report due **September 8, 2017**, addressing the visiting committee's recommendations applicable to the following referenced standards of the *Principles of Accreditation*:

CS 3.2.6 (Board/administrative distinction)

This standard expects an institution to have a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.

The institution failed to provide evidence that there is a clear and appropriate distinction between the policy-making functions of the Board and the operational implementation of policy by the institution's administration and faculty. It appears that the Board, in some instances, has been overly specific in operational areas, such as curriculum and employment practices.



Dr. Robert Vela, Jr.
January 11, 2017
Page Two

CS 3.4.4 (Acceptance of academic credit), Special Committee Recommendation 1 and Reaffirmation Committee Recommendation 6

This standard expects an institution to publish policies that include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, credit by examination, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. It expects the institution to assume responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript.

The institution failed to provide sufficient evidence that the Service Agreement between the institution and the Center for Student Information (CSI) had been fully implemented. It appears that course work or credit recorded on the institution transcript had not been reviewed by the appropriate faculty in the discipline area for equivalency.

While the revised process should improve the ability for the institution to control the quality of coursework accepted for transfer credit, no documentation of the new process was provided.

CS 3.4.5 (Academic policies), Special Committee Recommendations 2 and 3

This standard expects an institution to publish academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice and that are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution.

The institution failed to provide sufficient evidence that the transfer agreement with Alamo District Colleges (dated August 29, 2016) stating that courses from other Alamo District Colleges be recorded as transfer credit (not institutional credit) had been fully implemented.

While the new Transcripts Standards Agreement (dated October 10, 2016) provides for identifying transfer credit from outside the District, transfer credit from within the District, and institutional credit, the institution only provided a sample test student transcript for review.

The institution failed to provide evidence that a true institutional GPA was calculated and used in the determination of academic standing, honors for graduation, degree GPA, and federal financial aid.



Dr. Robert Vela, Jr.
January 11, 2017
Page Three

CS 3.4.10 (Responsibility for curriculum), Special Committee Recommendation 4
This standard expects an institution to place primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty.

The institution failed to provide sufficient evidence that the faculty has primary responsibility for curriculum.

It appears that the Board of the Alamo Community College District, in Board Policy B. 9. 1., has been overly specific in their requirement that certain course content be included in the institution's curriculum. See also Comprehensive Standard 3.2.6 (Board/administration distinction).

CS 3.13 (Policy compliance: "Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports"), Special Committee Recommendations 5 and 6 and Reaffirmation Committee Recommendation 9

This standard expects an institution to comply with the following policies of the Commission on Colleges.

The institution failed to provide sufficient evidence that the institution, as a separately accredited entity, has authority for the appointment and employment of all institutional personnel. It appears that the Board of the Alamo Community College District, in Board Policy D. 2. 5., has delegated these authorities to the Chancellor of the system.

The institution failed to provide sufficient evidence that it represents itself as a separately accredited entity as exemplified in institutional materials, such as the College Catalog, websites, marketing materials, and other documents. It also is unclear whether the institution represents itself as a single institution (Alamo Colleges) with multiple campuses, or multiple independent institutions (San Antonio College) with the U. S. Department of Education.

FR 4.7 (Title IV program responsibilities), Special Committee Recommendation 7
This standard expects an institution to be in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended.

The institution failed to provide clear evidence that the institution, as a separately accredited entity, is in compliance with the awarding of Title IV funds.

The institution, as a separately accredited entity, should clarify its role ensuring compliance Title IV program responsibilities.



Dr. Robert Vela, Jr.
January 11, 2017
Page Four

Guidelines for the monitoring report are enclosed. Because it is essential that institutions follow these guidelines, **please make certain that those responsible for preparing the report receive the document. If there are any questions about the format, contact the Commission staff member assigned to your institution.** When submitting your report, please send **five copies** to your Commission staff member.

Because your institution has been placed on Warning, the Commission calls to your attention the enclosed policy entitled "Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership."

