

The UF Mission Statement and SACS Accreditation  
*prepared for the Mission Statement Task Force – August 16, 2012*

Timothy S. Brophy, Director of Institutional Assessment  
Cheryl Gater, Director of SACS

The University of Florida is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). We are in the process of preparing for the reaffirmation of our accreditation in 2014. When our accreditors review our accreditation materials, they are guided by this primary question: “What is the extent to which the University of Florida, as an institution, is effective at accomplishing its mission?” The mission statement should capture our priorities as well as describe and define us as an institution.

Here are some of the relevant sections of the SACS principles that relate to the importance of the mission statement:

- “If an institution offers significant distance and correspondence education, it should be reflected in the institution’s mission” (SACS Policy Statement on Distance and Correspondence Education). As UF develops more and more self-funded degree programs and online education increases, we need to consider adding it into the mission statement if that’s really the trend the university is following.
- “It [institutional mission statement] conveys a sense of the institution’s uniqueness and identifies the qualities, characteristics, and values that define the institution’s place, role, and distinctiveness within the diverse higher education community” (SACS Resource Manual, p. 12).
- “Institutional integrity demands congruence between the mission statement and the institution’s governance...” (SACS Resource Manual, p. 12).
- “The mission statement is comprehensive, addressing all aspects of institutional function and actively guides the institution” (SACS Resource Manual, p. 32).
- “Because the [mission] statement describes what the institution does, it is the foundation for planning and assessment processes. These processes validate that the institution does what it claims and evaluates how well it fulfills its mission statement” (SACS Resource Manual, p. 32).

Other relevant SACS-related activities that define institutional priorities:

- The Quality Enhancement Plan is titled *Learning without Borders: Internationalizing the Gator Nation*. Internationalization is an institutional priority.
- Student learning assessment and Institutional Effectiveness documentation – assessment planning and data collection on student learning outcomes (degrees, certificates) and effectiveness documentation (both non-academic and academic units) is now taking place.