

The College District shall maintain accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The College District shall maintain other national and state accreditations as required for specific programs.

**Substantive Change**

The College District is committed to adhering to the policies and requirements of SACSCOC. This substantive change policy applies to any representative of the College District, administrative committees, or faculty committees wishing to make a curricular or organizational change.

Institutional  
Obligations

A college district that maintains accreditation with SACSCOC shall be required to:

1. Notify SACSCOC of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of changes; and
2. Have a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to SACSCOC in a timely fashion.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish institutional procedures for recognizing and approving substantive change and ensuring timely notification to SACSCOC. The President of the College District shall be responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented. The President shall be authorized to delegate this responsibility to any College District representative. The College District shall be committed to adhering to the policies and requirements of SACSCOC regarding all types of substantive change.

The types of substantive change and required procedures for reporting them appropriately are found in SACSCOC's policy on substantive change. If differences are discovered between Board policy and SACSCOC's policy, SACSCOC's policy shall have precedence.

Definition

Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Under federal regulations, substantive changes include:

- Any change in the established mission or objective 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 of study at a degree or credential level different from 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 or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program;
- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program;
- The establishment of a branch campus;
- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus, or institution;
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution; and
- Entering into contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25 percent or more of the accredited institution's programs.

Responsibilities

The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is responsible for providing information about the SACSCOC substantive change policy to the College District's President, Division Chairs, Deans, and Program Directors at the beginning of the academic year or more frequently if updates are required by SACSCOC action.

The Vice President of Instruction is responsible for providing the Accreditation Liaison with the following details of proposed programs or discontinued programs:

- A description of the educational program(s) involved;
- The nature of the change;
- The academic and professional qualifications of faculty members assigned to coordinate and teach in the program(s);
- The manner in which the College District will provide educational and academic support for students enrolled in the program(s) involved; and
- The plans for ensuring students enrolled in programs being discontinued will be able to complete the programs in good order ("Teach-Out Plans").

All Division Chairs, Deans, and Program Directors, or their designees, are responsible for informing the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison of other changes to the College District's educational programs, services, or operations that might prompt the initiation of a substantive change notification.

The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is responsible for:

1. Notifying the President of proposed changes in the College District's educational programs, services, or operations that might prompt a substantive change; and
2. Coordinating any required follow-up action requested by SACSCOC in response to substantive change notification, including any on-site visits to the campus, as applicable.

Process and  
Procedure

The following process and procedure shall apply:

1. **Initiation:** To ensure completion of all necessary documents (letter of notification, substantive change prospectus, or modified prospectus), all substantive changes shall be coordinated by the Accreditation Liaison in collaboration with the administrative personnel (e.g., President, Vice President, Division Chair, Dean, Program Director, or designee) who seeks to initiate the change. The Accreditation Liaison shall, as necessary, provide information regarding the requirements and/or status of any proposed substantive change to the Curriculum Committee, Administrative Council, and/or Board of Regents.
2. **Submission:** Following review by the Accreditation Liaison and the appropriate administrative personnel, substantive change documents shall be submitted for approval to the Vice President of Instruction and the President. All approved substantive change documents shall then be submitted to SACSCOC by the Accreditation Liaison through the Office of the President.
3. **Documentation:** All substantive change documents shall be available in the Accreditation Liaison's office and the President's office.
4. **Oversight:** The President shall ensure that the Board of Regents is aware of substantive change aspects relating to items requiring Board approval. The President shall also ensure that the Board of Regents is notified of SACSCOC's response to substantive changes (acceptance of notification, approval/denial, and/or pending site visits).

The following procedure shall be employed to ensure that the College District notifies SACSCOC (for substantive changes requiring

prior notification only) or obtains prior approval from SACSCOC (for substantive changes requiring such approval) prior to the implementation of any substantive change:

1. The initiator(s) establish the need for a substantive change by filling out and submitting to the Accreditation Liaison a Substantive Change Checklist, which shall be available on the College District's website and in the office of the Accreditation Liaison.
2. The Accreditation Liaison assesses the nature of the substantive change to determine the type of documentation that must be provided to SACSCOC, as well as the submission deadline that must be met relative to the desired implementation date of the substantive change. The Accreditation Liaison also notifies the Vice President of Instruction, the Vice President, and the President of the proposed change.
3. If the substantive change involves the establishment of a new workforce education program, the initiator(s) bring together an Advisory Committee to help the College District document the need for the program and ensure that it has adequate resources and a well-designed curriculum to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities essential for employment. Recommendations from the advisory committee are considered by faculty and submitted to the Curriculum Committee for consideration.
4. The Accreditation Liaison works with the initiator(s) to develop and complete the necessary documentation (letter of notification, substantive change prospectus, or modified prospectus) to be submitted to SACSCOC.
5. Prior to being submitted to SACSCOC, all documents obtain all relevant internal approvals, including administrative and governance reviews as well as committee approvals, to ensure adherence to the College District's quality assurance and institutional effectiveness processes. Faculty members must be appropriately involved in developing and approving programs, especially those who will be responsible for instructional delivery and assessment.
6. The Accreditation Liaison submits the completed substantive change documents to the Vice President of Instruction, the Vice President, and the President for approval and prepares the documents for transmittal to SACSCOC through the Office of the President.

7. The Accreditation Liaison submits the substantive change documents to SACSCOC along with the appropriate forms and fee as specified by SACSCOC. The Accreditation Liaison tracks the progress of the substantive change and updates the initiator(s), the Vice President of Instruction, the Vice President, and the President with the decision outcome from SACSCOC.