Reaffirmation of Accreditation Recommendation
for
Southeast Missouri State University
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

The Higher Learning Commission
A Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
November 14, 2012

2012-13 Academic Quality Improvement Program Review Panel on Reaffirmation
(lead reviewers starred)

Renee Aitken, Full-time Faculty, Northcentral University, Prescott Valley, AZ
Timothy Allwein, Associate Professor, Indiana Institute of Technology, Ft. Wayne, IN
*Glen W. Davidson, Professor Emeritus, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Carbondale, IL
George H. Johnston, Professor Emeritus, Parkland College, Champaign, IL
Mark Kretovics, Associate Professor, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio
Vincent Linder, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Cleary University, Ann Arbor, MI
Deborah Loper, Director of Assessment, Colorado Technical University, Colorado Springs, CO
Lynn D. Onken, Professor Emeritus, San Juan College, Farmington, NM
Laurie Pemberton, Director, Institutional Research & Planning, Allan Hancock College, Santa Maria, CA
Lawrence Ressler, Professor, Taylor University, Upland, IN
*Jane Salisbury, Former Dean of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, Edison State Community College, Piqua, OH
Karen J. Stewart, VP of Quality and Strategic, Waubonsee Community College, Sugar Grove, IL
William Tammone, Vice President for Academic Services, Illinois Central College, Peoria, IL
Wendolyn Tetlow, VP of Instruction and Student Learning, Bay de Noc Community College, Escanaba, MI
Elizabeth Towell, Associate Dean, College of Business, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL
Barbara Vredenburg, Emeritus Dean of Institutional Planning and Research, Iowa Western Community College, Council Bluffs, IA
Linda Wellborn, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Evangel University, Springfield, MO
Cecelia Wittmayer, VP for Academic Affairs, Dakota State University, Madison, SD
Contents

I. Context and Nature of Review ............................................................................................................. 3
   A. Review Purpose, Process, and Materials
   B. Organizational Context, Scope, and Structure (including extended physical or distance education operations)
   C. Compliance with Federal Requirements (including Notification of Quality Checkup Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment)
   D. Evidence of the Organization’s Responsiveness to Previous Commission Concerns regarding fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation

II. Fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation ...................................................................................... 4
   A. Criterion One: Mission and Integrity
   B. Criterion Two: Preparing for the Future
   C. Criterion Three: Student Learning and Effective Teaching
   D. Criterion Four: Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge
   E. Criterion Five: Engagement and Service
   F. Summary of panel recommendation regarding fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation

III. Participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) ........................................... 11
   A. Comments and counsel on AQIP Action Projects
   B. Comments and counsel on the AQIP Categories
   C. Comments and counsel on the AQIP Principles of High Performance Organizations and the institution’s quality program or infrastructure
   D. Summary of panel counsel about the organization’s commitment to continuous quality improvement and its participation in AQIP
I. Context and Nature of the Review

A. Review Purpose, Process, and Materials

AQIP Reaffirmation of Accreditation reviews are scheduled seven years in advance, when an institution joins the Academic Quality Improvement Program or when an institution already participating in AQIP is reaffirmed via the AQIP Reaffirmation of Accreditation process.

In conducting these reviews, the AQIP Reaffirmation review panel examines the following materials for each institution, and may use abbreviated references to these documents in its recommendations or rationales.

- **AP** Action Projects and Annual Updates (from the Action Project Directory)
- **CM** Federal Compliance Materials (provided by institution just before a Quality Checkup visit)
- **FP** Financial Panel (report from institution responding to concerns)
- **IH** Current Commission History File of institutional actions
- **IR** Institutional Responses (to reports from the Commission)
- **IW** Institution’s website
- **MR** Monitoring Report (from institution)
- **OP** Current Commission Organizational Profile, which incorporates last Institutional Update
- **PI** Systems Portfolio Index to compliance with the Criteria for Accreditation
- **QC** Quality Checkup Report
- **QS** Quality Highlights summary (provided by institution immediately before reaffirmation review begins)
- **SAS** Current Commission Statement of Affiliation Status
- **SP** Systems Portfolio
- **SR** Systems Appraisal Feedback Report

The panel also reviews any other major reports or documents that are part of the institution’s permanent Commission files; references to such materials will not be abbreviated.

