Dr. Mark P. Becker  
President  
Georgia State University  
300 Alumni Hall  
P. O. Box 3999  
Atlanta, GA 30302-3999  

Dear Dr. Becker:  

Thank you again for the hospitality and helpfulness extended to the Substantive Change Committee during its visit to your institution on September 6 – 9, 2016. Enclosed is the final report prepared by the committee.  

The report represents the professional judgment of the Substantive Change Committee made in accordance with the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement and subject to review by the Commission on Colleges and its standing review committees—the Committees on Compliance and Reports. Some parts of the report are directly related to the requirements of the Principles, while others may represent advisory comments offered by the visiting committee in a spirit of helpfulness. A formal recommendation is included when a visiting committee judges that the institution does not comply with a particular standard of the Principles. All recommendations included in a visiting committee report have been adopted by the total committee.  

The Commission on Colleges and its Committees on Compliance and Reports meet officially in June and in December. Final decisions on accreditation are made public following each meeting. The report of the visiting Committee will be reviewed in December 2016. The enclosed report contains no recommendations and requires no response.  

The Commission on Colleges endeavors to maintain a cooperative and constructive relationship with officials in system and state offices. However, because of the institutional nature of the accreditation process, it is preferable that these committee reports be furnished to the system or state offices by the institution rather than directly by the Commission office. Therefore, you will also find enclosed a second copy of the report.  

An institution may publicly release its visiting committee report; however, release of this report in its entirety or in part must be accompanied by the following statement: “The findings of this visiting committee represent a preliminary assessment of the institution at this time; final action on the report rests with the Board of Trustees of the Commission on Colleges.” If the institution releases part of its report, that part must contain a note stating: “A copy of the entire report can be obtained from the institution.”  

Please express my sincere appreciation to all members of your faculty and staff for their cooperation and assistance during the review process.  

Sincerely,  

Michael T. Hoefer, Ph. D.  
Vice President  
MTH:ktf  

Enclosures
DOCUMEN TATION FOR THE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE COMMITTEE

Merger-Consolidation of SACSCOC Accredited Institutions

Statement Regarding All Substantive Change Documentation Forms

Please note that this and all of the SACSCOC Substantive Change Documentation forms contain the standards typically provided to a visiting committee. Additional standards may be added by SACSCOC staff as needed to provide the visiting team with relevant information necessary to making an informed determination regarding the change.

Name of the Institution: Georgia State University

Dates of Visit: September 6 – 9, 2016

SACSCOC Staff Member assigned to the Institution:

Dr. Michael Hoefer

Substantive Change On-Site Committee Visit Chair:

Dr. Wilsie Bishop
Vice President for Health Affairs and University
Chief Operating Officer
East Tennessee State University
## Part I. Overview

The Georgia State University-Georgia Perimeter College Consolidation Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approval Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 6, 2015</td>
<td>Board of Regents gives approval for pursuing consolidation of Georgia State University and Georgia Perimeter College, creating a new Georgia State University under GSU President Mark P. Becker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 30, 2015</td>
<td>Presidents of GSU and GPC notify SACSCOC of their intent to consolidate and to submit Prospectus by 9/15/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 28, 2015</td>
<td>The Consolidation Implementation Committee (CIC) and its 43 Operational Working Groups (OWGs) and 38 subcommittees commence consolidation implementation planning, supported by System-level administrative counterparts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 18, 2015</td>
<td>USG BOR approves new mission and name for the consolidated institution, Georgia State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9, 2015</td>
<td>Consolidated upper-level administrative structure and college structure for the new GSU is finalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15, 2015</td>
<td>Prospectus to consolidate GSU and GPC to create new GSU submitted to SACSCOC</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 5, 2015</td>
<td>SACSCOC approves substantive change for the consolidation of GSU and GPC to form new GSU, effective in January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 6, 2016</td>
<td>The BOR of the USG gives final approval of consolidation of GSU and GPC to form new GSU effective immediately. The new administrative structure for the consolidated university takes effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1, 2016</td>
<td>Consolidated GSU operating budget for FY2017 takes effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 27, 2016</td>
<td>Compliance documentation for the Substantive Change committee visit is submitted. Due 4-6 weeks prior to onsite visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 22, 2016</td>
<td>Consolidated curriculum takes effect in Fall Semester 2016. Federal financial aid is consolidated under the new GSU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 6-9, 2016</td>
<td>Consolidation Substantive Change committee visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2017</td>
<td>Final action of the Commission on the Substantive Change committee report</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Georgia State University's (GSU) governing board is the Board of Regents (BOR) of the University System of Georgia (USG). Twenty-nine public two-year and four-year colleges and universities comprise the USG and are governed by the BOR. The consolidation of GSU and Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) was approved by the governing board, consistent with its mission and constitutional authority and with the consolidation principles the BOR had adopted to help guide potential institutional consolidations.

Those principles guided the Chancellor’s recommendations for consolidation and the BOR’s decision in January 2015 to consolidate Georgia State University and Georgia Perimeter College.

The following opportunities were identified as likely results from the consolidation of GSU and GPC:

- Creates a modern urban university that balances needs for access, research, and public service;
- Creates opportunities for raising retention and graduation rates for associate degree seeking students with GSU’s proven success in this area;
- Savings from eliminated duplicate positions and functions will be used to serve students.
- Furthers a nationally-recognized model for student success and retention for students from all backgrounds;
- Creates integrated pathways to degree, spanning from initial general education to associate degree to bachelor’s degree completion;
- Provides access and flexibility for students across the metro area; and
- Provides opportunities to target high-demand bachelor’s degrees to pockets of workforce need.

Acting within its constitutional authority as the governing board, the BOR of the University System of Georgia approved at its January 6, 2015 meeting the System Chancellor’s proposal to pursue consolidation of GSU and GPC. Georgia’s weakened economic condition caused by the deep national recession that began in 2008 resulted in substantial operating budget cutbacks and demands for improved efficiency in all state agencies, including the USG during the ensuing five years. Georgia’s public technical college system previously completed a number of institutional consolidations to conserve resources and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the affected technical colleges. In 2011, a new chancellor of the USG and the BOR determined that institutional consolidations were also necessary in the USG to achieve improved institutional efficiencies and effectiveness. Toward that end, the first round of four
pairs of institutional consolidations in the USG was initiated early in 2012, was approved by the Commission in December of that year and became effective in January, 2013. A second round of one paired institutional consolidation was initiated late in 2013, and was approved by the Commission in December 2014, effective in January 2015. Under the BOR’s consolidation initiative, the governing board and the chancellor have instructed consolidating institutions to redirect their freed resources from administrative consolidations to strengthen instructional services, expand academic offerings, optimize access to instruction, and concentrate on other USG strategic imperatives. The GSU/GPC consolidation constitutes a third phase of USG consolidations and follows in the footsteps of five previous successful institutional consolidations in the USG.

