

BSC gave degrees without credits

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CONCORD — Nearly 30 students from Barber-Scotia College were awarded diplomas last year without meeting degree requirements, a report by the school's accrediting body found.

The report by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools found students graduated with degrees in *O r g a n i z a t i o n a l* Management without the number of credits required and that students were awarded degrees with too few general education requirements and too many elective credits.

For example, SACS identified a student who was awarded an "A" grade for an independent study course five days after applying to take it in May 2003.

The Concord school could be placed on probation or lose its accreditation, said Donna Wilkinson, an executive director with SACS.

"I would think what we have here is an issue that relates to the basic integrity of an institution," Wilkinson said. "The public response to an issue of that sort will determine the future of the institution."

The SACS report, written last fall, was prompted by a written complaint the accrediting body received in June 2003. The complaint raised questions about the awarding of degrees in the college's adult program.

"Of particular concern to the committee is the inconsistent application of degree completion requirements for all students," the report says.

Barber-Scotia trustees, who were notified of the findings in January, said they have put safeguards in place to prevent future violations.

"We are very serious in making sure we are meeting SACS requirements," trustees chairwoman Ella Scarborough said.

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