

## **Certification Advisory Council (CAC)**

Wednesday, October 30, 2019

Summary Notes

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**Members Present:** Jacob Tingle, Chair; Hua Li; Gina Anderson; Cheryle Snead-Greene; Dorothy Langley; Lynette Gillis

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Cathie Maeyaert and Stacey Silverman

**Others Present:** Paula Owen; Kevin Conlon; Richard Cervantes

**The webcast of this meeting is available at the following link:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-pn50z0JS8>

### **1. Welcome and introduction of CAC members**

Ms. Maeyaert, Director-Private Postsecondary Institutions, Academic Quality and Workforce, welcomed everyone to the Certification Advisory Council meeting and stated that the meeting was being webcast. Ms. Maeyaert introduced herself and Dr. Silverman, Interim Assistant Commissioner as staff present at the meeting. Ms. Maeyaert stated that she was also the staff liaison for the site visit at the Southwest School of Art.

Ms. Maeyaert welcomed four new members to the Certification Advisory Council. All members introduced themselves and a quorum was established as six members were present.

### **2. Election of CAC chairperson**

Ms. Maeyaert stated that Joyce Williams was the previous chairperson whose term ended in August. Dr. Jacob Tingle had offered to act as the chair. Ms. Maeyaert asked if anyone else would like to be considered for the position as well. No one volunteered. All members supported Dr. Tingle as the chair.

### **3. Consideration of Summary Notes from the April 30, 2019 meeting**

Dr. Tingle asked if all members had a chance to review the summary notes from the April 30, 2019 meeting. Lynette Gillis made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Gina Anderson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously, and the minutes were approved as read.

### **4. Consideration of the application for Certificate of Authority from Southwest School of Art**

Dr. Tingle explained that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the application of Southwest School of Art for its fourth Certificate of Authority. The institution has operated in San Antonio under three previous Certificates of Authority, while seeking Higher Education Coordinating Board-recognized accreditation. The CAC members received the evaluation team site report and Southwest School of Art's (SSA) response prior to the meeting. Dr. Tingle asked that the SSA representatives introduce themselves.

Paula Owen, president of SSA; Kevin Conlon, Provost; and Richard Cervantes introduced themselves. Mr. Cervantes was the site team lead and works at Blinn College as the CFO.

Dr. Tingle asked Ms. Maeyaert to remind the members of the Certificate of Authority process and timeline. Ms. Maeyaert stated that a Certificate of Authority is valid for two years. Institutions that are seeking Coordinating Board-recognized accreditation apply for this type of certificate. The current Certificate of Authority is SSA's third certificate. The Certificate of Authority was set to expire on October 26, 2019. However, the Coordinating Board extended SSA's current Certificate of Authority due to the CAC advisory committee not being able to meet the quorum requirement in August 2019. The Coordinating Board gave SSA an interim certificate until January 23, 2020. The fourth Certificate of Authority, if approved, would be valid from January 2020 to January 2022. Institutions can apply for and receive Certificates of Authority for a total of eight years and at the end of eight years the institution must have received Coordinating Board-recognized accreditation. The application under consideration would be SSA's last Certificate of Authority. Certification by the Coordinating Board is not accreditation but a protection of the public interest while the institution pursues accreditation from a recognized agency. This committee makes a recommendation to the Commissioner and to the Coordinating Board members. The Commissioner can make his own recommendation and the combined recommendations go to the Coordinating Board at first a committee meeting and then to all the Coordinating Board members at a quarterly meeting. Staff expected this application would go to a December 2019 committee meeting and then to the full board in January 2020.

Dr. Tingle thanked Provost Conlon and President Owen for attending the meeting and asked that they give an overview of the institution's degree program and accreditation status.

President Owen stated that the degree program began in 2014 with students on campus. SSA board of trustees voted to add the degree program to the existing educational programs at SSA in 2010. The institution has been educational, especially studio education since 1965. It has a long record, and a broad and high-quality reputation for studio education and exhibition. The degree program was developed to fill a need in the state of Texas. There is no other independent College of Art in the state of Texas. President Owen stated that people ask why there is a need for a standalone college of art rather than the option of being an art major as part of the university. President Owen stated that the difference is that the college of art attracts a certain kind of student that is focused on art. That student is not exploring a path for themselves; they've always been on a path towards becoming professional artists. It's a

professional degree and the students are surrounded by like-minded students and like-minded faculty and in many cases, like-minded administrators. Both Kevin Conlon and President Owen have Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art degrees. It was surprising that Texas did not have a college of art like Savannah College of Art and Design, the Art Institute in Chicago, Otis College of Art, or many others. That need is being filled by SSA. President Owen described SSA's accreditation effort as having been "a little rocky," because they were initially pursuing accreditation with the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD), which decided not to apply to be on the recognized accreditor list in the state of Texas. SSA had to shift very quickly to pursue both NASAD and Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation and make an application to SACSCOC. SSA is in the process of applying to both NASAD and SACSCOC but because of the shift, SSA is right up against the last couple of years for THECB authorization.