Following SACSCOC approval of the Consolidation Prospectus in December 2015, the Board of Regents (BOR) of the University System of Georgia (USG) voted on January 6, 2016 to finalize the consolidation of GSU and GPC, effective immediately, in accordance with SACSCOC Substantive Change policy.

Part II. Institutional Assessment of Compliance

Section 1: THE PRINCIPLE OF INTEGRITY

1.1 The institution operates with integrity in all matters. (Integrity)

The institution demonstrated integrity in all matters of reporting, in all discussions, and readily provided all materials and information as requested.

Section 2: CORE REQUIREMENTS

2.1 The institution has degree-granting authority from the appropriate government agency or agencies. (Degree-granting authority)

The Committee’s review of the Constitution of the State of Georgia, the Bylaws of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and the news release announcing that the Board of Regents had approved the merger of Georgia State University (GSU) and Georgia Perimeter College confirms that GSU has degree-granting authority.

2.2 The institution has a governing board of at least five members that is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. The board is an active policy-making body for the institution and is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution.

A military institution authorized and operated by the federal government to award degrees has a public board on which both the presiding officer and a majority of the other members are neither civilian employees of the military nor active/retired military. The board has broad and significant influence upon the institution’s programs and operations, plays an active role in policy-making, and ensures that the financial
resources of the institution are used to provide a sound educational program. The board is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from the board except as specified by the authorizing legislation. Both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting board members are free of any contractual, employment, or personal or familial financial interest in the institution. (Governing board)

The Committee's review of the Constitution of the State of Georgia and the Bylaws of the Board of Regents (BOR) of the University System of Georgia (USG) confirms that the BOR is the legal body with specific authority over GSU. The Board has nineteen members as set by the number of congressional districts and at-large members. Article VIII, Section IV of the Constitution of the State of Georgia grants authority to the BOR with regard to policy and financial governance of the USG, and the Board's committee structure administers policy and financial actions as reflected in sample Board minutes.

Under the state Constitution, the BOR allocates and distributes appropriations among member institutions "in such amounts as will further an efficient and economical administration of the university system." The BOR also sets tuition and fees once appropriations and other legislative funding decisions are made. As reflected in the April 2016 BOR minutes, in addition to adjusting tuition and fees to maintain adequate funding, the BOR's consolidation initiative is aimed at reducing administration costs and redirecting savings to expansion of educational programs and services.

A minority of the Board may not control the actions of the Board because the Board may act only with a quorum of a majority of members. According to Section 45-10-22 of the Code of Georgia and the ethical statements contained in the Code, Board members may not lawfully transact any business with the University System of Georgia; they may not have conflicts of interest and they must disclose annually any financial transactions with the state or any state agency involving themselves or on behalf of any business (including those in which they or any family members have a substantial interest).

2.3 The institution has a chief executive officer whose primary responsibility is to the institution and who is not the presiding officer of the board. (Chief executive officer)

The Board of Regents (BOR) of the University System of Georgia (USG) appointed the president of GSU as the president of the new institution when the consolidation was announced. The GSU president is not a member or the presiding officer of the BOR, and is not the chief operating officer of the USG. As set forth in BOR Policy Manual Section 2.5, the president of each USG institution is the executive head of the institution and of all its departments, and exercises supervision and direction to promote the efficient operation of the university. The consolidation had no impact on the existing roles and responsibilities of a university president in the USG.

2.4 The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service. (Institutional mission)

The Committee reviewed the institution's Consolidation Report narrative and documentation for Core Requirement 2.4 and found that it provided clear evidence that its Mission was clearly defined, comprehensive, specific to the institution, and appropriate for higher education.
The Mission Statement contains language that focuses the institution on providing "an outstanding educational and exceptional support for students. . ." and "readies students for professional pursuits, educates future leaders, and prepares citizens for lifelong learning." Thus, the institution clearly indicates its support for teaching and learning. The institution's commitment to research is clearly supported by the Mission Statement when it states that the institution's "scholarship and research focus on solving complex issues. . ." Lastly, the statement also provides support for a public service role in its reference to its role as a public institution, workforce development, and its presence in the Atlanta area for experiential learning and support of faculty "tackling the challenges of an urbanizing nation and the world."

The Mission Statement as presented in the Consolidation Report and approved by the Board of Regents is published in three university catalogs (Associate-Level, Bachelor-Level, and Graduate) and the institution's Fact Book.

See the comments for Comprehensive Standard 3.13.5 for further information regarding needed editorial changes in the Mission Statement.

2.5 The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission. (Institutional effectiveness)

The Committee reviewed the narrative and documentation provided by the institution in its Consolidation Report. It is clear that the institution engaged in ongoing, institution-wide, research-based planning prior to consolidation, as was evidenced by the information provided.

The institution demonstrated a great deal of integrated planning during the last few years focused on the consolidation of Georgia State University with Georgia Perimeter College. This integration involved ensuring that this consolidation met the requirements of the State and Board of Regents and was based on sound rationale underlying these efforts. Of most importance were the efforts to ensure that the newly-consolidated institution met the needs of its constituencies in terms of educational programs, faculty, administrative structure, and fiscal arrangements. These efforts involved an extensive involvement from representatives of both former institutions.

While the consolidation efforts clearly indicated a high level of integrated planning, it is also important to demonstrate that the newly-formed institution integrates all types of planning in order to accomplish its mission. The Board of Regents developed a Strategic Plan in 2013, and Georgia State developed a Strategic Plan in 2011 (to continue through 2016). Also in 2011, a Diversity Strategic Plan was adopted, and the institution provided evidence (an Annual Report in 2015) that this plan has been active and produced some improvements. In addition, a new Mission Statement was approved by the Board of Regents in 2015.

