

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY**Policy Statement**

In accordance with *SACSCOC Principle 14.2* which states that the institution has a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC policy, and the *SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*:

The purpose of the policy is to ensure compliance with SACSCOC policy and procedures if there are significant modifications or expansions of the nature and scope of the institution. Substantive change includes high-impact, high-risk changes, and changes that can impact the quality of educational programs and services.

1. Definitions

Substantive changes, including those required by federal regulations, include:

- Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.
- Changing the legal status, form of control, or ownership of an institution.
- Changing the governance of an institution.
- Merging / consolidating two or more institutions or entities.
- Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.
- Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).
- Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.
- 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.
- 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.
- Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.
- Adding an additional method of delivery to a currently offered program.
- Entering in a cooperative academic arrangement.
- Entering in 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.

- 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.
- Adding competency-based education programs.
- Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.
- Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
- Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
- Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
- Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location including a branch campus.
- Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.

2. Procedures

The procedures outlined in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy include information for each type of change including:

- Whether prior notification to or approval from SACSCOC is required.
- Whether a committee visit from SACSCOC is required, contingent, or not required.
- What documents and common content are required to submit to SACSCOC.

See Procedure 51005P for guidance on commonly encountered changes at Laurel Ridge.

3. Responsible Office

Authority for interpretation of this policy rests with the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. The Vice President notifies the SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison of a substantive change. The Liaison prepares an appropriate draft document for the President. The President reviews and approves the document for submission to SACSCOC.

The college's Institutional Accreditation Liaison is responsible for notifying senior administrators when there have been changes to the SACSCOC substantive change policy. The college's policy will be modified accordingly.

4. Other Information

This policy was developed by the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs and the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison following the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy found at <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf>. The policy was reviewed by the Learning Policy Committee.

Document History:

Approved: President J. Sygielski, Feb 2008
Revised: President C. Thompson-Stacy, Aug 2014
Revised: President C. Thompson-Stacy, Jan 2017
Revised: President K. Blosser, Sep 2018
Revised: President K. Blosser, April 2023