Provost Conlon stated that the curriculum structure of the program meets NASAD standards for what they expect of a professional Bachelor of Fine Arts degree which is one of the reasons they are still interested in pursuing accreditation with NASAD. Dual accreditation has been the institution's goal from the very beginning. They had initially only sought NASAD accreditation but the problems with NASAD not applying to the state of Texas necessitated switching to SACSCOC. With the switch, some of SSA's internal organization of finances had to be adjusted in order to meet SACSCOC expectations. Those changes have been made and they have adopted NACUBO standards with respect to how they organize and report their finances. Recently, SSA's audit was completed and the institution did very well with fiscal year 2019. SSA Administration will continue to monitor the fiscal progress so that they can ensure that SSA is meeting SACSCOC's standards with respect to both operations and finance. President Owen stated that they have been keeping SACSCOC up to date on their progress all throughout these past six years, so they have been in contact with them as well as the staff and members of NASAD.

Dr. Tingle asked that Mr. Cervantes give a summary of the site team's report.

Mr. Cervantes stated that the site visit was the first time he participated in a site review. THECB staff asked him to chair the visit and included two other subject matter experts. Mr. Cervantes stated that he is not an expert in art or the education side. However, he has been in higher education his whole career and administration is where he has a lot of experience. The site visit team visited SSA in May. The team included a subject matter expert from the University of North Texas in Denton for the student services area and a subject matter expert from Texas Christian University for the education or curriculum review. There are 24 standards that they reviewed. These standards are required by the state and all but two of the standards were considered met. One of the standards not met at the time of the visit was a surety instrument which had not been provided to the Coordinating Board. That issue seemed to be more of a timing issue. Shortly after the meeting, SSA was able to secure the surety instrument and get approval from the Coordinating Board. The other issue was in regard to library resources. The SSA had provided a survey which was intended to determine whether there was appropriate

information in the libraries and the site reviewer did not feel that information was adequately conveyed appropriately in the survey. The reviewer asked for more information regarding the survey. SSA complied in a very positive manner. SSA came up with three different ways in which they would be able to provide measurement for that standard. The subject matter expert felt that was appropriate and so that standard was also subsequently approved.

Dr. Tingle gave the CAC members an opportunity to ask questions of either of the representatives from the SSA or of the team chair from the site visit.

Gina Anderson asked if SSA could elaborate a little bit more as to the progress on their SACSCOC accreditation.

Provost Conlon stated that they had to meet certain benchmark requirements for SACSCOC accreditation while they were in the process. Their last fiscal year audit came back net positive from operations; however, they did have a small deficit for their operations in the prior year which by itself could be considered a disqualifying event for SACSCOC. SSA has been in touch with Anne Chard who is their liaison with SACSCOC to let her know what their situation is. SSA's current fiscal year is positive and the projections for the next fiscal year positive. SSA will make application with two positive fiscal years with the idea that the third audit will come in while they are in the process. Anne Chard indicated that is a satisfactory approach. It will be tight, and SSA has to assume that all other things are working well. SSA administration is using feedback they have gotten from SACSCOC staff on prior applications that they have submitted. SSA has been making steady progress with NASAD. SSA staff feel that the NASAD self-study process is helping them to further refine those areas that are typically of concern with higher education applications for accreditation. Provost Conlon stated that he is still relatively new with SSA and has been with the school officially for about two years. He feels that SSA continues to make strides even through the THECB reauthorization process for this new certificate. The process has given them insight as to the things that they need to do to move into a regulated environment. Mr. Conlon said the path is narrow and it's a little anxiety producing, but everybody's on board. The board of trustees, administrative staff at the executive level, senior staff, and the faculty are all behind SSA's effort.

President Owen stated that they haven't actually submitted an application to SACSCOC yet. SSA needs to have the three financial statements before they can even apply. SACSCOC did allow the staff to submit some information for which SACSCOC read and gave some feedback. However, the application is not submitted to them yet. President Owen confirmed that the accreditation process with NASAD is very similar and might even be a little bit more stringent because it is a national accrediting agency more specific to art and design. SSA staff feel that going through the NASAD process is preparing them very well for SACSCOC.

Dr. Silverman asked when they anticipated applying to SACSCOC and when would SACSCOC receive applications.

President Owen answered that it is midsummer. Provost Conlon stated that they have two opportunities per year to submit formally to get on the agenda of the CNR committees to have them look formally at an application and make recommendations for initial review for a candidacy by the Commission on Accreditation. SSA anticipates submitting shortly before their third audit is complete with the idea that they'll be completed in time for the Commission to have that information at hand when they're deciding. President Owen stated during next summer will be the submission and SSA has already received tacit approval with the SACSCOC staff for this schedule.

Dr. Silverman asked if they anticipate SACSCOC considering the application at their September meeting.

President Owen stated SACSCOC could consider the application in September or in the spring. SSA would still have a timeline that falls within its Certificate of Authority period.

Dr. Silverman asked if they are anticipating spring 2021.

President Owen answered that the actual process would be in fall of 2020. President Owen and Provost Conlon came to THECB to meet with Dr. Peebles and Ms. Maeyaert when they realized the timeline. They were in a quandary because SSA had to move very quickly with SACSCOC after the NASAD issue. THECB staff were very helpful, trying to work with NASAD, but NASAD said the recognition application was non-negotiable. SSA is very intent upon making the SACSCOC accreditation work.

Ms. Maeyaert asked to clarify a statement. SSA stated that they had to change their financial reporting slightly and that showed some losses for a couple of years. Ms. Maeyaert asked SSA staff to clarify for the CAC members what years will have the positive financials that are expected.

