



ROAD TO SACSCOC REAFFIRMATION

# NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025



## What is Reaffirmation of Accreditation?

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges' (SACSCOC) Reaffirmation of Accreditation is a comprehensive internal and external review process to ensure that member institutions maintain continuing compliance with Commission policies and with [The Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement](#).

According to SACSCOC, "At the heart of SACSCOC's philosophy of accreditation, the concept of quality enhancement presumes each member institution is to be engaged in ongoing improvement of its programs and services and be able to demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission. Although evaluation of an institution's educational quality and effectiveness in achieving its mission is a difficult task requiring careful analysis and professional judgment, an institution is expected to document the quality and effectiveness of all its programs and services."

## Newsletter Archive

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## SACSCOC SITE VISIT SAVE THE DATE!!

While there is much work to be done between now and the SACSCOC On-site Reaffirmation Committee visit, please mark your calendars.

**March 24th - 26th, 2026**

# STANDARD SHOWCASE:

Standard of the Month

## SECTION 4: GOVERNING BOARD

### 4.1: Governing Board Characteristics

**Standard 4.1: The institution has a governing board of at least five members that (a) is the legal body with specific authority over the institution. (b) exercises fiduciary oversight of the institution. (c) ensures that both the presiding officer of the board and a majority of other voting members of the board are free of any contractual, employment, personal, or familial financial interest in the institution. (d) is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or institutions separate from it. (e) is not presided over by the chief executive officer of the institution.**

#### **Legal Body with Specific Authority Over the Institution**

The College's Board of Trustees operates as the governing board and is comprised of at least five members with specific authority over the College. The regulation and management of the affairs of the College, including the control and disposition of its property and funds, is vested in its Board of Trustees. As of October 24, 2024, the Board has 48 voting members.

The board has a committee structure which is designed to effectively fulfill the board's responsibilities to the institution. The following are the current committees of the board:

- Executive Committee: The Executive Committee of the Board has and may exercise the authority of the full Board in the management of the College and shall not have fewer than seven members.
- Standing committees to include: Audit, Compliance and Risk Management; Buildings and Interiors; Human Resources and Compensation; Finance; Governance and Nominating; Investment; Global; Commercialization; Government Affairs; and Academic Affairs; and Special committees as determined from time to time by resolution adopted by a majority of the incumbent Trustees.

#### **Fiduciary Oversight Over the Institution**

The Board exercises fiduciary oversight for the College. The Board is responsible for making cost-effective policy decisions, implementing and maintaining high-quality education, research and healthcare programs consistent with the College's mission. The BCM Bylaws affirm the governing authority of the Board to regulate, govern, and control the affairs of the College, including control and disposition of its property and funds. Board members are apprised of their responsibilities including fiduciary responsibilities via board member orientation and training.

#### **Free of Any Contractual, Employment, Personal, or Familial Financial Interests in the Institution**

All voting members of the Board of Trustees, including the presiding officer, are free of any contractual, employment, personal or familial financial interest in the institution. The Board's conflict of interest disclosure regimen requires trustees, annually, to disclose any contractual, employment, personal, or familial interests in the College. Board members disclose annually any contractual, employment, personal, or familial interests in the College in their completion of annual Board COI /IRS Form 990 Questionnaire.

#### **Majority Control**

The BCM Board of Trustees is not controlled by a minority of board members or by organizations or interests separate from it.

#### **Presiding Officer of the Board**

At each annual meeting, the Board of Trustees shall elect from among the Trustees, a Chair of the Board of Trustees, one or more Vice Chairs of the Board of Trustees, and a Secretary of the Board of Trustees. The term of office of the Chair of the Board of Trustees shall expire at the second annual meeting of the Board of Trustees that follows his or her election.

The Board of Trustees of Baylor College of Medicine is currently chaired by Gregory D. Brenneman, who was elected Chair of the Board of Trustees on May 24, 2023. The duties of Chair of the Board are as follows: The Chair of the Board of Trustees shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees and shall have such other powers and duties as the Board of Trustees may from time to time prescribe.

