UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE.

To: Academic Deans

From: Gerry Bradley,
           Executive Vice President and University Provost

           Robert (Bob) S. Goldstein,
           Vice Provost/SACSCOC Liaison

Date: September 17, 2024

RE: **University Requirements for SACSCOC Compliance**

Deans are responsible for ensuring adherence to important documentary processes in their units to maintain compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation and policies. Unit compliance with the practices stated below will be an element in the annual evaluation of each dean.

Institutions accredited by SACSCOC are required to:

- maintain documentation of the credentials for instructional faculty and ensure faculty are appropriately qualified;
- document student learning outcomes;
- provide timely notification of any changes in program-level accreditations;
- ensure academic programs demonstrate appropriate quality, rigor, integrity, and coherence commensurate with the institution's mission;
- provide evidence of regular and substantive faculty interaction with students enrolled in online educational delivery methods; and
- ensure students provided with a UofL education online or at an off-campus instructional site (OCIS) have comparable experiences to those educated on the main campus.

The purpose of this correspondence is to reinforce relevant university procedures to ensure the institution complies with these standards.

I.   Faculty Credentials

The Office of Faculty Affairs manages the collection of faculty credentialing information for all regular faculty appointments (i.e., term, tenure-track, and tenured). Faculty Affairs also provides guidance to the academic units on the credentialing of other instructional staff [i.e., part-time lecturers (PTL), graduate teaching assistants (GTA), and staff with dual appointments]. Academic units are responsible for managing the documentation of credentials for all PTL, GTA, and staff with dual appointments. More information is available online at: Faculty Credential Reporting.

Educational Credentials: Educational credentials for all faculty and instructional staff appointments must be entered into the university's Workday Human Resources system and linked in OnBase through submission of the Faculty Roster Form. Faculty Affairs has primary data entry responsibility for all regular faculty appointments. Each academic unit has a faculty credentials contact that works with Faculty Affairs to ensure the necessary data entry is completed

for all other instructional staff. The data entry of educational credentials must be completed (by either Faculty Affairs or the academic unit) during the hiring process.

Transcripts and Faculty Qualification Documentation: Faculty Affairs maintains a database of official transcripts, curricula vitae, and other documentation related to the qualifications of all regular faculty.

All other instructional staff employed through the academic unit as PTLs, staff with dual appointments, or GTAs who are the instructor of record must have their transcripts and other support documents maintained at the department/unit level. For all instructional staff, an official transcript, a curriculum vitae/resume, and other documentation as necessary to justify the qualifications of the individual must be retained in the academic unit personnel files and uploaded to OnBase. Any questions about the transmission of instructional staff qualifications into the central database (i.e., OnBase) may be directed to the Office of Faculty Affairs. For assistance with the credentialing process for instructional staff contact Jordan Aikin, Coordinator of Part-time Lecturers, at jordan.aikin@louisville.edu.

II. Syllabi

A course syllabus must be developed by each instructor and distributed to students at the start of the academic term. The posting of course syllabi in Blackboard is considered part of each instructor's preparation for each term. Students have a right to receive the information provided in the syllabus per university policy: Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

The syllabus should clearly state the course objectives and learning outcomes. The learning outcomes should specify the knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to obtain in a course or program. **In compliance with federal guidelines, syllabi for online courses should reflect opportunities for regular and substantive interaction with students**. Guidelines on the development of syllabi are available through the Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning: Syllabus Guidelines.

Per University policy, each syllabus must contain the approved notification of Title IX and Clery Act (i.e., campus crime and security) reporting procedures and responsibilities. Each unit may have additional requirements for the information that must appear on a syllabus. See the listing of unit syllabi policies here: Syllabus Policies by Unit.

Additionally, all syllabi must demonstrate an expectation of out-of-class work and instructional contact that complies with the requirements set forth in the Academic Calendar and Awarding of Course Credit Hours policy.

Finally, syllabi must be posted in Blackboard Ultra using prescribed naming conventions for UofL to maintain archival records of syllabi, which are used to establish transfer equivalencies for out-going students, provide evidence of compliance to accreditors, and assist with other academic compliance requests. More information about the posting of syllabi to Blackboard Ultra is available at Instructions to Add a Syllabus to a Course in Blackboard Ultra.

