**Academic Policy**

Responsible Office: Office of
Academic Affairs and SACSCOC
Liaison

Date Effective: August 1, 2020

Policy on Reporting Substantive Change to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)

Major Topics

Introduction

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Introduction

The SACSCOC liaison at Prairie View A&M University is responsible for “notifying the Commission in advance of substantive changes and program developments in accordance with the substantive change policies of the Commission” (SACSCOC, 2012). The liaison will also familiarize faculty, staff, and administrators with the standards and provide updates to appropriate individuals when policies and procedures are revised. While the SACSCOC liaison will retain the primary responsibility for facilitating the substantive change process, the appropriate campus administrators (e.g. the President, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Heads, etc.) will have specific responsibilities as outlined in the PVAMU Substantive Change Matrix on pages 2-6.

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish institutional procedures for identifying and approving substantive change and ensuring timely notification to the

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The University's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is the individual responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

The SACSCOC policy on substantive change outlines the types of substantive change and the required procedure for reporting them. If differences occur between this academic policy and the SACSCOC policy, the SACSCOC policy takes precedence.

II. Definitions

A. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

The SACSCOC is the regional body for the accreditation of degree granting higher education institutions in the Southern states and in Latin America that award associate, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degrees. The Department of Education has recognized the SACSCOC as an agency whose accreditation enables its member institutions to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. The Department of Education has federal requirements that require the institution to seek and receive approval prior to initiation, thus the SACSCOC has incorporated these requirements into its substantive change policy and procedures to ensure that the change will be included in the institutional accreditation.

B. Substantive Change

Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution, as defined in SACSCOC's substantive change policy. The SACSCOC policy defines the types of substantive change and the procedures for reporting them appropriately. The policy can be found in the [SACSCOC Substantive Change policy](#) and on the [SACSCOC Substantive Change website](#).

C. Prospectus

A prospectus is a detailed written narrative that describes the substantive change in a format specified by the Commission.

D. Accreditation Liaison

The accreditation liaison is the individual appointed by the President of the University to help ensure the University remains in compliance with SACSCOC accreditation requirements and policies.

E. Notification

Notification to the SASCOC regarding substantive change means the President of the University, or the Accreditation Liaison, when designated, shall send a letter to the President of the SACSCOC summarizing the proposed change, providing the intended implementation date, and listing the complete physical address if the change involves the initiation of an off-campus site or branch campus.

F. Branch Campus

A branch campus is a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is (1) permanent in nature; (2) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; (3) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and (4) has its own budgetary and hiring authority.

G. Off-Campus Site

An off-campus site is a location of an institution that is geographically apart but not independent of the main campus. The site may be used in an ongoing manner to deliver programs or courses leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, but it does not have its own faculty, administrative organization or budget.

H. Distance Education

Distance Education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program.

I. Degree Completion Program

A degree completion program is typically designed for a non-traditional undergraduate population such as working adults who have completed some college-level course work but have not achieved a baccalaureate degree. Students in such programs may transfer in credit from courses taken

previously and may receive credit for experiential learning. Courses in degree completion programs are often offered in an accelerated format or meet during evening and weekend hours, or may be offered via distance learning technologies.

J. Teach-Out Agreement

A teach-out agreement is a written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 50% or more of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study. This applies to the closure of an institution, a site, or a program. Such a teach-out agreement requires SACSCOC approval in advance of implementation.

K. Teach-Out Plan

A teach-out plan is a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides fifty percent or more of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions. Teach-out plans must be approved by SACSCOC in advance of implementation.

L. Significant Departure

A significant departure is when a program that is not closely related to previously approved programs at the institution or site or for the mode of delivery in question. To determine whether a new program is a "significant departure," it is helpful to consider the following questions:

- What previously approved programs does the institution offer that are closely related to the new program and how are they related?
- Will significant additional equipment or facilities be needed?
- Will significant additional financial resources be needed?
- Will a significant number of new courses will be required?
- Will a significant number of new faculty members will be required?
- Will significant additional library/learning resources be needed?