Additional planning efforts included a Campus Master Plan (2012). Georgia Perimeter College also had adopted a Facilities Master Plan in 2000, which was to be updated, but never completed. Plans for a new Facilities Master Plan for the Georgia Perimeter campus are scheduled for FY 2017. A Capital Budget and Space Allocation Committee considers capital budget and space requests and makes recommendations to the Provost.
Budget and financial planning at both Georgia State and Georgia Perimeter have resulted in balanced budgets with significant unrestricted net assets. The institution asserts that these financial results continue with the newly-consolidated Georgia State University, as well as anticipated savings based on the consolidation.

The institution also described unit level planning, student learning assessment, student success initiatives, and a system of academic program review. Thus, it appears that many types of planning are currently underway and have been ongoing at both Georgia State and Georgia Perimeter.

While the narrative provided by the institution did not provide details regarding how the various planning efforts were integrated with one another, interviews on campus with the President, key administrators in Institutional Effectiveness, and the Associate Provost for Strategic Planning were conducted to determine how this integration occurred. Those discussions revealed a high level of data-driven decision making, with priorities for funding after consideration of all requests, directly related to the institution’s Strategic Plan. Prior planning efforts on accomplishment of the Mission, and all of the evidence provided by the institution reveals a consistent focus on Mission accomplishment, and clear examples of such accomplishments.

2.7.2 The institution offers degree programs that embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with its stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education. (Program content)

Each degree program offered by the consolidated Georgia State University (GSU) embodies a coherent course of study that is compatible with the university’s stated mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.

Certificate, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate programs consist of coherent and appropriate bodies of study compatible with the consolidated institution’s mission of readying students for professional pursuits, educating future leaders, and preparing citizens for lifelong learning. The mission’s theme of the university’s presence in the Atlanta metropolitan area providing extraordinary experiential learning opportunities and supports the work of faculty tackling the challenges of an urbanizing nation and world is, likewise, appropriate for the consolidated enterprise. All areas and programs are found by the Committee to be compatible with the institution’s mission and appropriate to higher education. The two- and four-year programs are closely aligned to ensure ease of transition and include progressively more focused and complex courses.

Evidence of the coherence of the programs of study is found by inspection of excerpts from the associate, bachelor, and graduate catalogs. Curricular review procedures, including those for general education and distance education, are also in evidence. The quality of the consolidated academic programs is supported by evidence of faculty-based, System, and accredditor review, and approval thorough processes for new programs and degrees.

2.8 The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of each of its academic programs. (Faculty)

The institution provided faculty job descriptions, college workload policies and procedures, and data reflecting the number of full-time faculty, the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty at GSU and GPC, and the FTE student to FT faculty
ratios for programs. However, data on instructional modality, campus distribution and non-teaching responsibilities were not provided. Evidence was not provided to illustrate that through the administrative policies, the roles and responsibilities of faculty, working in conjunction with program deans and chairs, oversight of academic program quality is ensured.

The institution indicated that there were no reductions in the number of full-time or part-time teaching faculty as a result of the consolidation of the two institutions. The narrative stated that in the consolidation, the Atlanta campus continues to offer four-year, graduate, and first-professional degree programs with a heavy faculty commitment to research and creative activities while Perimeter College will continue to offer a limited array of access-oriented associate degree programs in preparation for transfer to baccalaureate programs. The institution provides faculty workload policies that reflect the differences in mission of GSU and Perimeter College.

The University System of Georgia Board of Regents Policy Manual indicates that it is the function of the academic authorities of each institution to determine faculty teaching load. (BOR Policy Section 3.1). The various colleges' policies follow the guidelines for faculty workload as delineated by the Board of Regents. Workloads are correlated with differences in: a) the levels of instruction provided; b) the levels of grant, contact, and research responsibilities of the faculty; and c) the levels of administrative, institutional, and community service obligations. Faculty teaching loads in the baccalaureate and graduate programs for faculty involved in research and creative endeavors reflect a 4-course teaching load for an academic year while faculty primarily assigned to teaching activities would teach a course load of up to 8 courses per academic year. The teaching loads for faculty at Perimeter College, whose primary responsibility is teaching, are 9 courses per academic year. These faculty loads are reasonable and follow sound academic principles. There was, however, no documentation of adherence to these teaching load guidelines provided in the narrative.

Non-teaching responsibilities for GSU faculty include research, creative activities and support of college mission. Non-teaching responsibilities for GPC include support of the learning process, student advising, service to the discipline or College, maintenance of departmental and college practices and procedures, and remaining current in their teaching discipline. While policy states that performance on non-teaching responsibilities is evaluated as part of both annual and multi-year reviews of tenure-track faculty, there was no documentation of non-teaching responsibilities.

Table 1 (Full-Time Faculty, Part-Time Faculty, Percentage Taught by FT Faculty, and Total Enrollment) clearly identified the percentage of courses provided for each unconsolidated institution and number of faculty (full-time versus part-time) employed to meet the program's standards. The percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty at GSU remains constant at approximately 76% and has increased from 45% to 61% at GPC. Disaggregated data by program was not provided. The institution failed to describe mechanisms to ensure program quality and integrity.

As documented in Tables 2 and 3, Class Size Trends are within generally accepted parameters for the pre-consolidated institutions. Tables 4 and 5, Student-to Faculty Ratio for each institution are within generally accepted parameters prior to consolidation. However, these ratios were based on IPEDS data for full time faculty equivalency (that is, including part time faculty in the calculations), not full time faculty. Table 6
disaggregates the FTE Student to FT Faculty ratios for each program. The variation of these program ratios was due to differences in instructional delivery, class size, student demand, research vs. access mission, degree level mix, and workload assignments. There was no disaggregation by instructional modalities of face-to-face, online, and hybrid, or by campus was provided.

The committee conducted interviews with the Director of Institutional Research, the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, the Vice Provost and Dean, Perimeter College and the Assistant Director, Institutional Research, Perimeter College. During those interviews, additional information was requested by the committee to allow the institution to demonstrate compliance with Core Requirement 2.8 regarding faculty roles and appropriate documentation of student to faculty ratios. The information provided by the institution on-site as well as the discussions in interviews demonstrates that the institution has adequate numbers of full-time faculty to support its mission.

