

Information about Accrediting Agency Decision

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Board of Trustees has voted not to sanction the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in connection with past academic irregularities in the Department of African and Afro-American Studies.

The University remains fully accredited and in good standing with SACSCOC. The campus will be asked to provide a monitoring report by next June on continued progress with academic procedures in the department.

Chancellor Holden Thorp was notified by telephone about that decision on June 20, 2013, as part of a biannual review of the accreditation status of degree-granting higher education institutions in an 11-state region. Chancellor Thorp sent the Carolina community an email message about the board's decision.

For more information about SACSCOC and this issue, visit the University's accreditation website, <http://oira.unc.edu/accreditation/>.

The University has worked with SACSCOC for more than a year to provide information and respond to questions about the comprehensive efforts to address past academic irregularities discovered during the joint NCAA and University investigation. The University sent SACSCOC the NCAA's ruling regarding violations, as well as the Review of Courses in African and Afro-American Studies, along with three other internal reports, more than 70 recommendations, and numerous new policies and procedures put in place to strengthen academics.

In December 2012, the SACSCOC trustees appointed a special committee to evaluate the University's compliance with accreditation standards. Since then, the University has remained fully accredited and in good standing with no sanction. (Refer to the SACSCOC statement, <http://www.sacscoc.org/2012%20December%20Actions%20and%20Disclosure%20Statements/UNC-Chapel%20Hill.pdf>).

At that time, the University had not received two outside, independent reviews: the Baker Tilly Review of Policies and Procedures and former North Carolina Governor James Martin's Academic Anomalies Report, conducted with Baker Tilly, a management consulting firm with extensive national experience in academic performance procedures and controls. Both reports were issued on December 19, 2012, to the University's Board of Trustees. In addition, the UNC Board of Governors Academic Review Panel did not complete its work until February 2013. That review found that the University's internal and outside investigations were thorough and that the new policies and procedures in place were reasonable.

In March 2013, the University submitted its First Monitoring Report to SACSCOC. That report addressed concerns identified by the SACSCOC trustees and staff in December on

issues including accreditation standards covering academic policies, academic support services, student records and definition of credit hours.

In January 2013, SACSCOC asked the University to provide information about the degrees awarded to students who were enrolled in what the Martin-Baker Tilly report called Type 1 courses (a lecture course in which the faculty member listed as instructor of record denied teaching the course section and signing the grade roll, or one in which the chair stated the course section had not been taught.) The University does not believe that credit was awarded for courses in which students did no work or that degrees were awarded to students who did not earn them.

The special committee visited campus in April and produced a report with one recommendation asking the University to demonstrate the integrity of the degrees that would be awarded to students who had not yet graduated and received credit for Type 1 courses.

The University responded to the special committee in May with a plan that is now being implemented. The University identified 80 students who took the Type 1 courses but have not graduated.

Of the 80 students, 34 students are not affected under the University's plan. Some registered for a Type 1 course, but did not receive any credit. Others have more than 120 hours required for graduation. A handful of students finished their undergraduate degrees at other institutions. In other cases, the course was a prerequisite to a higher-level course that was taught appropriately and completed satisfactorily.

The remaining 46 students – all of whom received passing grades in a Type 1 course – are affected. The University is offering them three options if they wish to pursue graduation. They may provide the past coursework for re-evaluation by a faculty committee; take a challenge examination; or take an additional course. The University will cover tuition, fees and the cost of textbooks or other related or required course materials.

In the First Monitoring Report in March, the University also told SACSCOC about 304 alumni who had graduated and were enrolled in a Type 1 course in African and Afro-American studies between 1997 and 2009. The University will offer any of those alumni an opportunity to enroll in one supplemental course. The University will cover tuition, fees and the cost of any textbook or required course materials. These students will not receive a grade or additional course credit since transcripts are permanently sealed one year after graduation under University policy.

The University will use no state funds to pay for these additional courses for either students or alumni.

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