Two lead panelists from the AQIP Reaffirmation of Accreditation drafted a recommendation that was reviewed and approved by the entire panel before it was forwarded to the Institutional Actions Council.

B. Organizational Context, Scope, and Structure (including extended physical or distance education operations)

Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO) is a public, comprehensive university located in Cape Girardeau, with four regional campuses located in Poplar Bluff, Sikeston, Malden, and Kennett. The institution primarily serves a 25-county region in southeast Missouri from St. Louis to the Arkansas border. The University was founded in 1873, and has been accredited continuously since 1915. SEMO is approved to offer up to 20% of its total degree programs through distance education.

The University is governed by a six-member Board of Regents. Members are appointed to rotating six-year terms by the Governor and are expected to be representative of the University’s service region. In addition, a non-voting student representative is appointed to a two-year term. The Missouri Commissioner of Education is an ex-officio member.
The University offers Associate through Education Specialist degree programs, and four approved certificate programs.

Spring semester 2012 enrollment figures were 8008 full-time, and 2246 part-time, undergraduate students, 329 full-time and 795 part-time graduate students. Dual enrollment with high school programs numbered 591 students.

A PEAQ Comprehensive Evaluation was conducted in 2000-2001. The University was admitted to the AQIP pathway, and the University’s AQIP team attended its first Strategy Forum in 2006. The first Systems Portfolio was submitted in 2010 and SEMO received the Systems Appraisal Feedback later that year. A team attended a second Strategy Forum in the summer of 2011. A Systems Portfolio Update was prepared for the Quality Checkup Visit which was conducted in 2012.

C. Compliance With Federal Requirements (including Notification of Quality Checkup Visit and Solicitation of Third-Party Comment)

A Quality Checkup site visit to the institution was conducted on September 12-14, 2012. In keeping with Commission requirements, Southeast Missouri State notified its constituencies and the public of this visit, soliciting third-party comment to be sent directly to the Commission. The Commission shared all comments received with the institution and the visiting team. The team discussed the comments with the institution and reviewed evidence of the institution’s compliance with the Commission’s notification and third-party comment requirements.

The Quality Checkup team examined evidence provided by the institution of its compliance with the Commission’s federal compliance program and reported that the institution met the Commission’s requirements.

D. Evidence of the Organization’s Responsiveness to Previous Commission Concerns Regarding Fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation

The Systems Appraisal Feedback Report identified no accreditation issues and documented that Southeast Missouri State University presented evidence that it complies with each of the five criteria for accreditation. The Quality Checkup Team agreed with the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report, concluding that the institution’s approaches to accreditation issues, documentation, and performance were acceptable and complied with Commission and AQIP expectations.

II. Fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation

A. CRITERION ONE: MISSION AND INTEGRITY. The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met.
The University’s mission serves as a constant point of reference in the executive leadership discussion of current and future directions of the University. The vision and strategic initiatives are set forth in the Systems Portfolio and other appropriate media including the website. (IW; SP)

The Board must approve all new institutional policies, budgets, proposed budgets, and requests for new programs. The Missouri Department of Higher Education, under the direction of the Coordinating Board for Higher Education, is responsible for statewide planning for post-secondary education including coordination of planning at SEMO. (SP 2012)

The University is committed to ethical practices of faculty and staff as defined in the Human Resource documents; the Office of Equity and Diversity Issues provides mandatory and optional training on issues such as diversity awareness. (SP)

SEMO operates through a formal shared governance system whereby all members of the University community, administration, faculty, staff, and students have an opportunity to participate directly in the decision making processes. The shared governance system incorporates standing committees, councils, groups, and open faculty and staff forums. (SP)

The general studies program objectives emphasize appreciation for diversity. Strategic enrollment management planning data incorporate diversity of the student population; the data are updated annually by the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee and presented to the Administrative Council for discussion. (SP)

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.

