

# Louisiana College retains accreditation

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**By Brian Blackwell**

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PINEVILLE, La. (ABP)-Louisiana College will remain fully accredited, school officials learned recently, after the Baptist school rescinded several policies critics said impinged on academic freedom.

The Pineville school had been on probation since December 2004 following a visit by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, during which association leaders cited concerns about academic freedom and governance.

Since then, the school has worked to address concerns and has involved administrators, faculty and trustees in the process. A decision on whether to lift the school's probation or take other action was made at the association's meeting Dec. 6 in Atlanta.

If SACS had not removed the college from probation, the school would have either undergone another year of probation or had its accreditation removed.

President Joe Aguillard said steps were taken during the past year that resulted in the college's removal from probation.

Trustees rescinded a hiring policy, adopted in September 2004, that allowed trustees early involvement in the hiring process for new faculty members. Some saw the policy as trustee encroachment on the responsibility of the school president to hire faculty members.

- ◆ Trustees rescinded a textbook-screening policy, adopted in December 2003, that required all classroom materials to be approved by department chairs and the vice president for academic affairs. Previous policy had given responsibility for selection of classroom materials to faculty members. The change elicited protest from faculty members and others.
- ◆ The school established task forces to address the areas of academic freedom, the faculty handbook and the selection of textbooks and curriculum materials.
- ◆ Trustees approved resolutions on the board's commitment regarding accreditation findings, on undue influence of the board, on the faculty handbook, on textbook policy and on academic freedom.
- ◆ The college held a faculty workshop under the guidance of a national consultant regarding the role of the faculty, board and administration in the accreditation process. A particular focus was academic freedom within a Christian institution.
- ◆ The Louisiana Baptist Convention Executive Board adopted a resolution spelling out the relationship between the convention and the college.

Aguillard, who was not president when the school attracted SACS criticism, said he believes the institution will be much healthier, stronger and focused as a result of the probation.

churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention ( SBC ) and around the world.