October 26, 2016

To: Academic Deans
University of Louisville

From: Dale B. Billingsley
Interim Executive Vice President and University Provost

RE: University Requirements for Faculty Credentialing and Course Syllabi

Deans and chairs are responsible for the maintenance of two important documentary processes in their respective areas: faculty credentials and course syllabi. Unit compliance with the practices stated below is an element in the annual evaluation of each dean.

As you know, the university’s 2017 decennial reaffirmation review with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is in progress. Institutions accredited by SACSCOC are required to maintain documentation on the credentials of instructional faculty and to document student learning outcomes. The purpose of this correspondence is to reinforce the university procedures on faculty credentialing and the posting of course syllabi to Blackboard for each class section.

Faculty Credentials: The Faculty Affairs Office (FAO) oversees the collection of faculty credential information for all faculty appointments approved by the university’s Board of Trustees. The FAO also provides guidance to the academic units with the credentialing of other instructional staff. All part-time instructional faculty hires must have documentation of their credentials on file in the hiring academic unit. More information is available online: http://louisville.edu/provost/faculty-personnel/faculty-credential-reporting-sacs-coc

Educational data: Educational data for all faculty appointments (full-time and part-time) must be entered into the university’s PeopleSoft Human Resources system. The FAO has primary data entry responsibility for full-time faculty hires and individuals appointed by the Board of Trustees. Each academic unit has a faculty credentials contact that works with the FAO to ensure the necessary data entry is completed for part-time faculty hires. The data entry of educational credentials must be completed (by either the FAO or the academic unit) during the hiring process.

Transcripts: The FAO oversees the scanning of transcripts for all faculty appointed by the Board of Trustees. The FAO maintains a database of original transcripts and redacted transcripts [social security number (SSN) and birth dates are removed]. The redacted transcripts can be used for external reporting, including to SACSCOC.

All other faculty or instructional staff employed through the academic unit as part-time or adjunct faculty must have their transcripts scanned at the department/unit level. This process also includes staff and graduate teaching assistants if they are listed as the instructor of record for a course section. An original transcript and redacted transcripts for part-time faculty must be retained in the academic unit personnel files. Transcripts are to be scanned and saved as a PDF file. An electronic copy (PDF) of the redacted transcript for part-time faculty must be provided to the FAO as new instructors are hired. Direct any questions about the transmission of part-time faculty transcripts into the central transcript database to the FAO.
Please remember, SACSCOC may request to view full-time or part-time faculty personnel files during the decennial reaffirmation process.

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 (Bb) should be treated by faculty as part of their instructional preparation for each term. Students have a right to receive the information provided in the syllabus per university policy: 
https://louisville.edu/dos/students/studentrightsandresponsibilities

The syllabi 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. Guidelines on the development of syllabi are available through the Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning: http://louisville.edu/delphi/resources/syllabus

University policy mandates that each syllabus contain the approved notification of Title IX and Clery Act reporting procedures and responsibilities, as well as a statement of accommodation of any disabilities verified by the Disability Resource Center. Each unit may have additional specific requirements for the information that must appear on a syllabus. See the listing of unit syllabi policies here: http://louisville.edu/delphi/resources/syllabus/schoolpolicies

SACSCOC has several standards that require institutions to define and publish policies related to academic content, (e.g. SACSCOC Comprehensive Standards 3.4.5, 3.5.1, 3.5.3 and 3.6.4). SACSCOC expects the syllabi for all courses taught at the university to be readily available. All syllabi will be subject to review during our 2017 SACSCOC reaffirmation and any future accreditation reviews. Much of the SACS review process takes place on-line by off-site reviewers, so syllabi need to be electronically accessible. More information about the posting of syllabi to Bb is available at: http://louisville.edu/oapa/sacs-data-requirements

Next Steps/Reminders:

1. The Provost Office of Academic Planning and Accountability is working with the unit associate deans to collect any missing course syllabi (spring 2016) needed for the 2017 SACSCOC on-site visit.

2. Each dean is asked to remind their faculty that posting of syllabi in Blackboard 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: http://louisville.edu/oapa/sacs-data-requirements

3. Academic units are asked to confirm that the unit’s personnel files for all part-time instructional faculty hires contain the required credentials documentation and that the documentation corresponds with the human resources data in the university’s PeopleSoft system.

4. The FAO will continue to maintain the files of all full-time faculty and board-appointed positions and complete the necessary PeopleSoft data entry.
Questions about the following university processes can be directed to:

**Accreditation Requirements**
Connie Shumake, Assistant Provost
csshum01@louisville.edu
502-852-3551

**Faculty Credentials**
Tracy Eells, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
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**Course Syllabi Guidelines**
Ann Elizabeth Willey, Faculty Fellow in Undergraduate Affairs and Associate Professor
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**Blackboard questions**

cc: Neville Pinto
    Tracy Eells
    Connie Shumake
    Ann E. Willey
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