



*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges*

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE REAFFIRMATION COMMITTEE

(Revised: January 2012
Edited: March 2013)

Statement Regarding the Report

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is responsible for making the final determination on reaffirmation of accreditation based on the findings contained in this committee report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the Principles of Accreditation and final action on the accreditation status of the institution rest with SACSCOC Board of Trustees..

Name of the Institution: Georgia Southwestern State University

Date of the Review: November 5-6, 2013

COC Staff Member: Dr. Cheryl Cardell

Chair of the Committee: Dr. Robert D. Gratz
Special Assistant to the President
Texas State University
San Marcos, TX

Part I. Overview and Introduction to the Institution

To be completed by the On-site Reaffirmation Committee.

Part II. Assessment of Compliance

Sections A thru E to be completed by the Off-Site Review Committee and the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee. An asterisk before the standard indicates that it will be reviewed by the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee even if the off-site review determines compliance.

A. Assessment of Compliance with Section 1: The Principle of Integrity

- 1.1 The institution operates with integrity in all matters. **(Integrity)**

Compliance

In the information provided to the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee, the institution demonstrated that it operates with integrity in all matters.

B. Assessment of Compliance with Section 2: Core Requirements

- 2.1 The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies. **(Degree-granting Authority)**

Compliance

Article VIII Section IV of the Georgia State Constitution and Title 20 of the Georgia Code vests authority over degrees with the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. Degree granting authority for Georgia Southwestern State University (Georgia Southwestern or GSW) is derived through its membership in the University System of Georgia as confirmed in Article I, Subsection 6 of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents.

- 2.2 The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board on which both the presiding officer and a majority of the other members are neither civilian employees of the military nor active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution's programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting board members are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. **(Governing Board)**

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern, as part of the University System of Georgia, is governed by an eighteen member Board of Regents. As established in Article VIII, Section IV of the Georgia Constitution, members of the Board are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Georgia Constitution and Georgia Code grant the Board of Regents authority over distribution of state appropriations, establishing responsibility for adequacy of financial resources. Through its Bylaws, Policy Manual, and committee structure, the Board of Regents is the policy-making body for the institutions in the University System of Georgia, including Georgia Southwestern.

The Georgia Code and Board of Regents Bylaws establish attendance requirements and other operational policies that ensure the Board is not controlled by a minority of its members or outside interests. By its makeup, organization, Bylaws, and required compliance with ethics policies of the University System of Georgia and Georgia Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest, the presiding officer and a majority of the members of the Board are free of contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. Samples of board minutes included in the policy documents available to the Off-Site Committee also confirmed specific actions of the board associated with this standard.

- 2.3** The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. *(See the Commission policy "Core Requirement 2.3: Documenting an Alternate Approach.")* **(Chief Executive Officer)**

Compliance

The chief executive officer of Georgia Southwestern is its President, who does not preside over the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The President is appointed by the Board of Regents and has administrative responsibility over the institution as outlined in Board Bylaws and policies.

- 2.4 The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. **(Institutional Mission)**

Compliance

The institution's mission is clearly defined and comprehensive. The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (USG) has deemed it appropriate for higher education and specific to the institution, as it addresses excellence in teaching and learning. It is published electronically on the institution's website and in both Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins, which are available in hard copy.

- 2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. **(Institutional Effectiveness)**

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern appears to engage in an ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide planning and evaluation process. The current strategic plan, *Moving Forward: Cultivating Growth and Excellence*, was developed from the work of committees, task forces, and the university as a whole. The process appears to be systematic and aligns with the mission of the institution. The process is relatively new, but appears to be in place and is being followed.

- 2.6 The institution is in operation and has students enrolled in degree programs. **(Continuous Operation)**

Compliance

The institution indicated that it has been in operation since 1906. It was chartered to offer two-year college degrees in the 1926, became part of the University System of Georgia in 1932, was authorized to offer four-year degrees in 1964, and was renamed Georgia Southwestern State University in 1996. The institution provided a list of students enrolled by degree program in Fall 2013, with 2,769 students enrolled in undergraduate programs and 142 students enrolled in master's programs.

- 2.7.1 The institution offers one or more degree programs based on at least 60 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the associate level; at least 120 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the baccalaureate level; or at least 30 semester credit hours or the equivalent at the post-baccalaureate, graduate, or professional level. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a

justification for all degrees that include fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit. **(Program Length)**

Compliance

As documented on its website and in its Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins, the institution offers 35 majors at the baccalaureate level, all of which require 120-132 semester credit hours, and 8 programs at the master's and specialist level, all of which require 30-38 semester credit hours.

The joint programs with GIT require 138-150 hours, with at least 86 taken at the institution.

These "semester credit hours" are equivalent to the standard practice for determining one credit hour: 50 clock minutes per semester hour per week.

- 2.7.2** The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. **(Program Content)**

Compliance

Evidence provided by the institution confirmed that degree programs are coherent and support the mission. The Off-Site Committee concluded that curriculum sheets for each degree illustrate a logical structure comparable with accepted standards in higher education.

- *2.7.3** In each undergraduate degree program, the institution requires the successful completion of a general education component at the collegiate level that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale. For degree completion in associate programs, the component constitutes a minimum of 15 semester hours or the equivalent; for baccalaureate programs, a minimum of 30 semester hours or the equivalent. These credit hours are to be drawn from and include at least one course from each of the following areas: humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences, and natural science/mathematics. The courses do not narrowly focus on those skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. If an institution uses a unit other than semester credit hours, it provides an explanation for the equivalency. The institution also provides a justification if it allows for fewer than the required number of semester credit hours or its equivalent unit of general education courses. **(General Education)**

Compliance

The institution provided an adequate rationale for the General Education program. This program is both comprehensive in breadth and reflects the institution's mission. The Undergraduate Bulletin outlines the General Education

components for the baccalaureate level. The GSW Core Curriculum consists of 60 credit hours, 42 of which are General Education.

The credit hours are distributed over (7) areas described as follows: Communication Skills, Quantitative Skills, Institutional Options (Humanities, Fine Arts and Ethics), (Natural Sciences, Math and Technology), Social Sciences and Lower Division Major Requirements.

- 2.7.4** The institution provides instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees. If the institution does not provide instruction for all such course work and (1) makes arrangements for some instruction to be provided by other accredited institutions or entities through contracts or consortia or (2) uses some other alternative approach to meeting this requirement, the alternative approach must be approved by the Commission on Colleges. In both cases, the institution demonstrates that it controls all aspects of its educational program. (See the Commission policy “Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternate Approach.”) **(Course work for Degrees)**

Compliance

Curriculum sheets for each program confirm that Georgia Southwestern offers all coursework for at least one degree at the baccalaureate, masters, and specialist level. Data presented by the institution verifies it controls all aspects of the educational programs.

- *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 each of its academic programs. **(Faculty)**

Non-Compliance

The institution defines full-time faculty members as those who work a 40 hour week, including teaching, office hours, service, and scholarship, with a normal teaching load being 12 semester hours per week (or in some cases 12 contact hours). Georgia Southwestern has 107 full-time faculty members, which constitutes over 65 percent of the faculty.

