

Title: Substantive Change – SACSCOC Compliance Policy

Policy Abstract: This policy is to ensure that all incidences of substantive change in the mission and academic programs, sites, and agreements of the College be reported in a timely manner as required by its accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

Responsible Offices: Office of the President, Provost's Office, SACSCOC Liaison,

Official: President of the College, Provost, SACSCOC Liaison

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Applies to: The mission and academic programs, sites, and agreements of Birmingham-Southern College.

Effective Date: February 1, 2014

Revision Date(s): August 8, 2019 (Minor revisions and update of SACSCOC policies); January 20, 2023 (Updated Contact(s); update of SACSCOC references)

Introduction and Background: It is an institutional obligation that colleges accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to notify the Commission of any substantive changes in a timely fashion and seek prior approval, when required, before initiating those changes. Institutions are also required to have a policy and procedure to ensure compliance with this requirement.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all substantive changes in the mission and academic programs, sites, and agreements of the College be reported in a timely manner and approved by the Commission when required before implementation as required by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges.

Applicable Regulations: SACSCOC The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement (2018) <https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/>

Transparency and Institutional Representation (14.2): The institution has a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC policy. (*substantive changes*)

Policy Statement: The College is to notify SACSCOC of all instances of substantive change and, as required, have changes approved by the Commission prior to implementation in accordance with the Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institution policy statement.

Whenever an Officer of the College believes that a substantive change as outlined in the details below may be pending, notification is to be sent to President's Senior Staff for thorough discussion of the change and consultation with the College's SACSCOC liaison.

Details: The following details are summarized directly from the Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institution policy statement, which should be consulted for additional clarification, procedures, and timelines. Some changes require as many as six-month notification and approval prior to implementation.

Institutional Obligations:

1. An institution is required to notify or secure SACSCOC approval prior to implementing a substantive change.
2. An institution is responsible for maintaining compliance at all times with Standard 14.2 (Substantive change) of the Principles of Accreditation and with the Substantive Change Policy and Procedures and related policies.

Definition: Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. 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.
- Adding graduate programs at an institution previously offering only undergraduate programs (including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and other for-credit credential).
- 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 into a cooperative academic arrangement.
- 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.
- Substantially increase 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.
- 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.
- Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.

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.

References:

SACSCOC, Principles of Accreditation 2018, [Accrediting Standards - SACSCOC: https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/](https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/)

SACSCOC, Website on Substantive Changes, [Substantive Changes - SACSCOC: https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/](https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/)