Please note that Federal regulations and Commission policy stipulate that an institution must demonstrate compliance with all the standards and requirements of the *Principles of Accreditation* within two years following SACSCOC Board of Trustees' initial action on the institution. At the end of that two-year period, if the institution does not comply with all the standards and requirements of the *Principles*, representatives from the institution may be required to appear before SACSCOC Board of Trustees, or one of its standing committees, to answer questions as to why the institution should not be removed from membership. If the Board of Trustees determines good cause at that time and the institution has not been on Probation for both years during the two-year monitoring period, the Board may extend the period for coming into compliance for a minimum of six months and a maximum of two years and must place the institution on Probation. If the Board of Trustees does not determine good cause, removal from accreditation is mandatory. (See enclosed Commission policy "Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership.")

If you have any questions regarding this letter or the process, please contact your Commission staff member.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belle S. Wheelan".

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President

BSW:ch

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Patricia L. Donat
Dr. Bruce Leslie, Chancellor, The Alamo Colleges District
Dr. Yvonne Katz, Chair, Board of Trustees

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.2.6 (BOARD/ADMINISTRATIVE DISTINCTION)

This standard expects an institution to have a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.

(Board/administration distinction)

In institution failed to provide evidence that there is a clear and appropriate distinction between the policy-making functions of the Board and the operational implementation of policy by the institution's administration and faculty. It appears that the Board, in some instances, has been overly specific in operational areas, such as curriculum and employment practices.

Summary of San Antonio College's Response and Actions

San Antonio College makes a clear and appropriate distinction between the policy-making functions of the college's governing board and the responsibility of the college administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.

At regularly scheduled Board Meetings in December 13, 2016,¹ January 17, 2017,² and August 15, 2107,³ the Board of Trustees, in response to the concerns raised by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, amended several policies to ensure a clear and appropriate distinction between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the San Antonio College administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.

- Policy A.1.1:⁴ *Legal Name and College Organizational Units* was amended to allow for the use of "Alamo Colleges District". The previous Policy A.1.1⁵ is included for

comparison. An example of the implementation of the policy by San Antonio College can be found on the San Antonio College transcript⁶ and webpage.⁷

- Policy B.9.1:⁸ *Educational Philosophy – The Alamo Way: Always Inspire, Always Improve* was amended to ensure that curriculum and curriculum changes remain in the control of the San Antonio College faculty and the San Antonio College Curriculum Committee. The previous Policy B.9.1⁹ is included for comparison. Evidence of the implementation of the policy by San Antonio College includes a memo to faculty regarding the change in policy¹⁰ and a syllabus for EDUC 1300.¹¹
- Policy D.2.5:¹² *Hiring Authority, Status, Assignments and Duties, Responsible Department: Human Resources* was amended to clarify that the Chancellor acts in consultation with the President of San Antonio College. The previous Policy D.2.5¹³ is included for comparison. An example of the implementation of policy D.2.5 is the hiring process at San Antonio College. In the example provided, the position is a full-time faculty position in Chemistry and the Search Committee was comprised of the chairperson and faculty members from the Department of Natural Sciences of which Chemistry is a part. A Hiring Form¹⁴ is submitted by the hiring committee to the Dean. This documents, which included transcripts and other documents, was reviewed by Dr. Conrad Krueger, Dean of Arts and Sciences. He concurred with the Search Committee’s recommendation and submitted a Memorandum to Recommend for Hire¹⁵ to Dr. Jothany Blackwood, Vice-President of Student and Academic Success, and Dr. Robert Vela, President of San Antonio College. At each the level the recommendation was approved and notated on the memo. The Offer

Letter¹⁶ to the candidate makes clear that the position is a Full-Time Faculty position in the Natural Sciences Department at San Antonio College. The Board of Trustees approved the appointment via a Minute Order¹⁷ on August 15, 2017.

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.4.4 (ACCEPTANCE OF ACADEMIC CREDIT)

This standards expects an institution to publish policies that include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, credit by examination, Advanced Placement, and professional certificates that are consistent with its mission and ensure that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution’s own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution’s transcript. (See Commission policy “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.”) (Acceptance of academic credit)

The institution failed to provide sufficient evidence that the Service Agreement between the institution and the Center for Student Information (CSI) had been fully implemented. It appears that course work or credit recorded on the institution transcript had not been reviewed by the appropriate faculty in the discipline area of equivalency. While the revised process should improve the ability for the institution to control the quality of coursework accepted for transfer credit, no documentation of the new process was provided.

