



**SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES**

1866 Southern Lane • Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

Telephone 404/679-4500 Fax 404/679-4558

www.sacscoc.org

September 29, 2010

Dr. John O. Schwenn
President
Dalton State College
650 College Drive
Dalton, GA 30720

Dear Dr. Schwenn:

Your institution is scheduled to begin its decennial review in anticipation of action on reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges in June 2013. To assist you as you begin this review, we invite you and other representatives from your institution to participate in a one-day Orientation Session scheduled to begin at 8:15 a.m. on **Monday, January 31, 2011**, and conclude by 3:30 p.m. that same day. The session will be held at a hotel close to Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport. Dr. Demetria Gibbs, Director of Training and Research for the Commission, will be sending you an email that will provide you with information about the meeting, including a schedule and registration materials.

The Orientation Session is designed to provide your institution's leadership with an overview of the reaffirmation process, with particular attention to discussing issues, challenges, and strategies for the development of a successful Compliance Certification and Quality Enhancement Plan. It also will be an opportunity to meet your Commission staff member and to interact with other institutions beginning the reaffirmation process.

Each institution is asked to establish a Leadership Team for the duration of its reaffirmation project. The Team usually consists of four to six individuals including the president/chancellor, the chief academic officer, a faculty member, and the institution's designated accreditation liaison. Your Leadership Team may be larger, but **only five members** may attend the January Orientation meeting. Due to space restrictions, we will not honor special requests to expand that number to more than five. We strongly encourage you to include your chief financial officer as one of your five institutional participants because we have scheduled a special session that will address financial reporting requirements related to the reaffirmation process.

As a regional accrediting commission of peers, its evaluation committees conduct a **comprehensive review** of an institution at the time of its reaffirmation. When you are reaffirmed, the Commission is making a public statement about the quality of the total institution and all its programs, wherever offered. Therefore, I urge you and your staff to review the Commission on Colleges' substantive change policy and procedures to ensure that your institution remains in compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.12 in the *Principles of*



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Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement. This standard requires an institution to notify the Commission of changes of a substantive nature in accordance with the policy and, when required, to seek approval prior to the initiation of changes. Please visit our Web site (<http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>) to review a summary of each member institution's responsibility with regard to substantive change. I am alerting you to this policy because failure to adhere can place your institution's accreditation in jeopardy **and** adversely affect Title IV funding for certain programs.

Within the next four weeks, you will receive 10 copies of the *2010 Edition of the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, and 10 copies each of the *Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation of Accreditation*, and the *Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation*. All documents are currently posted on our Web site and can be accessed at <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2010principlesofaccreditation.pdf> for the *Principles* and <http://www.sacscoc.org/handbooks.asp> for the handbooks. We would appreciate you and your staff reviewing these documents prior to the Orientation Session. Other materials related to reaffirmation can be found on our Web page at <http://www.sacscoc.org>, and then by clicking onto "Institutional Resources." We have recently revised this page, focusing primarily on documents that will assist you in the reaffirmation process.

The best to you and your academic community as you begin this very important institutional improvement process. Please feel free to contact staff for assistance as you progress.

Sincerely,

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

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.
President

BSW/CAL:th

cc: Dr. Claudette H. Williams
Dr. John A. Hutcheson, Accreditation Liaison