The Faculty Handbook and other policies stipulate that the faculty in the departments is responsible for ensuring the quality and integrity of the curriculum.

The institution provides program-by-program data on the number of full-time faculty via a comparison of full-time to part-time faculty for general education courses, major courses and graduate program courses.

These data support the number of full-time faculty is adequate in every program except for the online MSN and webBSIT programs, the data for which imply that all faculty teaching in these programs are “part-time and other faculty.” The

institution did not provide a clear explanation on how the institution ensures the quality and integrity in these programs.

- 2.9** The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. **(Learning Resources and Services)**

Non-Compliance

The library supplied evidence of its ownership of library collections and its participation in various statewide library initiatives in Georgia that provides additional access to electronic collections for its students and faculty. The evidence in the compliance document substantiates only the adequacy of its onsite print collections to support its FTE when compared with other peer institutions, but does not reflect adequacy of the total collections including those accessible offsite. Although the library states that it conducts periodic reviews of collections, has interlibrary loan agreements, and refers to results from user surveys, the actual evidence from these assessments to confirm that the collections and services are adequate in meeting the specific needs of the institution's programs was not provided for the Off-Site Committee to review.

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

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern provides a comprehensive array of student services that are specific and appropriate for the mission of the institution. Services are spread throughout the institution and delivered primarily through five of its units: The Office of Academic Affairs, Enrollment Services, the Office of Student Affairs, the Department of Athletics, and The Office of Information and Instructional Technology. The institution also provides distance learning students with several means of locating and accessing student services. These include the GSW website -- Academics index, which provides an index page of links to Academic Resources (Academic Resource Center, Disability Services, and the Writing Center, etc.). Information about Student Support Services is widely distributed and accessible to both on campus and distance learning students on institution's web pages, in the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins and in the Student Handbook.

- 2.11.1** The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (1) an institutional audit (or *Standard Review Report* issued in accordance with

Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a systemwide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or *Standard Review Report*) guide; (2) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and (3) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board. **(Financial Resources)**

Non-Compliance

Georgia Southwestern provided a financial analysis showing steady growth for total net assets exclusive of plant assets and related debt. Revenues from tuition and fees are increasing while state appropriations are decreasing over the same time periods. The evidence provided to the Off-Site Committee indicated sound budget planning. GSW provided a five-year analysis of net assets, but did not restrict the analysis to unrestricted net assets. The institution needs to provide a multi-year analysis of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant and plant related debt. The institution also needs to provide evidence of the budget approval for FY 2014 and the FY 2013 audit.

- 2.11.2** The institution has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. **(Physical Resources)**

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution. A Campus Master Plan has been approved and updated as of 2011. Plans include additional facilities and renovation of current facilities based on enrollment growth. Deferred maintains plans and construction plans are reviewed annually for funding during the budget cycle. A detailed survey of each building and its condition is included as part of the facilities inventory.

- 2.12** The institution has developed an acceptable Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that includes an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment and focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution. **(Quality Enhancement Plan)**

Not Applicable

C. Assessment of Compliance with Section 3: Comprehensive Standards

- 3.1.1 The mission statement is current and comprehensive, accurately guides the institution's operations, is periodically reviewed and updated, is approved by the governing board, and is communicated to the institution's constituencies. **(Mission).**

Compliance

The process to revise the institution's mission statement began in 2009, after the 2002-2007 strategic planning cycle ended. The effort was institution-wide as surveys were conducted and a task force appointed. The revisions were approved by the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia in August 2010. Now, the mission is aligned with the current (2008-2015) strategic plan. It is published electronically on the institution's website and in both Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins, which are available in hard copy.

- 3.2.1 The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer. **(CEO evaluation/selection)**

Non Compliance

As confirmed by meeting minutes of the Board of Regents, the current President of Georgia Southwestern was appointed by the Board in 2007. Under the policy of the Board, Presidents in the University System of Georgia are subject to annual evaluation by the Chancellor of the System as part of the annual reappointment process. Additionally, in 2010, an external consultant coordinated an evaluation of Georgia Southwestern's President. The evaluation included participation by a wide range of campus and community stakeholders.

Although the external consultant evaluation was provided no documentation of a completed annual evaluation was provided for review by the Off-Site Committee.

- 3.2.2 The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution's governance structure: **(Governing board control)**

3.2.2.1 the institution's mission

Compliance

Policy 2.10 of the University System of Georgia Board of Regents requires each System institution to operate under a mission approved by the Board. The current mission of Georgia Southwestern State University was approved by the Board of Regents in August 2010. The policies and actions of the Board clearly define the legal authority and operating control of the institution with regard to its mission.

3.2.2.2 the fiscal stability of the institution

Compliance

The Constitution and laws of the State of Georgia, as well as policies of the Board of Regents for the University System of Georgia, confirm that legal authority and operating control regarding fiscal stability of Georgia Southwestern State University rests with the Board. As documented in minutes of meetings of the Board, this authority extends to control over allocation of appropriations, establishment of tuition and approval of budgets.

3.2.2.3 institutional policy

Compliance

The Constitution and laws of the State of Georgia, along with the Bylaws and policies of the Board of Regents for the University System of Georgia clearly define legal and operating authority regarding institutional policy for Georgia Southwestern.

3.2.3 The governing board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members. **(Board conflict of interest)**

Non-Compliance

The University System of Georgia Human Resources Administrative Practice Manual includes a Policy on Conflict of Interest which applies to members of the Board of Regents. In addition, the Official Code of the State of Georgia includes provisions prohibiting conflicts of interest by members of the Board of Regents.

The institution provided documentation confirming that there had been no instances of penalties against Board members associated with violation of conflict-of-interest provisions, including removal from the Board. However, no information was provided to the Off-Site Committee to document education of Board members about the policy or affirmation by Board members of their knowledge of the policy or their compliance with the policy.

3.2.4 The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence. **(External influence)**

Non-Compliance

The Board of Regents for the University System of Georgia is established by provision of the Constitution of the State of Georgia, which also provides for the appointment process for members of the Board. Removal from the Board is only

as provided by law for excessive absences from meetings or violation of state ethics or conflict of interest laws. The Board of Regents also has established a policy against political influence. However, in the absence of additional evidence such as statements confirming Board Member's compliance with the Board's Conflict of Interest policy, the Off-Site Committee was unable to confirm that the board is free of the influence from political, religious, or other external bodies. Additionally, the institution provided no evidence of policies or procedures of the Board or actions taken by the Board to protect the institution from such influence.

- 3.2.5** The governing board has a policy whereby members can be dismissed only for appropriate reasons and by a fair process. **(Board dismissal)**

Compliance

Section 45-10-3 of the Georgia Code provides a code of ethics for members of public boards, including the Board of Regents for the University System of Georgia. Section 45-10-4 of the Georgia Code provides a process for dismissal of Board members upon violation of the code of ethics. Board members also may be removed for excessive absences from scheduled meetings of the Board. Meeting notices and opportunities for Board members to provide reasons for absences allow a fair process for dismissal of Board members for this reason.

The institution confirmed that it is unable to provide examples of implementation because no Regent members have been removed from the Board as a result of the dismissal processes provided for by law and Board policy.

