

December 4, 2003

TO: President Lee T. Todd

FROM: Ben W. Carr, Jr.

RE: Final Report, Lexington Community College Accreditation
Options Task Force

Attached is the final report of the Task Force you appointed to review the accreditation options for the Lexington Community College. The group worked diligently to review the options you outlined for us at the first meeting, and the analysis of those options is included. We are recommending Option Three for your consideration. We recommend that you make the decision about LCC's future as soon as possible due to the impending deadlines established by the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at your convenience

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important endeavor.

Attachment

DRAFT
Report of the Special Task Force
Options for SACS Accreditation of Lexington Community College
November, 2003

President Lee T. Todd, Jr. appointed a special task force in August of 2003 (Appendix A) to look at the options for Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (COC, SACS) accreditation for the Lexington Community College. The COC informed the University and LCC in a July 3, 2003 letter (Appendix B) that it was continuing LCC's accreditation for another year but was placing LCC on probation for 12 months for failure to comply with various accreditation criteria largely concerned with the issue of whether LCC has sufficient autonomy from UK to justify separate accreditation. In his charge to the Task Force, Dr. Todd asked the group to consider three options:

1. LCC maintains its relationship with UK, but institutes changes that would convince SACS that it has sufficient autonomy and independence to justify being separately accredited.
2. LCC is included as a component of the accreditation of the University of Kentucky.
3. LCC is accredited as a separate community college, either as a free-standing institution or as part of KCTCS.

President Todd charged the Task Force to evaluate these options (or a combination of them that might occur in sequence), to provide the pros and cons for each option, and recommend to him and to the Provost the best solution. Any solution must be consistent with the reform of higher education initiated by House Bill 1 of the Extraordinary Session of May 1997. Dr. Todd asked for the Task Forces report by December 31, 2003

Members of the Special Task Force were as follows:

Jim Applegate, VP for Academic Affairs, Council on Postsecondary Education
Jack Blanton, Student Services, Martin School
Keith Bird, Chancellor, Kentucky Community and Technical College System
Brad Cowgill, Sites and Harbison, Former member of LCC Development Council
Lee Edgerton, Faculty Member, Ag Econ, College of Agriculture
Tony Gentry, LCC Student
Shelbie Huggle, Staff Member, LCC
Jim Kerley, President, Lexington Community College
Karen Mayo, Staff Member, LCC
Randy Powell, Director of HR, Valvoline Corp., Chair of LCC Advisory Board
Peggy Saunier, Faculty Member, LCC
Don Witt, Office of Admissions and Registrar, University Registrar
Becky Womack, Faculty Member, LCC

In anticipation of this study, Dr. Jim Kerley, President of Lexington Community College, appointed an internal committee to look at the same options, and to assess the support for each option among the faculty and staff of the institution. Task Force member Becky Womack and faculty member Charles Coulston presented the findings of that group to the Task Force. An overwhelming majority of faculty and staff members at LCC chose option one, above, as their first choice. Their second choice, by a two-to-one ratio over the remaining choice, was option three, above. Option two was their least favored choice. A copy of the findings is located in Appendix C.

Special Task Force Recommendation: A large majority of the Special Task Force favored Option one, also, and discussed what would be required to complete this option to the satisfaction of the COC/SACS by the February of 2004 follow-up report deadline and the COC Special Committee visit in March of 2003. Realizing the difficulty and improbability of making all the required changes, and having them completed by the SACS deadlines, the Task Force decided that Option three was the best solution for LCC. **The Special Task Force recommends that LCC be transferred to KCTCS and maintain its separate accreditation as an institution of higher education.** With the February deadline for LCC's submission of a follow-up report, the Task Force is cognizant of the short time period for a decision and all the steps that must be taken in each of the three options. **The Task Force further recommends that the decision on LCC's future be made as soon as possible, to allow LCC to meet the SACS deadline for responding to the July, 2003 letter and to allow the maximum time for implementing whatever decision is made.** As noted above, the Task Force is aware that any of the three options will require significant work to be accomplished in a short time period. If the decision is made to transfer LCC to KCTCS, due diligence must begin on several issues, some of which are outlined in Appendix D. Every effort should be made to ensure that the transition is seamless for currently enrolled students. The agreement between UK and KCTCS regarding the management of LCC should include all the current services and activities currently enjoyed by LCC, with transition of certain services as KCTCS is ready to provide those services.

