



CLOSING THE LOOP

College of the Mainland Self-Study Newsletter

VOL. 1, NUMBER I

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2001

CLOSING THE LOOP COM SELF-STUDY NEWSLETTER

Newsletter Staff:

CATHERINE MORAN
Self-Study Editor

GLYNDA ALLISON
Publication Designer

KATHYE BERGIN
Self-Study Director
Steering Committee Co-Chair

DR. GREGORY A. JOHNSON
Steering Committee Co-Chair

FYI

Self-Study Office
Library Mezzanine
Campus mail: Self Study, c/o LRC
Suite B

Jane Saldua, Self-Study Assistant,
ext. 670. E-mail:
jsaldua@mail.mainland.cc.tx.us.
Hours Available: MW 8:30-1:30;
T 9:30-2:30; Th 8:30-12:30.

*For questions, comments, or suggestions
about this newsletter contact Cathy
Moran:*

ss_cmoran@mail.mainland.cc.tx.us
Self-Study Editorial Office, Suite C,
LRC 277, (409) 938-1211, ext. 672/670.

*For questions, comments, or suggestions
about the Self-Study process, contact
Kathye Bergin:*

ss_kbergin@mail.mainland.cc.tx.us
(409) 938-1211, ext. 671/670.

*Or drop us a line in one of the Self-
Study Closing the Loop boxes located
around campus.*

Dr. Homer "Butch" Hayes:

A Message From Our President

Welcome to the first issue of *Closing the Loop*, COM's Self-Study Newsletter. Over the course of the next two years, this communication tool will help all of us to know how the reaffirmation process for accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) is progressing. (Now that I have given you the jargon... I hope that we will all be kept informed of the processes, the surveys, the data collected and the ideas generated by the many committees.)

We might feel like the reporter to whom Charles W. Eliot said, "You are in the worst job in the world. You never have time." However, this is our self-study and we owe it to ourselves, our students, our colleagues and our community to be familiar with and contribute to the effort.

Reality is:

OPPORTUNITY IS NOWHERE

Perception is our individual response or interpretation of the information we receive. What matters most is that we share and discuss our perceptions and strive for consensus.

Self-Study Resources

On the World Wide Web

EDITOR'S NOTE: Many files at these sites require Adobe Acrobat Reader. You'll find quick links for downloading the Reader on these pages.

The SACS Site (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges)

<http://www.sacscoc.org/>—the home page of the Commission on Colleges (includes contact information)

<http://www.sacscoc.org/faq.asp>—Frequently Asked Questions/Answers about SACS and the accreditation process

•<http://www.sacscoc.org/commpub.asp>—Adobe Acrobat versions of SACS publications include the online version of 1998 Criteria for Accreditation and policies on distance learning, faculty credentials, and other important topics. This is the source for all those pesky "must" statements.

(continued on page 4)

Self-Study Steering Committee

Editor's Note: Each issue of Closing the Loop will feature a Spotlight on . . . section that focuses on a Self-Study committee or group of committees. Future issues will feature the Principal Committees.

Steering Committee may sound more at "home on the range" than on a college campus, but SACS had something very particular in mind when it named a Self-Study's central planning group. Like the point rider on a cattle drive, the Steering Committee keeps us headed in the right direction. At the end of our drive to re-accreditation (called *reaffirmation* by SACS), we don't want any "strays," so with 13 study-area Principal Committees, each veering off the main trail toward its own destination, a unifying force is a *must*. As we approach our journey's end in April 2003, the Steering Committee (or *SC*, as we call it) will unite the findings of the Principal Committees and, under the leadership of the Self-Study Editor, produce a single thorough picture of our college: the Self-Study Report.

The Steering Committee has been meeting frequently during the past spring and summer months, spending much of its time in up-front planning of the College's Self-Study effort. The group as a whole contributes to the Self-Study calendar and newsletter, examines survey instruments and selects appropriate questions for the College, discusses the Self-Study's Web presence, designs report forms and formats, and generally serves as a sounding board for the Steering Committee Co-Chairs and Self-Study Editor.