- 3.2.6** There is 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)**

Compliance

As clarified in Board of Regents Policy 3.1, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents establishes broad policies and delegates' responsibility to administer and implement policy to the institution's administration and faculty. A detailed example was provided by the institution documenting policy development and implementation related to revision of General Education requirements.

- 3.2.7** The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies. **(Organizational structure)**

Compliance

The administrative organizational chart for Georgia Southwestern, along with the University Statutes which include descriptions of administrative responsibility for

key positions, depict a clearly defined organizational structure that delineates responsibility for administration of policies. Both the organization chart and University Statutes are published on the university website.

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

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern provided evidence of hiring qualified administrative and academic officers capable of fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of running the institution. The Off-Site Committee's review of the job descriptions and resumes provided for the institution's senior administrative and academic leadership clearly demonstrated that the institution employs a highly qualified and competent leadership team. Each administrator's job description is reviewed and updated, if necessary, during annual performance evaluations.

- 3.2.9** The institution publishes policies regarding appointment, employment, and evaluation of all personnel. **(Personnel appointment)**

Compliance

The institution clearly outlines and publishes its policies regarding the appointment, employment and evaluation of all university personnel. Its personnel policies are found on the institution's Human Resources website under the section titled, "Personnel Policies."

- 3.2.10** The institution periodically evaluates the effectiveness of its administrators. **(Administrative staff evaluations)**

Compliance

All administrative and academic officers are evaluated on an annual basis by their supervisors, and, at times, by subordinates, per university and system policy. The President and the Vice President for Academic Affairs are both evaluated annually by the faculty and staff. Evaluations are prescribed in University policy, and each evaluation involves an employee self-evaluation, supervisor review and comment, and face-to-face appointment to review the employee's performance over the past year. The review process provides the supervisor an opportunity to give formative feedback to the employee to improve job performance, and for the supervisor and the employee to agree upon goals for the next year. Examples of performance evaluations for each of the three principal types of administrators at the institution were provided for review by the Off-Site Committee.

- 3.2.11** The institution's chief executive officer has ultimate responsibility for, and exercises appropriate administrative and fiscal control over, the institution's intercollegiate athletics program. **(Control of intercollegiate athletics)**

Compliance

The organizational chart for Georgia Southwestern depicts an administrative structure whereby The Director of Athletics reports directly to the President. Position descriptions for the President and the Director of Athletics confirm the President's ultimate responsibility for administrative and fiscal control over the intercollegiate athletics program.

- 3.2.12** The institution demonstrates that its chief executive officer controls the institution's fund-raising activities. **(Fund-raising activities).**

Compliance

Organizational charts for Georgia Southwestern and position descriptions for the President, Executive Director of the GSW Foundation, and Director of Athletics verify that individuals responsible for fundraising activities report to the President, who by virtue of the reporting relationships exercises ultimate control of the institution's fundraising activities.

- 3.2.13** For any entity organized separately from the institution and formed primarily for the purpose of supporting the institution or its programs: (1) the legal authority and operating control of the institution is clearly defined with respect to that entity; (2) the relationship of that entity to the institution and the extent of any liability arising out of that relationship is clearly described in a formal, written manner; and (3) the institution demonstrates that (a) the chief executive officer controls any fund-raising activities of that entity or (b) the fund-raising activities of that entity are defined in a formal, written manner which assures that those activities further the mission of the institution. **(Institution-related entities)**

Compliance

The institution has one related entity; the Georgia Southwestern College Foundation. Documentation includes the Articles of Incorporation of the GSW Foundation that clearly states its purpose is to support the mission of the institution. Evidence of the relationship of the Foundation to the institution is clearly documented in the Provider Service Agreement. The President/CEO of the institution is responsible for the fund-raising activities as described in the incorporation documents and the provider service agreement. Job description of the Executive Director of the Foundation clearly defines the reporting relationship to the Foundation and the institution. As evidenced by the institution's organization chart, the President/CEO has clear responsibility for oversight of the Foundation's activities.

- 3.2.14** The institution's policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of all intellectual property. These policies apply to students, faculty, and staff. **(Intellectual property rights)**

Compliance

The institution has a clear, coherent policy on intellectual property that includes ownership, resolution of disputes, and use of revenues. The policy is published in the Faculty Handbook and GSWeatherwane Student Handbook and is applicable to faculty, staff, and students.

- 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

Non-Compliance

As with standard 2.5, institutional effectiveness, the institution does identify its assessment process and related cycle. The institution identifies outcomes, assesses said outcomes, and provides evidence the data is used to make improvements. However, the information provided for review by the Off-Site Committee did not include dual degree programs, weBSIT, and the 1+2+1 programs with the various Chinese universities.

- 3.3.1.2** administrative support services

Non-Compliance

The sample of plans submitted by administrative support services was representative of the institution. The process used for institutional effectiveness is documented, but there is no consistency in the terminology used from office to office. The units appear to identify outcomes (activities). It is unclear if the information presented is the "evidence" (the institution's word): It is unclear if the information presented as "evidence" is the measurement or the data resulting from the measure. The report does address changes made based on the data collected.

- 3.3.1.3** academic and student support services

Compliance

The sample of plans submitted by academic and student support services was representative of the institution. The process used for institutional effectiveness is well-documented. It is clear there is a process in place and is being followed. The report addressed improvements made based on the data collected. There is inconsistency between units regarding the use of the terms “goal” and “activity.”

3.3.1.4 research within its mission, if appropriate

Compliance

The institution stated that although research is not identified in its mission statement and there are no established research units or centers, there are some research activities occurring on-campus. In fact, there is limited, funded research within the faculty. The institution did address the student learning outcomes in the graduate degree programs where research is an expected outcome. The institution did identify outcomes, and provided evidence it does assess said outcomes and uses the data to make improvements.

3.3.1.5 community/public service within its mission, if appropriate

Non-Compliance

Two of the three units identified as providing community/public service provided evidence of identified goals, activities to help achieve said goals, and data collected. Also, there is evidence of the data being used to make improvements. The Center for Business and Economic Development (CBED) did not provide evidence of identified outcomes; therefore, there are no measures identified to assess outcomes. There appears to be no assessment cycle in place for the CBED.

- 3.3.2** The institution has developed a Quality Enhancement Plan that (1) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP; (2) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP; and (3) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. **(Quality Enhancement Plan)**

Not Applicable

- 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)**

Compliance

As illustrated in the MSN example presented in the report, the Institution operates its curriculum approval process as defined in its University Statutes document: Each educational program, and the included coursework, for which academic credit is awarded is approved by the faculty and the administration. In particular, the Committee on Academic Affairs acts upon recommendations from the department faculty regarding undergraduate programs and the Committee on Graduate Affairs acts upon recommendations from the department faculty regarding graduate programs. The proposals are then reviewed by the faculty senate, and finally the full faculty. These groups are composed of an appropriate cross-section of the faculty and administration.

- 3.4.2** The institution's continuing education, outreach, and service programs are consistent with the institution's mission. **(Continuing education/service programs)**

Compliance

Evidence presented by the institution confirmed continuing education, outreach, and service programs support the University mission. The Division of Continuing Education, GSW Center for Business and Economic Development, the Rosalyn Carter Institute, and other programs encourage the intellectual, social, and personal growth of the community.