III. Procedures

- A. SACSCOC requires member institutions to send notification of substantive changes. Some substantive changes require prior notification and approval, others only require prior notification. The notification requirements for various types of substantive change are denoted in the Matrix for Substantive Change. (see Appendix A). Additional information for certain types of changes can be found in the SACSCOC Policy Statement on Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status, which can be found on the SACSCOC website. <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/Mergers.pdf> Approval authority related to each type of substantive change happens at various level across the University and is illustrated in the Matrix for Substantive Change. (See Appendix A)
- B. The President may delegate administrative responsibilities for approving or recommending on substantive change to the Provost or other appropriate senior administrators (See if we have a delegation of authority SOP to refer to).
- C. In accordance with the curriculum approval process, all substantive changes related to academic programs shall require approval by the respective department committee and department chair, college/school committee and the Dean, the respective Dean of Undergraduate Studies or Graduate Studies, the respective University Committee and the Provost.
- D. The Accreditation Liaison shall inform all responsible individuals at each level of the University (See Matrix in Appendix A) of the SACSCOC substantive change policy and the institutional substantive change policy on a biannual basis. The Accreditation Liaison will request notification of substantive changes on a biannual basis for the next 12 month period to ensure that notifications can be submitted six months prior to the implementation of any substantive change and provide a long-range outlook for planning.
- E. If a prospectus is required by SACSCOC, the deans or appropriate senior administrators shall coordinate preparation of the prospectus in collaboration with the Provost and forward it the Accreditation Liaison for final review.
- F. The Accreditation Liaison shall review a required prospectus and obtain approval of the President and the Provost before preparing for submission to SACSCOC by the President, or designee.

IV. Institutional Obligations

Member institutions are required to notify the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of

changes. Member institutions are required to have a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Commission in a timely fashion.

V. References

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges. (2018). *Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges. Revised, December 2018*. Retrieved on April 20, 2020 from <https://sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges. (2012). *The Accreditation Liaison*. Retrieved on April 18, 2020, from <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/accreditation%20liaison.pdf>.

Questions Related to Substantive Change

Questions related to substantive change should be directed to the Prairie View A&M University SACSCOC Liaison at 936-261-2173.

Prairie View A&M University SACSCOC Liaison:

Dr. Sarina Willis

Vice President, Enrollment Management

SACSCOC Liaison

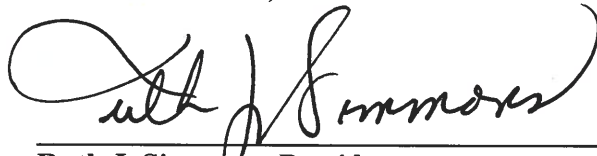
Office: Evans Hall Room 306

Phone: (936) 261-2173

Email: srwillis@pvamu.edu

APPROVALS:


James M. Palmer, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs 7/27/20
Date


Ruth J. Simmons, President 7/29/20
Date

I. PVAMU Substantive Change Matrix

Because a variety of individuals are involved in the substantive change process, the SACSCOC matrix below has been adapted to delineate individual responsibilities in the reporting and documentation of substantive changes (SACSCOC, 2018).

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACSCOC Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility: (Submit to Liaison)
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved <i>Example: Initiating an Associate Degree in Substance Abuse</i>	No	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Application for Level Change 12 months in advance Due Date to SACSCOC: March 15 for June review September 1 for December review	Department Head or Program Coordinator
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer's request and not on short notice) <i>Example: Providing more than 50% of the courses for the BSN in Nursing at the RELLIS site.</i>	No	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Prospectus 8 months in advance Due Date to SACSCOC: January 1 for fall implementation July 1 for spring or summer implementation	Department Head or Program Coordinator

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACSCOC Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility
Expanding at current degree level (<i>significant departure from current programs</i>) <u>Example: Development and implementation of MS in Physical Therapy</u>	No	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Prospectus 8 months in advance Due Date to SACSCOC: January 1 for fall implementation July 1 for spring or summer implementation	Department Head or Program Coordinator
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites by adding programs that ARE significantly different from current programs at the site AND at the institution	No	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Prospectus 8 months in advance Due Date to SACSCOC: January 1 for fall implementation July 1 for spring or summer implementation	Department Head or Program Coordinator
Initiating degree completion programs	No	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Prospectus 8 months in advance Due Date to SACSCOC: January 1 for fall implementation July 1 for spring or summer implementation	Department Head or Program Coordinator

Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACSCOC Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility
<p>Initiating a branch campus (defined as “a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permanent in nature; • offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential; • has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization; and • has its own budgetary and hiring authority.”) 	No	Yes	President	<p>Prospectus 8 months in advance</p> <p>Due Date to SACSCOC: January 1 for fall implementation July 1 for spring or summer implementation</p>	SACSCOC Liaison
Relocating a main or branch campus	No	Yes	President	<p>Prospectus 8 months in advance</p> <p>Due Date to SACSCOC: January 1 for fall implementation July 1 for spring or summer implementation</p>	SACSCOC Liaison
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution	No	Yes	President or Provost	<p>Prospectus 8 months in advance</p> <p>Due Date to SACSCOC: January 1 for fall implementation July 1 for spring or summer implementation</p>	SACSCOC Liaison
Type of	Notification Letter	Prior Approval	SACSCOC Liaison	Documentation & Advance Submission	Documentation Responsibility