None.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and Commission monitoring (e.g., Action Project, Systems Portfolio, required report).

None.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and Commission adverse action or sanction (i.e., probation, withdrawal of accreditation) may be warranted.

None.

5. Recommendation of the Panel:

Criterion One is met and no Commission follow-up is recommended.

B. CRITERION TWO: PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE. The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.
1. Evidence that Core Components are met.

The budget review process stands out as a significant, proactive move by the University and its leadership in the face of continuing state funding issues and state mandates in education performance. The process is transparent and provides opportunities for SEMO to incorporate the needs of employees into budgetary planning. (QC)

Continuous quality improvement is overseen by the AQIP Steering Committee. This committee has broad representation from all divisions and employee classifications as well as students, a member of the Board of Regents, and strong faculty representation. (QS)

As evidence of the University’s ability to respond to emerging challenges, the Budget Review Committee, when confronted by state budget cuts (and to provide cost savings to the University), developed several significant proposals to change the benefits package for University employees, which proposals were subsequently accepted by the Board of Regents. (QS)

The strategic planning process originates with the Board of Regents and involves all members of the University community, including faculty, clerical-technical staff, professional staff, administrators, and executives. As the plan is developed by the Strategic Planning Committee, it is presented for comment and suggestions to numerous employee groups, such as the Clerical-Technical Staff Council, Faculty Senate, and College Councils. In the final stages of approval, it is reviewed by the President’s chief expanded advisory council (Administrative Council), and then forwarded to the Board of Regents for final approval. Units responsible for objectives submit annual reports on relevant accomplishments, which are shared with the campus at large at the President’s annual State of the University Address. (SP)

The Office of Institutional Research has a full-time director, two staff, and a graduate assistant, who are responsible for management of data for state and federal reporting. In addition, they provide data upon request for individuals and units within the university. SCT Banner is the University’s integrated database suite of administrative applications. (SP)

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.

None.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and Commission monitoring (e.g., Action Project, Systems Portfolio, required report).

None.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and Commission adverse action or sanction (i.e., probation, withdrawal of accreditation) may be warranted.

None.
5. Recommendation of the Panel:

Criterion Two is met and no Commission follow-up is recommended.

C. CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING. The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met.

Nine common learning objectives in the University Studies Program guide general education and its assessment. The assessment of these learning outcomes is overseen by the University Academic Assessment Review Committee. (SP, SR, QS)

The institution has developed curricular processes that provide for multiple levels of feedback and integration with department and program assessments of student learning. College-wide committees gather data and track results ensuring that changes in assessment practices are data-informed. A set of definitions and calculation protocols have been developed for student learning outcomes assessment, key performance indicators, and program review. Access to most data systems requires a secure user code (SP, SR, QS)

The University’s attention to its diverse student populations and their specific needs underscores its agility in meeting stakeholder needs in its ever-changing educational environment. Many organizational units, including academic advising centers, the Center of Writing Excellence, the Math Learning Center, various Learning Assistance Programs, Disability Services, Student Support Services, and an Academic Enhancement Program, have processes that identify student needs and provide needed support for students in areas teaching and learning. (SP, SR, QC)

As part of the student learning outcomes assessment process, each department or unit establishes a set of student learning outcome goals. All departments include goals related to communication and critical-thinking skills and outline components of the knowledge base and skill sets required of their students. (SP)

Data related to assessment of student learning outcomes are determined through the University’s academic assessment process, which is overseen by the University Academic Assessment Review Committee. (SP)

The procedures and structural criteria for tenure and promotion, as set forth in the Faculty Handbook, are developed and revised by the Faculty Senate and the Provost and are based on the role of faculty as teacher-scholars; teaching is paramount in consideration because teaching is the core responsibility of all faculty. (SP)

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.

None.
3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and Commission monitoring (e.g., Action Project, Systems Portfolio, required report).