Note: The option for LCC to become a free-standing institution was discussed, but was not considered in depth. This sub-option was not considered to be consistent with the goals of higher education reform as initiated by HB1. HB1 established the four parts of postsecondary education (UK and UL, the comprehensive universities, KCTCS, and the Council on Postsecondary Education). Establishing LCC as a separate, free-standing institution does not fit into this scheme of postsecondary education. Therefore, only the portion of option three dealing with transferring LCC to KCTCS was considered in depth.

Background

A visiting Committee of the Commission on Colleges visited the Lexington Community College on November 12-15, 2000. The Commission considered the Visiting Committee Report, and the LCC response, at its June, 2001 meeting. In July of 2001, the Commission requested a first follow-up report from LCC. The institution responded to

the request. In July of 2002, a second follow-up report was requested. LCC responded to this request. In July of 2003, the letter placing LCC on probation for one year was received by LCC. At that time, LCC hired a consultant to review the situation and recommend what LCC could do to meet the SACS requirement of sufficient autonomy to justify continuation of separate accreditation. That consultant visited LCC and UK during the fall of 2003. In her opinion, after reviewing the UK Web site, various LCC and UK documents, and after interviewing various LCC and UK officials, stated that proving LCC's autonomy from UK would be nearly impossible, given the close relationship that has been fostered over many years. With the impending deadline for responding to the Commission, and with the subsequent special committee that would visit LCC in March of 2004 to ascertain the level of autonomy, UK and LCC needed to make a decision. If the two institutions decided that the current relationship with UK were to be maintained, with an effort to show that LCC is sufficiently autonomous, and the COC special committee was not convinced, LCC would be in danger of losing its accreditation. That would be disastrous for the institution's reputation, and for currently enrolled students who would then be attending an unaccredited institution. President Todd appointed the Special Task Force to examine the available options, and give him the advantages and disadvantages of each option, and to recommend the best solution for LCC.

Pros and Cons of Each Option

The advantages and disadvantages (pros and cons) of each option are given in Appendix E.

Issues

The issues to consider in each of the three options are included in Appendix F.

Summary and Conclusion

The Special Task Force examined the options, the issues related to each option, and the pros and cons of each option, before deciding on Option Three. The Task Force was aware of the magnitude of the tasks involved in each of the three options, and was therefore driven to make a decision earlier than the December 31 deadline. The group assumed that President Todd, Provost Nietzel and President Kerley would need the additional time to implement the final decision. The Task Force stands ready to assist in any way possible. Every member of the group wants UK and LCC to benefit from the final decision, and urges everyone involved to consider the currently enrolled and future students in final deliberations.



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University of Kentucky

Office of the President
101 Gillis Building
Lexington, KY 40506-0033
(859) 257-1701
Fax: (859) 257-1760
www.uky.edu

MEMORANDUM

To: Special Task Force on Options for SACS Accreditation of
Lexington Community College

Ben Carr (Chair)
Jim Kerley
Jack Blanton
Lee Edgerton
Don Witt
Keith Bird
Jim Applegate
Brad Cowgill
Randy Powell
Becky Womack
Karen Mayo
Shelbie Hugle
Peggy Saunier

From: Lee T. Todd, Jr. 

Subject: SACS Accreditation for Lexington Community College

Date: August 20, 2003

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the Special Task Force on Options for SACS Accreditation of Lexington Community College. I also want to express particular appreciation to Ben Carr, for his willingness to Chair this Task Force. By virtue of his experience, knowledge, and trusted leadership, I believe Ben is the ideal individual to lead this effort.

As you all are aware, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) informed the University and LCC in a July 3, 2003 letter that it was continuing LCC's accreditation for another year but was placing the institution on probation for 12 months for failure to comply with various accreditation criteria largely concerned with the issue of whether LCC has sufficient autonomy from UK to justify separate accreditation. SACS identified several indicators that the institutions should examine and consider in assessing whether the development of sufficient autonomy for LCC would be possible, and a consultant hired by LCC has rendered advise on this matter to President Kerley, Provost Nietzel, and myself.

