



May 8, 2020

Mr. Eric Bruntmyer
President & CEO
Hardin-Simmons University
2200 Hickory Street
Box 16000, HSU Station
Abilene TX 79698-6000

Dear Mr. Bruntmyer:

Thank you for your institution's response (dated April 15, 2020) to our letter of March 11, 2020, requesting an explanation and documentation regarding your institution's ongoing compliance with specified standards in the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*.

Our request had been made following receipt of unsolicited information which appeared in reports published on various websites which criticized your institution's decision to close Logsdon Seminary (and the graduate programs offered by it). Information in these reports raised potential questions about the institution's ongoing compliance with the following SACSCOC *Principles*:

- Comprehensive Standard 4.2.f (*External influence*)
- Comprehensive Standard 6.4 (*Academic freedom*)
- Comprehensive Standard 10.4 (*Academic governance*)
- Core Requirement 13.1 (*Financial resources*)
- Comprehensive Standard 13.3 (*Financial responsibility*)

Our review of your response (specifically, the 14-page Institutional Special Report supplemented by approximately 160 pages of supplementary information) has led us to the following conclusions in relation to the five specified *Principles*, respectively:

- The institution's report and supporting documentation provided no evidence that recent decisions resulted from undue external influence; as documented in minutes of the Board of Trustees, recent decisions, instead, appear to have resulted from a multistep process which included participation by varying institutional constituents (including representatives from Logsdon Seminary);
- The institution has a longstanding published policy which defines its commitment to academic freedom and how an individual may register concerns related to possible violations of academic freedom; the institution reports that no individual has actually registered such concerns in relation to this published policy;
- Based on published governing documents, the institution's Board of Trustees appears to have the authority to make broad decisions about the institution's academic structures and program offerings; more specifically, evidence was provided to demonstrate that the decisions related to Logsdon Seminary were made in the context of established institutional governing structures which include opportunities for faculty participation;



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- While recent audited financial information clearly indicates that the institution has experienced operational deficits, it nonetheless also appears clear that the institution retains a solid financial base to support its mission; and
- Given the recent operational financial deficits, the institution's actions to re-structure its academic offerings might be interpreted as actions of financial responsibility (more specifically, too, the institutional response appears to counter the charge that the institution's planned actions would necessarily violate original donor requirements in the establishment of Logsdon Seminary).

Based on review of your submitted materials, we have determined that the unsolicited information does not support a determination of your institution's current non-compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*. Therefore, there will be no further action required by your institution related to this matter at this time.

We thank you for your cooperation in this matter, and we appreciate your continued support of SACSCOC's activities and work. If you have questions, please contact Dr. John Hardt, the SACSCOC staff member assigned to your institution.

Sincerely,

Belle S. Wheelan Ph.D.
President

BSW/JSH:rb

cc: Mr. Michael L. Monhollon, Institutional Accreditation Liaison
Dr. John S. Hardt, Vice President, SACSCOC