Provost Conlon answered they expected positive financials for year 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Dorothy Langley asked a question regarding the SSA report for standard 17. SSA mentioned that they didn't meet that particular standard but did submit a survey. Ms. Langley asked if SSA could tell the CAC a little bit more about that particular survey and what criteria they presented helped meet that particular standard.

Provost Conlon answered that the response that they provided to THECB regarding their concerns was focused on what they were doing to develop the relationship with the library. SSA has a consortium agreement with the San Antonio Public Central Library, which is their main library. The library is literally right across the street from SSA. The library also wanted to develop the collection and work with faculty and the library staff to make sure it was in line with the various emphases that are part of the art study conducted at SSA. The library wanted to work on developing the programming. So, between the relationship, the collection, and the programming to support students use of the library they feel like they have done a good job of realigning the needs of the library to meet student and faculty requirements. President Owen

stated that SSA has also rewritten the survey, so it captures the information better. The problem with the survey was that it wasn't capturing enough information to cover that particular standard. Provost Conlon stated that SSA didn't want to submit the entire survey as part of their application for recertification and inadvertently omitted some information that would have been useful to the site team to help them make their decision. In response, SSA staff included that information and elaborated on the development work that they had been doing to improve the relationship and the collection.

Cheryle Snead-Greene asked SSA to elaborate on their statement regarding some losses in the program. Ms. Langley was thinking about the sustainability of the program once it gets off the ground and was also looking at the SSA faculty to student ratio. Ms. Langley asked what SSA's projected enrollment was and when they must hire new faculty or whether they are going to use faculty already on board.

President Owen stated that they have done a lot of this kind of planning and projecting because they are a startup, new college. So, they have had to do a lot of planning for how that enrollment will grow and what SSA will do to keep the financial picture stable during that time. SSA is fortunate that they have been around for a long time, so it has a large donor base. It has other continuing education programs. It has a youth program that attracts a lot of foundation support. SSA rents some of its facilities. SSA's historical site in the middle of downtown San Antonio is a popular site for weddings. So, they have other revenue streams. SSA administration has projected how enrollment will eventually bring them to scale. They have just recently done ten-year projection and are projecting an enrollment growth by 2032, to approximately a hundred and seventy-five students. SSA administration is being very conservative with their number. It probably will be more than that, but they have also during this same period of time completed a master plan. SSA hired a firm to help them with that, but in that process, they had to project enrollment and studio needs and student needs and faculty and so forth. So, they know that they can serve up to about 175 to 200 students with current facilities. During this ten-year period, they will also be implementing the master plan and are already in conversation with the city of San Antonio for some collaboration, because they are right across the street from the library. SSA will probably work with the city and some of its facilities. In summary, SSA had to do a lot of that projecting into the future.

Provost Conlon stated that he would like to add one other point. The school has been around since 1965, serving the community through adult education and youth programming. Many of the faculty who are qualified and credentialed that teach within their BFA program also serve those communities as well, so they are able to scale the BFA within the existing programs without adding additional faculty and that's likely to be the case for the foreseeable future unless a faculty member leaves. SSA would end up having to replace that individual, but it has qualified faculty in each of the departments within the school. For example, there is faculty in the metals program, faculty in the fibers program, and faculty in the painting program. All of these faculty members also teach in the community and youth programs. This allowed SSA to incubate, grow, and launch the BFA program within the existing structure of the school. If SSA

gets the number of students hoped for, 175, the administration will have to make some hiring decisions to support students in the various emphases, depending on where enrollment goes and if some areas are more popular than others, but they don't anticipate that to be a problem right now. SSA faculty is working really well within their current scale and administration anticipates that growth will just allow them to hire as they need.

Cheryle Snead-Greene asked if as an art studio the faculty-student ratio is probably standard.

Provost Conlon answered that it is a little bit low. Typically, you would want to see a ratio of one to six or seven or eight and SSA is at one to four or five depending on how you measure student participation in the various emphases of the school. It's also a conscious decision SSA has made to keep that intimate mentorship relationship between the faculty and the student and keep those ratios small so that students have a very high-quality experience in the program; at least until they are fairly convinced that the program can be scaled.

Cheryle Snead-Greene stated she sees that SSA is anticipating growth, which is very good, and have persons who are interested in this type of degree, but she noticed that SSA did not have dormitories right now. She asked if these were included in SSA's scope as they grow.

President Owen answered that they are already working with the developer community. They don't want to run their own dormitories. They are in downtown San Antonio, so there's a lot of apartments available and it's not a pressing need right now. From a recruitment point of view, where parents would like to see their child moving into a safe environment near campus, they are working with the developer community to partner with them on housing. SSA does own a block right across one of the streets that runs through the campus so that they have that opportunity to build housing on that space.

Provost Conlon stated that SSA is very fortunate in that they have very little debt. It is one of the blessings that they enjoy and it's because they have had good fiscal stewardship. They haven't had the best reporting of fiscal stewardship, but now that they have got that worked out with the NACUBO process, they have a clearer picture of where they are and where they need to go. Provost Conlon thinks dormitories can certainly realize auxiliary revenue through the dormitories and services provided to students that are typically associated with dormitories, but he has many years of experience with SCAD, which got out of the dormitory business, SCAD worked with private contractors and developers to develop appropriate student housing and partnerships between safety and security issues are typically associated with dormitories. They let the developers take on the debt burden and kept SCAD from running up a debt that it really didn't need.