LCC will be required to submit a Follow-Up Report to SACS at least six weeks prior to a visit in Spring, 2004 that will be conducted by a Special Committee. Our report will need to address the fundamental issue of how LCC should be administered and accredited, and this is the major question that the Task Force should address and for which I am seeking your recommendations. At the risk of some oversimplification, the institutions have three options to consider:

1. LCC maintains its relationship with UK, but institutes changes that would convince SACS that it has sufficient autonomy and independence to justify being separately accredited. This has been the goal of our current bid for LCC's accreditation, but the changes that UK/LCC have offered to date in two follow-up responses have not been sufficient. Based on the administration's readings of SACS requirements as well as the input from Margaret Sullivan, the consultant to LCC, the viability of this option is in serious question.
2. LCC is included as a component of the accreditation of the University of Kentucky; under this option, LCC would not be recognized as an independently accredited institution.
3. LCC is accredited as a separate community college, either as a free-standing institution or as part of KCTCS.

My charge to the Task Force is to evaluate these options (or a combination of them that might occur in sequence) and recommend to me and the Provost what you consider to be the best solution. LCC has been a very successful community college, and I want its successes to be maintained and properly recognized. In addition, I want the ultimate solution to be one that is consistent with the reform of higher education that has been initiated by HB1 and that needs to be continued.

In order to prepare for our required Follow-Up Report to SACS, I would request that you submit your recommendations by December 31, 2003.

jlf

cc: Dick Siemer
Mike Nietzel



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

1866 Southern Lane • Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

Telephone 404/679-4500 Fax 404/679-4558

www.sacscoc.org

July 3, 2003

Dr. A. James Kerley
President
Lexington Community College
Cooper Drive
Oswald Building, Room 209
Lexington, KY 40506-0235

Dear Dr. Kerley:

The following action regarding your institution was taken at the June 2003 meeting of the Commission on Colleges:

The Commission reviewed the institution's Second Follow-Up Report and continued accreditation for good cause and placed the institution on Probation for twelve months for failure to comply with the following sections of the *Criteria*: Section 6.1.5 (Organization and Administration – Administrative Organization), and Section 6.2.2 (Institutional Advancement – Fund Raising). A Special Committee was authorized to visit the institution to review its ongoing compliance with the *Criteria*.

The institution is requested to submit a Third Follow-Up Report to be provided to the Special Committee approximately six weeks before the visit in spring 2004. The report should address the visiting committee's recommendations cited in the following sections of the *Criteria*:

**Section 4.8.2.1 (Faculty – Academic and Professional Preparation – Associate),
Recommendations 11 and 14**

The institution has not documented the appropriateness of academic and professional preparation for all faculty teaching biology. Faculty credentials presented in a number of instances do not appear to be acceptable (for example, faculty with MS degrees in Botany, Plant Science, Agronomy are teaching biology courses in human anatomy and physiology).

The institution should provide documentation of academic preparation demonstrating that faculty, full-time and part-time, have a master's degree in the teaching discipline or have at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline and hold a master's degree, or provide justification of exceptional cases on an individual basis to include documentation of outstanding professional experience and demonstrated contributions to the teaching discipline.



Dr. A. James Kerley
 July 3, 2003
 Page Two

The institution must complete the Commission's "Roster of Instructional Staff" (enclosed) and document compliance during the fall 2003 and spring 2004 terms. Please follow the instructions on the form. Documentation of appropriate qualifications should be attached for each full-time and part-time faculty member teaching credit courses in biology. Please include a description of the courses or a catalog.

**Section 6.1.5 (Organization and Administration – Administrative Organization),
 Recommendations 21 and 22 and**

Section 6.2.2 (Institutional Advancement – Fund Raising), Recommendation 24

The institution has not yet demonstrated that it has sufficient autonomy to be accredited separately by the Commission. It must also demonstrate that it is sufficiently autonomous from the University of Kentucky in the perception of the public. A search of the UK Web site revealed that the institution is included as a unit of the University. According to the Web site, "The site includes entries for services and departments and other units of the University of Kentucky. . . ." The UK Campus Guide includes LCC. The UK News Web site includes stories about faculty and administrators at LCC.