III. Program-Level Accreditations

The Office of Academic Planning & Accountability (OAPA) has provided guidance to all associate deans about the timely notification of the outcomes of program-level accreditation reviews and/or on-campus visits by accrediting bodies. An important aspect of this guidance is to provide notification to OAPA within two weeks of being informed of the outcome of an accreditor's review process. The institution is required to publicly disclose our accreditation status with all United States Department of Education (USDOE) recognized accreditors, and we must notify SACSCOC of any change in our accreditation status with such agencies. Timely notification to OAPA ensures we remain in compliance with this requirement.

Additionally, OAPA assists with the review of all program-level accreditations. As part of this process, OAPA conducts a planning meeting prior to the academic program beginning their self-study process. If a program has an

accreditation occurring within the academic unit during the 2024-2025 academic year, OAPA should have already been in contact with the unit to schedule the initial meeting (or already held it). If that has not happened, contact Kay Vetter, Director of Accreditation and Academic Programs, at kay.vetter@louisville.edu as soon as possible.

Finally, OAPA has revised the Program Level Accreditation Review and Notification Process to clarify expectations regarding review of annual submissions to accreditors. If the annual submission is in response to an adverse finding during a program's most recent reaffirmation process, involves a substantive change, or requires my or the President's signature, OAPA must review the notification prior to submission. OAPA should be given at least six (6) weeks for this review.

For more information about the notification and review process of program-level accreditations, visit Program Level Accreditation Review and Notification Process.

IV. Academic Calendar and Awarding of Course Credit Policy

The Academic Calendar and Awarding of Course Credit Hours policy has been revised to comply with revisions to the SACSCOC Credit Hours policy. The policy now includes requirements about approving zero-credit hour courses, clarifies expectations for out-of-class work, and identifies the number of available meeting days for all institution-wide terms offered by UofL.

V. Regular and Substantive Interaction

SACSCOC and the USDOE require evidence of regular and substantive interaction between faculty and students enrolled in online courses. To ensure compliance with this standard, a series of questions has been added to the course development process requiring the associate deans to acknowledge the requirement of such interaction and that documentation is maintained by the unit for newly established online courses. Additionally, all faculty teaching one or more online courses this academic year were sent the Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online Courses Policy. Faculty are expected to read the policy and confirm their acknowledgement of the policy. Full compliance is required, and periodic status updates are provided to academic units for follow-up. If faculty teaching online courses do not complete the attestation, they will not be permitted to teach online courses during the subsequent semester.

VI. Academic Agreements with External Partners

Any agreements between UofL and an external agency involving an academic program (e.g., degree, certificate, etc.) must be reviewed by and routed through the Provost's Program Proposal Review Committee (PPPRC). The types of agreements governed by this process include, but are not limited to the following:

- dual degrees (i.e., a course of study resulting in a student receiving degrees from each participating institution at the same educational level),
- joint degrees (i.e., a course of study resulting in a student receiving one degree bearing the insignia of each participating institution at the same educational level),
- transfer agreements,
- continuation pathways (i.e., a course of study resulting in a student receiving degrees from each participating institution at different educational levels),
- off-campus instructional sites (OCIS), or
- cooperative academic arrangements (i.e., transcripting courses/instruction offered by other institutions/entities as UofL courses).

For more information about the PPPRC review and approval process, visit Academic Agreement Process or for questions, contact Derek Hottell, Assistant Director for Accreditation and Academic Programs, at derek.hottell@louisville.edu.

Experiential Learning Agreements: Additionally, while academic units will continue to be responsible for reviewing, approving, and submitting for signature all agreements related to experiential learning (e.g., site placements, clinical rotations, internships, practicums, etc.), academic deans should be aware that they are attesting to the following by recommending a site for approval to me:

- The site is safe and free of known hazards. Students at the site have the same reasonable expectation of safety as they do on UofL's campus.
- The supervision and experiences being provided to the students at the site are pedagogically appropriate to meet the learning objectives of the experiential learning course, and they are appropriately scaffolded for the students' levels of mastery.
- The site offers appropriate spaces, equipment, and other resources to meet the learning objectives of the experiential learning course.

