



April 14, 2025

Dr. Timothy Beard
Interim President
Florida A&M University
1601 South Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32307-3100

Dear Dr. Beard:

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) policy, "Unsolicited Information" (available at www.sacscoc.org), stipulates that the Commission give appropriate consideration to significant accreditation-related unsolicited information revealed about an institution between periods of scheduled review. This policy affords the institution an opportunity to respond to concerns raised by the review of unsolicited information.

SACSCOC has received internal institutional communications that raise questions about ongoing compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation (Principles)*. In addition, SACSCOC learned from several members of the institution that a member of the FAMU Board of Trustees contacted the administration in what was described as an attempt to interfere with the institution's ability to implement its policies and procedures regarding faculty employment. The documents and discussion with members of the institution raise concerns about clear distinctions between the FAMU Board of Trustees' and the administration's roles and responsibilities, particularly as it relates to the administration's ability to implement and administer policies and the general direction set by the board without undue interference. In addition, the communication between a member of the FAMU Board of Trustees and employees of the institution appear to call into question adherence to the Board's Conflict of Interest Policy, specifically "[t]rustees shall act in good faith, with due regard to the interest of the University, and shall comply with the fiduciary principles and laws set forth in the Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees..." outlined in Article 6.1, Conflict of Interest, of the FAMU Board of Trustees Operating Procedures.

In light of these circumstances, and in accordance with SACSCOC policy and procedures, I am requesting that the institution prepare a report that explains and documents the extent of its compliance with the following standards of the *Principles of Accreditation*:

Standard 4.2.b (Board/administrative distinction and shared governance)

This standard expects the institution's governing board to ensure a clear and appropriate distinction between the policy-making function of the board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy.

Standard 4.2.d (Conflict of Interest)

This standard expects the institution's governing board to define and address potential conflict of interest for its members.



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In addition, please provide a narrative and supporting documentation addressing any additional information related to the received internal documents and communications that may impact the institution and its compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*. A copy of the *Principles* is available on our website.

Please submit a copy of the institution's response to this letter as a zipped file via the Institutional Portal by May 19, 2025.

Upon receipt of the institution's response, staff will review and determine whether the information is of factual substance and related to accreditation. If so, the staff will forward unsolicited information and documentation, along with the institution's response to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for review. Or it is possible that the SACSCOC President could authorize a Special Committee to review the institution's compliance with the *Principles*.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (404) 679-4501, ext. 4540.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Geoffrey C. Klein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Geoffrey C. Klein, Ph.D.
SACSCOC Vice President

GCK:ktf

cc: Dr. Belle S. Wheelan, President, SACSCOC
Mrs. Kristin Harper, Board Chair, Florida A&M University