The institution should demonstrate that it has made further progress in regard to the autonomy issues raised in the July 3, 2002, letter from Dr. James Rogers to Dr. James Kerley in regard to Recommendations 21, 22, and 24. As stated in that letter ". . . if the institution is not able to demonstrate autonomy sufficient for separate accreditation under the current structure, there are several alternatives that are possible: inclusion of the institution in the accreditation of the University of Kentucky, or separation from the University structure as a free-standing institution or as part of a system."

The Commission suggests that Lexington Community College review the indicators listed below related to autonomy. One of our community college systems is examining these indicators to evaluate whether there is sufficient autonomy to allow separate accreditation for their units. All of the following do not necessarily apply to Lexington Community College, but might be helpful in moving toward the autonomy necessary to maintain separate accreditation under Section 1.3 of the *Criteria for Accreditation*. The core issue is whether Lexington Community College has the autonomy required for separate accreditation as characterized in Section 1.3. Some indicators:

1. Delegation of degree granting authority to each individual institution;
2. Authority for the name of the individual institution to be the primary name on its diplomas, transcripts, catalogues, and the like;
3. Requirement that 25 percent of the credit hours necessary for its degree be earned at that institution;



Dr. A. James Kerley
July 3, 2003
Page Three

4. Authority for each institution to adopt its own mission statement;
5. Authority for each institution to adopt, revise, and evaluate its own curriculum , and to eliminate curricula as appropriate;
6. Authority for each institution to adopt, revise, and manage its own operating budget;
7. Authority for each institution to raise funds, adopt and manage capital budgets, and to build facilities consistent with its own facilities master plan;
8. Authority for each institution to contract for goods and services, and to employ personnel as budgeted;
9. Authority for each institution to have its own financial aid number and administer its own financial aid services; and,
10. Authority for each institution to enter into service agreements, of their own choosing, for the efficient and economical purchase of certain goods and services.

Federal regulations and Commission policy stipulate that an institution must remedy deficiencies within two years following the Commission's initial action on the institution or the institution must be removed from membership. In accordance with Commission policy, the Commission may extend accreditation for "good cause" for a maximum of one year following a two-year monitoring period. At the conclusion of the extended period defined by the Commission, if the institution is not in compliance with the *Criteria*, representatives from the institution may be required to appear before the Commission, or one of its standing committees, to answer questions as to why the institution should not be removed from membership or why its period for remedying deficiencies should be extended again for good cause. In all cases, the institution bears the burden of proof to provide evidence why the Commission should not remove it from membership. (Please refer to the enclosed Commission policies "Follow-Up Reports, Sanctions, and Removal from Membership" and "Definition of Good Cause.")

The institution has now been extended on Probation for one year for good cause. At the end of this period it must come into compliance or show good cause why it should not be removed from membership. If the Commission determines good cause, the institution can only be extended on Probation for a maximum of one more year.



Dr. A. James Kerley
July 3, 2003
Page Four

The above action indicates a need for a future report. Guidelines for this report are enclosed. Because it is essential that institutions follow these guidelines, **please make certain that those responsible for preparing the report receive them. If they have questions about the format, contact the Commission staff member assigned to your institution.** When submitting reports, please send **five copies** to your Commission staff member.

In accordance with Commission policy, a Special Committee will visit an institution placed or continued on Probation to review evidence of compliance with the above named sections of the *Criteria for Accreditation*. The Committee may extend its initial focus if any evidence of additional *Criteria*-related concerns come to its attention. Your Commission staff member will contact you to discuss arrangements for this Special Committee.

If you have any questions regarding this letter or the process, please contact your Commission staff member.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Rogers", is written over the typed name and title.