By submitting an experiential learning agreement through Compliance360 for my signature, you are attesting that you and/or your designee(s) have ensured that the above statements are true regarding the site. For additional resources to support you and your faculty in crafting rewarding experiential learning opportunities for our students, visit the Center for Engaged Learning.

Compliance360: I want to reiterate my expectation that all agreements or other documentation requiring my signature, should be routed through Compliance360.

Process Revisions: Finally, Gail DePuy, Senior Vice Provost, and Derek Hottell, Assistant Director of Accreditation and Academic Programs, are currently working with various contract administrators to refine and streamline the approval process for academic agreements. Please be prepared for Drs. DePuy and Hottell to contact you in the upcoming weeks to identify the individuals who are primarily responsible for administering agreements within your units to incorporate them into the feedback and review process of the revised academic agreement approval process.

VII. Off-Campus Instructional Sites (OCIS)

All students earning UofL credit need to be provided with comparable academic experiences and student support services regardless of whether those courses are offered on-campus, online, or at an OCIS. Any academic program coordinator (e.g., department chair, graduate program coordinator, etc.) with courses being offered at a location other than the Belknap campus needs to ensure they correspond with OAPA to provide requested information about the quality of the site. Per SACSCOC standards and policies, both the Health Science Center (HSC) and Shelby campuses are considered OCIS.

Academic units offering programs and/or courses at the Shelby campus must notify OAPA (Bob Goldstein, Vice Provost), to ensure the program is offering less than 50% of its courses at this OCIS. This only applies to sites where for-credit courses being transcripted as UofL courses are offered; student placements, internship sites, transfer agreements, study abroad locations, and student exchanges are not considered OCIS.

Additionally, any department offering dual credit courses must notify Ms. Megan Adams, Coordinator of Dual Credit, at megan.adams@louisville.edu prior to offering a dual credit course. For more information about offering dual credit courses, visit UofL Dual Credit Program.

VIII. Next Steps/Reminders:

1. Remind your faculty that posting of syllabi in Blackboard Ultra is an ongoing requirement. All course sections must have a syllabus posted unless the course has been exempted. The list of exempted courses can be found at: Courses Exempted from Posting on Blackboard Ultra.

2. Confirm that all processes related to faculty credentialing for instructional staff, as specified in Section I of this memo, are completed.

3. Ensure faculty members teaching online courses complete the annual acknowledgement of the Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online Courses Policy.

4. Notify OAPA immediately if you have a program-level accreditation self-study or other accreditation reporting requirement due during the 2024-2025 academic year if OAPA has not already been in contact with you or the academic program.

5. Distribute the expectations set forth in this memo to members of your academic unit who are responsible for ensuring compliance with the guidelines, policies, and procedures identified in this memo.

Questions about the above university processes can be directed to the following units:

Accreditation Requirements
Bob Goldstein, Vice Provost/SASCOC Liaison
Robert.Goldstein@louisville.edu
502-852-6169
or
Kay Vetter, Director of Accreditation and Academic Programs
kay.vetter@louisville.edu
502-852-3551

Academic Agreements
Derek Hottell, Assistant Director of Accreditation and Academic Programs
derek.hottell@louisville.edu
502-852-7477

Faculty Credentials
Cherie Dawson-Edwards, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
cherie.dawson@louisville.edu
502-852-2583

Course Syllabi Guidelines for Undergraduate Courses
Beth Willey, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
aewill01@louisville.edu
502-852-6159

Course Syllabi Guidelines for Graduate Courses
Beth Boehm, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs
beth.boehm@louisville.edu
502-852-5110

Blackboard Ultra or Online Education Questions
Kelvin Thompson, Vice Provost for Online Strategy and Teaching Innovation
kelvin.thompson@louisville.edu
502-852-4319

Thank you for your attention to these important university requirements.

Sincerely,

Gerry Bradley
Executive Vice President and University Provost

Robert (Bob) S. Goldstein
Vice Provost/SACSCOC Liaison

cc: Kim Schatzel, President
        Kay Vetter, Director of Accreditation and Academic Programs
        Cherie Dawson-Edwards, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
        Beth Willey, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education
        Beth Boehm, Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs
        Kelvin Thompson, Vice Provost for Online Strategy and Teaching Innovation
        Associate Deans