

SACS facts

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COUNTDOWN:

Compliance Certificate submitted THIS WEEK!

Submitting the Compliance Certificate to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is the first formal step in the process of applying for reaffirmation. This certificate will be submitted March 1st. Additional requirements involved in the application are submission of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and the on-site visit.

6 months to submit the QEP document
8 months till the on-site visit



What you need to know

What accreditation means for US

- Improvement! Institutional effectiveness is the foundation for accreditation—it is a cycle of assessment and evaluation of assessment results. It is this cycle of self-review that makes us a better institution.

For our STUDENTS, it means

- Credits earned by our students are transferrable to other institutions.
- Our programs are eligible for federal financial aid.



What do I need to do when the SACSCOC team visits my campus in October?

- Know the dates are October 11-13, 2011, and plan to be on campus.
- Know the mission of the College.
- Know that QEP stands for Quality Enhancement Plan.
- Know that **our** QEP will improve student learning by focusing on critical thinking both in the classroom and on campus.



Mission of the College

Palm Beach State College, founded in 1933 as Florida's first public community college, is a diverse, comprehensive institution dedicated to serving the educational needs of Palm Beach County. Integrally linked to the community through strong partnerships, the College provides associate and baccalaureate degrees, professional certificates, workforce development and lifelong learning.

Palm Beach State College's mission is to create and sustain a dynamic teaching and learning environment that provides a high-quality, accessible, affordable education, preparing students to contribute and compete ethically and successfully in a diverse global community.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ACCREDITATION AND THE REAFFIRMATION PROCESS, [click here](#).

Assessment

General Education Review

Every three years the College has formed an ad hoc committee to review the content of the general education program. This process entails a review of the general education philosophy and learning outcomes, and provides an opportunity for clusters to make a case for including additional courses as general education offerings. The review also involves the examination of the existing general education courses to determine if any should be deleted from the program.

Two years ago, however, the College formed a standing committee for the assessment of general education. Because the faculty who serve on this committee are fully versed in the various aspects of general education, it made sense to assign the responsibility of the review of the general education program to this committee rather than form an ad hoc committee. At present, the committee has reviewed and proposed revisions to the general education philosophy statement and the general education learning outcomes. A survey was sent to all full-time faculty members for their input, and the responses were very positive. Based on these survey results, the committee made some minor modifications to the philosophy statement. Once the proposed revisions are approved by the College administration, the new general education philosophy statement and learning outcomes will be distributed to the entire College.

The next step the committee will take in the review process is to see if there are any courses currently included in the general education program that should be recommended for deletion. The principle factors considered for course deletion include such things as: 1) consistent low enrollment; 2) the course is offered only on one campus; 3) the course no longer supports the general education philosophy; or 4) the course is too specific in its scope. If any courses are identified by this review, the recommendation to delete the course from the general education program will be sent to the appropriate cluster for their consideration.

Later during this semester, faculty will be asked to submit recommendations for courses to be added to the general education program along with justification for those recommendations. Once the nominations for additional courses are submitted, faculty members will be provided with an opportunity to appear before the review committee to make a brief presentation about why their course should be added to the general education program. The committee will vote on each course and each course that is accepted will then go through the curriculum process. Any changes to the general education program, philosophy and learning outcomes will be reflected in the next college catalog.

MORE ABOUT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT, PLEASE VISIT:
<http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/x10269.xml>

Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Congratulations to our poster contest winners!

Kudos to Lindsay Perry and Todd Price! Lindsay is a current Palm Beach State student and as a grand prize winner, she won a \$150 credit to her student account for her poster submission. Todd works in our eLearning Department on the Lake Worth campus. His entry was submitted as an employee. As the second grand prize winner, Todd won a helicopter ride. Congratulations also to student Rebecca Swafford. Her entry was a runner-up and she won a 4-pack of Panther Prowl tickets.

Thank you to the Palm Beach State College Foundation, Ocean Helicopters, and Student Life for their generous donations.

To view the winning entries, [click here](#).

What IS critical thinking?

Glad you asked! Answering this question will become far more than just knowing a definition. In fact, one of the expected outcomes of the QEP is that we will build a common vocabulary and **understanding** of critical thinking, or more specifically, an understanding of how it is best taught and assessed. To achieve that outcome, we will frequently refer back to the operational definition developed within the College-wide effort last fall (see below).

Critical thinking is using the skills needed to explore, evaluate, express, and engage in purposeful reasoning in order to reach sound conclusions, decisions, positions, and solutions.

What does it take to have a college-wide conversation to develop a QEP?

SACS requires the QEP to be selected and developed by a broad-based representation of all constituents. At Palm Beach State College the process of selecting a focus topic and gathering ideas to implement included:

- 18 committee meetings with 59 faculty, staff, and students (Nov 2009 through Feb 2011)
- 1 major faculty meeting with 12 sub-groups and almost 90% of full-time faculty participating (Jan 2010)
- 4 campus forums with 250 faculty, staff, students, administration, community and Board members (Feb 10)
- 9 campus focus groups with 120 faculty and staff participants (Sept-Oct 10)
- 2030 Web responses to surveys specifically related to critical thinking

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE QEP, PLEASE VISIT OR CALL:
<http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/QEP.xml> ~ 561-868-3325