James T. Rogers
Executive Director
Commission on Colleges

JTR:ch

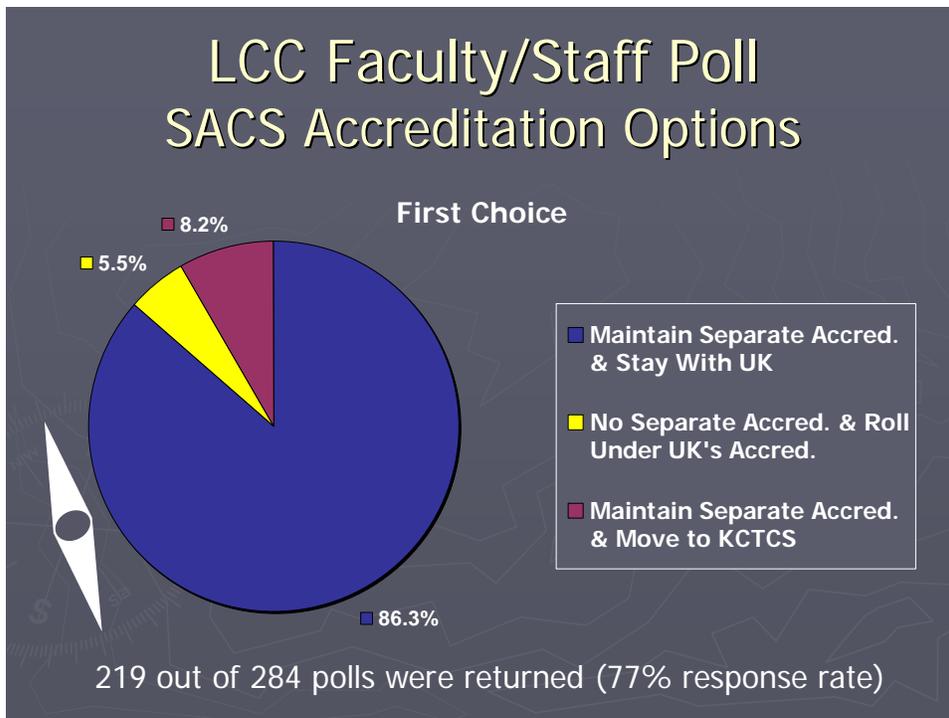
Enclosures

cc: Dr. G. Jack Allen
Mr. Steven S. Reed, Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Dr. Lee T. Todd, Jr., President, University of Kentucky

**Lexington community College
Faculty and Staff Opinion Poll on Accreditation Options
October 21, 2003**

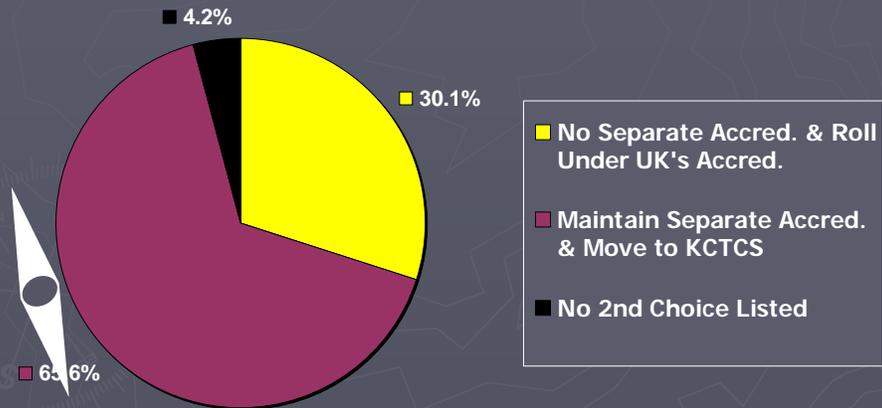
The Institutional Effectiveness Office at the Lexington Community College conducted a poll of all full-time, regular faculty and staff regarding their preferences among the options for the College's accreditation. For security reasons, the forms were stamped with the College seal and hand-delivered. 219 of the 284 forms distributed were completed and returned which represents a 77% response rate.

Results show that 86% would prefer to remain separately accredited and stay with the University of Kentucky as their first choice. Of those respondents (86% cohort), if that option were not available, 66% of the cohort would prefer to remain separately accredited and move to KCTCS. Though the large majority would prefer to remain separately accredited and stay with UK, 5% indicated their first choice would be to roll under UK's accreditation and 8% indicated their first choice would be to move to KCTCS. The following charts show the results of the survey in graphical form.