The BCM Bylaws, Article IV, stipulates the following: "The president of the corporation shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation, shall have general and active management of the business of the corporation, and shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Board of Trustees are put into effect."

# STANDARD SHOWCASE:

Standard of the Month

## SECTION 4: GOVERNING BOARD

### 4.2.d: Conflicts of interest

#### **Standard 4..2.d: The governing board defines and addresses potential conflict of interest for its members.**

The Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) Board of Trustees (Board) defines and addresses potential conflict of interest for its members. The Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy provides guidance with respect to common categories of potential conflicts. The Board engages in ethics training through a training session and new trustee orientation.

#### **Conflict of Interest Defined**

Baylor College of Medicine's Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy establishes Board of Trustees policy and procedures to identify and manage real and potential conflicts of interest within the Board. The policy defines both general and specific guidelines to avoid conflicts of interest among members of the Board, stating in part:

- Potential Conflicts, Type I: Situations that could be perceived to present a conflict of interest because of the Trustee's relationship with another entity in which the interests of the College and such other entity may conflict or be competitive, but which do not involve potential benefit to the Trustee personally.
- Potential Conflicts, Type II: Situations that present actual, direct conflicts of interest. Examples may include:

#### **Administration of the Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy**

The Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy places responsibility for administration of the policy with the Audit Committee of the Board, which utilizes the Annual Disclosure and Form 990 annually. Accordingly, the Audit Committee Charter prescribes that the Committee shall receive reports from management on the review of conflicts of interest disclosures, promptly investigate responses or information likely to have a significant adverse effect on the College and submit a report with recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

*Informing Board Members* On behalf of the Audit Committee, the Office of Board Relations, which is part of the Office of the General Counsel, initiates the process by which the Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy is implemented. The policy and disclosure form are distributed annually by Board Relations, on behalf of the Audit Committee chair, to each trustee for their completion and signature, and constitutes the College's annual trustee conflict of interest disclosure. Board Relations collects the Annual Disclosure Form responses and shares them with the General Counsel and the chair of the Audit Committee, who review the information disclosed and identify for the Audit Committee's consideration any potentially actionable conflicts of interest. This information is also shared with the College's treasurer, who notes in the College's IRS Form 990 any business or family relationships disclosed in the forms.

#### **Demonstration of Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy in Exercise of Institutional Responsibilities**

The College requires Board members to demonstrate integrity in the exercise of all individual and collective responsibilities related to the management of institutional affairs, as the Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy reminds Trustees to be sensitive to potential conflicts and direct any questions regarding the applicability of the policy to the chair of the Audit Committee. Board members must demonstrate that their decisions are based solely on their understanding of the best interests of the institution, unencumbered by conflicting obligations or interests.

In summary, BCM's governing board defines and addresses potential conflict of interest for its members. BCM has an established Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy, and its Board engages in ethics training

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## SECTION 4: GOVERNING BOARD

### 4.2.f: External Influence

#### **Standard 4.2.f: The governing board protects the institution from undue influence by external persons or bodies.**

Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) ensures its governing board, the Board of Trustees (Board), protects the institution from undue influence by external persons or bodies. BCM policy contains provisions ensuring that the governing board is free from undue influence from any external body. Additionally, trustee training and education is provided to all trustees. Board of Trustees' minutes are provided as documentation of Board member selection, Board member self-recusal from voting, and annual execution and review of completed Trustee Conflict of Interest questionnaires.

#### **Board of Trustee Responsibilities and Member Education**

The Board of Trustees are provided new member orientation and annual presentations that include the Board of Trustees Conflicts of Interest Policy, member expectations, the BCM Bylaws, and the Annual Disclosure and Form 990. The Board of Trustees Conflicts of Interest Policy provides guidance with respect to common categories of potential conflicts. As needed, the Office of the General Counsel updates the trustees regarding updates to any laws. Annually, the Audit Committee of the Board utilize forms by which Trustees periodically verify that they are in compliance with this Conflicts of Interest Policy. Such forms are distributed annually. All communications regarding disclosures and determinations of conflict of interest are maintained in confidence. The custodian of these records is the executive director of Institutional Governance and Board Relations. This is distributed annually by Board Relations, on behalf of the Audit Committee chair, to each trustee for their completion and signature, and constitutes the College's annual trustee conflict of interest disclosure.

