

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

SACS Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 (December 2006)

“The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and when required seeks approval prior to the initiation of the changes.”

Why:

- to remain in compliance with federal standards (e.g. financial aid implications)
- to create and sustain our partnership with SACS in fostering academic quality.

Definition: Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. (SACS, December 2006)

- 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 at a degree or credential level above 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 hours or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program

Including:

- New certificate program, if it requires new courses or resources (faculty, courses, library resources, equipment or facility, funding)
- New program at a more advanced level than currently approved
- New program at a lower level than currently approved
- Initiating a branch campus (has its own budget, hiring practices, etc.)

May also include:

- Expanding program offerings at the current credential level (depends upon current offerings)
- Initiating off-campus sites (if 25% or more of required courses are offered there)
- Distance Learning - Offering 25% or more of program’s credits through Distance Learning (online, video classes, satellite transmission)
- Distance Learning – addition of significantly different programs

- Distance Learning – introduction of new modes of delivery (including hybrid programs)
- Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium
- Altering significantly the mission of the institution
- Significant change in the length of a program
- Initiating a degree completion program
- Closing an institution or program

How to report:

Once the provost has approved the concept and has given permission to proceed with a proposal:

1. Work with SACS Liaison to determine whether proposed changes are substantive
2. Report changes to SACS via Chancellor to President of Commission on Colleges six 6 months prior to implementation date (12 months if degree level above current accreditation)
 - a. description of program
 - b. date of implementation
3. SACS will respond with approval or will require a prospectus and a substantive change committee campus visit