Change	Required	Required	informed of the change through the:	Timeline	
Initiating dual or joint degrees involving program expansion (significant departure) or initiating a new site where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program	No	Yes	Provost or University Curriculum Process	Prospectus 8 months in advance Due Date to SACSCOC: January 1 for fall implementation July 1 for spring or summer implementation	SACSCOC Liaison and Appropriate Department Heads
Initiating joint or dual degrees with at least one institution not accredited by SACSCOC	Yes At least 6 months prior	Yes	Provost or University Curriculum Process	8 months in advance	SACSCOC Liaison and Appropriate Department Heads
Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program	Yes Screening form	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Due Dates to SACSCOC: March 15 for June Review September 1 for December Review	SACSCOC Liaison and Appropriate Department Heads
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	Yes December 15 for June review June 1 for December review	Yes	President	Prospectus Due Dates to SACSCOC: March 15 for June review September 1 for December review	SACSCOC Liaison
Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACSCOC Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility

Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution	Yes December 15 for June review June 1 for December review	Yes	President	Prospectus Due Dates to SACSCOC: March 15 for June review September 1 for December review	SACSCOC Liaison
Acquiring any program or site from another institution	Yes December 15 for June review June 1 for December review	Yes	President	Prospectus Due Dates to SACSCOC: March 15 for June review September 1 for December review	SACSCOC Liaison and Department Head
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing	Yes December 15 for June review June 1 for December review	Yes	President	Prospectus Due Dates to SACSCOC: March 15 for June review September 1 for December review	SACSCOC Liaison
Initiating a certificate program at a new off-campus site at employer's request and on short notice (previously approved program)	No	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Modified Prospectus Contact SACSCOC Liaison	SACSCOC Liaison and Department Head
Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACSCOC Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility
Initiating a certificate program that is a significant departure from previously approved programs at employer's request and on short	No	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Modified Prospectus Contact SACSCOC Liaison	Department Head or Program Coordinator

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Adding a site under a U.S. military contract for a previously approved program	No	Yes	University Curriculum Process or Provost	Modified Prospectus Contact SACSCOC Liaison	SACSCOC Liaison and Department Head
Altering significantly the length of a program	No	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Modified Prospectus Contact SACSCOC Liaison	Department Head or Program Coordinator
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution	No	Yes	President	Modified Prospectus Contact SACSCOC Liaison	SACSCOC Liaison
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	No	Yes	University Curriculum Process and Provost	6 months in advance	SACSCOC Liaison
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	Yes	No	President	Prior to implementation	SACSCOC Liaison
Initiating dual or joint degrees with other SACSCOC accredited institution (s)	Yes	No	President, Provost or University Curriculum Process	Prior to Implementation, At least 6 months prior	SACSCOC Liaison
Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACSCOC Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	Yes	No	Department Chair and University Curriculum Process	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement Prior to implementation	Dean and SACSCOC Liaison

Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the SACSCOC accredited institution	Yes	No	President or Provost	Letter of notification and Copy of Signed Agreement 8 months in advance Due Dates to SACSCOC: January 1 for fall implementation July 1 for spring implementation	SACSCOC Liaison and Department Head
Initiating off-campus sites where student can obtain 25-49% of credits toward a program (including but not limited to Early College High School, dual enrollment programs offered at a high school, and certificate programs that are not at employer's request and not on short notice)	Yes	No	President or Provost or University Curriculum Process	Letter of notification Prior to implementation	SACSCOC Liaison and Department Head
Initiating distance learning by offering 25-49% of the first program <u>for the first time</u>	Yes	No	University Curriculum Process	Letter of notification Prior to implementation	SACSCOC Liaison and Department Head
Type of Change	Notification Letter Required	Prior Approval Required	SACSCOC Liaison informed of the change through the:	Documentation & Advance Submission Timeline	Documentation Responsibility
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans to teach out its own students	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification Immediately following decision to close	Department Head and SACSCOC Liaison

Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution where the institution plans contracts with another institution to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	Yes	Yes	University Curriculum Process	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach- out agreement detailing terms included with notification Immediately following decision to close	Department Head and SACSCOC Liaison
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