#### **Governing Board is Free from Undue Influence**

The Board of Trustees of Baylor College of Medicine, through its policies and its recent actions, underscores that it is free of undue influence from political, religious or other external influences, and it continues to protect the College's operations from such outside influences.

The foundation of freedom from outside influence is laid from the beginning of a trustee's service to the College. When a trustee is elected or appointed to the College's Board, that person receives an information packet that includes the corporate BCM Bylaws that address the number of trustees and their terms of office as well as the Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy and Annual Disclosure Form. In addition, new members discuss responsibilities with the executive director of Board Relations and Board leadership at their Board of Trustees new member orientation, as well as at annual orientation.

#### **Disclosure and Management of Conflicts of Interests**

To ensure compliance with the Trustee Conflict of Interest Policy, each Trustee is asked annually to disclose potential conflicts via the Annual Disclosure Form. The Annual Disclosure Form addresses matters such as independence, relationships, business transactions, and grants or assistance and is signed and dated by the trustee; responses are reviewed by the chair of the Audit Committee and, if warranted, the Audit Committee and the Office of the General Counsel. Additionally, under Texas law, a college trustee is required to discharge his/her duties in good faith, with ordinary care, and in a manner the trustee reasonably believes to be in the best interest of the College.

#### **Additional Methods to Avoid Undue Influence**

The College also has an Integrity Hotline to facilitate reporting fraudulent, unethical, or otherwise inappropriate behavior in violation of Bylaws or policies that would jeopardize the integrity of the College. Concerns may be reported to the Integrity Hotline by either phone call or web portal, which may be accessed via the College's Intranet homepage.

In summary, college policies support the Board's compliance with this standard. As mentioned, BCM policy contain provisions ensuring that the governing board is free from undue influence from any external body. Additionally, trustee training and education is provided to all trustees to ensure trustees are aware of procedures to protect the institution from undue influence.

# STANDARD SHOWCASE:

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## SECTION 4: GOVERNING BOARD

### 4.2.g: Board Self-Evaluation

#### **Standard 4.2.g: The governing board defines its responsibilities, and regularly evaluates its effectiveness.**

Baylor College of Medicine's governing board defines and regularly evaluates its responsibilities and expectations and engages in regular self-evaluation. The process of the board's self-evaluation is an important one that ensures transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

#### **Board Duties and Responsibilities**

The final authority and responsibility for the governance of Baylor College of Medicine (BCM) is vested in its Board of Trustees (the Board) in accordance with the BCM Bylaws. The regulation and management of BCM's affairs, including the control and disposition of its property and funds, are vested in the Board. These duties and responsibilities are disseminated to new members during the Board of Trustees new member orientation presentation and reviewed annually at one of the regularly-scheduled Board meetings.

#### **Self-Evaluation by the Board of Trustees**

The Executive Director of Institutional Governance and Board Relations oversees the Board self-evaluation process and works with the Board's Governance and Nominating Committee to implement the process. The Governance and Nominating Committee Charter provides for the committee to have no fewer than six voting members, all of whom shall be trustees. Currently nine members serve on the Governance and Nominating Committee. The committee's purpose is to provide assistance to the Board, the Chair, and the CEO in the areas for membership selection, committee selection and rotation practices, evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the Board, and review and consideration of developments in corporate governance practices.

The Board's annual self-evaluation cycle uses an online survey tool, that allows respondents to provide feedback about board efficacy. The Board Self-Evaluation survey is launched via email to Board members from the executive director of Institutional Governance and Board Relations. An option for a hard copy of the survey is provided for those Board members that attend the board meeting in person. The Board's self-evaluation encompasses five broad topics: Board Activity, Governance, Board Organization, Board Meetings, and Board Membership. Within these areas, the evaluation scrutinizes various activities, including familiarity with policies, procedures, and guidelines; adequacy of orientation for newly elected members; understanding of the strategic planning processes and components; adequacy of oversight of financial performance and fiduciary accountability of the College; engagement in board development processes; adequacy of committee structures to logically address areas of operations; and adequacy of board meeting structures and logistics.