Each SC member serves as a liaison for one or two Principal Committee Chairs, reviewing pertinent "must" statements, compiling source document lists, formulating action plans, reviewing principal committees' progress, and, more often than not, just plain listening.

At times overwhelmed and mightily perplexed, the Steering Committee has nevertheless agreed to undertake their tough assignment, believing the end result will be an improved College of the Mainland. --C. Moran

Steering Committee Members' Liaison Assignments to Principal Committees

Kathye Bergin, Co-Chair
(ext. 671)

Conditions of Eligibility/
Institutional Purpose Committee
Chair: Ouida Sanmann

Arrangements Committee
Co-Chairs: Mary DeHart
and Bethany Pheneger

Gregory A. Johnson, Co-Chair
(ext. 433)

General Education Committee
Chair: Jerry Anderson

Mark Adams (ext. 544)

Faculty Committee
Chair: Kelly Musick

Community Outreach Committee
Chair: Joyce Palmer

Dianne Faust (ext. 464)

Finance Committee
Chair: Bob Young

Physical Plant Committee
Chair: Michelle Kettler

Michele Betancourt (ext. 216)

Distance Education Committee
Chair: Joanna Kile

Cissy Matthews (ext. 461)

Developmental Education
Committee
Chair: Sparky Koerner

Workforce Education Committee
Chair: Patricia Jackson-Williams

Becky Miles (ext. 246)

Student Development
Committee
Chair: Drew Nelson

Administrative Operations
Committee
Chair: Rich Nowak

Kathryn Park (ext. 201)

Ed. Support/Learning
Resources Committee
Chair: Leslie Richardson

Geane Stevenson (ext. 280)

Continuing Education
Committee
Chair: Alice Watford

Ralph Holm, President

Board of Trustees
Advisor to Steering Committee

Why Closing the Loop?

Closing the Loop--the Self-Study Manual. Closing the Loop--the Self-Study Newsletter. Closing the Loop mugs. Closing the Loop response boxes. What's next? Closing the Loop--the Musical? Closing the Loop--the miniseries? Sure it's a catchy phrase (well, sort of catchy), but what does it really mean?

In plain language it means this:

- If we see we're doing something well, *do we share it* so others can benefit by adopting it?
- If we see we're doing something not so well, *do we take action to change it* when we plan for our next year?
- If we see a good idea at another college, *do we examine how we could make it work for us* or do we shrug our shoulders and say, "But that'll never work at COM"?

Closing the loop means *paying attention* to signs that we could provide better programs and services to our students and our community and *acting* on those signs. When evidence tells us we should change, do we *close the loop* and make the improvement or do we say, "This is the way it's always been at COM, so this is the way it'll always be"?

DATELINE@COM

2001	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	2001
Organization Phase					Data Collection Phase								
												Drafting/Data Check Phase	
2002	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	2002
Data Collection Phase (cont.)				Campus Feedback Phase				Implement/Publication Phase			Follow-up		
Drafting/Data Check Phase (cont.)						Revisions Phase							
2003	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DECEMBER	
Follow-up (cont.)			The Visit Apr. 14-17		Response Phase						Reaffirmation of Accreditation		

SACS FAQs

Or, What you always wanted to know about SACS and aren't afraid to ask!

What is SACS?

SACS is the abbreviation for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. It is one of six regional accrediting organizations in the U.S. recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Established in 1895, it accredits more than 12,000 public and private educational institutions from pre-kindergarten through university in eleven states in the southeast U.S. (i.e. Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia) and Latin America.

Who gets to have SACS?

Everyone! That is, each of the more than 12,000 member institutions regularly performs a comprehensive self-evaluation.

Why have SACS?

The comprehensive self-evaluation, or self-study, assists the member institutions in planning for improvement. Furthermore, accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation assures the public of an institution's overall quality.

How often do we get to have SACS?

COM is currently in the every ten years cycle for reaffir-

mation of accreditation. After an institution receives its initial accreditation, it is required to conduct a self-study and undergo an evaluation after five years and every ten years thereafter. During the years between self-studies and site visits, the institution is required to submit annual reports and may be visited by other teams if it undertakes any significant changes, such as offering programs off-campus or through distance education, or making substantive changes in governance.