Summary of San Antonio College's Response and Actions

San Antonio College demonstrates responsibility for the academic quality of course work and credit recorded on the institution's transcript. San Antonio College's Transcript Posting/Processing Service Agreement¹⁸ with the Center for Student Information (CSI) has been fully implemented.¹⁹ San Antonio College approves CSI to process completed lower-division academic courses taken as part of the core at other Texas public institutions of higher education that are identified by the Texas Common Course Numbering System (TCCNS) and published in the Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual (ACGM) and Workforce Education Courses published in the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) as transferred into SAC for core credit, as required by Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part I, Chapter 4, Subchapter, B Rule 4.24.²⁰

When a course equivalency is not available in the databases listed above, that course is reviewed by a San Antonio College faculty member within that academic discipline. The faculty member determines if the course is to be accepted as a course equivalent. The information is submitted to CSI and recorded on the student's record. The following are redacted examples of the transfer course equivalency approval process.

- Example 1:²¹ Morepark College ENGL M02 (Introduction College Writing) was approved as a course equivalent of San Antonio College ENGL 1301 (Composition I) by Dr. Gilliam M. Burton, Professor of English. The approved course equivalent is posted on the student's transcript.
- Example 2:²² Wake Forest University HST 101 (The Rise of the West to 1700) approved as the equivalent of HIST 2311 (Western Civilization I) at San Antonio

College by Dr. Jonathan Lee, Professor of History. The approved course equivalent is posted on the student's transcript.

The faculty at San Antonio College have the sole authority to evaluate and approve or deny course equivalencies from transfer institutions.

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.4.5 (ACADEMIC POLICIES)

This standards expects the institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice, and that are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution. (Academic policies)

SAC failed to provide sufficient evidence that the transfer agreement with Alamo District Colleges (dated August 29, 2016) stating that courses from the Alamo District Colleges to recorded as transfer credit (not institutional credit) had been fully implemented. While the new transcripts Standards Agreement (dated October 10, 2016) provides for identify transfer credit from outside the District, transfer credit from within the District, and institutional credit, the institutional only provided a sample test student transcript for review. The institution failed to provide evidence that a true institution GPA was calculated and used in the determination of academic standing, honors for graduation, degree GPA, and federal financial aid.

Summary of San Antonio College's Response and Actions

San Antonio College adheres to principles of good educational practice. San Antonio College fully implemented the MOU dated October 10, 2016.²³ This MOU, which replaced the August 2016 MOU, is limited to Joint Admission. The Transcript Standards Agreement²⁴ between San Antonio College and the Center for Student Information is a service-level agreement signed January 2017. The new transcript was implemented in February, 2017. Attached is a redacted transcript²⁵ of a student who attended San Antonio College and has transfer credit from within the college's district and from a college outside of the college's district. (An earlier version of the transcript²⁶ is provided for comparison.) This current transcript includes the appropriate identification of transfer credit and the appropriate use of an institutional (San Antonio College) GPA. The following is a key to identify the significant changes that have been made to the syllabus in accordance with good educational practice:²⁵

1. Name of the college is prominently displayed,
2. Seal of San Antonio College,
3. San Antonio College Director of Enrollment is the signature on the transcript,
4. Transfer Credit from colleges within the Alamo Community College District is listed as transfer credit,
5. Institutional Credit is credit earned at San Antonio College,
6. Hours and GPA earned at San Antonio College are clearly noted
7. SAC Overall GPA is an institutional GPA.

Additional transcript examples are provided for review.

- Transcript – With No Transfer Coursework²⁷
- Transcript – With In-District Transfer Coursework²⁸
- Transcript – With Non-District Transfer Coursework²⁹

The San Antonio College (institutional) GPA is on transcript,^{25, see #6 and #7} and is used in the calculation of degree GPA and Federal Financial Aid. (Note: The “ACD” GPA is retained on the transcript to hold students harmless because this GPA was in use for a period of time prior to implementation of the new transcript.) The true San Antonio College GPA is used to calculate and determine academic standing,³⁰ honors, and participation in College-Sponsored Programs and Events.³¹

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.4.10 (RESPONSIBILITY FOR CURRICULUM)

The standards expects an institution to place primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum with its faculty. (Responsibility for curriculum)

The institution failed to provide sufficient evidence that the faculty has primary responsibility for curriculum.

