

Substantive Changes

As a SACSCOC requirement for membership, the College is required to comply with the current Substantive Change Policy for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions (the "Policy"). The College is required to notify SACSCOC of changes in accordance with the Policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the institution of changes.

I. Substantive Change Definition

Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Under federal regulations, substantive change includes:

1. Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.
2. Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.
3. Changing the governance of an institution.
4. Merging / consolidating two or more institutions or entities.
5. Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.
6. Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).
7. Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.
8. Adding graduate programs at an institution previously offering only undergraduate programs (including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other for-credit credential).
9. Changing the way an institution measures student progress, whether in clock hours or credit-hours; semesters, trimesters, or quarters; or time-based or non-time-based methods or measures.
10. Adding a program that is a significant departure from the existing programs, or method of delivery, from those offered when the institution was last evaluated.
11. Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.
12. Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.
13. Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
14. Entering into a written arrangement under 34 C.F.R. § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers less than 25% (notification) or 25-50% (approval) of one or more of the accredited institution's educational programs. An agreement offering more than 50% of one or more of an institution's programs is prohibited by federal regulation.
15. Substantially increasing or decreasing the number of clock hours or credit hours awarded or competencies demonstrated, or an increase in the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.
16. Adding competency-based education programs.
17. Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.
18. Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
19. Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
20. Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
21. Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.

22. Adding a permanent location at a site at which an institution is conducting a teach-out program for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.
23. Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.
24. Participating in the federal Prison Education Program providing Pell Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

In addition, the Policy lists additional substantive changes, both institutional and programmatic, that must be reported prior to implementation.

II. Reporting Substantive Changes

1. A. Institutional Substantive Changes

Any major change to the College's operations or structure should be assessed in relation to the Policy. Once a change has been identified and an anticipated date of implementation has been estimated, the President and SACSCOC Liaison will work together in submitting the requisite notice to SACSCOC, prior to implementation of the change.

2. Program Substantive Changes

Each semester, the SACSCOC Liaison will meet with the College's Curriculum Committee to identify any program changes that may meet the definition of "substantive change". Any changes that are in progress, planned for the future, or anticipated to be required at some later date will be identified. Once a change has been identified and an anticipated date of implementation has been estimated, the SACSCOC Liaison will work with the program involved, the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and the President's Office in order to submit the required notification to SACSCOC.

III. Dissemination of Substantive Change Policy

The College recognizes the importance of timely identification of potential substantive changes so that SACSCOC may be notified within the required timeframe.

Each semester, the SACSCOC Liaison will review the Policy, and this Procedure, with the President's Executive Staff and the Academic Affairs Council.

IV. Cataloging Substantive Changes

The SACSCOC Liaison will maintain a history of notifications sent to SACSCOC and responses from SACSCOC. Electronic copies will also be provided to departments or programs involved in the change.

The College will comply with the directives of the SACSCOC upon notification of submitted changes.

Policy Number: 04.02.07.01

Legal Reference:

1B SBCCC 400.1; [SACSCOC Policy Statement](#) (December 2016)

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