

ECSU reaccredited by SACS with no follow-up

By Sharon Chappell

On Jan. 21 Elizabeth City State University received its official notification of reaccreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Accreditation was reaffirmed with no follow-up at this time.

"It should be noted that this particular accreditation process was historic in the sense that for the first time in our history, we received approval with no follow up for the next ten years," said Chancellor Jimmy R. Jenkins.

"The accreditation is a very important set of credentials for an institution because ECSU's budget, like that of other institutions, is enrollment-driven. If the enrollment plummets, so does the University's budget.

"Secondly, federal programs, foundations and other philanthropic agencies tend to give money for support of programs and activities to accredited institutions."

ECSU's reaccreditation by SACS culminated more than two years of preparation, meetings and hard work by administrators, faculty, staff, students and the community, who participated in the Institutional Self-Study Program.

The Program evaluated several areas—commitment, purpose, effectiveness,

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educational programs, support services and administrative processes.

Preparing for the SACS visit wasn't easy, according to Dr. Anne Henderson, ECSU's Director of the Self-Study.

"The process itself became increasingly challenging, especially in the last stages," Henderson said. "It involved so many people. Some truly put themselves out. They gave us moral support and, occasionally, even food. Some, knowing we had had only cold sandwiches earlier, would come into the SACS office at 10 p.m. with a meal for us."

Because of all the hard work and support, the visit to ECSU by the accreditation team went very well according to Henderson.

"Everything the team asked for or wanted to see was provided in a matter of minutes. It was very gratifying to be complimented on our efficiency."

Another satisfied participant was Le-

onard Ballou, Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the SACS Self-Study, who was "most happy" about the University's reaccreditation. "We got the best we could get," he said. "It was what I had hoped for...a Centennial present for this school."

For helping to make this "present" possible, both Henderson and Ballou said they were especially grateful to Dr. Robert Thorne, Editor of the SACS Self-Study, and Ms. Brenda Clark, Special Secretary for SACS, who both put in many long hours "in the trenches."

"We would also like to thank Dr. Gerald McCants, Diane Patterson, Dr. Rachel Gragson, Ellis Lawrence, Nancy Lee, Gladys Banks, Liz Linney, Cindy Sawyer and Robin Joyner," said Henderson and Ballou.

"And of very special help were Chancellor Jenkins, Ulysses Bell, Roger McLean and SACS liaison personnel, Gerald Cates

and Carol Luthman."

Ballou and Henderson also appreciated the SACS Booster Team which was made up of students. Some of the primary workers on this team were Thomas Chatman, Mark Barfield, Valerie Hines, Kim Robinson and Reginald Gatling.

This network of people not only helped prepare for the SACS visit, but also helped to implement immediate and long-range plans for the nine recommendations given to the University by the visiting team.

The team's recommendations included changing the wording of the SACS accreditation statement on all school publications, developing a new Purpose Statement, clarifying of key responsibilities among University personnel and updating or replacing equipment within specific departments.

"ECSU moved expeditiously to deal with the recommendations that the visiting team made...and to set in motion plans designed to address those recommendations that required a more long-term implementation," said Jenkins. "I felt confident from the beginning because we had selected dedicated and efficient members of the University to lead this effort. All in all, apparently, our responses were more than adequate since the Commission has recommended reaffirmation with no follow-up."

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