Mr. Cervantes added support as somebody that has 1,800 beds at his institution. With all of the things that Mr. Conlon mentioned, security is an issue. The cost of building a facility for SSA and add it on their books would just be prohibitive. Going with the developer certainly is an opportunity to keep it off the balance sheet and SSA can decide as to whether or not it's going to be a fiscally sustainable. There are a small number of students so a big move in that

direction is not anticipated anytime soon. SSA has transportation that comes to its campus, including the river that comes down right to their premises, so there's a number of ways that students are able to get to their facility. A very positive thing about the institution is that the students were staying there, they weren't coming and going. They would come there, and they would do their work while they were there and would not leave. They felt very comfortable in the environment.

Ms. Maeyaert asked for follow-up when SSA was talking about the training programs and the space issue. There were some concerns raised by students on the use of space by the community programs. Ms. Maeyaert asked if SSA had any other follow-up information on the use of campus space by both the community program and the BFA program.

President Owen stated that competition for space is probably not ever going to go away. Everyone wants more space and access to equipment and machinery. She thinks some of the students in the community programs have been used to having all the space. With the addition of the college students, she said, in general, they're working it out just fine and everyone has lab hours, and everyone has access and thinks it's mostly just a little normal grumbling.

Provost Conlon added that SSA just created an internal task force to look at some of the issues regarding competition for space with the community program versus the BFA program. The BFA program is sensitive to some of the needs of the community students as well and has done a really good job. He has been working with Justin Boyd, SSA's academic director, to look more carefully at the footprint that the BFA program occupies within the overall schedule and the use of facilities. Mr. Conlon thinks that they have come up with some good solutions even with projected growth. He does not anticipate, based on the projections, that SSA will have to add anything to the physical plan for quite some time. He thinks that there's plenty of space, it's just as President Owe mentioned that some people have had open and unfettered access to a facility and now they're having to make way for this new population that's coming in. There are going to be some hard feelings about that.

Cheryle Snead-Greene asked a question regarding the curriculum and general education. SSA points out that SSA standards satisfy the required hours and other schools don't have general education courses, but she did not see anything on whether students would be satisfying the Texas common core. If a student got into this program and was not successful or didn't like it, and wanted to transfer and go somewhere else, if the student didn't have that common core, she would have to start all over.

Provost Conlon answered that there have been some courses he has been working with the faculty to make some adjustments to the current curriculum so it's more in line and satisfies some of the common course transferability requirements. For example, he has been meeting with the faculty that teaches the social psychology course and they are making some adjustments to the course so that it falls within the new numerical sequence of the common core, but also fits within that discipline expectation for psychology. Those are adjustments that they continue to make but he didn't want to mislead the CAC. They try to create a general



education and liberal arts experience that's rich in those discipline areas that they are serving but they always try to contextualize that learning so that the students see it as relevant to their practice as artists and designers. The last thing he wants to have happen is a student "sort of zone out." It's not that they are creating general education courses for artists. There's legitimate integrity to the courses and their structure, but they always try to find some way to tie it into their hard practice.

Dr. Silverman asked a question regarding whether students transfer out from SSA and if so where they go.

President Owen answered that they have not had very many transfers out. They have had some students go on leave and come back. She only knows of one student that has transferred out.

Provost Conlon added that their retention rates are very good compared to their peers both within Art Design and single purpose institutions, but also compared to small liberal arts schools. Typically, the first year retention rate hovers around 80 percent and increases every year after.

Dr. Silverman asked where SSA students come from and if they are mostly from the San Antonio area.

Provost Conlon answered that about 73% come from San Antonio. They also have a student from Pennsylvania, a student from Florida, from Boerne, and one from Houston.

Dr. Silverman stated the student population was primarily Texas, but some out-of-state. Provost Conlon affirmed Dr. Silverman's statement. President Owen added that the institution is young, so they expect the student population to grow exponentially as they gain traction.

Cheryle Snead-Greene asked if SSA's students are traditional college age students fresh out of high school or if they get a lot of adult students. She saw where SSA had a student who had a portfolio they put together and they got credit. Dr. Greene was thinking about the prior learning assessment (PLA) and was wondering if SSA has adult students. She asked if SSA would let students, if they don't take some those classes, be able to use it for other portfolios.

Provost Conlon answered that there are a variety of students. Some of SSA's students are non-traditional. SSA just had a student last year who left his business to pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. He did stop with his work, came in and earned his degree, and now is going back into the workforce. He was certainly a non-traditional student in his early 30s. SSA had a former student, recent alum, who is similarly non-traditional. Provost Conlon stated when SSA first launched the program it probably had more of the traditional students, but it has been attracting more and more attention from people who like the idea of going back to school.

President Owen stated that their first-time freshmen ratio has also grown. About fifty-one percent of their students are first-time freshmen and then a large number are transfers from

the community college system. There is a robust community college system in San Antonio and because the art people are all linked and have these relationships, a lot of SSA's friends and other people exhibit with SSA. Colleagues are teachers in the community college system. They do get transfers from the community college system and then some non-traditional students.