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

Compliance

The institution uses and publishes admission policies that are consistent with its mission as a selective comprehensive state university offering both undergraduate and graduate programs of study. The Georgia Board of Regents has established minimum standards for admission at all System institutions. The institution has established requirements for Freshmen Admission, Transfer Admission, Transient Admission, Audit Admission, International Student Admission, and Admission of Persons 62 or older that meet or exceed the minimum set by the USG. Graduate student admission policies were also provided for each degree program offered at the institution. The institution provided documentation of policies for each admission category for review by the Off-Site Committee.

Admissions policies are consistent with other institutions of higher education. All admissions policies are clearly and widely published in the Undergraduate Student Bulletin and Graduate Student Bulletin, as well as on the institution's website.

- 3.4.4** The institution publishes 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. 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)**

Compliance

The institution publishes and makes available policies containing criteria for awarding academic credit within its Undergraduate Bulletin for the following areas: Transfer Credit, Transfer Credit from Accredited Technical Colleges, Transfer Credit from Non-Regionally Accredited Institutions, Transfer Credit from International Institutions, Transient Credit, Credit for Study Abroad Programs, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate, Credit by Examination, Military Credit, and Prior learning. The policies clearly prescribe that faculty have responsibility for awarding all transfer credit.

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

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern publishes its academic policies through the Undergraduate Bulletin, Graduate Bulletin, Student Handbook, and Faculty Handbook. These policies are also posted on the Institution's website. All of these documents are consistent, comprehensive, and adequately describe well-developed policies that have been established and monitored by the faculty. These documents are thoroughly disseminated and available to all segments of the University. In addition, the vetting process for revising or creating policies is robust and clearly articulated.

- 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)**

Compliance

The institution has well-documented, reasonable policies and procedures for determining the amount and level of credit for both in person and online courses offered by the institution. The documentation provided to the Off-Site Committee contains sufficient evidence that the institution implements and enforces its policies for awarding credit.

- 3.4.7** The institution ensures the quality of educational programs and courses offered through consortia relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing

compliance with the *Principles* and periodically evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the mission of the institution. (See the Commission policy “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.”) **(Consortia relationships/contractual agreements)**

Compliance

The institution provided documentation of signed agreements and a designation of program responsibilities for each “party” involved. There is evidence of on-going reviews of agreements demonstrated via minutes from Deans’ and Directors’ Council and Administrative Council.

- 3.4.8** The institution awards academic credit for course work taken on a noncredit basis only when there is documentation that the noncredit course work is equivalent to a designated credit experience. **(Noncredit to credit)**

Non-Compliance

Georgia Southwestern publishes policies to describe the circumstances in which academic credit can be awarded for non-credit experiences. It utilizes a form titled, “Evaluation of Credit from Non-Traditional and Other Sources,” whereby students can apply to have coursework from non-traditional sources evaluated for equivalence with coursework at Georgia Southwestern. However, no evidence was provided to the Off-Site Committee confirming that the policies are implemented and enforced.

- 3.4.9** The institution provides appropriate academic support services. **(Academic support services)**

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern provides a comprehensive and appropriate array of academic support services for both students and faculty that support and enhance student learning and success. Academic Support Services are provided primarily through the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Vice President for Enrollment Management. The Division of Student Affairs is also directly supports academic support services through the Office of Career Services. Students may find out what services are available and how to access them in a variety of ways including GSW Weathervane Student Handbook, the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins, and the websites of individual units. Incoming freshmen are also introduced to academic support services in UNIV 1000, GSW's orientation course. Every student is also assigned an Academic Advisor, who knows what academic support services are available. Noteworthy is the approach taken to transition transfer students and inform them about academic support services. Transfer students can access a series of videos describing the campus including how to find an academic advisor and three videos on student services.

The institution also provides distance-learning students with several additional methods of locating and accessing academic services. The Academics index page provides links to Academic Resources including the Academic Resource Center, Disability Services, the University Writing Center, and other relevant resources and offices.

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

Compliance

The institution places the primary responsibility for the content, quality, and effectiveness of its curriculum with its faculty. Article IV Section 4 of the GSW University Statutes empowers the faculty "Committee on Academic Affairs" (CoAA) to approve curriculum changes and the same statute empowers the faculty "Committee on Graduate Affairs (CoGA). The institution outlines the process of curriculum changes and provides examples of curriculum changes approved during 2012-2013.

- *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)**

Non-Compliance

The program coordinators for two graduate programs do not appear to have appropriate academic qualifications in the field. The coordinator for the Master of Arts in English/Critical Literacy has a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, Emphasis on Reading-Writing. The program coordinator for the Master of Business Administration has a Master of Accountancy and is a CPA. The qualifications of these two coordinators were not apparent in the evidence provided.

- 3.4.12** The institution's use of technology enhances student learning and is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs. Students have access to and training in the use of technology. **(Technology use)**

Non-Compliance

Although the institution provided evidence that students and faculty have access to and training in the use of technology that is appropriate to support academic programs, the evidence available to the Off-Site Committee was insufficient to determine that the technology provided is used, that its use enhances student learning and is appropriate for meeting the objectives of its programs.

- 3.5.1 The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which students have attained them. **(General education competencies)**

Compliance

As mandated by University System of Georgia policy, Georgia Southwestern clearly identifies its general education competencies and ensures that its students are aware of them; the general education curriculum is discussed in detail in the Institution's Undergraduate Bulletin and in the USG Academic and Student Affairs Handbook. Nine areas of competency are identified and assessed, primarily through sets of target courses.

The institution has begun work on these assessments through review of course-embedded artifacts, using standard rubrics. Targets were established and the extent to which students achieve these targets have been documented. This process was recently instituted so not all of the outcomes have been assessed thoroughly at this point. However, the process is in place and is being followed.

- 3.5.2 At least 25 percent of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. *(See the Commission policy "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.")* **(Institutional credits for a degree)**.

Non-Compliance

According to its Undergraduate Bulletin, the institution requires "all undergraduate degree candidates to earn at least twenty-seven (27) of the forty (40) hours of credit immediately preceding graduation in residence." In addition, transfer students who matriculate in their last year of study must complete their last two semesters in residence, earning at least 30 semester credit hours of the coursework earned for an undergraduate degree.

Since undergraduate majors range in hours from 120-132, these policies alone do not guarantee that all undergraduates take at least 25 percent of the coursework from the institution. The narrative provided indicates that "Transfer students in programs that require more than 120 credit hours for completion may be required to take more than 30 credit hours in residence during the last stages of their programs to ensure that they have received at least 25 percent of their instruction from GSW." There is a similar statement about checking the 25 percent minimum for students completing the WebBSIT consortium program. However, no documentation was provided to the Off-Site Committee demonstrating that this 25 percent minimum is, indeed, enforced.

- 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 the Commission policy "The Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees.")* **(Undergraduate program requirements)**

Compliance

The University publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs in the Undergraduate Bulletin and via Curriculum Sheets. The Registration and Academic Information Network provides an online resource for this information. General Education components are described for each program.