2.9 The institution, through ownership or formal arrangements or agreements, provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections and services and to other learning/information resources consistent with the degrees offered. Collections, resources, and services are sufficient to support all its educational, research, and public service programs. (Learning resources and services)

The Institution clearly asserts that it is in compliance and provides a clear narrative that supports the premise that the consolidation is mostly positive. In terms of resources the two institutions enjoyed a common base of resources through a statewide library collections program provided by GALILEO, and the online virtual library. These are unaffected by the consolidation. These resources are supplemented by electronic resources held at the various institutions in the merger. Due to the increased FTE counts there were costs associated with the merger. These costs were absorbed by the institution which will result in a richer array of resources available after the merger. The facilities and staff at all institutions are available to all of the users regardless of location. The facilities are open hours that respond to the needs of the user base and usage and assessment information is regularly gathered and analyzed. Student advisory councils supplement the information gathered in assessments.

The George State University Library provides unique resources. The most notable is CURVE providing access to state of the art technology for special research projects. This resource has attracted national attention. Another is membership in the Center for Research Librarians allowing researchers access to unique primary and secondary materials from all over the world. This membership is combined with other memberships and onsite collections to provide a robust instructional and research collection.

The libraries are staffed by librarians with the appropriate credential and support staff sufficient to meet their mission. The consolidation has allowed librarians to be deployed at all locations insuring a level delivery of services and instruction.

The institution's narrative and the documentation fully support the assertion of compliance.

2.10 The institution provides student support programs, services, and activities consistent with its mission that are intended to promote student learning and enhance the development of its students. (Student support services)
The Committee reviewed documents and conducted interviews in support of the institution's case for compliance. In the course of the on-site review and verification the committee considered how student support programs and services promote the institution's mission and promote student learning and development. The committee also interacted with students to determine their perceptions of student support services at the institution, and posed similar queries to verify the institution's case for compliance. Documents reviewed including Board of Regents Academic and Student Affairs Handbook and numerous websites promoting student services present strong affirmation for student programming and services that further learning and development outcomes. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with the Associate Vice President and Dean of Students as well as numerous students which again affirmed that student support programs, services, and activities are consistent with Georgia State University's mission and at the same time promote learning and development of students.

2.11.1 The institution has a sound financial base and demonstrated financial stability to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services.

The member institution provides the following financial statements: (1) an institutional audit (or Standard Review Report issued in accordance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services issued by the AICPA for those institutions audited as part of a system wide or statewide audit) and written institutional management letter for the most recent fiscal year prepared by an independent certified public accountant and/or an appropriate governmental auditing agency employing the appropriate audit (or Standard Review Report) guide; (2) a statement of financial position of unrestricted net assets, exclusive of plant assets and plant-related debt, which represents the change in unrestricted net assets attributable to operations for the most recent year; and (3) an annual budget that is preceded by sound planning, is subject to sound fiscal procedures, and is approved by the governing board. (Financial resources and stability)

The Committee reviewed the 2015 annual financial reports for Georgia Perimeter College and the unconsolidated Georgia State University, as well as the financial information provided in the report narrative. The consolidated institution has provided evidence of a sound financial base. Prior to consolidation, Georgia State relied on state funding, tuition, and other diverse revenue streams from auxiliary enterprises, endowments, gifts, sponsored operations, student fees, and capital funding. Reductions in state funding from 2010 to 2016 were largely addressed by the willingness of the Board of Regents to raise tuition. All of these revenue streams remain available to the consolidated institution. Georgia Perimeter returned to a balanced budget in the year prior to consolidation.

The fiscal 2017 operating budget for the consolidated institution was developed to be an equal balance of revenues and expenditures at $1,005,168,340. Financial savings of over $4.7 million have been achieved through consolidation by eliminating many duplicative positions and functions. These funds have been redirected to the core mission of the institution. In addition to significant fee revenues, the consolidated institution benefits from the support of the GSU Foundation, with assets of over $200 million. Resources for the consolidated institution appear to be adequate for missional purposes and to support scope of program and services.

Although finances of the consolidated institution remain tightly budgeted, there are appropriate contingent financial plans should budgeted revenues not materialize. Listed strategies include use of reserves, reduction of travel and other operating expenses, delaying information technology purchase, and if necessary, reduction in force.
2.11.2 The institution has adequate physical resources to support the mission of the institution and the scope of its programs and services. (Physical resources)

The consolidated institution includes 12.5 million square feet of space (7.5 million assignable square feet) across six full service campuses and two leased off-campus instructional sites. Along with comprehensive offerings through on-line and distance education, the facilities can readily support the consolidated enrollment of 50,000 students, and the required scope of the consolidated institution’s programs and services.

The committee reviewed capital planning documents, master plans updates for both unconsolidated institutions, and the unconsolidated Georgia State University strategic plan. There is strong evidence of linkage between facility development and the missional objectives of the consolidated institution. Instructional technology resources are sufficient to support instruction and scholarly activities.

Section 3: COMPREHENSIVE STANDARDS

3.2 Governance and Administration

3.2.1 The governing board of the institution is responsible for the selection and the periodic evaluation of the chief executive officer. (CEO evaluation/selection)

The Constitution of the State of Georgia establishes the USG and grants governing authority of system member institutions (including GSU) to the Board of Regents (BOR). As outlined in BOR Policy Manual Sections 2.1 and 2.2, the BOR is responsible for electing the chief executive officer of member institutions (including GSU) and renewing the contract on an annual basis. Section 2.3 of the BOR Policy Manual calls for evaluations of presidents of system institutions that are factored into the annual appointment renewal of each president. Interviews with the GSU president and USG chancellor confirmed that the GSU president recently received a “360” review from the chancellor which included feedback from faculty, students, direct reports and external stakeholders.

3.2.2 The legal authority and operating control of the institution are clearly defined for the following areas within the institution’s governance structure: (Governing board control)

3.2.2.1 the institution’s mission;

Final authority for governance, control, and management of each of the institutions of the USG, including GSU, is designated to the BOR in the Constitution of the State of Georgia (Article VIII, Section IV, Paragraph 1) and the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (§20-3-31). The authority of the BOR to approve the mission of member institutions is included in BOR Policy Manual, Section 2.10. GPC’s and GSU’s mission statements were consolidated by a 42-member Consolidation Implementation Committee with representatives from both institutions, and the resulting consolidated GSU mission statement was reviewed and approved by the BOR at its January 2015 meeting.