Dr. Tingle asked a question related to transfers and the potential growth strategy, maybe not just in the city of San Antonio, but are from other BFA programs in the state of Texas. He asked if there are some opportunities there that SSA is looking at in terms of recruiting from other cities in the state.

Provost Conlon answered that when he was at Ringling College of Art and Design, one of his prior assignments was very involved in developing a very robust set of articulation agreements with most of the community programs that were in the state of Florida. He also did similar work when he was at Columbus College of Art and Design. It is high on his priority list, as soon as they get accreditation, to begin to develop those articulation agreements. They have some informal articulation already happening and they have signaled to friends in the art community to let them know that SSA is always willing to look at a student's academic record then try to be as generous as possible with transfer credits. They brought in several students that way, but his goal is to wait until they gain accreditation and then formally go after these articulation agreements. President Owen stated that she thinks that accreditation is key for their enrollment.

Hua Li asks a question about the library issue. He states that he is from engineering and not quite familiar with Fine Arts. Dr. Li asked if students are looking for books or looking for a resource from online database.

Provost Conlon answered that they have a relationship with the San Antonio Public Library, and they maintain databases and a collection for SSA. The second floor of the Central Library is where the Marie Swartz Visual Arts Center is located. A partnership was developed between Southwest School of Art and San Antonio public library several years ago. They merged their collections and it lives on the second floor of the library. Students have space to go, there's lounge area for them to work in, there's a small exhibition of artwork along the wall of the space. The students are accessing both the digital databases as well as the hard-bound volumes that are part of the collection. SSA has tried to organize the collection and the databases into lists that students can easily find. For example, if they are interested in doing research in metals and jewelry, the library has been kind enough to organize a list for SSA both within the database and within the collection. Students can find out everything that they need to know about metals at both the introductory level, but also the advanced level when they're working on their thesis. The thesis requirement for students earning the BFA is that they do an exhibition of their senior level work and that they also have a written component explaining their research and their approach to their practice through that thesis in the presentation through the exhibition.

Hua Li stated from his understanding for his engineering students, they mainly use the library on campus for studying, they don't really go there for books. He asked if SSA thinks that there are any problems with the enrollment growth in that there may not enough space without using the second floor as a study area.

Provost Conlon answered that the agreement with the library also provides students access to the study carrels and there are several small meeting rooms that they're allowed to have access to. SSA does not anticipate that it'll be a serious issue for many years. President Owen also mentioned the campus master planning process. SSA considers the library to be a partner in that master planning process. The city of San Antonio has been very involved in looking at what they can do to bridge the two campuses to join them and that includes construction of some shared resources that would benefit students and their need for spaces. It's also a benefit to Southwest School of Art and the library for a medium sized auditorium, where they could do programming and other things that would be a benefit to both institutions.

President Owen added that SAPL is a huge library and people are using libraries in different ways these days, so they are all working together to create an institution of higher education that incorporates and serves the community. It's a bit of a new model and they have a record of that new model of working in San Antonio. Although higher education has a lot of challenges right now, they believe that this vision will help them to be sustainable in the future.

Provost Conlon referred to his comments before with the dormitory situation and Richard Cervantes' assertion that the idea that an institution has to do everything itself is a bit of an anachronism. As institutions, today especially, in their startup situation they want to bring in partners. So, the library is a natural partner which is literally from his office to the front door of the library a two-minute walk across the street.

President Owen added that they have already had a partnership with the library, including the San Antonio Book Festival and the Central Public Library and they have other programming partnerships already.

Provost Conlon added that the development of the block that they own across from the school represents another opportunity to find ways to partner in an interesting way on a bookstore, on parking, on dormitory space, or on food services. They look at that opportunity to partner as an innovative way of advancing what it is that SSA does. Artists by nature are innovators. They think differently about problem solving and he thinks that the institution has a history of doing that which is exciting.

Dr. Tingle asked if the Marie Swartz collection is a resource center open to library patrons as well as students when patrons could access the collection and how they would gain access.

Provost Conlon explained that students get their own library card which gives them access to certain resources within the library. There is also a reserved section. If a faculty member wants to hold a book in reserve it is pulled out of the general collection and held in reserve for

students to get access to it. There are also resources within the database that students have unique access to that the general public does not. SSA feels it has a good partner with the library and it's an efficient way for them to realize the needs of faculty and students to do research and to have opportunities to meet and study. SSA is very pleased with the new agreement. It has allowed SSA to solidify the relationship but also do something that SACSCOC was asking them to do, which is to demonstrate that they had some autonomy in relationship and that they had some control that would serve SSA's academic and institutional needs.

Dorothy Langley asked if SSA tracks the data usage by the students and uses the information from that tool to monitor or give feedback on how many students are actually using the library.

Provost Conlon answered that their new librarian, Keith, works with staff at the library to track use by students and by faculty. SSA student and faculty populations are small, so the numbers aren't impressive if you've come from a comprehensive university and you're looking at the number of students who use a library system of that scale. While use can always be better, he thinks one of the things that the new librarian is bringing to the table is a different way of looking at programming that engages students and understanding the library as a resource for their studio practice. SSA tracks the numbers, receiving them twice a year at the end of each semester.

