

# Coastal President Happy after Accreditation Visit

By MICHAEL HALL The Brunswick News

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Accreditation is something that College of Coastal Georgia President Valerie Hepburn is thankful happens only once every 10 years.

"We have been working on this for two and a half years. It is a very full and thorough review of all of our programs," Hepburn said Tuesday.

But the work is worth it.

Members of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on College visited the Brunswick campus last week, but it will be June before it announces its determination.

Hepburn is encouraged by the fact that the comments she received were positive.

"We feel very confident that come June, we will be getting good news," she said.

The process started in March, when the college sent the association a mountain of paperwork on all of the programs at the school, Hepburn said.

The commission, which Hepburn said is made up of colleagues, sent back a positive off-site review before making its official site visit last week.

"This one was big for us because it was the first review we have had as a four-year institution," she said.

During the week, commission members interviewed students and people from the community about the institution's service learning program. The program qualifies as the college's quality enhancement plan, an integral piece to earning accreditation.

"They were very impressed with our students and with the level of involvement by the community," Hepburn said.

The Service-Learning Initiative is designed to get students out of the classroom and involved with the community, something the commission told Hepburn was a unique program.

"They said it is something they don't see often," she said.

Before leaving, the commission suggested that the college improve on tracking graduates' success. Hepburn said as more students graduate, the college will have more data to consider.

"Because we are a young four year institution, we do not have a lot of graduates yet," she said.