None.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and Commission adverse action or sanction (i.e., probation, withdrawal of accreditation) may be warranted.

None.

5. Recommendation of the Panel:

Criterion Three is met and no Commission follow-up is recommended.

D. CRITERION FOUR: ACQUISITION, DISCOVERY, AND APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE. The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met.

The institution understands the importance of a curriculum for acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. Academic programming is reviewed regularly for currency and relevance. There is an active Program Review Process and several Action Projects have been deployed and new processes implemented to ensure improved learning opportunities for various stakeholder groups. (QS, QC)

The Career Linkages Proficiency Checks Review, a partnership with the Missouri Division of Workforce Development (DWD), provides for career advising. Four proficiency checks have been reviewed and updated, thereby coupling classroom experiences with workplace realities. (QS)

Working partnerships with agencies such as the Missouri Department of Workforce Development, the Office of Extended and Continuing Education, other colleges and universities and professional organizations and agencies, demonstrate the University’s intent to maintain viable learning opportunities for students, faculty and staff, and external stakeholders. (QS, SP, SR)

The University, through teaching and scholarship, challenges students to extend their intellectual capacities, interests, and creative abilities; develop their talents; and acquire a lifelong enthusiasm for learning. (Mission)

Students benefit from a relevant, extensive, and thorough general education with a global perspective; professional and liberal arts and sciences curricula; co-curricular opportunities; and real-world experiences. By emphasizing student-centered and experiential learning, the University, in collaboration with other entities as appropriate, prepares individuals to participate responsibly in a diverse and technologically advanced world, and in this and
other ways contributes to the development of the social, cultural, and economic life of the region, state, and nation. (Mission)

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.

None.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and Commission monitoring (e.g., Action Project, Systems Portfolio, required report).

None.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and Commission adverse action or sanction (i.e., probation, withdrawal of accreditation) may be warranted.

None.

5. Recommendation of the Panel:

Criterion Four is met and no further follow-up is required.

E. CRITERION FIVE: ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE. As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

1. Evidence that Core Components are met.

The University strives to foster positive relationships among departments and work units on campus through its governance structure, committee and council structures, surveys and university-wide events. Appropriate organizational structures and processes are in place to develop and maintain relationships with external organizations that provide services to students and the overall organization. (SP, SR)

SEMO serves a twenty-five county area with broad diversity including underrepresented students, international students, and students with disabilities. Specific programs and offices function to support the needs and experiences of all stakeholder populations. (SP, SR)

Advisory committees, regional campus advisory boards, ad hoc work groups, research collaboratives, connections with area community colleges, and community partnerships facilitate communication and ensure the University is meeting the ever-changing needs of its stakeholders. (SP, SR, QS)

SEMO serves students through scores of programs coordinated by Campus Life, including Student Government Association, Student Senate, Student Activities Committee, Greek Life, Emerging Leaders, club sports, and a wide array of social, special interest, honorary, professional, spiritual, and service student organizations. (SP)
Services for other stakeholders include youth and family programs offered by Recreation Services, campus tours offered by Admissions, and Homecoming and Family Weekends. All residents of Missouri may access informational services offered by Kent Library. KRCU, the University’s public radio station, broadcasts throughout the region. Cultural events and services for the region and visitors are offered at performance venues on the River Campus and at the Show Me Center, the Southeast Missouri Regional Museum, and the Center for Regional History. The Southeast Explorer bus takes cultural and educational exhibits directly to communities in the University’s service region. The Southeast Missouri State University Press serves the region by supporting local authors and authors writing about the region. (SP)

SEMO serves business and industries of the region through the Southeast Missouri State University Innovation Center, which offers business incubator space, entrepreneurial training, business development services, technical oversight, and easy access to services needed by start-up entities. The Small Business Development Center assists small businesses and start-ups in the region. The University Farm and the Missouri Rice Research Farm serve to advance agricultural practice. The Center for Economic and Business research conducts economic studies of the region for the use of constituents in the region. (SP)

2. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components need organizational attention, but no specific Commission monitoring or reporting.