Additionally, each board member can suggest overall improvements for the board's effectiveness such as proposed actions, implementations, and identifying weaknesses. Once the response period closes, the collected responses are forwarded to the Board's Governance and Nominating Committee for review and action plan development. This committee reviews the Board's responses and formulates an action plan, which is presented by the chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee at the next regularly-scheduled full Board meeting.

Based on the survey summary results, members of the Governance and Nominating Committee make specific recommendations, if needed.

In summary, the Board uses several methods to engage in regular self-evaluation of their responsibilities and expectations, new trustee orientation, annual meetings, and the self-evaluation process. The Board is committed to ongoing improvement to ensure effective governance in accordance with best practices.



# REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION TIMELINE:

All dates subject to change throughout the process

Target Date	Accreditation Process	Quality Enhancement Plan
<b>October 2024</b>	SACSCOC Executive Committee Established and First Meeting  SACSCOC Reaffirmation 2026 Kick-Off  Review of SACSCOC narratives begins	Launch QEP Survey  Recruit QEP Director
<b>November 2024</b>	Reaffirmation Newsletter  Review of SACSCOC narratives	Review Survey Results/Analyze Comments  Examine Feasibility of Topic  Recruit QEP Director
<b>December 2024</b>	SACSCOC Annual Meeting, Austin, TX (12/7 to 12/10)  Reaffirmation Newsletter  Review of SACSCOC narratives	Review Survey Results/Analyze Comments  Examine Feasibility of Topic
<b>January 2025</b>	Reaffirmation Newsletter	Engage Content Specialist  Identify External review/advisory committee  Recommend Topic to Executive Leadership  QEP Topic Announced to BCM Community
<b>February 2025</b>	Reaffirmation Newsletter	Determine QEP time frame for implementation and budget
<b>March 2025</b>	Reaffirmation Newsletter	
<b>April 2025</b>	Leadership Review of Compliance Certificate begins Reaffirmation Newsletter	
<b>July 2025</b>	Compliance Certificate Draft Completed	
<b>August 2025</b>	Final Review of Compliance Certificate	
<b>September 2025</b>	Compliance Certificate Due (9/8)	
<b>November 2025</b>	Site Visit Prep  Off-Site Peer Review Conducted (11/4 to 11/7)	
<b>December 2025</b>	Site Visit Prep  Mock Visit	
<b>January 2026</b>	Site Visit Prep  Mock Visit	
<b>February 2026</b>	Site Visit Prep  Optional Focused Report Due (2/10)	QEP Due (2/10)
<b>March 2026</b>	On-Site Peer Review Conducted (3/24 to 3/26)	Present and discuss QEP (3/24 to 3/26)
<b>December 2026</b>	Review by SACSCOC Committee Board (12/3 to 12/6)	

# OUR MISSION, OUR PURPOSE

**Mission:** Our mission at Baylor College of Medicine is to provide guidance, support and resources to help faculty and staff create and implement effective changes while ensuring the highest quality of education for our students.

**Purpose:** Our purpose is to promote academic excellence and innovation through accreditation and education effectiveness. We strive to foster a culture of continuous improvement and to provide resources and support for faculty and staff to develop and implement effective educational programs that prepare students for success.

## **The Office of Accreditation and Education Effectiveness supports the Baylor College of Medicine education enterprise by:**

- Facilitating institutional accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and monitoring ongoing compliance with SACSCOC principles of accreditation
- Providing support for program level specialized accreditation
- Coordinating ongoing assessment of educational programs and the university's quality enhancement plan (QEP)
- Conducting and reporting the results of academic program reviews
- Conducting general institutional research and data analysis
- Reporting key academic performance metrics to federal, state, and professional organizations
- Conducting general institutional research and data analysis
- Providing process expertise in the approval of substantial changes to existing programs
- Managing educational affiliation agreements, observerships, and external learners

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