- 3.5.4** At least 25 percent of the course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty members holding an appropriate terminal degree—usually the earned doctorate or the equivalent of the terminal degree. **(Terminal degrees of faculty)**

Compliance

Data presented by the institution confirms at least 25 percent of the course hours in each major at the baccalaureate level are taught by faculty with a terminal degree. Course hours for the fall 2012 programs substantiate the percentages of courses taught by faculty with terminal degrees range from 34 percent for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing to 100 percent for several programs.

- 3.6.1** The institution's post-baccalaureate professional degree programs, and its master's and doctoral degree programs, are progressively more advanced in academic content than its undergraduate programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program rigor)**

Compliance

The institution clearly established that its master's degree programs are clearly more advanced in academic content than the undergraduate programs within the same academic units, providing comparative documentation demonstrating that the graduate degree programs and doctoral specialists programs are progressively more complex and rigorous than the undergraduate programs.

- 3.6.2** The institution structures its graduate curricula (1) to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline and (2) to ensure ongoing student engagement in research and/or appropriate professional practice and training experiences. **(Graduate curriculum)**

Compliance

All Georgia Southwestern graduate programs are structured to include knowledge of the literature of the discipline. Additionally, each program has a research component, a professional practice and training component, or both. Course Outlines and Curriculum Sheets adequately describe these program requirements.

- 3.6.3** At least one-third of credits toward a graduate or a post-baccalaureate professional degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. (See the Commission policy “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.”) **(Institutional credits for a degree)**

Compliance

For graduate programs offered solely by the institution, students earn at most nine hours of transfer work from another accredited institution. This means that at least two-thirds (and typically more) of the credits for a graduate degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution.

The institution participates in a consortial arrangement with Columbus State to offer the MSN degree online. While the MOU and other documentation do not specify that one-third of the credit must be offered by the institution granting the degree, the MOU does specify that each member is in control of its academic policies. The institution has documented that the schedule of courses over a two-year period, negotiated by the two institutions each time, includes at least one-third of the coursework offered through the institution awarding the degree.

- 3.6.4** The institution defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-graduate professional programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. **(Post-baccalaureate program requirements)**

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-baccalaureate professional programs on its graduate webpages and within its Graduate Bulletin. Moreover, these requirements are consistent with the appropriate accrediting bodies.

- 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)**

Non-Compliance

The Institution has a small group of faculty who do not have a graduate degree in the field, but who are teaching courses. Of these, 12 do not have sufficient

documentation of other qualifications that provide evidence of expertise in the field. Please refer to “Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty.”

- 3.7.2** The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of each faculty member in accord with published criteria, regardless of contractual or tenured status. **(Faculty evaluation)**

Compliance

Evidence presented by the institution confirms it regularly evaluates the effectiveness of faculty. Criteria for evaluation in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service are well-documented in the Faculty Handbook. The institution presented a variety of sample forms demonstrating uniform application of evaluations across the University.

- 3.7.3** The institution provides evidence of ongoing professional development of faculty as teachers, scholars, and practitioners. **(Faculty development)**

Compliance

As indicated in the Faculty Handbook, faculty are required to document participation in professional development for promotion/tenure. The institution provides resources for professional development of its faculty through a number of programs, most notably “Southwestern Week” sponsored during the week prior to the start of fall semester each year. A variety of professional development activities are offered during that time for faculty. These activities include events such as “training in the use of plagiarism prevention software, for new academic advisors, on building an online course, on the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act in the classroom, for UNIV 1000 instructors, or on the implementation of a new technology like Degree Works.” In addition, there are events throughout the year, and also resources for grants associated with professional development.

- 3.7.4** The institution ensures adequate procedures for safeguarding and protecting academic freedom. **(Academic freedom)**

Compliance

The institution ensures that there are adequate procedures for safeguarding academic freedom and publishes these within its GSW Faculty Handbook and within its General Statutes.

- 3.7.5** The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. **(Faculty role in governance)**

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern faculty participate in academic and governance matters through twelve committees. Prominent are the Committee on Academic Affairs and the Committee on Graduate Affairs, both charged with drafting, reviewing, and approving policy. All committees provide status reports at semiannual General Faculty meetings.

- 3.8.1** The institution provides facilities and learning/information resources that are appropriate to support its teaching, research, and service mission. **(Learning/information resources)**

Non-Compliance

The institution provided evidence of its provision of facilities and learning/information resources and references to its recent renovations to update facilities, in addition to its provision of learning resources onsite and accessible online. The institution did not provide evidence that the facilities and learning/information resources are utilized by students and faculty to meet the needs of the programs and that they are appropriate in supporting the institution's teaching, research, and service mission.

- 3.8.2** The institution ensures that users have access to regular and timely instruction in the use of the library and other learning/information resources. **(Instruction of library use)**

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern provided evidence of regular access to instructional opportunities in the use of the library and learning resources that are a combination of face-to-face sessions embedded in courses taught by professors, sessions by appointment with librarians, and instruction delivered online via the website. A one-hour credit class is offered annually teaching the foundations for information literacy, and a library online tutorial is assessable via the library's homepage. The Library and the Office of Information and Instructional Technology both offer instruction in learning/information resources primarily delivered online that is timely and available to students at a distance.

- 3.8.3** The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experiences in library and/or other learning/information resources—to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

Non-Compliance

The Off-Site Committee's review of staff qualifications for the library and learning/information resources units of the institution indicates that the qualifications are appropriate. Although the library unit used a peer analysis to compare its numbers of qualified staff with comparable institutions, the number compared is different than the total staff number reported in the Compliance

Certification report, and the results indicated that the institution is eleventh of thirteen institutions surveyed per FTE students. The evidence did not demonstrate that the institution has a sufficient number of qualified staff in the library and or other learning/information resources areas to accomplish its mission for all of its academic programs.

- 3.9.1** The institution publishes a clear and appropriate statement of student rights and responsibilities and disseminates the statement to the campus community. **(Student rights)**

Compliance

The institution's Student Handbook, GSWeathervane is the primary distribution source for information about Student Rights and Responsibilities. Statements about student rights and responsibilities are available in print and in an electronic version on the GSW website. Additional sections in the Handbook regarding Student Rights and Responsibilities include the Student Bill of Rights, Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students, Student Expression of Opinion, Posting of Information, Financial Responsibility of Students, Student Media, and Responsibilities of Student Editors, Directors, and Contributors to Student Media. The Handbook also describes the institution's Code of Conduct and the process for handling violations.

- 3.9.2** The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains security measures to protect and back up data. **(Student records).**

Compliance

The University System of Georgia (USG) establishes the core principles for the privacy and security of student records. GSW policies regarding student records must also conform to the USG principles. The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of student records by employing strict measures to protect and back up data. GSW's security plan includes the use of SSL encryption, redundant servers, sophisticated firewalls, and privacy and security audits.

The Office of the Registrar is the official custodian of student academic records, but individual instructors and academic advisors as well as academic unit administrators also have custody of some student academic records. The institution also contracts with outside providers who store student academic records for various purposes. The institution uses Banner as its Student Information System (SIS), Desire 2 Learn as its Learning Management System (LMS), and PeopleSoft for human resources and financial management. The institution also employs the Degree Works system for advising purposes. The Banner Web Interface is known as the Registration and Academic Information Network (RAIN), and access to this portal is password protected. Individual students have access only to their own records, while faculty and administrators have read-only access to records such as transcripts and rosters for all students.

