



**SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS  
COMMISSION ON COLLEGES**

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April 12, 2011

Mr Robert Levy  
Chairman  
Louisiana Board of Regents  
P. O. Box 777  
Ruston, LA 71273

Dear Mr. Levy:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Louisiana institutions that are members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to express full support for The Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS). As you know, this consortium is a partnership with academic libraries, state and private libraries, museums and archives, and performs the essential and cost-effective tasks of combining resources and providing information technology and solutions. Because LOUIS provides these vital resources and services throughout the region, it ensures that Louisiana institutions of higher education meet SACSCOC standards of accreditation. Therefore, I state without equivocation that LOUIS is *critical* for these institutions. In fact, LOUIS allows them to maintain not only SACSCOC accreditation, but NCAA and program-level accreditation as well.

Without LOUIS, Louisiana's universities would have trouble meeting certain SACSCOC Core Requirements and Comprehensive Standards, particularly Core Requirement 2.9, Learning Resources and Services, and Comprehensive Standard 3.8.1, Learning/ Information Resources. The first of these specifically calls for the existence of entities like LOUIS, stating that institutions must provide educational resources via their libraries. Since ownership of materials by individual institutions is nearly impossible given budgetary realities, **Core Requirement 2.9 calls for formal arrangements or agreements that provide and support student and faculty access and user privileges to adequate library collections.**

When determining compliance with this requirement, SACSCOC reviewers look for *evidence* that access to collections and services are available to those attending off-campus sites and distance learners. LOUIS is a *critical* provider of this technology.

**In order to determine compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.8.1, SACSCOC reviewers carefully examine an institution's library and learning resources to assure that they support all its educational programs.** The collective bargaining power of LOUIS



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is what allows Louisiana's institutions of higher education to meet this Core Requirement. Without LOUIS, these resources would be prohibitively expensive. As a result, not only would institutions be in danger of losing SACSCOC accreditation, but they would also likely lose program-level accreditation for such programs as business and education. Further, Louisiana institutions would lose potential students, as those interested in such specialized areas will chose not to attend an institution whose programs are not accredited.

The loss of SACSCOC accreditation would not only negatively affect a school's ability to award degrees and for students to obtain financial aid, it would also negatively affect NCAA accreditation. NCAA accreditation is contingent upon institutions meeting acceptable academic standards, and this is determined by the institutional accreditation of one of the seven regional accreditation agencies, in this case SACSCOC. The loss of NCAA accreditation will not only negatively impact the existence of collegiate athletic programs, it will have a negative economic impact on those communities for which collegiate athletic programs are major economic engines.

In short, it is impossible to overestimate the critical nature of LOUIS to Louisiana's institutions of higher education. I urge you to support full funding of the LOUIS system to ensure that students have the tools they need to successfully complete their academic endeavors.

If you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.  
President

BSW:rb

cc: SACSCOC Member Institutions in Louisiana  
The Honorable Bobby Jindal, Governor of Louisiana  
Members, Louisiana Board of Regents  
✓ Mr. Jim Purcell, Commissioner of Higher Education, Louisiana Board of Regents  
Dr. Joe D. May, President, Louisiana Community and Technical College System  
Dr. John V. Lombardi, President, Louisiana State University System  
Dr. Randy Moffitt, President, University of Louisiana System  
Dr. Ronald Mason, Jr., System President, Southern University System