3.2.2.2 the fiscal stability of the institution; and

The legal authority and operating control for the financial affairs of GSU are constitutionally vested in the BOR. Under BOR bylaws, the BOR allocates funds to USG institutions in April each year and approves budgets for each institution within the USG, including GSU, by June. As illustrated by the BOR meeting minutes of April 13, 2016,
the BOR sets tuition and fees after the annual legislative session ends and the BOR’s state appropriations are known for the coming fiscal year. Interviews with the GSU president, USG chancellor, and BOR members confirmed that this structure is working as scheduled.

The BOR has two standing committees with oversight responsibilities pertaining to the financial stability of USG institutions: the Committee on Finance and Business Operations and the Committee on Internal Audit, Risk, and Compliance.

3.2.2.3 institutional policy

The BOR’s authority under the Constitution of the State of Georgia (Article VIII, Section IV, Paragraph 1) and the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (§20-3-31) includes authority and control over policy. BOR policy is set forth in the BOR Policy Manual and associated handbooks and manuals, and applies to all USG institutions, including GSU. The secretary to the BOR is responsible for maintaining BOR policies, including their periodic review and update.

3.2.3 The governing board has a policy addressing conflict of interest for its members. *(Conflict of interest)*

The Committee’s review of the BOR Policy Manual, USG, Section 8.2.20.5.XI, Code of Conduct, confirms that the BOR has a policy addressing conflict of interest for members. The Board’s policies in turn reflect a series of specific provisions in the Georgia Code pertaining to conflicts of interest, and reiterate some additional specific and related restrictions.

3.2.4 The governing board is free from undue influence from political, religious, or other external bodies and protects the institution from such influence. *(External influence)*

The Committee’s review of the Constitution of the State of Georgia, Article VIII, Section IV, Paragraph 1 and the BOR Policy Manual, USG, Section 12.1, Political Interference, confirms that the BOR has exclusive authority over the USG, that all appropriations for the USG are made to the BOR, and that the Constitution vests “government, control and management” of the USG in the BOR. There is no statutory subjugation of the BOR authority that would permit undue influence from political, religious or other external bodies, thereby protecting GSU from such influence. Georgia is also an open records and open meetings state, and no evidence of undue external influence has been documented to exist in recent decades.

3.2.5 The governing board has a policy whereby members can be dismissed only for appropriate reasons and by a fair process. *(Board dismissal)*

The Committee’s review of the Constitution of the State of Georgia, Article VIII, Section IV, Paragraph 1, the BOR Bylaws, and the Official Code of Georgia, shows that members of the Board may be dismissed for failure to attend meetings (Bylaws) and for breaches of Ethics or Conflicts of Interest (Code Sections 45-10-3, 45-10-4, 45-10-24, and 45-10-28), with the Constitution providing avenues for vacating Board membership, including a “competent tribunal”. There is specification of reasons for dismissal and due process, including a hearing. In recent decades, no member of the BOR has been dismissed for any reason.
3.2.6 There is a clear and appropriate distinction, in writing and practice, between the policy-making functions of the governing board and the responsibility of the administration and faculty to administer and implement policy. (Board/administration distinction)

Section 3.1 of the BOR Policy Manual sets forth the relationship between the BOR, the Chancellor, and the president, administrators and faculty of each member institution (including GSU). BOR Policy Manual Section 2.5 sets forth the authority and responsibilities of the presidents of institutions; Section 3.2.1.2 addresses the responsibilities of administrators and their faculty status; and Section 3.2.4 defines the role of the faculty. The GSU statutes more specifically delineate administrative and faculty roles and responsibilities at GSU.

The BOR institutional consolidation initiative illustrated how the BOR’s policy-making authority is distinguished in practice from the responsibility of system and institutional personnel to administer and implement Board policy. In its January 2012 Meeting Minutes, the BOR charged the Chancellor to take measures necessary to effect consolidation, and in January 2015 the BOR further instructed the Chancellor and the GPC and GSU presidents to pursue consolidation of those two institutions. Interviews with the GSU president, other senior GSU administrators, the USG chancellor, and BOR members confirmed that the respective roles of the governing board, administration and faculty are clearly understood, followed and respected by these constituent groups.

3.2.7 The institution has a clearly defined and published organizational structure that delineates responsibility for the administration of policies. (Organizational structure)

GSU provides evidence of a clearly defined organizational structure that reflects the needs of the institution and follows the delineation of responsibility for the administration of policies. The institution’s organizational chart establishes the existence of an appropriate organizational structure. The organizational charts reflect the nine academic colleges and their administrative structures, and the four non-academic units: Finance and Administration, Research and Economic Development, Student Affairs, and Enrollment Management and Student Success. These units are responsible to the President in assisting and advising toward accomplishment and implementation of GSU Board Policy and institution mission.

The organizational charts and job responsibilities are based on and are consistent with the University System of Georgia’s Board of Regents Bylaws and GSU Statutes. These are published in the GSU Faculty Handbook and the Board of Regents Policy Manual.

The consolidation resulted in a president of GSU, who was confirmed by the Board of Regents. The president confirmed and the Board of Regents approved that the existing Georgia State Vice Presidents would remain in their pre-consolidation positions, with the addition of a new cabinet level position of Vice President for Human Resources. GPC was changed to Perimeter College, the ninth college of GSU, and was placed under the leadership of the newly created position of Vice Provost and Dean.

Both the pre-consolidation organization of deans, department chairs, and faculty at the GSU remained unchanged and the faculty of Perimeter College remained organized in their pre-consolidation divisions.

While organizational charts were provided, there is no indication of where the charts are published and made available. However, the Committee discovered a published (web page) description, not an organizational chart, of their administrative organizational structure which satisfies the requirements of this standard.
3.2.8 The institution has qualified administrative and academic officers with the experience and competence to lead the institution. (Qualified administrative/academic officers)

In addition to providing the organizational chart for the administrative and academic areas, the institution has identified the individuals who serve as administrative officers (responsible for oversight of major administrative departments) as well as those who serve as academic officers. The résumés and position descriptions for each individual in an administrative or academic leadership position was provided. The experience and competence are detailed in each résumé, and all individuals meet standards as desired by the institution for effective leadership. The institution's administrative officers have the educational credentials and necessary experience to be successful. Information including educational backgrounds of administrators was given. Resumes also documented that the staff had more than adequate professional experience to be successful.