It appears that the Board of the Alamo Community Colleges District, in Board Policy B.9.1, has been overly specific in their requirement that certain course content be included in the institution’s curriculum.

Summary of San Antonio College's Response and Actions

On December 13, 2016¹, and January 17, 2017², the Board of Trustee's revised Policy B.9.1 to remove Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* with reference to curriculum. The revised⁸ and previous⁹ B.9.1 policies are presented as evidence.

Board Policy updates are posted on the Board of Trustee (BOT) Policy Webpage.³² When a BOT policy is changed, a memo is sent to all employees via email. The memo regarding the B.9.1 policy revision was sent to all employees at San Antonio College via email.³³ As a reminder, prior to the start of the next semester (Summer 2017), the Discipline Coordinator sent a memo regarding the change in B.9.1 to San Antonio College faculty teaching EDUC 1300³⁴. Samples of syllabi from EDUC 1300 are included for review^{35, 36}.

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.13 (HIRING)

Applicable Policy Statement. If an institution is part of a system or corporate structure, a description of the system operation (or corporate structure) is submitted as part of the Compliance Certification for the decennial review. The description should be designed to help members of the peer review committees understand the mission, governance, and operating procedures of the system and the individual institution's role within that system.

The institution failed to provide sufficient evidence that the institution, as a separately accredited entity, has authority for the appointment and employment of all institutional personnel. It appears that the Board of the Alamo Community Colleges District, in Board Policy D.2.5., has delegated these authorities to the Chancellor of the system.

Summary of San Antonio College’s Response and Actions

San Antonio College has the authority to appoint and employ all institutional personnel. Individuals interested in employment at San Antonio College can apply for positions at San Antonio College through a link to a listing of positions at San Antonio College.³⁷ When a position needs to be filled at San Antonio College, the Search Committee is comprised of employees of San Antonio College. That committee recommends a final candidate to the San Antonio College President. The following are documents detailing the hiring practice at San Antonio College from the Search Committee, to Administration Officials, to Offer Letter.

- Full Time Faculty Hire³⁸ (SAC Department Search Committee Recommendation for Hire, Memorandum to Hire, Offer Letter to Candidate)
- Full Time Staff Hire³⁹ (Redacted Hiring Packet, Redacted Offer Letter)

COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD 3.13 (BRANDING)

This standards expects the institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice, and that are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution. (Academic policies)

The institution failed to provide sufficient evidence that it represents itself as a separately accredited entity as exemplified in institutional materials, such as the College Catalog, websites, marketing materials, and other documents. It also is unclear whether the institution represents itself as a single institution (Alamo Colleges) with multiple campuses,

or multiple independent institutions (San Antonio College) with the U.S. Department of Education.

Summary of San Antonio College's Response and Actions

San Antonio College adheres to principles of good educational practices and consistently presents itself as a separately accredited institution through its communication with students and other stakeholders. San Antonio College's webpage⁴⁰ clearly identifies the college and the college is distinguishable from the Alamo Community College District (ACCD) and the sister colleges within ACCD. Additional evidence of the presentation of San Antonio College as a single institution is found in the San Antonio College mission⁴¹ and the San Antonio College Core Curriculum.⁴²

The San Antonio College transcript^{25, 27-29} presents the institution as a separately accredited institution. The transcript clearly states the name, San Antonio College, includes San Antonio College's Seal, and lists course taken at institutions other than San Antonio College as transfer credit.

