



July 26, 2000

Dr. James T. Rogers
Executive Director
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033-4097

Dear Dr. Rogers:

The purpose of this letter is to respectfully request your concurrence with the list of programs for which Virginia Tech is responsible to present a prospectus on unreported substantive changes to the Committee on Criteria and Reports for their consideration with its Second Follow-up Report due on September 20, 2000. In your letter of July 7, 2000, you stated that the Commission denied approval of Virginia Tech's previously unreported substantive changes since 1996 and found that Virginia Tech has not complied with Section 1.2 (Principles and Philosophy of Accreditation – Application of the "Criteria")

The institution implemented substantive changes in violation of the "Criteria" for Accreditation and applicable policies and procedures of the Commission. Therefore, the institution must provide evidence that appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure that in the future it complies with applicable "Criteria" and Commission policies and procedures related to substantive change.

Based upon the July 7, 2000 correspondence, Virginia Tech has implemented additional policies and procedures to ensure that the University will comply with Commission policies and procedures related to substantive change. These will be outlined in our September 20, 2000 Second Follow-up Report. Virginia Tech is also preparing in prospectus format the reports for previously unreported substantive changes (see attachment) of new programs and off-campus/distance learning programs initiated and reported after the 1996-1998 Self-Study and Re-Affirmation site visit but not submitted in the Commission's prospectus format. I do understand that the previously submitted SCHEV materials were not viewed by the Committee on Criteria and Reports as being in the appropriate format.

However, Dr. Rodgers, we need your guidance on the following off-campus/distance learning programs (see attachment) that were either in operation at the time of the 1996 - 1998 self-study and subsequent SACS Committee visit (April 1998) or were in development at the time of the self-study and visit. According to Substantive Change Procedure C - Procedure Two of the Policies, Procedures, Guidelines of the Commission on Colleges "When the method or location of distance learning instruction is significantly different, or when an institution has significantly expanded its off-campus programs or distance learning activities from those that were reviewed as part of the most recent official Accreditation action of the Commission, the procedures described in this document apply." Since these programs were part of our re-affirmation self-study and site visit, and since these programs are not different from the method or location of existing University distance learning instruction (the sites were existing Virginia Tech sites and the University began offering online courses prior to 1996 through its Cyberschool) - does Virginia Tech need to prepare an individual prospectus for each program?

Please note the following reference to three additional areas listed on our earlier roster submitted in the First Follow-up Report:

- The proposed Masters in Natural Resources is not developed sufficiently to submit it as a substantive change but we will do so at the appropriate time.
- The coursework offered at the Center for European Studies and Architecture is only one semester in a 10-semester degree program. The Center has been a Virginia Tech site for for many years and was described in the University's Self-Study report.
- The Reynolds Homestead in Critz, Virginia is not a new Virginia Tech site. It has been a continuing education site of the University for many years and was described in the 1996-1998 Self-Study. Its connection to Net.Work.Virginia, the statewide broadband ATM network, provides the site with the capability to participate in course offerings through two-way interactive videoconferencing.

Dr. Rogers, you can appreciate how extremely important it is for Virginia Tech to have your advice and concurrence regarding the substantive changes for which a prospectus must be submitted in the September 20, 2000 Second Follow-up Report. Your prompt response will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

David R. Ford
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Attachment

Xc: Dr. Charles W. Steger
Dr. John O. Dwyer