

**CHARLESTON SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
MANUAL OF PROCEDURES**

TITLE	NUMBER	DATE
SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY	R-64	November 5, 2014

Background

CSU is required to maintain communication with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) whenever significant changes occur in our programs. This policy outlines the necessary procedures for approving and communicating changes in a timely manner. The VPAA must approve change requests prior to sending them to SACSCOC and final approval from SACSCOC is required prior to implementation of the changes.

NOTE: A significant portion of this document is excerpted from the SACSCOC document "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges." This note serves as attribution of those excerpts.

Definition

A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion in the nature and scope of an accredited institution. It is expected that the CEO or a designated representative of an institution will notify the Commission President of substantive changes at that institution.

Currently at CSU, the Assistant to the VPAA serves as CSU's SACSCOC accreditation liaison. All substantive change requests must pass through the VPAA's office with acknowledgment from the liaison (Asst. to VPAA) and finally be endorsed by the President.

Types of Substantive Change

SACSCOC and federal regulations recognize the following as examples of substantive change. As defined by the SACSCOC policy, "Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Under federal regulations, substantive change includes

- Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution
- Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution
- The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated
- The addition of courses or programs of study at a degree or credential level different from that which is included in the institution's current accreditation or reaffirmation.
- A change from clock hours to credit hours

- A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program
- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50% of an educational program.
- The establishment of a branch campus
- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution
- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes only the initiation of a dual or joint academic program with another institution
- Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution
- Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of one or more of the accredited institution's programs

The SACSCOC Board of Trustees has approved additional substantive changes that require notification and, in some cases, approval prior to implementation. This policy and its procedures address substantive changes identified through Federal regulations and Board approval."

Significant changes are reported in different ways depending on the type of change requested. The procedures for reporting are as follows:

- Procedure One for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring *Notification and Approval Prior to Implementation*
- Procedure Two for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring *Only Notification Prior to Implementation*
- Procedure Three for Closing a Program, Site, Branch Campus or Institution.

Some changes do not require communication with SACSCOC; however, all changes require approval of the VPAA.

Procedure

Receiving approval for significant changes is not a speedy process. Substantial lead times are required for receipt of all approvals. Initiating departments should plan accordingly to ensure that all approvals are completed prior to the implementation of any significant change. As an aid for planning, the following table provides deadlines for the approval of various changes.

Initiating departments should notify the VPAA's office regarding the intent to submit a substantive change **at least 30 days prior** to the deadline for submission of the materials. All deadlines indicate length of time prior to implementation of the change.

Approval Plan

Substantive change requests should proceed through the following approval process. Lower levels of change may not require all steps in the approval process. The initiating department should consult with the VPAA to determine the number of required approvals.

1. Approval by the initiating department or school
2. Approval by the Dean of the initiating department or school
3. Notification to VPAA and Assistant of substantive change intent
4. Approval by the appropriate graduate or undergraduate curriculum committee
5. Approval by the VPAA and/or President (if required)
6. Approval by the University Board of Trustees (if required)
7. Submission to SACSCOC
8. Approval by SACSCOC

Communication Plan

All campus communication regarding substantive changes should occur between the initiating department, the Assistant to the VPAA, and the VPAA. Only the President or the designated liaison (currently the Assistant to the VPAA) can communicate with SACSCOC.

1. Initiating department submits notification of substantive change intent
2. VPAA and Assistant receive substantive change materials
3. Assistant to the VPAA requests authorization by VPAA and President to submit substantive change request to SACSCOC
4. SACSCOC reviews materials
5. Assistant to VPAA or VPAA communicates any SACSCOC decisions to initiating department

Explanation of which materials required notification letters, full prospectuses, or on-campus reviews are available in the *SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy*.

This policy replaces the previous Substantive Change Policy used internally in the VPAA's office (2009).

By action of Dean's Council on November 5, 2014.