

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

A Member of the Texas A&M University System

January 29, 2010

Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, President
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

Dear Dr. Wheelan:

Records of the Commission College (COC) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) will show that Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) is a Track B Institution scheduled for its decennial reaffirmation of accreditation in 2010. In fact, the on-site team has been scheduled for March 22-24, 2010.

In December, 2001, Prairie View A&M University notified the Commission that it planned to offer 25% of the coursework required for the Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and for the Master's Degree in Counseling at Paul Quinn College, 3837 Simpson Stuart Road, Dallas, Texas. (attachment: December 20, 2001 letter to Dr. Rogers). In July, 2007 the University reported that it had indeed offered courses at Paul Quinn College and that due to the need to utilize technology so that the courses could be offered via interactive video, it had acquired space at the Dallas Urban League at 4315 South Lancaster Road, Dallas, Texas 75216-7105. (attachment: July 2, 2007 letter to Dr. Wheelan). In that same correspondence, it notified the Commission that it had moved it's offering from Paul Quinn College to Cedar Hill College's Center at Cedar Hill, 207 North Cannady Road, Cedar Hill, Texas 75104, approximately 12.1 miles from the Paul Quinn College location. The Commission accepted the changes.

According to the Substantive Change Policy of the Commission, the University was to seek approval to offer at any location more than 50% of the coursework required for completing a degree. Regrettably, oversight controls were not sufficient to ensure that students would not be able to complete more than 50% of the coursework required for degree completion in the two areas and therefore the University was not in compliance with Commission policy. It appears that this oversight occurred during changes in academic program leadership, modes of delivery, and physical location. As noted in the Compliance Certification submitted September 10, 2009, the U.S. Department of Education's Title IV Dallas Office has been conducting an off-site program review related to the University's offering of student financial aid at locations in the Dallas area and the offering of more than 49% of the coursework required for the degree.

In August, 2008, the University discontinued offering courses either face-to-face or by interactive video in the Dallas Metroplex. Students enrolled at the time were assisted with transitioning to the main campus where adjustments in scheduling were made to accommodate the students' travel requirements (attachment: letter of notification to students). Students in that area and in other locations may now access the programs online. In February, 2009, the Commission approved the offering of the both the Master's Degree in Educational Leadership and the Master's Degree in Counseling online (attachment: February 24, 2009 letter from Dr. Wheelan).

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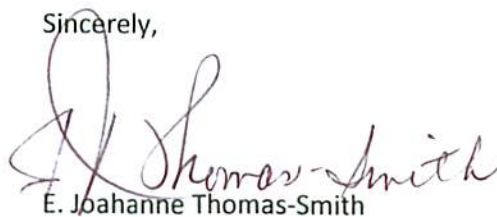
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Among the steps that have been taken to ensure that there is compliance with the Commission's Substantive Change Policy, and especially the very important "50 % rule," are the (1) strengthening of the institution's Substantive Change Policy and the continual monitoring of compliance by both the University Academic Council (undergraduate curriculum) and the Graduate Council; (2) the requirement that the Office of the Registrar monitor and alert the Office for Academic Affairs of anomalies in the course scheduling especially where approval has been granted for distance site offering of a specified set of courses constituting less than 50% of the courses required for a degree program; and (3) utilization of the student information system (BANNER) to support the electronic notation of enrollment where a student is nearing completion of the maximum percent of program requirements allowed at the site. An additional support for maintaining compliance is the availability of the services of the recently established Compliance Office in the Office of Business Affairs. This office is dedicated to campus-wide enterprise risk management.

Dr. Wheelan, please know that Prairie View A&M University respects the purpose and philosophy of the Commission's principles which it and its peer institutions have voluntarily vowed to uphold in letter and spirit. Please trust us to better manage the Substantive Change process. This is a commitment that the leadership makes and intends to keep.

Please contact me at eithomas-smith@pvamu.edu or 936-261-2175 if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



E. Joahanne Thomas-Smith

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
SACS Liaison

xc: Dr. George C. Wright, President, PVAMU
Dr. Rudy Jackson, Vice President, COC-SACS