The Committee reviewed the Roster of Administrators and the credentials of senior leaders including the Provosts, and Vice Presidents. In addition, the Committee interviewed the Director, Institutional Research, the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, and the Vice Provost and Dean, Perimeter College and other senior level administrators during the course of the visit. This on-site examination supports the institution's case for compliance.

3.2.9 The institution publishes policies regarding appointment, employment, and evaluation of all personnel. (Personnel appointment)

The newly consolidated institution defines and publishes policies regarding candidate selection, appointment, employment protocol, on-boarding, and evaluation of faculty and staff. The two institutions effectively merged and aligned their personnel policies through common Board policies and operational workgroups, with representatives from both institutions. Given System-wide oversight, this effort was relatively seamless and the workgroups provided adequate and agreeable compromise for the few personnel policies that differed between the institutions.

Evidence of personnel appointment policies and their use was provided in a series of policy manuals, handbooks, and illustrations. Guidance and review are provided by the Human Resource Advisory Council, hiring manager, AA/EEO office, search committee, and academic administration. Moreover, all new employees are on-boarded through orientations and policy awareness requirements. These policies and procedures are published, open to all candidates and employees, and signal continued compliance.

The institution provided narrative and links to the academic affairs and HR webpages pertaining to the evaluation of employees, personnel policies, and advertising protocol.

3.4 All Educational Programs

3.4.3 The institution publishes admissions policies consistent with its mission. (Admissions policies)

The Substantive Change Committee reviewed documents and conducted interviews in support of the institution's case for compliance. The institution clearly asserted that it is in compliance and provided a narrative that fully supports that assertion. The Institution's primary rationale rests on documented evidence that both institutions were fully compliant prior to the merger, an assertion supported in their last review. The institution
provided compelling evidence that, if anything, compliance has been strengthened by simplified and clear requirements that allow students to move from Perimeter College programs to four year programs at Georgia State. To support these assertions, the institution cited their published admissions requirements on their Portal, in the Associate Catalog, in the Bachelor's Catalog, the Graduate Catalog. They also provided the Transition Request Form and a link to the enrollment management website and examples of admissions marketing materials. All of these materials support their assertion of compliance.

3.4.4 The institution publishes policies that include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, credit by examination, advanced placement, and professional certificates that is consistent with its mission and ensures that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript. *(See the Commission policy “Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures.”*) *(Acceptance of academic credit) Note: Although not listed as a reference in the Principles of Accreditation, see also the Commission policy “The Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees.”*

The newly consolidated institution has mission-consistent policies for awarding credit for transfer courses, credit by examination, advanced placement examinations, professional certificates, and experiential learning. System-level policies and collaborative work group efforts resulted in seamless and thorough procedures and policies for receiving, reviewing, and accepting academic credit between the institutions. Georgia Perimeter students move directly into Georgia State by academic performance, not as transfer students. Other System (USG) students benefit from common course numbering and learning outcomes set by the USG. Acceptance of credits from other institutions is tied to policy and review. Responsibility for the academic quality of accepted credit is assumed by the institution, controlled by explicit policy, and monitored by an articulation team. In all cases, accepted courses and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and are regularly reviewed for existing alignment with degree programs. Colleges and departments have discretion in the acceptance of transfer credit and have published policies that speak to such. No experiential credit (except limited military) is offered and no academic credit for professional certification earned as non-credit is awarded. Evidence of these policies is published in various catalogs and handbooks, and examples are provided. These polices point to continued compliance with this standard.

3.4.5 The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These policies are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through publications that accurately represent the programs and services of the institution. *(Academic policies)*

The academic policies offered by the newly consolidated institution embody accepted professional educational standards. Existing policies were meshed easily due to USG common standards and the efforts of several workgroups. The policies are disseminated to all constituents through catalogs, policy manuals, and websites, and give accurate and faithful representations of the academic programs and services offered by the institution. Policy origination, change, and review processes involve faculty and administration, and adequately allow for broad input and thorough and reasonable consideration.

Evidence of published academic policies and their widespread dissemination is provided and easily accessible. Continued compliance is evident in the published documentation.
3.4.9 The institution provides appropriate academic support services. *(Academic support services)*

The institution’s mission statement expresses commitment to providing leadership and service as a student-centered research university.

The institution provides a description of multiple offices that provide services for students in alignment with institutional commitment. Some examples are: The Office of Student Success, Study Abroad, the Honors College, the Learning Support program, the Writing Studio, the Mathematics Assistance Complex, the International Students and Scholars program, Student Support Services and Testing and Disability Services.

The institution also provides a description of several offices that provide services for faculty. Some examples are: The Center for Teaching and Learning, the Instructional Technology Center, the Office of Diversity Education Planning, University Educational Technology Services and the Office of Disability Services.

The Committee reviewed documents and conducted interviews in support of the institution’s case for compliance. In the course of on-site review and verification it was shown that students and faculty have multiple points of access for student and faculty academic support services, including extensive web site information; online training, tutorials and resources; test proctoring; online social media, tutoring and mentoring support; e-mail and telephone communication. Also interviews with the Vice Provost and Dean of Perimeter College, the Dean of Students, the Associate Dean of the Dunwoody campus, the Director of Academic Outreach, the Assistant Director of Academic Advisement and various faculty and student interactions affirm the case for appropriate academic support services.

3.4.11 For each major in a degree program, the institution assigns responsibility for program coordination, as well as for curriculum development and review, to persons academically qualified in the field. In those degree programs for which the institution does not identify a major, this requirement applies to a curricular area or concentration. *(Academic program coordination)*

The Committee's review of the list of program coordinators’ experience, academic credentials and conversations and supplementary documentation during the visit show that all program coordinators have an appropriate advanced degree in the field and/ or research or professional experience in the field. During the on-site visit, conversations with faculty members and the chair of the Faculty Senate Academic Programs Committee provided evidence that the coordinators provide oversight for assessing the quality of the program and its curriculum.

3.5 Educational Programs: Undergraduate Programs

3.5.3 The institution publishes requirements for its undergraduate programs, including its general education components. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. *(See the Commission policy “The Quality and Integrity of Undergraduate Degrees.”)* *(Undergraduate program requirements)*

There is sufficient evidence to show that each of the institution’s academic programs is consistent with the requirements of the Board of Regents and the institution publishes requirements for its associate degrees and baccalaureate degrees in its Catalogs, which are made available to students in electronic format on the institution's website.
The institution provided evidence that the general education requirements and core competencies for its associate degrees and baccalaureate degrees are defined in the institution’s Catalogs and that degree requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. Currently, the general education core curriculum for both associate degree transfer programs and baccalaureate degrees are the same.