LCC Faculty/Staff Poll SACS Accreditation Options

Second Choice of Those Whose First Choice was Maintain Separate Accreditation & Stay With UK



ISSUES RELATED TO TRANSFER OF LCC TO KCTCS

The transfer of the Lexington Community College from governance by the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees to the Kentucky Community and Technical College System Board of Regents will require due diligence on several issues. The major issues are listed and briefly described below.

1. Revenue Bonds, LCC Buildings

LCC student tuition, along with UK student tuition, is pledged to support the debt service of facilities on the University campus. Legal counsel will need to determine how to legally transfer governance of LCC to KCTCS with this restriction.

2. LCC Campus

The University owns the current campus. The terms of use of this campus by LCC (as a member of the KCTCS) will need to be determined and included in an agreement between UK and KCTCS.

3. Agreements between UK and KCTCS

The University and KCTCS will need to develop and sign an agreement covering such issues as parking, student fees, bookstore services, interim registration of students, safety and security, physical plant services, interim financial aid services, interim student records services, and a variety of other services. LCC and KCTCS will need to negotiate differences in curriculum that have evolved over the past six years.

4. Employees

LCC faculty and staff members are currently UK employees. The University and KCTCS will need to determine the status of these employees upon transfer of LCC to KCTCS. The agreement must cover current tenured faculty, and faculty members working toward tenure, and staff. The two institutions must agree on retirement issues – especially for those employees who retire after the date of transfer and who qualify for UK retirement.

5. Students

Current students at LCC are University students. The University and KCTCS will need to agree on a final date for students to graduate with a UK/LCC diploma. Students who graduate after that date will receive a LCC/KCTCS diploma. The institutions must also agree on what student services will be available for LCC students – including access to such facilities as dorms, fraternities/sororities, student center, the Johnson Recreation Center, and varsity athletic events.

6. Legislative Action

The transfer of LCC to KCTCS will require changes in the Kentucky Revised Statutes. Legislators will need to be briefed on the proposed transfer, and proposed changes to the statutes must be drafted. The public must also be made aware of the proposed transfer.

**PROS AND CONS OF THREE OPTIONS
LEXINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACCREDITATION**

There are three options to consider in LCC's current accreditation dilemma:

1. Make changes and attempt to maintain separate LCC accreditation

UK administration would make the changes recommended by the consultant – e.g. have the LCC President report directly to the UK President; establish a separate senate for LCC, independent of the UK Senate; establish an independent development office and fund-raising operation for LCC, independent of the UK Development Office; Change graduation diplomas to reflect LCC, not UK and LCC; etc.

Pros

If successful, maintains separate accreditation for LCC

Maintains current status among community colleges in Kentucky and across the nation

LCC can continue as a member of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

LCC maintains status in the community (Central Kentucky)

LCC continues to offer developmental courses, and smaller classes to serve students who may not be as well prepared for college

LCC student services remain intact

UK benefits from LCC efforts in 2/3 of UK mission – teaching and service

UK benefits from greater student diversity

LCC would have a separate foundation and independent fund-raising capability

LCC retains separate line-item budget

LCC has control of LCC scholarships

Cons

If unsuccessful, LCC could lose membership in the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (COC/SACS)

Loss of accreditation, or even the decision to remove LCC from that status, could hurt enrollment and financial aid eligibility, and the status of graduates could be put in jeopardy

Overall funding not likely to improve, nor is LCC likely to be a priority in the UK budgeting process

No increased support for new building(s)

2. Drop separate accreditation, and allow LCC to be accredited as part of UK

LCC operated for several years as part of UK prior to the first application for separate membership in the COC/SACS (in the 1960s).

Pros

No impact on status of students for financial aid, UK benefits (dorms, ballgames, etc.) graduation, transfer, or continuation of studies.

No further action would be required for LCC to maintain this status – no further reports after the Spring 2003 report, and no visiting committees would be required.