Dorothy Langley stated that she believes these numbers would be beneficial even though if the numbers are small. Her college is relatively small, at one thousand students. The college is able to track and discovered the information is very important, especially for SACSCOC accreditation. Provost Conlon agreed that if you track it then you're paying attention to it.

Lynette Gillis noted the partnerships that SSA has worked out are innovative to ensure some sustainability, but that it requires someone who maintains that partnership to know that relationship will continue with the library, ideally in perpetuity. She asked about steps SSA is taking to ensure those partnerships are sustainable.

President Owen answered that they continue to meet, support each other, and report to the library board from time to time. SSA is working with the library on the expanded master plan which is a mutual benefit. President Owen meets with the director of the library system for lunch periodically. They also can use this partnership to support each of the separate missions. For the library it's important for them to say that while libraries are changing, the library is doing different things, such as providing access to these college students by forming the Marie Swartz Resource Center. She said the library is becoming different from your mother's library. Sustaining that relationship at the city level is also important, so they provide data for the city as well.

Provost Conlon stated that the new SSA librarian is the chair of a library committee that works with a small group of faculty who have been focusing mostly on development policy for the collection in the past six to eight months. They share that information with their counterparts within the central library. SSA knows where their focus needs to be for whatever budgetary

allocations they are making for the next academic year. That focus allows the library and the school to be in communication about what the Marie Swartz collection needs next.

President Owen stated that the library and college relationship has strengthened. They always had a partnership, but it strengthened formalized the relationship because of the agreement and because of the joint master plan.

Lynette Gillis asked about financial resources and stability. SSA stated revenues increased by 1.2 million, while expenses only increased by about a hundred thousand. Some of the of the alternative revenue streams were mentioned. Dr. Gillis asked if those alternative revenue streams were the primary reasons for that significant increase from fiscal year 2018 to 2019 and if the revenue stream was sustainable.

President Owen stated that the increase in revenue seen in the last year's numbers is partly because they have a donor base that is behind them. The base wants SSA to succeed and with their transformation to higher education their credibility has grown, their reach has grown, and their scope has grown. SSA has more donors from outside of San Antonio and that will probably only grow as they have more students from outside of San Antonio. President Owen thinks one of the biggest reasons that people make contributions is because they believe in your mission but also, they believe in your ability to achieve your mission. She thinks that both of those are becoming more so.

Lynette Gillis asked if the donations are gifts to SSA's general operating budget.

President Owen answered that in some cases the donations go to general operations and in others to the SSA scholarship fund. SSA has already given away \$1.6 million since 2014 in privately funded scholarships because their students are not eligible for any financial aid at this point. In the last two years, the institution launched an additional scholarship campaign and so far, they have about \$3 million for scholarships. SSA continues to see gifts for scholarships come through the door, even unsolicited gifts for scholarships.

Lynette Gillis asked if SSA would expect the gift base would continue over the growth.

President Owen answered she thinks it's a logical assumption. Texans are very fond of their culture and their arts programming throughout the state and as more students want to go to college at SSA, they will have more friends. For instance, they just went out to El Paso. SSA received an invitation to talk to their arts-interested college-going students. Interest is only moving forward.

Richard Cervantes stated just looking at SSA's financial statements for 2017 and 2018, 2018 had grants that had increased by about \$300,000. He said SSA was doing something on that side that's grown and then they had a significant increase in their investment earnings to a little bit over \$400,000. Between the two of those figures, that's about 70 percent of the million dollars increase that was reported.

Dr. Silverman asked where SSA's students go when they graduate and the kind of jobs they hold.

President Owen gave examples. One is a museum guard and has his own studio. Two students are in graduate school. One student is applying to graduate school for the spring semester. Another student contacted SSA about teacher certification because he had been teaching in the SSA teen program and now he's decided he wants to be an art teacher. Some students are working as apprentices for artists who do public art or commission work and almost all of them have their own studios set up and are exhibiting their work.

Dr. Silverman asked if SSA had heard of the ArtStartArt website. She explained that is a way for university students to actually post their artwork online and it's curated every month. The site puts up new art pieces and it's available to the public. Several Texas institutions of higher ed are participating in that and Dr. Silverman has also purchased artwork from one of them. She thinks it's just a wonderful opportunity for students to be able to actually get some revenue and actually put their stuff out now in the public domain.

President Owen replied that it reminded her to mention that SSA have two business courses as part of the curriculum. One of the courses is focused on marketing and the other is focused on zoning, tax law, contracts, and business plans and so forth. SSA does prepare their students for their future as practicing artists.

Cheryle Snead-Greene asked to follow-up Dr. Silverman's question on where the students go. Dr. Greene asked if SSA has the numbers on their six-year graduation rate.

Provost Conlon stated that SSA only has a four-year graduation rate that's published on their website. He thinks that SSA is in the process now of tabulating the data on the six-year rate. They just graduated their second cohort, so they are not quite there yet with a six-year, and he doesn't have the numbers at hand.

Cheryle Snead-Greene stated that most Texas schools look at six-year graduation rates.

President Owen stated that SSA will have more data but have only had twenty graduates so far.

