

For Immediate release

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SACS Reaffirms FWBBC Regional Accreditation

NASHVILLE, TN—The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) notified Free Will Baptist Bible College that its regional accreditation has been reaffirmed for 10 years, according to Provost Greg Kettelman. SACS is the regional accrediting agency in the southeast and authorizes colleges to award associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degrees.

The reaffirmation came after a fall 2010 evaluation when a 10-member on-site team from SACS spent three days on campus reviewing FWBBC's academic programs, faculty and staff qualifications, finances, physical plant, library, board and governance, strategic planning, student life, and other dimensions of the college's operations. Over a period of three years, more than 2,600 supporting documents were prepared for the reaffirmation visit. Prior to the on-site visit, an off-site team reviewed FWBBC's compliance document. After the on-site visit, the SACS Commission on Colleges reviewed the teams' reports and reaffirmed the college's accreditation.

"SACS accreditation reaffirmation visits leave no stone unturned," said Provost Greg Kettelman. "The reaffirmation is conducted by professionals who recognize quality higher education and helps ensure wise use of resources. Our reaffirmation signals that FWBBC is a transparent, high-quality, wisely managed institution of higher education. When it's time to choose a college for their children, parents can trust FWBBC."

The reaffirmation process involved the entire college family as the on-site team examined trends, records, facts, truth-in-advertising, and conducted staff and student interviews as well as examining financial aid compliance and numerous other areas.

FWBBC's Compliance Committee chairman, Dr. Kevin Hester, said, "This reaffirmation decision by SACS is the end result of an intensive three-year effort by the administration, faculty, and staff to

demonstrate FWBBC's compliance with the standards and principles laid out by one of the premier accrediting bodies in the United States. This decision demonstrates the high quality of education available at FWBBC and its continuing commitment to excellence."

The process of gaining *initial* regional and/or national accreditation, like the process of accreditation *reaffirmation*, puts the entire college under scrutiny. Few organizations reach the level of self-examination and peer-evaluation required by SACS. Every decision, plan, and action is a legitimate area of examination for accrediting association representatives who are selected by SACS from among other southern colleges and universities to serve as team members who review academics, finance, administration, and student services.

Teacher Education chairman Dr. Thurman Pate celebrated the SACS reaffirmation: "Regional accreditation is vital to the Teacher Education program. One of the preconditions for approval of the TE program states, 'Institutions eligible for institutional or regional accreditation are accredited without probation....' For the teacher candidates who complete our program to receive their license, the college must maintain regional accreditation through SACS."

After learning of the SACS reaffirmation decision, Wayne Spruill, FWBBC's director of institutional research, pointed to the walls of his office lined with 136 notebooks filled with compliance documents, and said: "It's rewarding to realize we have maintained records and documentation that support our efforts to educate leaders to serve God. The preparation and presentation of our compliance documents has been both an arduous process and a learning experience."

Tom Sass, vice president for financial affairs, remarked: "Reaffirmation signals that even during hard economic times FWBBC has met the rigorous financial requirements set forth by SACS. Accreditation keeps opportunities for financial aid available to our students."

FWBBC underwent two accreditation reaffirmation visits during the 2010-2011 academic year—the regional visit by SACS and a national visit by ABHE (Association for Biblical Higher Education), the

agency that accredits degree-granting Bible colleges in the United States and Canada. Results from the ABHE reaffirmation visit are expected to be positive and will be announced later this summer.

President Matt Pinson said, “This is a great day for FWBBC. I salute our dedicated faculty, staff, and student body for a job well done. I hope the SACS accreditation reaffirmation provides yet another reason for Free Will Baptist parents to send their children here. We have an excellent program, and the broader community of professional educators has confirmed what we have known all along—Free Will Baptist Bible College provides top quality education for our students.”