All of data collection systems utilized are supported by institution's Office of Information and Instructional Technology with backup support provided by USG technology services.

- 3.9.3** The institution provides a sufficient number of qualified staff—with appropriate education or experience in the student affairs area—to accomplish the mission of the institution. **(Qualified staff)**

Compliance

The institution employs an appropriate level of well credentialed staff capable of leading the Division of Student Affairs. A review of staff vitas and job descriptions demonstrate that Student Affairs personnel are capable of providing quality and effective services and programs. Ongoing professional development is encouraged and supported as budget constraints permit. Annual assessments, annual reports, and annual performance appraisals are used to help ensure the quality and effectiveness of the programs and services offered within the Division of Student Affairs.

- 3.10.1** The institution's recent financial history demonstrates financial stability. **(Financial stability)**

Non-Compliance

While Georgia Southwestern provided evidence of financial stability, including Key Performance Indicators, no documentation was provided to the Off-Site Committee regarding large year-to-year changes in temporary and permanently restricted net assets. Also, no discussion was provided regarding the qualification and experience of individuals charged with management of financial management. Additionally, a current audit was not available for review.

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

Non-Compliance

Georgia Southwestern provided audits for the federal and state financial aid programs as required by federal and state regulations. Audit finding for each year presented were limited and were resolved in a timely manner. Audits are pending for both state and federal programs for FY 2013.

- 3.10.3** The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources. **(Control of finances)**

Compliance

The institution provided adequate documentation to support appropriate control over its financial resources. Evidence included a Business Procurement Manual, copy of procurement processes, and various reports required by the University of Georgia System.

- 3.10.4** The institution maintains financial control over externally funded or sponsored research and programs. **(Control of sponsored research/external funds)**

Compliance

The institution has policies and procedures in place governing the distribution of funds from external grants and contracts. There is evidence from the details included in the Business Procedures Manual related to the processes for external fund management. Specific examples included disbursement authorizations, travel approvals, and budget management. The last audit provided indicated no audit findings.

- 3.11.1** The institution exercises appropriate control over all its physical resources. **(Control of physical resources)**

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern exercises control over all its physical resources. Regulations and procedures exist that clearly identify responsibility for the control, safeguarding and update of the institution's physical assets. Evidence provided for review by the Off-Site Committee included material management procedures and inventories; equipment inventory; building inventories, vehicles inventories, and the assignment of responsibility of the physical resources.

- 3.11.2** The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community. **(Institutional environment)**

Compliance

The institution has procedures and processes that provide for a healthy, safe and secure campus environment. Evidence provided for review included the institutional inspection related to fire suppression systems and safety inspections. The institution employs a campus wide emergency notification system call "ConnectED". This notification system provides broadcasts to student, faculty and staff on impending safety events. Additionally, the institution provided their Clery information and training manuals.

- *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)**

Compliance

The institution operates, maintains and has adequate physical resources to serve the need of the institution and support its students, faculty, staff, research needs, housing needs and support of its mission. Documentation included a facilities campus master plan with current facilities needs assessment as well as future needs based on enrollments growth. Evidence also included deferred maintenance plans that documents progress and details future needs as well as a funding plan to address future facility needs.

- 3.12.1** The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the Commission's substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. *(See the Commission policy "Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions.")* **(Substantive change)**

Compliance

The institution provided its policy to the Off-Site Committee with its policy on substantive change, noting that all potential substantive changes must be reviewed by the institutions SACS-COC Liaison. The institution also provided a list of all substantive changes sent to the Commission on Colleges since August 2003, along with the supporting documentation associated with each of these changes.

- 3.13.1** The institution complies with the policies of the Commission on Colleges. **(Policy compliance)**

*3.13.1. "Accrediting Decisions of Other Agencies"

Applicable Policy Statement. Any institution seeking or holding accreditation from more than one U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting body must describe itself in identical terms to each recognized accrediting body with regard to purpose, governance, programs, degrees, diplomas, certificates, personnel, finances, and constituencies, and must keep each institutional accrediting body apprised of any change in its status with one or another accrediting body.

Documentation: The institution should (1) list federally recognized agencies that currently accredit the institution or any of its programs, (2) provide the date of the most recent review by each agency and indicate if negative action was taken by the agency and the reason for such action, (3) provide copies of statements used to describe itself for each of the accrediting bodies, (4) indicate any agency that has terminated accreditation, the date, and the reason for termination, and (5) indicate the date and reason for the institution voluntarily withdrawing accreditation with any of the agencies.

Compliance

Georgia Southwestern holds accreditation from two U.S. Department of Education recognized accrediting bodies: the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). Neither of these bodies has terminated the institution's accreditation, nor has the institution voluntarily withdrawn its accreditation from

either body. The institution provided evidence related to recent reaffirmation reviews confirming that it describes itself in identical terms to these agencies.

3.13.2 “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures”

Applicable Policy Statement. Member institutions are responsible for notifying and providing SACSCOC with signed final copies of agreements governing their collaborative academic arrangements (as defined in this policy). These arrangements must address the requirements set forth in the collaborative academic arrangements policy and procedures. For all such arrangements, SACSCOC-accredited institutions assume responsibility for (1) the integrity of the collaborative academic arrangements, (2) the quality of credits recorded on their transcripts, and (3) compliance with accreditation requirements.

Documentation: The institution should provide evidence that it has reported to the Commission all collaborative academic arrangements (as defined in this policy) that included signed final copies of the agreements. In addition, the institution should integrate into the Compliance Certification a discussion and determination of compliance with all standards applicable to the provisions of the agreements.

Non-Compliance

The institution noted a dual-degree arrangement with 34 Chinese universities through collaboration between the China Center for International Educational Exchange and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. The institution provided three letters of notification to SACS - August 2008, May 2013, and August 2013. Approval was received for the first two, with one pending. The institution stated this was the only dual-degree arrangement at GSW, but the response for CS 2.7.1 describes a dual-degree program with Georgia Institute of Technology (GIT). The institution did not provide sufficient clarification or documentation regarding the GIT program. Without clarification or documentation for the GIT program, compliance could not be determined by the Off-Site Committee.

***3.13.3 “Complaint Procedures Against the Commission or Its Accredited Institutions”**

Applicable Policy Statement. Each institution is required to have in place student complaint policies and procedures that are reasonable, fairly administered, and well-publicized. (See *FR 4.5*). The Commission also requires, in accord with federal regulations, that each institution maintains a record of complaints received by the institution. This record is made available to the Commission upon request. This record will be reviewed and evaluated by the Commission as part of the institution’s decennial evaluation.

Documentation: When addressing this policy statement, the institution should provide information to the Commission describing how the institution maintains its record and also include the following: (1) individuals/offices responsible for the maintenance of the record(s), (2) elements of a complaint review that are included in the record, and (3) where the record(s) is located (centralized or decentralized). The record itself will be reviewed during the on-site evaluation of the institution.