Provost Conlon stated that he is new to Texas, having been here two years. He stated that the cultural vibe of San Antonio is unique. He lived in Savannah for 16 years, worked for SCAD, lived in Sarasota for three years, Columbus for six years, and now in San Antonio. The area is like nothing he has ever seen before. The number of cultural partners that they have in the area interested in their students is remarkable. Several of the students, even while they are working towards their degree program, are working for organizations like SAC, or programming at Blue Star, or other things that they're doing around town that have them engage the professional art community. It's not just being a student doing their BFA; they're integrating themselves within the arts community and they're welcome there. Provost Conlon added that he has had chief academic officer roles at all of these schools. When he saw the first BFA exhibition at SSA, he was there as a consultant. He was even hired yet. However, he knew he

wanted to work at the school. It was a small show with only 11 students in that first cohort, but he even told several board members that he would stack that artwork up against any art program in the United States, That's a tribute to the faculty but it's also a tribute to the fact that SSA is drawing and attracting a special kind of student who wants to have that focused experience that they're not going to get at a comprehensive university. SSA likes to call themselves the only independent art school in Texas and some people may scratch their head and mention there are plenty of comprehensive universities that have excellent art programs. That is true. UT Austin has a fine art program, but it's not the same. Having worked at private art and design schools for twenty years as an administrator, he can tell that the kind of students SSA is attracting and the kind of results that they are getting are pretty special.

Dr. Tingle asked if any CAC members had additional questions.

Ms. Maeyaert asked about standard five and SSA's financials. She asked if SACSCOC has any concerns about SSA meeting its financial requirements in order to proceed with the application for accreditation.

President Owen answered that they have been working with a consultant from an accounting firm in Atlanta whom SACSCOC recommended to SSA. He was recommended because he knows NACUBO standards inside and out. He has said that when SSA submits, SSA needs to be able to demonstrate without a doubt that their financials are strong. The balance sheet is strong, but SSA needs to have an operating budget that meets SACSCOC standards. SSA might have a concern over 2018, which is so close that he says that they may overlook it. 2019 is very strong. SSA just got their audit for 2019 and expects 2020 to be very strong.

Ms. Maeyaert stated that they have talked about that SSA's timeline is very tight. If SSA does not have SACSCOC accreditation or candidacy with SACSCOC by the time a fourth certificate of authority would run out, SSA needs a plan for students. She asked SSA to elaborate on those plans for the committee.

Provost Conlon stated that they had been working with the department chair at University of Texas San Antonio negotiating the preliminary steps of a teach out agreement should it come to that and making sure that they are in conversation about how SSA preserves students' degree progress within their program. The UTSA program is a Bachelor of Fine Arts program just like SSA's program, so they feel like it's a good fit and have enjoyed some partnership opportunities with UTSA for quite some time. He feels like this articulation of the two programs together through this teach out would be fairly easy. The Dean with whom he negotiated the Memorandum of Understanding to proceed into the teach out agreement is retired as of now, but his replacement has already been informed that SSA wants to continue to pursue this over the next year. SSA feels like they will protect the students' degree progress if it comes to that, Also, the surety instrument is in place to cover students' last tuition and fees as well.

Ms. Maeyaert asked if SSA has discussed with SACSCOC the Certificate of Authority timeline and how SSA coming up on a hard deadline.

Provost Conlon affirmed SSA has discussed the deadline with SACSCOC. In the application that was made to THECB one of the questions asks about the accreditation pathway. Provost Conlon produced a calendar that looked at both NASAD accreditation, even though it's not recognized in the state of Texas, and SACSCOC accreditation. Both of those were shared with Anne Chard at SACSCOC to verify that he had his information correct before he represented it to the CAC committee members. It was important to him that we're all sharing the same information. Even though NASAD isn't necessarily playing in our sandbox here in Texas, he has been in close contact with Karen Moynihan, who's the executive director of NASAD as well. His goal is to make sure everybody knows what everybody else is doing and that they are taking advantage of all the good work that they are putting into applications to THECB, NASAD, and their self-study process. Ultimately, with the application to SACSCOC, he is trying to lower any risk and minimize ambiguity.

Ms. Maeyaert asks if other than the financial reports, whether SSA has had any conversations with SACSCOC which brought up any other concerns that they have at this point about SSA's process to accreditation.

President Owen answered that it was a couple of years ago that SACSCOC reviewed their draft and so there are a few minor things which they have since corrected and elaborated on. So, the answer would be no.

Provost Conlon stated that to Paula's point, the hiring of the librarian has helped to address one of the issues that staff noted in their prior draft applications, the autonomy of the institution in terms of being able to manage that programming relationship. That was the only other concern that was brought up. SSA feels like they are in a good position now with a new agreement with Keith hired as the librarian and with their assessment improvements. That was the other area that was noted. There was a little concern that their assessment efforts were nascent. SSA didn't have a track record, but now they have completed two full cycles and they are in the middle of the third cycle of program assessment. They funnel that into a larger institutional effectiveness portfolio that they have built around how they are making progress on the institution's strategic plan. It's maturing. SACSCOC previously said it was not mature and it wasn't mature because they were relatively new at that. It has come a long way.

Dr. Silverman asked when SSA students transfer in and SSA tries to accept courses if there are any courses that stand out that don't transfer in.

Provost Conlon answered that they try to look at SACSCOC guidelines with respect to general education requirements. They look within the discipline areas that are traditionally associated with that compliance criteria. Sometimes you have students who may have taken a great deal of coursework in a particular area and they've got an excessive number of credits, for example in psychology. If SSA can't find somewhere to put those extra credits, they will turn them down because they need that coursework to slide into an articulation table that allows them to meet accreditation requirements with respect to the general education expectations of SACSCOC.