Retention of UK identity for students, faculty and staff

Potentially more powerful role for LCC division chairs

Possible opportunity for LCC to pursue offering bachelor degrees in technical fields

Cons

LCC cannot be a member of AACC

Some loss of status among community colleges in Kentucky and across the nation

Loss of visibility and identity as a separate institution

Potential long-term changes in LCC student admission standards – and loss of access

Potential changes in promotion/tenure process

Potential impact on technical programs

LCC faculty may not be respected in the research culture of UK

Probable tuition increase with loss of separate accreditation – LCC tuition would likely be increased to same level as UK undergraduate tuition

No increased support for new building(s)

LCC funding not likely to improve in UK research-focused mission

Potential loss of control over curriculum

Potential loss of control over adjunct faculty hiring – possible pressure to use teaching assistants

No change in LCC student fees for unused services due to different student profile

Potential threat to LCC mission as a community college when absorbed by University

Potential centralization of some services, with loss of those services at LCC

UK would have higher overall default rate on student loans

UK graduation rate and first-year retention rates would suffer when data is combined

3. Move LCC to the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS)

Moving LCC to KCTCS might eventually require legislative action. The Board of Trustees could delegate the management of LCC to the Board of Regents of KCTCS (legal question), with the intent of taking the issue to the General Assembly to revise the statutes to reflect the inclusion of LCC in KCTCS. A lot of background work would be needed – with LCC faculty and staff, LCC Advisory Board members, LCC Development Council members, current governor and future governor, local legislators, and legislative leadership.

Pros

LCC could maintain separate accreditation with COC/SACS

Relationship with Central Kentucky Technical College would be determined within same governance structure – i.e. KCTCS Board of Regents – with Central Kentucky region potentially better served by the consolidation of the two institutions

LCC building (or new campus) would not be competing with UK buildings on UK capital plan priority list

Potentially greater institutional control of destiny, vision and direction

Greater control of budget at institutional level

LCC would benefit from associating with peer institutions

LCC would not be competing with UK for funding priority

Increased influence over general education curriculum

Potential elimination or reduction of student fees for unused UK services

Similar employee benefits, except for long-term disability benefit

Potentially more grants available through technical/vocational education system

Independent fundraising allowed and encouraged

Cons

Another transition process – stressful and unsettling

Possible political opposition

UK loses student enrollment and diversity, and a point of access within UK

UK would possibly lose some student fees

UK might lose some transfer students as LCC focuses curriculum for broader transfer to state institutions

UK loses ease of reverse transfer within same governance structure

Some technical program conflicts (LCC – KCTCS) since curricula have been developing separately since 1998

Potential move from UK campus (future) and loss of enrollment at LCC

Merger with Central Kentucky Technical College would be another transition to endure

Potential loss of some services on UK campus

Potential drop in faculty/staff morale with separation from UK

LCC would lose much of the close connection with UK. Connection would be through agreements, not through a common governance structure.

UK might lose some of the transfers who now come to UK after attending LCC

LCC students might not be able to live in the dorms, participate in the band, use the Johnson facility, etc. – UNLESS both parties desired these connections, and wrote them into the delegation document or other agreements, and any legislation

An outside agency would be operating an institution on UK property – could complicate activities such as parking for football games, bus service, and campus services open to UK students but not KCTCS students

25 Nov 2003

Summary of Issues Related to the Three Accreditation Options

There are a variety of issues to be reviewed for each of the three options considered by the task force. These issues are related to the Pros and Cons list in Appendix E. An X in the column indicates that the issue exists under that option.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Option 1</u>	<u>Option 2</u>	<u>Option 3</u>
Separate Accreditation	X		X
Loss of Separate Accreditation		X	
Maintains current relationship with UK	X		
LCC part of UK	X	X	
LCC part of KCTCS			X
New relationship with UK		X	X
Revenue Bond Issue			X
Agreements between UK and KCTCS			X
Governing Regulations changes	X	X	X
Administrative Regulations changes	X	X	X
Board action required	X	X	X
Legislative changes required			X
Student status unchanged	X	X	
Employee Status unchanged	X	X	
LCC Tuition Increase Likely		X	