The common core requirements were reviewed by the GSU University Senate and the GPC Senate early in the fall 2015 semester and then approved by the University System of Georgia’s (USG) Council on General Education in October 2015.

The College makes no distinction between modes of delivery, so all requirements for programs and courses apply to both traditional and distance modalities.

The associate and baccalaureate degrees conform to the curriculum developed by the University System of Georgia (USG). Conformity of degree program requirements to commonly accepted standards and practices is ensured through several reinforcing mechanisms: 1) adherence to policies and procedures of the University System of Georgia that reflect commonly accepted standards, such as those for the content and size of the core curriculum and the length of undergraduate degree programs; 2) solicitation of internal and external peer evaluations of new program approvals prior to the governing board’s approval to ensure commonly accepted practices; 3) completion of periodic comprehensive academic program reviews and state and national reviews for program approval, initial accreditation, or reaffirmation of accreditation to ensure adherence to regional and national standards; and 4) adherence to the SACS-COC Policy Statement on “Distance and Correspondence Education” and the C-RAC “Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education.” The review process ensures that the program requirements conform to the USG policy and commonly accepted standards for degree programs.

3.6 Educational Programs: Graduate and Post-Baccalaureate Professional Programs

3.6.4 The institution defines and publishes requirements for its graduate and post-baccalaureate professional programs. These requirements conform to commonly accepted standards and practices for degree programs. (Post-baccalaureate program requirements)

Because the merger involved a lower-division, two-year institution, little effect on the standards and practices for graduate and professional programs occurred. The university’s graduate requirements conform to those found throughout the USG and elsewhere in higher education. The university publishes requirements for all post-baccalaureate programs in the Graduate School Catalog, which is available online. Individual departments also list and publish information about their respective graduate programs in their websites. Processes for the addition, change, or review of graduate programs, including those delivered via distance pedagogies, are clear and involve ample faculty and administrative oversight.

Evidence that graduate requirements are clearly defined and published is provided in the graduate catalog, handbooks, policy manuals and directives. Continued compliance is documented in these publications.
3.7 Faculty

3.7.5 The institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters. (Faculty role in governance)

The newly merged institution publishes policies on the responsibility and authority of faculty in academic and governance matters in the institution’s Statutes and University Senate’s by-laws. The integration of faculty governance between the institutions was achieved by the adoption of a workgroup’s recommendation to require faculty representation from Perimeter College in the Senate’s Executive Council. Moreover, almost 50 Perimeter faculty serve as 2016 University Senators. Internal governance policies and procedures are published online, and delineate and emphasize the faculty’s role in broad academic and internal governance matters. The University Senate is presided over by the President; however, seven elected faculty senators serve on the nine-member Executive Committee, the executive governing body of the Senate. These faculty senators also serve as members of the Administrative Council, the chief advisory body to the president on administrative matters. Faculty representation exists on twenty other standing Senate committees, plus many college and school faculty governance groups.

Evidence of shared governance and continued compliance is found in the institution’s Statutes, Senate by-laws, minutes, and related documents all of which detail and summarize the authority and oversight granted faculty in the governance system.

3.9 Student Affairs and Services

3.9.2 The institution protects the security, confidentiality, and integrity of its student records and maintains security measures to protect and back up data. (Student records)

Georgia State University (GSU) has multiple processes and procedures in place to ensure confidentiality and integrity of its student records. GSU uses the BANNER student information system as the institution-wide student information management system to store and manage electronic student information. BANNER is a widely used system for securing and protecting student records. GSU also utilizes Maxient for the management of student complaints and disciplinary proceedings.

GSU has provided an excellent overview of matters related to the protection and maintenance of student records in the following areas: academic, disciplinary, counseling, medical, financial aid, university police, career services, admissions, student accounts, and library. In addition, the specific guidelines for each department describe how the institution ensures that it adheres to these policies and procedures. Narratives are provided with regard to how student records are protected, appropriately held in confidence, and maintained.

3.10 Financial Resources

3.10.3 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its financial resources. (Control of finances)

The consolidated institution has appropriate controls over its financial resources. The first full year of consolidated financial budgeting and accounting for the new GSU occurred for FY 2017, beginning July 1 2016. Consolidation largely involved adoption of GSU’s existing accounting systems and business practices to manage the financial resources of the new institution on a larger scale than was in place prior to consolidation.
The committee reviewed relevant policies from the Board of Regents. Regent Policy 7.2 establishes authority for budget approval, tuition and fee setting, and other important financial processes. Responsibility is clearly delineated. Regents Policy 7.10.1 (Internal Audits) and 7.10.2 (External Audits) authorize audits and reviews of the USG institutions. Expectations of an organized method of internal control are evidenced by a comprehensive Business Procedures Manual.

Committee interviews with both the Senior VP for Finance and Administration and the Associate Vice President for Finance and Administration indicate the defined controls are in place and appropriately administered. An interview with the University System vice chancellor of fiscal affairs confirmed the level of financial diligence provided by the system.

### 3.11 Physical Resources

#### 3.11.1 The institution exercises appropriate control over all its physical resources. (Control of physical resources)

The consolidated institution provides adequate control over its physical resources. Consolidating activities were minor for this area of review. Established departments for facilities, police, and risk management receive more coordination, but remain largely unchanged.

Access to facilities is authorized by senior level staff members. Photo identifications are issued to faculty, staff, and students. The Georgia State University Police Department provides law enforcement, security and safety services to the university and the immediate surrounding areas. The consolidated institution has 150 officers across all of its facilities. The department is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. The department provides crime prevention workshops and personal safety information, emergency management, key control and safety escorts. Campus police also partner with Atlanta Police Department officers to patrol the downtown campus and to respond to emergencies.

Comprehensive risk management services are provided. Risk Management provides support for evaluating and mitigating exposures to hazards. Occupational Safety and Risk Management responds to all campus-wide issues that affect employee life-safety in research labs, teaching labs, offices, and other student environments. Risk Management provides after action reviews for incidents filed with the consolidated GSU Police related to any property damage or loss to determine appropriate follow-up actions with individuals or external agencies. Appropriate levels of insurance are maintained.