Compliance

The institution has two procedures for addressing student complaints: one deal with Academic Issues and the other addresses Non-Academic Issues. These policies are outlined and widely publicized in the Student Handbook and the Faculty Handbook. The links to these policies are also located on the institution's website. Distance Learning Students also have access to these policies on the Distance Learning webpage. Distance Learning students are provided with access to the contact information for department chairs, deans, directors, and vice presidents on a page linked to GSW's Distance Learning web page. Records of Academic Complaints are maintained in the Office of Academic Affairs and Non-Academic Complaints are maintained in the Office of the Assistant Dean of Students. Examples of complaints and their resolution are provided in FR 4.5

3.13.4 “Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports”

***3.13.4.a. Applicable Policy Statement.** An institution includes a review of its distance learning programs in the Compliance Certification.

Documentation: In order to be in compliance with this policy, the institution must have incorporated an assessment of its compliance with standards that apply to its distance and correspondence education programs and courses.

Compliance

The institution integrated a discussion of issues related to distance learning programs into the appropriate responses to Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards, and Federal Requirements.

3.13.4.b. 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 with in that system.

Documentation: The institution should provide a description of the system operation and structure or the corporate structure if this applies.

Compliance

The institution provided evidence of the operating structure of the University System of George, of which GSW is a unit. Budgets are approved as separate units and each unit has its own mission statement. The institution provided a mission statement approved by the faculty in April 30, 2010.

3.13.5 “Separate Accreditation for Units of a Member Institution”

***3.13.5.a. Applicable Policy Statement.** All branch campuses related to the parent campus through corporate or administrative control (1) include the name of the parent campus and make it clear that its accreditation is dependent on the continued accreditation of the parent campus and (2) are evaluated during reviews for institutions seeking candidacy, initial membership, or reaffirmation of accreditation. All other extended units under the accreditation of the parent campus are also evaluated during such reviews.

Documentation: For institutions with branch campuses: (1) The name of each branch campus must include the name of the parent campus—the SACSCOC accredited entity. The institution should provide evidence of this for each of its branch campuses. (2) The institution should incorporate the review of its branch campuses, as well as other extended units under the parent campus, into its comprehensive self-assessment and its determination of compliance with the standards, and indicate the procedure for doing so.

Not applicable

3.13.5.b. Applicable Policy Statement. If the Commission on Colleges determines that an extended unit is autonomous to the extent that the control over that unit by the parent or its board is significantly impaired, the Commission may direct that the extended unit seek to become a separately accredited institution. A unit which seeks separate accreditation should bear a different name from that of the parent. A unit which is located in a state or country outside the geographic jurisdiction of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and which the Commission determines should be separately accredited or the institution requests to be separately accredited, applies for separate accreditation from the regional accrediting association that accredits colleges in that state or country

Implementation: If, during its review of the institution, the Commission determines that an extended unit is sufficiently autonomous to the extent that the parent campus has little or no control, the Commission will use this policy to recommend separate accreditation of the extended unit. ***No response required by the institution.***

Not applicable

3.14.1 A member or candidate institution represents its accredited status accurately and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in accordance with Commission requirements and federal policy. **(Publication of accreditation status)**

Compliance

The institution publishes information about its accreditation status on its website and in its undergraduate and graduate catalogs, using the prescribed format in all three locations. The institution provided copies of these documents for review by the Off-Site Committee.

D. Assessment of Compliance with Section 4: Federal Requirements

- *4.1 The institution evaluates success with respect to student achievement consistent with its mission. Criteria may include: enrollment data; retention, graduation, course completion, and job placement rates; state licensing examinations, student portfolios; or other means of demonstrating achievement of goals. **(Student achievement)**

Non-Compliance

Georgia Southwestern uses various methods to assess student success. The institution presented information regarding enrollment (2003-2012), retention (2000-2011), progression (2007-2010), graduation (2009-2008), but no threshold of achievement was identified.

No threshold of achievement was identified with the other data (i.e., NCLEX-RN licensure exam scores and GACE II pass rates) presented.

- *4.2 The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the mission and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. **(Program curriculum)**

Compliance

The institution's curriculum is directly related and appropriate to the mission and goals of the institution and the diplomas, certificates, or degrees awarded. To fulfill its mission, the institution offers programs designed to encourage "intellectual, personal, and social growth for students" through a "full range of bachelor degree programs, along with selected master's and specialist degree programs." These programs are vetted through a process that specifically includes a clear description of "fit with the institutional mission."

- *4.3 The institution makes available to students and the public current academic calendars, grading policies, and refund policies. **(Publication of policies)**

Compliance

The institution makes its current academic calendar, grading policies, and refund policies available to students and the public primarily through its website. Information regarding these policies is also available in print versions of the Undergraduate Student and Graduate Bulletins, Faculty Handbook, *GSWeatherwane*, and the Student Handbook. The grading and refund policies are detailed and appropriate for the mission of the institution and consistent with similar types of institutions.

- *4.4 Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs. **(Program length)**

Compliance

The lengths of the Institution's baccalaureate and master's programs are appropriate and conform to the standards in the disciplines. They meet or exceed minimum requirements of 120 semester credit hours for baccalaureate programs and 30 semester credit hours for master's programs. Baccalaureate programs range from 120 semester credit hours (e.g., Art) to 132 semester credit hours (Music Education); dual-degree programs with GIT range from 138 to 150 hours; master's programs from 30 (MBA) to 38 (MSN).

The specialist program also meets requirements at 30 hours, but this program is currently inactive.

- *4.5 The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. (See the Commission policy "Complaint Procedures against the Commission or its Accredited Institutions.") **(Student complaints)**

Compliance

The institution has two well-publicized procedures for addressing student complaints (one for Academic Issues and one for Non-Academic Issues) as well as a procedure for appealing disciplinary measures resulting from student code of conduct violations. The University System of Georgia (USG) also provides for appeal of some decisions made on the individual campuses. The procedures for handling both academic and non-academic complaints are outlined in the GSW Student Handbook, *GSWeatherwane*, and the GSW Faculty Handbook. All students (undergraduate, graduate, and distance learning) have easy access to these policies. All administrators, advisors, and new employees are also made aware of the policies during faculty and staff training held in August and May.

Academic and Non-Academic Complaints begin with an informal process between the student and the faculty or staff member with whom they disagree and progressively move into more formal processes to the President of the Institution. In specific cases, there is also an appeal to the USG Board of Regents.

An example of an Academic Complaint and an example of a Student Code of Conduct case were presented for review by the Off-Site Committee. These examples provided adequate evidence that the complaint processes used at the institution to resolve issues are followed as written in policy.

- *4.6 Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. **(Recruitment materials)**

Compliance

The recruitment materials provided for Off-Site Committee review accurately portray the institution to prospective students and adhere to its mission. The focus of the institution's recruitment materials is the Admissions website; however, the institution also utilizes a variety of social media outlets, billboards, and television and radio advertisements in their recruitment process. The Admissions website is easy to access and contains a wealth of information about the institution. There are links to many other offices and sites for students to explore. The Admissions office also assists with the recruitment of Study Abroad opportunities and the English learning Institute. Many examples of recruitment materials were presented to the Off-Site Committee for review. This review of the recruitment materials and methods provided demonstrates that the institution's message is communicated consistently to students and parents.