The President of San Antonio College confers degrees as a separately accredited institution. At Graduation on May 13, 2017, President Robert Vela stated, "By the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees of the Alamo Community College District, as President of San Antonio College, I confer upon you a GED, Certificate, Associate of Arts, Associate of Arts in Teaching, Associate of Science, and Associate of Applied Science degree."⁴³

San Antonio College presents itself to the community as a separately accredited institution through the use of our official San Antonio College logo⁴⁴ and Spirit Image.⁴⁵ The

following items are further evidence of San Antonio College’s presentation of itself as a separately accredited college to students and the public:⁴⁶

- San Antonio College Brochure
- San Antonio College Twitter Account
- San Antonio College Facebook Account
- Alumni Event Announcements
- Material on Colleges within the District
- San Antonio College Public Relations Announcements
- Fall 2017 Welcoming Statement from President Vela

San Antonio College is recognized by the Department of Education as a separately accredited institution as stated in a letter dated February 7, 2017.⁴⁷

FEDERAL REQUIREMENT 4.7 (TITLE IV PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES)

The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended. (In reviewing the institution’s compliance with these program responsibilities, the Commission relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U.S. Department of Education.) (Title IV program responsibilities)

SACSCOC comments: The Committee recommends that the institution demonstrate that it uses appropriate practices in the calculation of cumulative grade point averages in determining Satisfactory Academic Progress and for federal reporting in compliance with Title IV requirements.

Summary of San Antonio College’s Response and Actions

San Antonio College is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV. The memo,⁴⁷ dated 2-7-17, from Ms. Kim Peeler, Compliance Manager, Region VI, states that, “the satisfactory academic progress policy⁴⁸ submitted and the current funding mechanism for campus-based programs are acceptable under regulations governing the Title IV financial aid programs.” Additionally, the Department of Education (DOE) letter states that the DOE is aware that San Antonio College is accredited separately from the other colleges within the Alamo Colleges District.

EVIDENCE

1. BOT meeting minutes from 12-13-16
2. BOT meeting minutes from 1-17-17
3. BOT meeting agenda from 8-15-17
4. Current Policy A.1.1
5. Earlier redlined BOT Policy A.1.1
6. San Antonio College Transcript
7. San Antonio College Webpage
8. Current Policy B.9.1
9. Earlier redlined BOT Policy B.9.1
10. Memo Reminder of B.9.1 policy change
11. Syllabus EDUC 1300
12. Current BOT Policy D.2.5
13. Earlier redlined BOT Policy D.2.5
14. Hiring Form – From Committee to Dean
15. Memorandum to Recommend for Hire
16. Offer Letter
17. BOT Minute Order August 15, 2017
18. Transcript Posting/Processing Service Agreement between San Antonio College and
CSI
19. Email from Elizabeth Garza, Director of CSI
20. Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part I, Chapter 4, Subchapter, B Rule 4.24

21. Transfer Course Equivalency Approved by Faculty and Posted on Transcript –
Example 1 – English
22. Transfer Course Equivalency Approved by Faculty and Posted on Transcript –
Example 2 – History
23. Memorandum of Understanding – October 10, 2016
24. Transcript Standards Agreement between San Antonio College and the Center for
Student Information – January 2017
25. Notated Transcript – With In-District and Non-District Transfer Coursework
26. Transcript Used Prior to February 2017
27. Transcript – With No Transfer Coursework
28. Transcript – With In-District Transfer Coursework
29. Transcript – With Non-District Transfer Coursework
30. San Antonio College Catalog – Academic Standing
31. San Antonio College Catalog – Honors and Participation in College-Sponsored
Programs and Events
32. Board Policies – 1st Page Example
33. Policy Update Memo 1-17-17
34. Memo Reminder of B.9.1 policy change
35. Sample 1 - Syllabus EDUC 1300
36. Sample 2 – Syllabus EDUC 1300
37. Webpage Screenshot of Jobs at San Antonio College

38. Full Time Faculty Hire - SAC Department Search Committee Recommendation for Hire, Memorandum to Hire, and Offer Letter to Candidate
39. Full Time Staff Hire – SAC Department Search Committee Recommendation for Hire, Email Notification of Intent to Hire, and Offer Letter to Candidate
40. San Antonio College’s Webpage
41. San Antonio College Mission Statement
42. San Antonio College Core Curriculum
43. Excerpt from Graduation Script - Conferring of Certificates and Degrees
44. Official San Antonio College Logo
45. San Antonio College Spirit Image
46. Marketing, Social Media, and Communication Examples
47. DOE letter 2-7-17
48. Alamo Colleges District Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy