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AMERICAN **OSTEOPATHIC** ASSOCIATION

## Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation

### **Sam Houston State University College of Osteopathic Medicine**

Self-Study

Initial Comprehensive Site Visit

Self-Study Due Date: May 9, 2023

Site Visit Date: August 7-10, 2023

## Standard 1: Mission and Governance

A College of Osteopathic Medicine (COM) must have a written statement of mission and goals for the osteopathic medical education program, conduct ongoing planning and assessment, and have written bylaws that describe an effective organizational structure and governance processes. In the conduct of all internal and external activities, the COM must demonstrate integrity through its consistent and documented adherence to fair, impartial, and effective processes, policies, and practices.

### Element 1.1: Program Mission (CORE)

A COM must have a mission statement that: 1) explains the overall purpose of the COM's program; and 2) serves as guide for program planning and assessment. Where the COM is part of a larger educational institution or parent institution, the COM's mission must be consistent with the institution's mission. The COM must review its program mission at least once every five years and upon review, if the COM deems it to be appropriate to do so, the COM should revise its mission to meet the COM's growth and continued development. The COM must consider the input of its faculty, staff, and students when reviewing and revising its mission.

#### Supporting documentation

- 1.1-1. Provide copies of program mission / vision (optional) / goals or objectives (optional) and a public link to where the documents are published.
  - SharePoint Link: [SHSU-COM Element 1.1-1 Mission, Vision, and Goals.pdf](#)
  - Link: <https://www.shsu.edu/academics/osteopathic-medicine/about/policies-and-procedures.html>
- 1.1-2. If the COM is part of a larger educational institution (parent institution), provide a copy of the parent institution's mission statement. The documents should show last updated date (or effective date).
  - SharePoint Link: [SHSU-COM Element 1.1-2 Parent Institution Mission Statement.pdf](#)
- 1.1-3. Provide documentation of the mission revision process, participants, and meeting minutes documenting the most recent governing board approval of the COM's mission.
  - SharePoint Link: [SHSU-COM Element 1.1-3 Mission Revision Process, Participants, and Minutes.pdf](#)

#### Narrative Response

1. If there is any additional narrative or explanation you wish to provide, please write it below. SHSU-COM reviewed the mission, vision, and strategic plan over the past year. Of note, any change in the mission would be a substantive change and SHSU-COM is not eligible to make such a change while in pre-accreditation status. SHSU-COM faculty and administration did participate in the revisions of the university strategic plan as noted in the attachments.

### Element 1.2: Strategic Plan

A COM must produce and publish a current strategic plan addressing all core aspects of the COM's mission. Faculty and students must be included in the strategic plan development, review, and revision.

#### Supporting Documentation

- 1.2-1. Provide a copy of the COM strategic plan.

- SharePoint Link: [SHSU-COM Element 1.2-1 Strategic Plan.pdf](#)  
1.2-2. Provide the list of individuals who participated in the plan creation/revision.
- SharePoint Link: [SHSU-COM Element 1.2-2 Strategic Plan Participation.pdf](#)  
1.2-3. Provide a link to where the COM strategic plan and relevant documents are published.
- Link: <https://www.shsu.edu/academics/osteopathic-medicine/about/policies-and-procedures.html>

### Narrative Response

1. If there is any additional narrative or explanation you wish to provide, please write it below.

Although the SHSU-COM strategic plan was reviewed, it was not revised. Any future changes to the strategic plan would be completed in the context of the new university strategic plan approved this year.

### Element 1.3: Licensing and Regional / Institutional Accreditation (CORE)

A COM must maintain in effect any charter, licenses, or approvals required for it to function as an institution of higher education, including the provision of degree programs beyond the secondary level.

The parent/sponsoring institution under which the COM operates (or the independent COM itself) must be recognized by an institutional accrediting agency that is recognized by the United States Department of Education (USDE). The COM must report to the COCA any adverse actions that are taken against it or its parent institution by its institutional accreditor within five business days of notification of such action.

### Supporting Documentation

- 1.3-1. Provide a copy of the charter, license, or letter of approval from all agencies issuing such approvals.
- SharePoint Link: [SHSU-COM Element 1.3-1 Licensing and Regional Institutional Accreditation.pdf](#)  
1.3-2. Provide a public link to where the most recent institutional accreditation documents are published.
  - Link: <https://www.shsu.edu/academics/osteopathic-medicine/about/policies-and-procedures.html>

### Element 1.4: Governance & Program Policies (CORE)

A COM must have a governing body, or be part of a parent institution with a governing body, that defines the mission of the COM and/or institution, approves the strategic plan, provides financial oversight, and approves requisite policies. The COM must publish and abide by policies regarding conflict of interest (for board members, employees, and institutionally employed faculty); due process for employees, students, and credentialed instructional staff; confidentiality of employee, student, and medical records; fiscal management; and ethics which must incorporate the American Osteopathic Association Code of Ethics.

### **Element 1.6: Degree-Granting Body**

The governing body of the COM and/or institution must confer the degree of Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) upon those students who have satisfactorily completed the requirements for graduation and have been recommended for graduation by the COM's faculty.

#### **Supporting Documentation**

- 1.6-1. Provide a copy of the bylaws or governing documents that demonstrate the conferral of degree.
  - SharePoint Link: [SHSU-COM Element 1.6-1 Bylaws Conferral of Degree.pdf](#)
- 1.6-2. Provide a copy of the COM policy demonstrating that the faculty senate (or approved body) must recommend candidates for graduation.
  - SharePoint Link: [SHSU-COM Element 1.6-2 Graduation Policy.pdf](#)
- 1.6-3. Provide minutes from the faculty association meeting where this occurred for the most recent graduates.
  - SharePoint Link: [SHSU-COM Element 1.6-3 Faculty Association Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)



**College of Osteopathic Medicine**  
SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

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**Element 1.1: Program Mission**

- **1.1-2 Supporting Documentation**
  - Mission of Sam Houston State University (parent institution) – [link](#)

## Mission of Sam Houston State University (parent institution)

Sam Houston State University is a student-centered, community engaged institution whose mission is to offer an accessible, quality higher education. The university offers a variety of innovative and flexible degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels focused on career readiness, personal and professional development, and service. SHSU provides integrated academic and student success services designed to support traditional and non-traditional students from diverse backgrounds. (Updated April 2022; Approved by the Texas State University System Board of Regents May 19-20, 2022).



## College of Osteopathic Medicine

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

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### **Element 1.2: Strategic Plan**

- **1.2-1 Supporting Documentation**
  - College of Osteopathic Medicine: 2018-2024 Strategic Plan – [link](#)



Sam Houston State University

# College of Osteopathic Medicine

ELEMENT 1.2 - SHSU-COM STRATEGIC PLAN



## OVERVIEW

The SHSU-COM strategic plan is aligned with the mission of Sam Houston State University. Since its inception in 1879, the university has played a key role in developing educational opportunities in the East Texas region. There are thousands of SHSU alumni living in the East Texas service area, many of whom came to SHSU as first-generation college students. SHSU has been a valued resource in the community and currently has approximately 21,000 enrolled students.

The College of Osteopathic Medicine was created by the university to meet a specific need – to address a physician workforce shortage in the eastern region of Texas. The aim of the medical school is to improve access to primary care and other specialties in short supply in the region. This will be accomplished by recruiting qualified students into the College of Osteopathic Medicine from communities in our service region, educating them with an emphasis on needed specialties, training them in healthcare facilities in the region, and creating opportunities for residency education in these same regional hospitals. Upon completion of their training, the expectation will be for them to serve in these communities and improve access to healthcare in East Texas.

All four years of medical education are focused on the Osteopathic Core Competencies for Medical Students and preparation for practice. The first two-year integrated curriculum lays a foundation for evidence-based decision making and diagnostic reasoning. This will facilitate the transition to clerkship rotations in our clinical facilities. SHSU-COM has established clinical affiliations with facilities in the service region interested in becoming academic teaching sites.

SHSU-COM has partnered with Huntsville Memorial Hospital to launch its first Rural Family Medicine Residency program in 2024. The program has received funding through the HRSA Teaching Health Center GME program. SHSU-COM is developing a GME consortium model which will serve as the COM-based ACGME accredited sponsor. This consortium is actively working on developing additional residency programs in the region.

## CONTINUOUS REVIEW OF THE INITIAL STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic planning is an ongoing process of assessment and quality improvement. Any alteration in the mission or objectives of the COM is considered a substantial change requiring COCA approval and such changes are not considered until after graduation of the inaugural class of student doctors. In addition, SHSU has embarked on a journey to review and update the university strategic plan. Any review and update of the COM strategic plan has been delayed to ensure alignment with the new university-wide plan.

### SHSU Strategic Planning Update

The SHSU Strategic Planning process was restarted in September 2021 with the creation of a cross-institutional Strategic Planning Steering Committee (Faculty, Staff, Students, Alumni and Community members). Their charge was to conduct an environmental scan, focus groups and surveys which would inform both a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis looking out ten years (2031) but also our Mission (Who we are), Values and Vision (who we want to be). This work was completed in January 2022 and submitted for Cabinet review in February 2022 which resulted in the University's restated Strategic Framework proposal (Mission, Values, Vision, and Strategic Priorities). The Framework was approved by the Texas State University System in May 2022. Documentation of this approval can be found on the Board website (page 11) at the following link: <https://www.tsus.edu/regents/board-meetings.html>

In June 2022 it was decided that each of the four strategic priorities (*Prioritize Student Success and student access, Embody a culture of excellence, Elevate the reputation and visibility of SHSU, and Expand and elevate our service to the state and beyond*) would have two Cabinet level Champions and roles were assigned.

Work to move the framework forward to become a strategic plan was halted between June and the end of August 2022 to ensure the critical mass needed to build informed Goals, objectives and Key Performance indicators could be created. 21 goals were identified during this process supporting the four strategic priorities. Each Goal TF Team consisted of approximately 9-15 representing our stakeholders (Students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members). Upon completion of the Goal Task Force work their efforts were consolidated into a draft strategic plan and submitted to Stakeholder leadership organizations (Student Government, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Alumni Board and Presidents Circle) for comment and input on lead goals to provide focus for university efforts going into FY24. The draft plan was then submitted to Cabinet for input and has now been finalized in a formal outline (Message from the President, Strategic Planning process, Mission, vision Values, SHSU Experience, Strategic Priority's with supporting goals and the strategic plan assessment). This was submitted to the Texas State University System Board of Regents for approval in the May 2023 Meeting.

The leadership of the COM has been involved in the development of the new university strategic plan and input has been solicited along the way at all levels including from faculty, staff, and students.

An overview of the new strategic plan is on the following page and more details can be found on the website at: <https://www.shsu.edu/strategic-plan/>.

# Sam Houston State University **STRATEGIC PLAN**

## MISSION

Sam Houston State University is a student-centered, community-engaged institution whose mission is to offer an accessible, quality higher education. The university offers a variety of innovative and flexible degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels focused on career readiness, personal and professional development, and service. SHSU provides integrated academic and student success services designed to support traditional and non-traditional students from diverse backgrounds.



## VALUES

- Student Success and Support
- Academic Excellence
- Service and Community Engagement
- Inclusive Excellence
- Collaborative Environment
- Honor
- Creativity and Innovation

## VISION

Sam Houston State University will provide a transformative environment that enables students from diverse backgrounds to become leaders who serve their families, communities, and professions. We aspire to make SHSU both the best value in higher education and the top regional public university in the state of Texas. We will accomplish this through providing high quality, innovative, and flexible academic programs; a commitment to student success, scholarship and creative works; and engagement that solves the most critical challenges facing the world.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Student Success and Student Access
2. Embody a culture of excellence
3. Elevate the reputation and visibility of SHSU
4. Expand and elevate our service to the State and beyond



Sam Houston State University

MEMBER THE TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM



## College of Osteopathic Medicine

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

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### Element 1.3: Licensing and Regional/Institutional Accreditation

- **1.3-1 Supporting Documentation**
  - Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)
    - Letter of Notice – [link](#)
    - Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes – [link](#)
  - SACSCOC Substantive Change Approval – [link](#)
  - SACSCOC Reaffirmation – [link](#)
  - SACSCOC Status 2023 – [link](#)

The Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Program at Sam Houston State University was formally approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) on August 14th, 2018. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board grants or provides program approval for state institutions in Texas. Sam Houston State University is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and is able to award bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees. The most recent accreditation documents can be found on the SACSCOC website.



August 2, 2019

Dr. Dana G. Hoyt  
President  
Sam Houston State University  
Box 2026  
Huntsville, TX 77341

Dear Dr. Hoyt:

Thank you for submitting the following substantive change:

Substantive Change:

**Significant Departure Program  
Doctor (D.O.) in Osteopathic Medicine**

**OCIS 50% of a Program  
Osteopathic Medical Education – Conroe  
925 City Central Avenue  
Conroe, TX 77304**

Submission date:

**4/29/2019**

Implementation date:

**8/3/2020**

Case ID:

**SC005986**

The Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) program, which is consistent with the mission of Sam Houston State University, is designed to prepare graduates to practice medicine safely and proficiently. It was created to help address the current physician shortage in Texas, particularly in the area of primary care. The program will be conducted at an off-campus instructional site in Conroe, Texas,

Instruction will be provided in traditional classroom and laboratory settings for the first two years, combined with clinical rotations during the third and fourth years. The new program was approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in August 2018, with a projected cohort size of 150 students. A comprehensive list of all other programs offered by the University was included, as well as a list of off-campus instructional sites.

Admissions and graduation requirements were provided. The curriculum, course descriptions, rotation schedules, and student learning outcomes were also provided along with a definition of credit hours. Student learning will be evaluated in accordance with the American Osteopathic Association Commission on College Accreditation (COCA) standards. The program will also be integrated into the University-wide institutional effectiveness process which was described in detail. This process involves defining outcomes, measuring attainment of the outcomes, then using the collected data to drive





Dr. Dana G. Hoyt  
August 2, 2019  
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continuous program improvement. Administrative oversight will be provided by the Dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine.

The Faculty Roster describes the qualifications of the four full-time faculty members who will support the Osteopathic Medicine program. The faculty members all have related doctoral degrees and appear to be qualified for their assigned courses. Qualifications for future faculty members were also included, and appear to be appropriate. Keep in mind that the ultimate determination of faculty qualifications is the responsibility of the peer review teams who will assess the faculty as part of the institution's next SACSCOC accreditation review.

Library and learning resources appear to be adequate. The Newton Gresham Library has an extensive collection of physical and electronic resources that support the health sciences curriculum. This includes an estimated 800,000 e-books; 300 databases; and over 400,000 research resources such as journals, periodicals, and news publications. Students may access these resources in person or through the library website. Additional external resources are available through an interlibrary loan system. Reference and research assistance is provided by professional librarians either in-person or via phone, text, and virtual chat. Librarians have also developed online tutorials, research guides, and instructional videos.

Student support services appear to be adequate and are available to all students, regardless of location. Along with standard support such as financial aid, student records, and admissions, the University also provides career counseling, tutoring, and health services. The College of Osteopathic Medicine will provide department-level services specifically for D.O. students such as academic advising, clinical clerkship support, mentoring, graduate medical education (GME) placement, and professional development. Students also have access to recreational sports, leadership development opportunities, and student government activities to enhance their skills outside the classroom.

The physical resources appear to be adequate. The Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine program will be conducted at a newly-constructed medical education building in Conroe, Texas, approximately 30 miles from the University's main campus. The building is scheduled for completion in December 2019 and will have approximately 107,000 square feet of space. The space will include classrooms, offices, a simulation lab, a skills lab, and an OSCE testing center. The College of Osteopathic Medicine will also have a clinic site for faculty practice situated near the medical education building. The University already has technological infrastructure in place to support the technical needs of the new program.

Financial support for the program appears to be adequate, and a five-year projected budget was provided. Revenues will come from student tuition and fees, private donors, plus practice plan income and research grants. Expenses will include faculty salaries, program administration, and facilities. Revenues are anticipated to surpass the expenses each year of the program's operation.

#### Policy Update

Please note that, at its meeting in June 2018, the Board of Trustees approved modification of the *Substantive Change Policy for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement*, for any type of



Dr. Dana G. Hoyt  
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substantive change requiring approval. If an approved substantive change has not been implemented within two years of action by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, the institution will need to submit a new prospectus for the change or application for a level change.

The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reviewed the materials seeking approval of the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) degree program and the Osteopathic Medical Education – Conroe off-campus instructional site (OCIS). It was the decision of the Board to approve the program and the site, and include them in the scope of the current accreditation. The site will be evaluated again as part of the institution's fifth-year or decennial review.

Enclosed is an invoice for \$500 to help defray the cost of reviewing the prospectus.

Should you need assistance, please contact Dr. Steven M. Sheeley at 404-679-4501, ext. 4584 or via email at [ssheeley@sacscoc.org](mailto:ssheeley@sacscoc.org).

Please include the Case ID number above in all submissions or correspondence about this substantive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belle S. Wheelan".

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.  
President

BSW/SKO:lp

Enclosure

cc: Dr. Somer L. Franklin, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Dr. Steven M. Sheeley



Dr. Dana G. Hoyt  
President  
Sam Houston State University  
1803 Avenue I  
Huntsville, TX 77341-2026

Dear Dr. Hoyt:

The following action regarding your institution was taken by the Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) during its meeting held on December 8, 2019:

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees reaffirmed accreditation. No additional report was requested. Your institution's next reaffirmation will take place in 2029 unless otherwise notified.

Also, please submit to your Commission staff member, preferably by email, a one-page executive summary of your institution's Quality Enhancement Plan. The summary is due **February 15, 2020**, and should include on the same page the following information: (1) the title of your Quality Enhancement Plan, (2) your institution's name, and (3) the name, title, and email address of an individual who can be contacted regarding its development or implementation. This summary will be posted to SACSCOC's website as a resource for other institutions undergoing the reaffirmation process.

All institutions are requested to submit an 'Impact Report of the Quality Enhancement Plan on Student Learning' as part of their 'Fifth-Year Interim Report' due five years before their next reaffirmation review. Institutions will be notified 11 months in advance by the President of the Commission regarding its specific due date. Directions for completion of the report will be included with the notification.

We appreciate your continued support of SACSCOC's activities and work. If you have questions, please contact the SACSCOC staff member assigned to your institution.

Sincerely,

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.  
President

BSW:sf

cc: Dr. Steven M. Sheeley, Senior Vice President, SACSCOC



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## Institution Search

### Institution Name

### State

### Highest Degree Offered

### Next Reaffirmation Year

## Institutions

- [Institutions](#)
- [Accreditation Actions and Disclosures Statements](#)
- [Third Party Comments](#)

### Resources

- [Common Names versus Official Names Guide](#)
- [Name Change Cross Reference List](#)
- [Accredited and Candidate List](#)

[Back to Results](#)

## Sam Houston State University

*As of 2/9/2023*

*Former Name: Sam Houston Teachers College (1925 - 1926); Sam Houston State Teachers College (1927 - 1964); Sam Houston State College (1965 - 1968)*

The information on this page describes the accreditation relationship between this institution and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. General information about the Commission and the accreditation process is provided at the end of this document. In addition, links to definitions are provided for many of the terms used.

### General Information

**+ CEO Name**

Dr. Alisa R. White

**+ Address**

1803 Avenue I  
Huntsville, TX 77341-2026

**+ Country**

United States

**+ Institutional Phone**

(936) 294-1111

**+ Approved to Offer**

Baccalaureate Degree  
Master's Degree  
Doctoral Degree

**+ [View Available Programs](#)**

**+ [View Student Achievement Data](#)**

## Accreditation Information

**+ Status**

Accredited

**+ Public Sanctions**

**+ Candidacy Date**

**+ Accreditation Granted**

01/01/1925

**+ Reaffirmation**

2019

**+ Distance Education Approval Date**

12/01/2000

**+ Next Reaffirmation**

2029

**+ Next Fifth-Year Review**

2025

**+ Degree Level**

VI

**+ Control**

Public

## SACSCOC Staff Member

**Sandra Jordan**

[Email](#)

## In-Progress Reviews

2025 Fifth-Year Interim Report

## Most Recent History with SACSCOC

2019 Reaffirmation Committee

2018 Off-Site Review

## Off-campus Instructional Sites (Additional Locations)

### Types

- **Approved  $\geq 50\%$ :** Site is approved to offer any portion of a program. Additional programs may be offered with no further site notification or approval. Only sites offering 50% or more of a program require approval.
- **Approved Branch  $\geq 50\%$ :** Site is approved as a branch campus to offer any portion of a program. Additional programs may be offered with no further site notification or approval.
- **Approved Cert  $\geq 50\%$ :** Site is approved to offer any portion of a certificate program only. Additional certificate programs, or up to 50% of non-certificate programs, may be offered with no further site notification or approval.
- **Notified 25-49%:** Less than 50% of a program may be offered at the site. Less than 50% of additional programs may be offered with no further site notification.
- Sites offering less than 25% of a program do not require notification or approval.

### Status

- **Open:** Instruction may be offered at the site consistent with the site type defined above.
- **Closed:** Closed sites are not shown. A site is closed when (1) the institution has stopped admitting students to the site and (2) SACSCOC has approved the site teach-out plan. Therefore, instruction may continue at a site under the teach-out plan after the site is closed.

### + Aldine Independent School District

14910 Aldine Westfield Rd  
Houston, TX 77032  
United States

Type: Approved >= 50%  
Status: Open

+ **Bryan Independent School District**

101 North Texas Avenue  
Bryan, TX 77803  
United States  
Type: Approved >= 50%  
Status: Open

+ **Conroe Independent School District**

3205 W. Davis  
Conroe, TX 77304  
United States  
Type: Notified 25-49%  
Status: Open

+ **Cy-Fair Independent School District**

10300 Jones Road Houston  
Houston, TX 77065  
United States  
Type: Approved >= 50%  
Status: Open

+ **Huntsville Independent School District**

441 FM 2821 East  
Huntsville, TX 77320  
United States  
Type: Notified 25-49%  
Status: Open

+ **Madisonville Independent School District**

718 Bacon Street  
Madisonville, TX 77864  
United States  
Type: Notified 25-49%  
Status: Open

+ **Mitchell Intermediate School**

6800 Alden Bridge Drive  
The Woodlands, TX 77382  
United States  
Type: Approved >= 50%  
Status: Open

+ **New Caney Independent School District**

21580 Loop 494  
New Caney, TX 77357  
United States

United States

Type: Approved >= 50%

Status: Open

+ **Osteopathic Medical Education – Conroe**

925 City Central Ave

Conroe, TX 77304

United States

Type: Approved >= 50%

Status: Open

+ **Spring Independent School District**

16717 Ella Blvd

Houston, TX 77090

United States

Type: Approved >= 50%

Status: Open

+ **The Woodlands Center**

3380 College Park Drive

The Woodlands, TX 77384

United States

Type: Approved >= 50%

Status: Open

+ **Trinity Independent School District**

101 W Jefferson PO Box 752

Trinity, TX 75862

United States

Type: Approved >= 50%

Status: Open

+ **University Park**

20515 State Highway 249 Building 12, Suite 232

Houston, TX 77070

United States

Type: Approved >= 50%

Status: Open

+ **Willis Independent School District**

204 W. Rogers

Willis, TX 77378

United States

Type: Notified 25-49%

Status: Open

## ABOUT SACSCOC AND ACCREDITATION

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the regional commission responsible for accrediting degree-granting institutions in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and some institutions in Latin America and other international sites approved by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. The SACSCOC Board of Trustees is the representative body of the member institutions also known as the College Delegate Assembly. To gain or maintain accreditation, an institution must comply with SACSCOC policies, procedures, and with all standards contained in the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* in the professional judgment of peer reviewers. SACSCOC's institutional accreditation includes all degree levels regardless of location or mode of instruction.