The committee did note that the automated work order system for the Perimeter College has not been functional for almost two years. Attention should be paid to insure that this college is quickly brought into the system managed by the consolidated institution.

### 3.13 Responsibility for compliance with other Commission policies

#### 3.13.4. “Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports”

3.13.4.b. Applicable Policy Statement. If an institution is part of a system or corporate structure, a description of the system operation (or corporate structure) is submitted as part of the Compliance Certification for the decennial review. The description should be designed to help members of the peer review committees understand the mission,
governance, and operating procedures of the system and the individual institution's role within that system.

**Documentation:** The institution should provide a description of the system operation and structure or the corporate structure if this applies.

Through review of the narrative report presented by the institution, review of documents describing the history of the consolidation process and websites describing the USG, the Board of Regents Website, and the Chancellor's Website, as well as interviews with university administration, the Chancellor of the USG, and Vice Chancellor for Fiscal Affairs of the USG, the relationship between the newly merged/consolidated GSU and the University System of Georgia (USG) was clearly articulated. The Board of Regents (BOR) is the constitutionally established independent state agency for policy development and governance of the institutions within the USG. Georgia State University is one of four identified "Research Universities" within the University System of Georgia and provided evidence of compliance with BOR policies. The President of Georgia State, as do the Presidents of all 29 institutions in the system, reports directly to the Chancellor of the USG.

3.13.5. "Separate Accreditation for Units of a Member Institution"

*3.13.5. a. Applicable Policy Statement.* All branch campuses related to the parent campus through corporate or administrative control (1) include the name of the parent campus and make it clear that its accreditation is dependent on the continued accreditation of the parent campus and (2) are evaluated during reviews for institutions seeking candidacy, initial membership, or reaffirmation of accreditation. All other extended units under the accreditation of the parent campus are also evaluated during such reviews.

**Documentation:** For institutions with branch campuses: (1) The name of each branch campus must include the name of the parent campus—the SACSCOC accredited entity. The institution should provide evidence of this for each of its branch campuses. (2) The institution should incorporate the review of its branch campuses, as well as other extended units under the parent campus, into its comprehensive self-assessment and its determination of compliance with the standards, and indicate the procedure for doing so.

The institution in its report indicated that it did not have any branch campuses. The merger/consolidation of Georgia Perimeter College and its five campuses and the GSU resulted in five campuses throughout central Georgia affiliated with GSU. The five Perimeter campuses are managed centrally through the main GSU campus and are overseen by Dr. Peter Lyons, who serves as a GSU Vice Provost and Dean of Perimeter College. Three of the campuses were visited by members of the Substantive Change Committee and administrators; students and faculty from the other two campuses were interviewed by videoconference. While the GSU mission statement refers to "branch" campuses, it was the opinion of the committee, consistent with the report from the institution, that these five campuses are sufficiently integrated into the central operations of GSU so as not to function as branch campuses. As this is an editorial change, the institution is in the process of addressing this language conflict and they have been assured by the Chancellor that it will be on the October 2016 Board of Regents agenda for approval.

3.14 Representation of status with the Commission

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20 Form Updated: June 2016
3.14.1 A member or candidate institution represents its accredited status accurately and publishes the name, address, and telephone number of the Commission in accordance with Commission requirements and federal policy. (Publication of accreditation status)

Georgia State University’s SACSCOC accreditation status is represented on five university publications or websites. The institution provided six links, but one dealt only with specialized accreditation (document number 5). In reviewing these documents/ websites, the committee found a minor mistake in wording for SACSCOC accreditation found in website documentation for GSU (supporting document number 1 in narrative, found at http://oie.gsu.edu/assessment-and-review-academic-and-administrative/accreditation/). The error in wording was corrected prior to the end of the visit to the GSU campus.

Section 4: FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

4.5 The institution has adequate procedures for addressing written student complaints and is responsible for demonstrating that it follows those procedures when resolving student complaints. (See the Commission policy “Complaint Procedures against the Commission or its Accredited Institutions.”) (Student complaints)

Georgia State University (GSU) has multiple processes and procedures in place to ensure confidentiality and integrity of its student records. GSU uses the BANNER student information system as the institution-wide student information management system to store and manage electronic student information. BANNER is a widely used system for securing and protecting student records. GSU also utilizes Maxient for the management of student complaints and disciplinary proceedings.

GSU has provided an excellent overview of matters related to the protection and maintenance of student records in the following areas: academic, disciplinary, counseling, medical, financial aid, university police, career services, admissions, student accounts, and library. In addition, the specific guidelines for each department describe how the institution ensures that it adheres to these policies and procedures. Narratives are provided with regard to how student records are protected, appropriately held in confidence, and maintained.

Interviews were conducted with the Associate Vice President and Dean of Students, the Associate Dean of Students, the Assistant Dean of Students for the Dunwoody campus as well as numerous students, which again affirmed that the university maintains and properly protects student records.

4.7 The institution is in compliance with its program responsibilities under Title IV of the most recent Higher Education Act as amended. (In reviewing the institution’s compliance with these program responsibilities, the Commission relies on documentation forwarded to it by the U. S. Department of Education.) (Title IV program responsibilities)

The consolidated institution has authority from the federal government to award financial aid under Title IV. Both the GSU and GPC Program Participation Agreements are active through 2016 and 2017, respectively. The consolidated institution was authorized by the Department of Education to disburse financial aid beginning August 1, 2016.

The financial aid program is routinely audited. As public institutions of higher education, GSU and GPC are organizational units of the Board of Regents (BOR) of the University
System of Georgia for financial reporting purposes. Therefore, pre-consolidated GSU and GPC were included in the annual financial audits of the BOR by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts. These annual audits included the required testing of financial aid disbursements. The most recent audit of Fiscal 2015 revealed no items of concern.

The pre-consolidated institutions were also required to be reviewed by the Georgia Student Finance Commission. The compliance reviews for Fiscal 2013 were provided to the committee. Those reviews listed only minor areas of concern. Those items have been addressed by management.

The committee interviewed the financial aid director for the consolidated institution. He indicated that there are adequate institutional resources allocated to the financial aid function to maintain a routine system of internal controls and to effectively make awards.
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