- *4.7** 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)**

Non-Compliance

The institution is approved for Pell, FFEL, FDSL, FS, FWS and FSEOG through 6/30/2015. The last audit, conducted as of FY 2007, showed no audit finding on the federal programs. The institution also included a copy of the current program participation agreement. The next audit is scheduled as of FY 2013, but was not included in the documentation.

- *4.8** An institution that offers distance or correspondence education documents each of the following: **(Distance and correspondence education)**

- 4.8.1** demonstrates that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program 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, at the option of the institution, methods such as (a) a secure login and pass code, (b) proctored examinations, or (c) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

Compliance

The institution offers distance education coursework, but no correspondence courses. Student identity is verified through login to the GeorgiaVIEW learning management system (LMS), which requires entry of a password. In addition, the School of Business Administration enrolls the majority of online students, and it requires at least one proctored examination (using ProctorU) in each online course.

- 4.8.2 has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.

Compliance

The institution issues each student and staff member a username and password, which serves as the unique identifier and is required for students and faculty to access the GeorgiaVIEW learning management system and the Registration and Academic Information Network (RAIN). Upon login, students only see their own grades and other feedback, and faculty -- who can see all grades and feedback for students in their courses -- are required to abide by the usual FERPA regulations.

Further, the Computer and Network Usage policy (which users must agree to) clearly specifies the prohibition against sharing of passwords. While not referenced in the documentation for this standard, the student honor code provides specific punishments for cheating, which would cover representing oneself as another student.

- 4.8.3 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.

Compliance

The institution distributes information about additional costs for students through the RAIN registration system. These costs typically include the cost of proctored examinations, and the most recent notice posted for students during registration indicated that the two hour exam cost is \$25.00.

- *4.9 The institution has policies and procedures for determining the credit hours awarded for courses and programs that conform to commonly accepted practices in higher education and to Commission policy. (*See the Commission policy "Credit Hours."*) **(Definition of credit hours)**

Compliance

The institution provided evidence of policies and implementation that are commonly accepted to define the semester credit hour. The institution also indicated that the equivalency is required of online courses. It also addresses the amount of contact and preparation time expected in online modes of delivery.

E. Additional observations regarding strengths and weaknesses of the institution. (optional).

Part III. Assessment of the Quality Enhancement Plan

To be completed by the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

A. Brief description of the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan

PRELIMINARY

B. Analysis of the Acceptability of the Quality Enhancement Plan

1. **An Institutional Process.** *The institution uses an institutional process for identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment.*
2. **Focus of the Plan.** *The institution identifies a significant issue that (1) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and (2) accomplishes the mission of the institution.*
3. **Institutional Capability for the Initiation, Implementation, and Completion of the Plan.** *The institution provides evidence that it has sufficient resources to initiate, implement, sustain, and complete the QEP.*
4. **Broad-based Involvement of Institutional Constituencies.** *The institution demonstrates the involvement of its constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the Plan.*
5. **Assessment of the Plan.** *The institution identifies goals and a plan to assess the achievement of those goals.*

C. Analysis and Comments for Strengthening the QEP

Part IV. Third-Party Comments

To be completed by the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee.

If an institution receives Third-Party Comments, the institution has an opportunity to respond to those comments and the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee reviews the response as part of its comprehensive evaluation of the institution.

The Committee should check one of the following:

___ No Third-Party Comments submitted.

___ Third-Party Comments submitted. (**Address the items below.**)

- 1. Describe the nature of the Comments and any allegations of non-compliance that may have been part of the formal Third-Party Comments;*
- 2. Indicate whether the Committee found evidence in support of any allegations of non-compliance.*

If found to be out of compliance, the Committee should write a recommendation and include it in Part II under the standard cited with a full narrative that describes why the institution was found to be out of compliance and the documentation that supports that determination. In this space, reference the number of the Core Requirement, Comprehensive Standard, or Federal Requirement and the recommendation number cited in Part II.

If determined to be in compliance, explain in this space the reasons and refer to the documentation in support of this finding.

APPENDIX A

Roster of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee	Roster of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee
<p>Dr. Robert D. Gratz - CHAIR Special Assistant to the President Texas State University</p> <p>Mr. Gary W. Barnes Vice President for Business and Finance West Texas A&M University</p> <p>Mrs. Veronica M. Biscoe Director of University Planning, Assessment and EEO Northwestern State University</p> <p>Dr. John Crain President Southeastern Louisiana University</p> <p>Dr. Janice R. Franklin Dean, University Library and Learning Resources Alabama State University</p> <p>Dr. Holly P. Hirst Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and Professor of Mathematics Appalachian State University</p> <p>Dr. Brian L. Johnson Assistant Provost/Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs Austin Peay State University</p> <p>Dr. David P. Shields, Jr. Vice President for Student Affairs University of North Alabama</p> <p>Dr. Jerre W. Wilson Vice President, Academic Affairs Marine Corps University</p> <p><u>SACSCOC Representative:</u> Dr. Charles Taylor Vice President SACSCOC</p>	

(Refer to "Directions for Completion of the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee.")

APPENDIX B

Off-Campus Sites or Distance Learning Programs Reviewed

(Refer to "Directions for Completion of the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee.")

PRELIMINARY

APPENDIX C

List of Recommendations Cited in the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee *(Refer to "Directions for Completion of the Report of the Reaffirmation Committee.")*

PRELIMINARY

Request for Justifying and Documenting Qualifications of Faculty

Institution: Georgia Southwestern

For each of the faculty members listed below, the committee either found the academic qualification of the faculty member to be inadequate and/or the institution did not adequately justify and document the faculty member's other qualifications to teach the identified course(s). For each case, the committee checked the column appropriate to its findings and provided additional comments if needed to clarify the concern.

The institution is requested to submit additional justification and documentation on the qualifications of each of the faculty member listed. When responding, the institution should use the Commission's "Faculty Roster Form: Qualifications of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty" and its "Instructions for Reporting the Qualifications of Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty," which can be accessed under the Institutional Resources tab of the Commission website: www.sacscoc.org. Read the instructions carefully and pay close attention to the section "Providing Information that Establishes Qualifications." The completed form, or similar document, should be included as part of the institution's formal response to the Commission.

1	2	3	4	5
Name of Faculty Member	Course(s) in Question	Inadequate Academic Qualifications	Insufficient Justification of Other Qualifications	Comments (if needed)
Kevin Ellis and John Fox and Patricia Hunter and Karen Jansen and Cynthia Schaeffner	ESL courses that are below 1000	X	X	
Arthur Bone	MUSC 1xx (guitar courses)	BA in music	X.	
Tracey McCorkle	Spanish language courses	MEd English Ed	X	
Mandy Mercer	Social Work	no documentation provided	X	
Slenker III, Robert Emmitt (P)	CIS 2010, CIS 2020	MBA		
Sullivan, Troy Vincent (P)	BUSA 3050, Business Statistics, BUSA 3060 Quantitative Management	EdD, Adult Education		
Watts, Angela (P)	UNIV 1000, The GSW Experience	Bachelor of Business Admin		
Yueng, Alwen	CHIN 1001, 1002, 2001, 2002	Masters of Music, Piano Pedagogy		

*Form Adopted: January 2007
Updated: January 2011*