Regional accreditation agencies are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit degree-granting colleges and universities. There are six regions of the United States which regional agencies oversee. Regional accreditation validates the quality of an institution as a whole and evaluates multiple aspects of an institution, including its academic offerings, governance and administration, mission, finances, and resources. Institutions of higher education in the United States may also seek accreditation through national or specialized accreditation agencies. National accreditation associations, like regional accreditors, accredit the institution as a whole. Specialized accreditation agencies accredit programs, departments or schools within a college or university.

### Components of the Review Process

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees conducts several types of institutional reviews: (1) Candidate Committee reviews of applicant institutions seeking candidacy, (2) Accreditation Committee reviews of candidate institutions seeking initial membership, (3) Reaffirmation Committee reviews of member institutions seeking continued accreditation following a comprehensive review, (4) Special Committee reviews of member institutions seeking continued accreditation following evaluation of institutional circumstances that are accreditation related, and (5) Substantive Change Committee reviews of member institutions seeking approval and continued accreditation following the review of a change of a significant modification or expansion to the institution's nature and scope. Each of the above type of reviews has its own evaluation documents and peer review procedures and can be found on the SACSCOC website at [www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org).

The Committees on Compliance and Reports (C&R), standing committees of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, review reports prepared by evaluation committees and the institutional responses to those reports. A C&R Committee's recommendation regarding an institution's accreditation-related matters is forwarded to the Executive Council for review. The Executive Council recommends action to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, which makes the final decision on reaffirmation and any monitoring activities that it may require of an institution. The SACSCOC Board of Trustees convenes twice a year.

### Complaints Against SACSCOC Accredited Institutions

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) recognizes the value of information provided by students, employees, and others in determining whether an institution's performance is consistent with SACSCOC standards for obtaining or maintaining accreditation. The Commission's interest also is in ensuring that member institutions maintain appropriate grievance procedures and standards of procedural fairness and that the procedures are applied appropriately and consistently. The procedures for the review of complaints involving member institutions enable SACSCOC to address possible violations of its *Principles of Accreditation*, its Core Requirements and Standards, SACSCOC policies or procedures, as well as to address possible violations of an institution's own policies and procedures, if related to the *Principles*.

Since SACSCOC's complaint procedures are for the purpose of addressing any significant non-compliance with SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*, policies, or procedures, **the procedures are not intended to be used to involve SACSCOC in disputes between individuals and member institutions, or cause SACSCOC to interpose itself as a reviewing authority in individual matters of admission, grades, granting or transferability of credits, application of academic policies, fees or other financial matters, disciplinary matters or other contractual rights and obligations. Nor does SACSCOC seek redress on an individual's behalf. Under no circumstances does SACSCOC respond to, or take action on, any complaint or any allegation that contains defamatory statements. Further, SACSCOC will not serve as a grievance panel when the outcome of institutional grievance or appeal processes is unsatisfactory to the complainant.**

SACSCOC expects individuals to attempt to resolve the issue through all means available to the complainant, including following the institution's own published grievance procedures, before submitting a complaint to SACSCOC. Therefore, SACSCOC is under no obligation to consider additional information submitted by the complainant subsequent to the receipt of the formal complaint. SACSCOC's usual practice is not to consider a complaint that is currently in administrative proceedings, including institutional proceedings, or in litigation. However, if there is substantial, credible evidence that indicates systemic problems with an accredited institution, SACSCOC may, at its discretion, choose to proceed with the review.

In order for review by SACSCOC personnel, a formal complaint must be submitted **in writing** using the [SACSCOC "Complaints Against Institutions: Information Sheet and Form,"](#) **signed**, and **two copies** mailed to: **President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia, 30033-4097.** SACSCOC will not review oral or anonymous complaints, and it will not consider complaints sent electronically or through facsimile transmission. In addition, SACSCOC will not act on complaints submitted on behalf of another individual or complaints forwarded to SACSCOC from another entity.





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