

Bennett College Accreditation FAQs

Revised 2018.12.29

Why did SACSCOC remove Bennett College from membership?

On Tuesday, December 11, Bennett College received the devastating news that it was removed from SACSCOC membership due to inadequate financial resources. The College immediately filed a letter of appeal, and Bennett maintains its accreditation during the appeal process. To be clear, Bennett College is still accredited by SACSCOC. Bennett's removal from SACSCOC membership is solely based on Financial Resources. Bennett had no other SACSCOC negative findings. See SACSCOC Disclosure Statement:

<http://www.sacscoc.org/2018decActionsanddisclosurestatements/Bennett%20College%20Disclosure%20Statement%202018FIN.pdf>

The Appeal Process

What is the timeline for the appeal?

Bennett has until February 1 to raise money and submit a report to SACSCOC. Bennett College President will go to SACSCOC in Atlanta for a meeting February 18, 19, or 20th to present the funds raised and make the case for reinstating Bennett's accreditation. If successful, that's it-- Bennett retains its accreditation. If we are not successful, Bennett will sue SACSCOC to maintain its accreditation.

How much money does Bennett need in order to successfully appeal?

Bennett College will need to raise approximately \$5.7 million.

What happens if we do not win our appeal?

It's important to note that Bennett will remain accredited throughout all phases of the appeal process. In anticipation of that possibility, Bennett College will file a lawsuit against SACSCOC which will extend our accreditation for 12-18 months. In addition Bennett has begun the process of seeking membership in TRACS accreditation (Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools).

What is the timeframe in which the parents would be notified of the appeal standings?

Within 24 hours. Please update your contact information at the following link

<http://www.bennett.edu/forms/pif>.

December 2018 / May 2019 Graduates

For graduating seniors: Will we be able to graduate in December 2018? Will we be able to graduate in May 2019? Are the graduating seniors in danger of not getting an accredited degree? What about the Class of 2019?

Yes, graduating seniors will graduate from Bennett with an accredited degree in December 2018 and May 2019. While Bennett is appealing the SACSCOC decision, the College remains accredited. Because we will maintain accreditation, we do not anticipate December 2018 or May 2019 graduates being negatively impacted.

If the College closes, how will this affect my degree after I graduate?

At no time during the appeals process will Bennett allow its accreditation to lapse. Bennett College is still accredited and will maintain accreditation throughout the appeal process. Current seniors are not impacted, as they will graduate from Bennett with an accredited degree in their specific major; it will not impact acceptances into graduate school.

In the unlikely event that Bennett closes, students will need to seek admissions into another institution.

If Bennett loses accreditation, how will this effect current seniors applying for graduate schools and jobs?

As long as the students graduate from an accreditation institution, it will not impact acceptances into graduate school. Please note that each institution has admissions requirements that must be met as a criteria for acceptance.

Should we be applying for other schools before the SACSCOC officials make their decision?

The college recommends that all students return to Bennett College in for the spring 2019 semester. However, students interested in transferring to another college, should first understand the college transfer policy (students can only transfer a certain number of credit hours). Secondly, students will have to apply for admissions to the college/university of their choice, including colleges/universities in the Greensboro area. We will follow our normal processing procedures when requesting a transcript for transfer.

If an appeal is denied, will federal aid for students receiving in the spring be returned? If no, are we responsible for the remaining balance that is usually covered by financial aid?

Students will maintain their federal financial aid, scholarships, and/or UNCF scholarships because Bennett is still accredited. As with all financial aid awarded, students must maintain required GPA and credit hours in order to maintain their financial aid. In the unlikely event Bennett loses its accreditation, all federal aid will be returned to federal government and students will not be held responsible to balances on their accounts.

What is the appeal process with the hearing in February 2019? How soon will the accreditation be removed? How long will the accreditation last after the appeal? How long will Bennett retain its accreditation after the appeal and during the 50-day period? How long are we able to be in an "appeal" state?

There are two steps to the appeals processes. The first appeal will take place in February and the college will be given a response within 7-days.

The second steps in the appeal process is file a lawsuit if the appeal is denied by SACS. During which that time the college will remain accredited for 12-18 months.

In addition, Bennett has already began the process to acquire from TRACS Accreditation - Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools. <https://www.tracs.org/>. At some point, both accrediting bodies governing bodies.

