

04.05 Substantive Changes

Original Approval: DATE

Last Updated: DATE

Last Reviewed: DATE

Policy / Purpose:

In compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Wallace Community College – Selma (WCCS) reports all changes to the Commission on Colleges in accordance with the guidelines provided in Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions: <https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/>

Scope:

This policy applies to any responsible college employees who can initiate, review, or approve changes that are considered substantive according to the current version of the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. In academic instruction, this includes full-time instructors, division chairs, academic program directors, academic dean, and the Executive Cabinet. Other college employees in Dual Enrollment, Fiscal Services, Financial Aid, Student Services, or compliance may be asked to review or approve a Substantive Change initiative. These individuals are responsible for timely notification of Substantive Changes to the SACSCOC Liaison, who is responsible for notifying or seeking approval from SACSCOC as appropriate for the Substantive Change.

Definitions:

Responsible Party: Each individual, position, or entity designated as within the scope of this policy is required to be familiar with and comply with this policy.

Substantive Change: According to SACSCOC, “substantive change is a significant modification or expansion in the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” Substantive changes can be academic in nature or reflect broader institutional changes.

SACSCOC Liaison: ADD POSITION TITLE HERE.

Details:

1. Institutional Obligations:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.

2. Examples of Substantive Changes: Include but are not limited to:

- 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 credentials).
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
3. **Review of Policy:** The Substantive Changes Policy will undergo periodic review by Executive Cabinet.
 4. **Periodic Orientation:** The SACSCOC Liaison will provide periodic orientation on substantive change requirements to responsible parties.
 5. **Enforcement:** Consequences of noncompliance are articulated in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures at <https://sacscoc.org/accrediting-standards/substantive-changes/> and may be subject to the College's Employee Discipline Policy.

6. **Changes to College Catalog:** Refer to the Development and Adoption of Policies and Amending the Local Policies and Procedures and College Catalog Policy.

Procedure(s):

1. The SACSCOC Liaison emails academic and administrative employees to remind and inform leadership of this policy, copying the President, the Executive Cabinet, the Chair of the Student and Academic Affairs Committee, and the Chair of the Curriculum Committee using the schedule below:

Email Reminder Date	Changes Due Date	Implementation Date
April 1	May 1	Fall term
October 1	November 1	Spring term*

**changes to the College Catalog are not recommended for spring term implementation.*

2. Responsible Party completes and submits a Substantive Change Form to the SACSCOC Liaison.
3. When necessary, the SACSCOC Liaison consults with Executive Cabinet as to whether a proposed institutional change constitutes a “significant departure.”
4. If a substantive change is required according to SACSCOC guidelines, the SACSCOC Liaison determines whether 1) notification is to be made or 2) whether a prospectus needs to be prepared seeking prior approval.
5. If notification is needed, the SACSCOC Liaison composes a letter for the President’s signature and compiles any additional evidence for submission if necessary.
6. When seeking prior approval and when necessary, the SACSCOC Liaison coordinates composition, editing, budget preparation, signature gathering, and submission through the SACSCOC institutional portal.
7. The SACSCOC Liaison consults with marketing and other departments (if applicable) about program advertising guidelines prior to official approval of prospectus.
8. The SACSCOC Liaison communicates official SACSCOC responses to the President, the Executive Cabinet, and others as necessary.

Additional Provisions / Information:

There are no Additional Provisions / Information applicable to this policy.