To: Academic Deans

From: Gerry Bradley  
Interim University Provost

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

Date: September 28, 2022

RE: University Requirements for SACSCOC Compliance

Deans and program chairs are responsible for the maintenance of important documentary processes in their respective areas to ensure compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation. 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 on the credentials of instructional faculty,
- document student learning outcomes,
- provide timely notification of any changes in program-level accreditations,
- provide evidence of regular and substantive faculty interaction with students enrolled in online educational delivery methods, and
- ensure students provided with a UofL education at an off-campus instructional site have a comparable experience 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 Provost Office of Faculty Affairs oversees the collection of faculty credential information for all faculty appointments approved by the university’s Board of Trustees. Faculty Affairs also provides guidance to the academic units with the credentialing of other instructional staff. All part-time instructional faculty hires must have full documentation of their credentials (e.g., academic transcript of highest degree earned, curriculum vitae, and other documentation as requested) on file in the hiring academic unit. More information is available online at: http://louisville.edu/provost/faculty-personnel/faculty-credential-reporting-sacs-coc

Educational data: Educational data for all faculty appointments (full- and part-time) must be entered into the university’s PeopleSoft Human Resources system. Faculty Affairs 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 Faculty Affairs to ensure the necessary data entry is completed for part-time faculty hires. The data entry of educational credentials must be completed (by either Faculty Affairs or the academic unit) during the hiring process.
Transcripts: Faculty Affairs maintains a database of official transcripts and redacted transcripts (i.e., social security numbers 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 lecturers or adjunct faculty must have their transcripts maintained at the department/unit level. This process includes staff and graduate teaching assistants if they are listed as the instructor of record for a course section. An official transcript and a redacted transcript 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 uploaded to OnBase by the academic unit as new part-time instructors are hired. Direct any questions about the transmission of part-time faculty transcripts into the central transcript database to the Office of Faculty Affairs.

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 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 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: 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 for students with disabilities verified by the Disability Resource Center. Each unit may have additional or 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

More information about the posting of syllabi to Blackboard is available at: http://louisville.edu/delphi/blackboard/faculty http://louisville.edu/oapa/sacs-data-requirements

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) 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 standard. For more information about the notification and review process of program-level accreditations, visit https://louisville.edu/accreditation/program-level-accreditation-process-and-status-change-notification/.

IV. Substantive Interaction

SACSCOC and the US Department of Education require evidence of substantive interaction between faculty and students enrolled in online methods of educational delivery. To ensure compliance with this standard, a series of questions have 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 fall were sent the Regular and Substantive Interaction Policy. Faculty are expected to have read the policy and confirmed their acknowledgement of the policy. Full compliance is required, and periodic status updates will be provided to academic units for follow-up.

V. 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 the Provost Program Proposal Review Committee (PPPRC) prior to being sent to the Office of the Provost for approval and execution. The types of agreements governed by this process include, but are not limited to dual degrees, joint degrees, transfer agreements, research agreements, continuation pathways, off-campus instructional sites, or cooperative academic arrangements. For more information about this review and approval process, visit https://louisville.edu/oapa/exchange-agreements-and-programs/academic-agreements-process.

VI. Off-Campus Instructional Sites

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 off-campus instructional site. Any program chair 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, both the Health Science Campus and ShelbyHurst campus are considered OCIS. Academic units offering programs and/or courses at ShelbyHurst must notify 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 transcripted as UofL courses are being offered; student placements, internship sites, transfer agreements, study abroad locations, and student exchanges are not considered OCIS.

VII. Next Steps/Reminders:

1. 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: https://louisville.edu/oapa/course-syllabus-collection/sacs-data-requirements

2. Academic units are asked to confirm that the unit’s personnel files for all part-time instructional faculty hires contain the required documentation of credentials and that the documentation corresponds with the human resources data in the university’s PeopleSoft system. Please note that Faculty Affairs will continue to maintain the files of all full-time faculty and board-appointed positions and complete the necessary data entry.

3. Each dean is asked to ensure faculty members teaching online courses complete the annual acknowledgement of the Regular and Substantive Interaction Policy.

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

Accreditation Requirements
Kay Vetter, Director of Accreditation and Academic Planning
kay.vetter@louisville.edu
502-852-3551
Faculty Credentials
Cherie Dawson-Edwards, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs
bcdawson01@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
502-852-6159

Blackboard Questions
http://louisville.edu/delphi/blackboard/help/instructor-help/add-a-syllabus-to-your-course

Thank you for your attention to these important university requirements.

Sincerely,

T. Gerard Bradley
Interim University Provost

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

cc: Lori Gonzalez
    Kay Vetter
    Cherie Dawson-Edwards
    Beth Willey
    Beth Boehm
    Kristen Brown
    Associate Deans