What will happen to the students who decide to stay? Are we going to be able to finish the semester if things do no work out?

Bennett College is committed to providing a quality education. As we continue with the appeals process, Bennett remains accredited through SACSCOC. Students enrolled will continue to earn academic credit towards their chosen major.

Where has the previous money received been going?

All monies that have been received have been appropriately put to use. There are multiple forms of monies that comes into the college each year. Some of federal funds, grant funds, scholarship fund, and other donations. The main type of funds that the college usually generate are classified as "**Restricted funds**" and can only be used for a specific purpose. Donors typically designate or "**restrict**" the use of their donations to a particular purpose or project. An example is a gift to a special scholarship fund. "**Unrestricted**" funds are donations that can be used for any purpose. These are the kinds of funds that is the most difficult to raise. The college has been able to generate a surplus of \$461,038 and had no audit findings, increased its fundraising from \$3.47 million to \$4.25 million over a 3-year period, and was approved for a capital loan deferment over a six-year period with a financial benefit of nearly \$9 million.

It is important to note that SACS did not remove Bennett's accreditation for misuse of funds, which is demonstrated through is clean audit. The college was cited for lack of cash on hand, which simply means we do not have a steady "cash flow" to operate the college.

Financial Aid & Scholarships

Where does this leave the full scholarship students? During the appeal process, will Bennett students be able to accept federal student loans and how will this impact federal financial aid for the spring semester? How or if student aid or scholarships will be affected during this process? Will this affect our scholarships since we are low on money?

Students will maintain their federal financial aid, scholarships, and/or UNCF scholarships because Bennett is still accredited by SACSCOC. As with all financial aid awarded, the Department of Education requires recipients to maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) that monitors GPA and completion rates. Students are required to maintain a 2.0 cumulative

GPA and a 66.7% completion rate to remain eligible to receive federal financial aid. Federal loans are considered federal financial aid and will remain available to those who qualify. Additionally, students awarded scholarships must maintain the GPA requirements as outlined with the scholarship.

Transferring Credits

How would this affect students transferring?

Through the appeals process, Bennett College remains accredited by SACSCOC. Students must meet admissions requirements for the institution in which they are seeking admission. Students seeking to transfer to another institution will be held to their transfer credit policy. All institutions have a maximum number of credits that can transfer into their institution; therefore, a student may not be allowed to transfer all courses into another institution based upon their transfer policy. It is important these transfer specific questions be addressed with the receiving institution.

Will credits be able to transfer? Will other colleges accept credits from Bennett?

While Bennett College has appealed the accreditation decision, we are still accredited by SACSCOC. Please keep in mind that all institutions have a transfer of credit policy that is applied to the evaluation of credits completed outside of their institution. Receiving institutions must evaluate transfer credits utilizing the catalog when the course was completed. For example, students enrolled during the fall 2015 semester should be evaluated utilizing the 2015-2017 Academic Catalog for Bennett College. It is important that these transfer specific questions be addressed with the receiving institution.

Fundraising

How much money does Bennett need?

\$5.7 million.

How Can We Help?

Do we have some type of letter we can send, that we can email to donors we know? To churches and companies? Alums? We will be gone most of the 45-50 days. As students, what can we do to help Bennett?

Students interested in helping with fundraising efforts should direct donors to: <http://www.bennett.edu/standwithbennett/>. The college does not recommend starting a GoFundMe accounts as it is counterproductive to the overall fundraising goals. Questions about fundraising efforts should be directed to the office of Institutional Advancement.

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Currently available is the #StandwithBennett Toolkit:

<http://www.bennett.edu/standwithbennett/toolkit/> where you will find generic letter for you to send to family and friends.

Why does my daughter have to be cleared by the business office in January before she receives her key to the dorm if all was paid for in the fall of 2018? She had wanted to get her transcript and was told there was a hold on her account due to a UNCF scholarship that was awarded but funds had not been forwarded to the college as of yet. I did receive an email from the college explaining that her tuition was paid but the funds had not populated.

The spring semester is a separate term. Every student must be cleared by the Business Office to be officially enrolled. Our procedure requires students to clear the Business Office before a residence hall key is issued to them. It is part of our checks and balances system.