Dr. Silverman asked if SSA is getting a lot of students with dual credit.

Provost Conlon answered that it hasn't been a big issue so far. They do look at students' portfolios very carefully. They have the Admissions Review Committee (ARCO). The committee is comprised of faculty, an admissions officer, and Provost Conlon. They look pretty carefully to make sure that students have the necessary skills to be successful as studio practitioners. They are also looking at their high school transcripts and any college credit that they're bringing in but don't have a lot of dual enrollment at this time.

Cheryle Snead-Greene asked if SSA accepts AP credit.

Provost Conlon confirmed SSA accepts AP, IB, and CLEP.

Cheryle Snead-Greene said she assumed that for the students who have a lot of psychology or sociology, SSA probably doesn't have a reason to offer any type of minors just so that they would be able to use those credits.

Provost Conlon answered that the current structure of The Bachelor of Fine Arts program is built around NASAD standards and it's roughly one-third gen ed liberal arts, roughly one-third general art and art history content, and roughly one-third that's built around a level specialization in an area of emphasis that the students can pursue. They have seven emphases at the school and because the weight of that last third is so heavy, they don't have a lot of wiggle room in the curriculum right now for minors. In the future it might happen. For example, Provost Conlon started a business minor within the art program at Columbus College of Art in design. He also noted the two professional practices courses in the current BFA program. With a little bit of tweaking and maybe opening up a couple of elective opportunities, he would love to start a business minor at Southwest School of Art. He was a business major in undergraduate school for a couple of years before he saw the light and came to art.

Gina Anderson stated that a minor that SSA might consider would be one in education, a teaching certification.

President Owen agreed, stating there are not many for art teachers.

Dorothy Langley asked if SSA had entertained any guided pathway initiatives with some of the community colleges for those students who complete whatever they need to complete and then just move into SSA's program. It wouldn't be a question of can we take credits or not take credits.

President Owen answered that it may come as SSA moves forward.

Dorothy Langley asks about the average tuition cost.

Provost Conlon said it is \$620 per credit hour.

Dorothy Langley asked if most students are full-time as opposed to half-time.

President Owen said SSA has 50% full-time and 50% part-time. Provost Conlon added that the tuition rate is based on per credit hours attempted.

Dr. Silverman asked how many semester credit hours it takes to complete the program.

Provost Conlon stated it takes 120 semester credit hours. One of the things that they have discovered is that occasionally students will take more. They try to encourage them to be efficient. Their advising processes are pretty good. They have two people that act in an official capacity to advise, the Director of Student Affairs and the Registrar. but all of the faculty are advising in some mentorship capacity to try to encourage students to move through the program efficiently. They don't want them lingering and the students don't want to be lingering. They want to get out and change the world with their art.

Dr. Tingle asked Dr. Silverman and Ms. Maeyaert if they have any suggestions, restrictions, or conditions that they would like to include before the CAC members voted to recommend to the Coordinating Board.

Dr. Silverman stated that she did. She would like to propose the following conditions apply to this application:

- Southwest School of Art must provide the Coordinating Board with annual audited financial statements during the final Certificate of Authority as soon as the audited financials are received by SSA.
- Additionally, SSA must provide the Coordinating Board with all correspondence between the institution and SACSCOC regarding the status of its application or candidacy with the accrediting agency as soon as received or sent.
- If SSA believes it will not have candidacy status by the end of the final Certificate of Authority, which is in January of 2022, then by July 2021 it must provide the Coordinating Board staff the following:
  - Correspondence with SACSCOC regarding how the accreditor would view the gap in state authorization between the end of the final Certificate of Authority and obtaining candidacy status;
  - Any arguments regarding extraordinary circumstances which the Coordinating Board might consider in extending the final Certificate of Authority until SACSCOC can decide on candidacy; and
  - A signed teach out agreement which allows students to transfer to another institution to finish the BFA program should the Coordinating Board not give an extension due to extraordinary circumstances.

Dr. Tingle asked if the CAC members had any questions based on the staff recommendations or had any additional questions, concerns, or discussion. No CAC members had any questions.

Dr. Tingle stated that they needed a motion and a second to recommend approval or recommend denial of SSA's fourth application, clarifying that the motion would include the Coordinating Board's recommended proposed conditions.

Hua Li made a motion for approval to recommend SSA's fourth application for Certificate of Authority with the proposed conditions. Dorothy Langley seconded.

CAC members voted unanimously to recommend approval with the previously stated conditions.

#### **5. Update on upcoming meeting dates**

Ms. Maeyaert stated the next scheduled CAC meeting is January 30, 2020. There are no applications for a Certificate of Authority at the moment. Ms. Maeyaert will keep the CAC members updated if there are any pending applications.

Ms. Maeyaert asked members to email a summary of any expenses for the meeting. The Coordinating Board is required to report the amount that advisory committee members expend for meetings. Those expenses include travel and any copies made.

Dr. Silverman stated that the next CAWS meeting will be December 11, 2020 and recommends that the SSA staff should attend.

#### **6. Adjournment**

Dr. Tingle thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.