None.

3. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components require institutional attention and Commission monitoring (e.g., Action Project, Systems Portfolio, required report).

None.

4. Evidence that one or more specified Core Components are not met and Commission adverse action or sanction (i.e., probation, withdrawal of accreditation) may be warranted.

None.

5. Recommendation of the Panel:

Criterion 5 is met and no Commission follow-up is recommended.

F. Summary of panel recommendations regarding fulfillment of the Criteria for Accreditation:

The Systems Appraisal Feedback Report and Quality Checkup Report indicate that the institution provided evidence that it complies with each of the Five Criteria for Accreditation and their Core Components. The Reaffirmation Panel agrees that the Criteria for Accreditation are all met. The Reaffirmation Panel’s rationale for this conclusion is spelled out above for each of the Criteria for Accreditation.
III. Participation in the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP)

A. Comments and counsel on AQIP Action Projects

Identification of Action Projects result from two processes: campus-wide solicitation and Strategy Forums.

Since 2007, nine Action Projects have been initiated, six of which have been competed by the date of this review. The Checkup Visit team commended the University on use of completed Action Projects which guided the institution through a process of evident improvement. Of special note are the completed Action Projects: Strengthening Faculty-based Academic Advising (Category 1), Defining Indicators of Being the University of First Choice, Improving Information Distribution and Communication, Shared Governance, Improving Students Basic Algebra Skills Using Technology Plus Individual Tutoring, and Development of Communication Protocols and Training Program for Emergency Response. Three Action Projects remain active: Assessment Development and Planning Team, Course Redesign, and Development, Implementation and Assessment of Formalized Course-level Student Learning Outcomes.

An analysis of current and completed Action Projects indicates four Projects related to Category 1, Helping Students Learn, three Projects related to Category 5, Leading and Communicating, and one Project related to Category 3, Understanding Student and Other Stakeholder Needs. These Projects have moved the institution forward in a number of ways, as described throughout the Systems Portfolio and Quality Highlights, and for which the University is commended. As a maturing AQIP institution, SEMO is encouraged to consider stretching itself through Action Projects related to the other categories. The Action Project Directory may provide ideas for projects as well as networking opportunities with institutions who have addressed challenges similar to those SEMO may face.

B. Comments and counsel on the AQIP Categories

SEMO has taken steps to improve its measurement systems and to establish processes which integrate the quality culture into both the learning environment and daily operations. The modification of a Program Review process, multiple Action Projects in a variety of areas, and enhanced communication procedures should significantly improve the collection and analysis of data used to inform the decision-making process. The more rigorous development of trend lines and other comparative data should help strengthen both short-term and long-term performance.

C. Comments and counsel on the AQIP Principles of High Performance Organizations and the institution’s quality program or infrastructure

The institution has demonstrated its dedication and commitment to the Principles of High Performance Organizations and its quality program by its participation in AQIP and the manner in which it has responded to suggestions in the Systems Portfolio Feedback Report and Quality Checkup Report. The principles that are most clearly evident are SEMO’s focus on assessment of organizational processes and student learning, its efforts to maintain a viable and current curriculum, and ongoing Action Plans to gather data for supporting the various stakeholder groups. The Reaffirmation Panelists echo the encouragement of the Quality Checkup team to continue the process of developing an integrated office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research.
D. Summary of panel counsel about the organization’s commitment to continuous quality improvement and its participation in AQIP

The University has been responsive to feedback and counsel received through the various steps of the AQIP process, resulting in positive changes through strategic planning, the Plan-Do-Check-Act processes, Action Projects and infrastructure redesign. The University is setting the stage for future success and improvement, and is encouraged to continue its efforts in quality programming, particularly in the assessment of student learning and meeting the changing needs of its diverse stakeholder groups. Likewise, the University is encouraged to continue to improve its use of data to inform decisions that will promote its quality culture and organizational performance.

As one of the first comprehensive universities to adopt AQIP principles and processes, Southeast Missouri State University is commended for its leadership and example for other universities in the North Central region.