How do we know our SACS self-evaluation was any good?

After completion of the self-study, a Commission peer review team, consisting of persons from other colleges and universities, visits the institution and examines the self-study. The team evaluates the institution to assure it is in compliance with the minimum standards for accreditation, the *1998 Criteria for Accreditation*, and that it has conducted a satisfactory self-study. If so, it is eligible for reaffirmation of its accredited status.

For more information about SACS, let your browser do the lurking at <http://www.sacs.org>.

Self-Study Resources On the World Wide Web

(Continued from page 1)

The Community and Technical Colleges Page

<http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/ctc/>—
A treasure-trove of links in the
following areas:

- **Instructional Programs** (including Core Curriculum, Workforce Education, Tech-Prep);
- **Institutional Effectiveness** (includes performance measures, a Statewide Fact Book, college profiles, examples of "exemplary" IE programs, etc.);
- **Strategic Planning** (including Access/Equity, Continuous Improvement Plans, etc.).

Cathy's Corner

Must Mugs

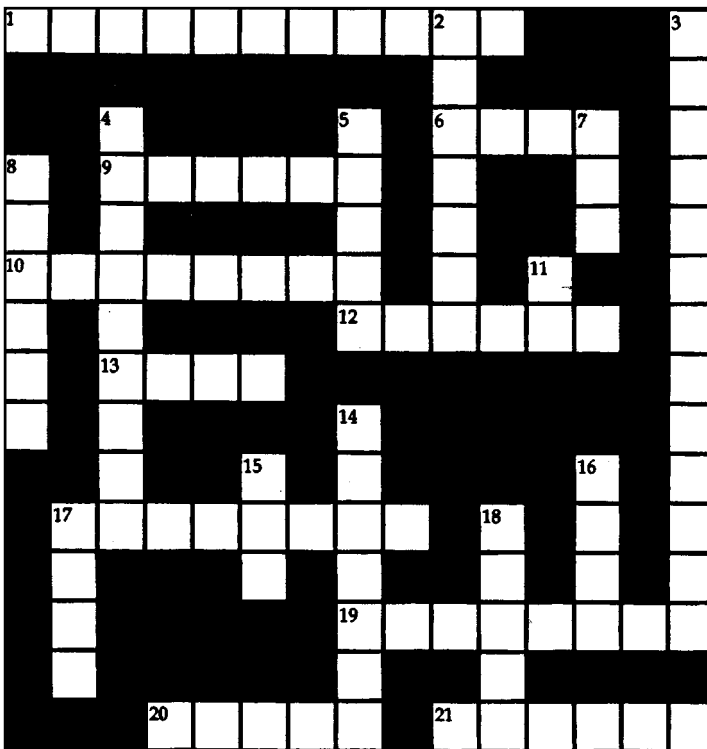
Be the first person on campus to find all the appearances of the word "MUST" in this issue of *Closing the Loop* and win a *Closing the Loop* mug.

E-mail your "MUST" count to Cathy Moran at ss_cmoran@mail.mainland.cc.tx.us. If you are the first to e-mail Cathy with the correct answer, she will deliver your CTL mug to you within the week.

Remember, you must play to win!

Dr. Greg's MIND ERASER

Take the Challenge



ACROSS

- The Self-Study addresses these conditions
- Another way of describing Compliance Statements
- Each committee meeting should have one
- Who should participate in the Self-Study
- Questionnaire
- Dean of Operations and Finance
- Members of this committee act as liaisons to the Principal Committees
- The number of Principal Committees
- These three act as administrative liaisons
- Self-Study Director

DOWN

- Dean of Instruction
- A successful Self-Study

results in reaffirmation of this

- Dean of Student Services
- COM President
- Years in cycle for reaffirmation
- Number of southeastern states in region of SACS
- Institutional Effectiveness
- Each committee meeting should be documented by these
- Location of Self-Study office
- Number of Principal Committees addressing education
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Number of committees addressing either students and the community or administrative areas