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AGENDA

2018 SACSCOC Reaffirmation Leadership Team Meeting
January 26, 2016 – 2nd meeting
BBS Dean's Conference Room, JO 4.306

1. Call to Order Serenity King
2. Approval of Minutes Serenity King
3. Announcements Serenity King
 - A. Lunch and Learn Workshop Schedule
 - B. Fall 2015 SACSCOC Report online: <http://sacscoc.utdallas.edu/>
 - C. Neal Armstrong visits
 - D. Belle Wheelan visit
4. Complete Formation of Reaffirmation Committees 2 Team Groups
 - A. Final Recommendations from Groups for 2018 Teams
 - B. Next steps to be taken
5. Review SACSCOC Policies (may be carried over to February meeting) Serenity King
 - A. SACSCOC policies are at <http://www.sacscoc.org/policies.asp>
 - B. Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure
 - C. FR 4.1 Student Achievement Website Analysis/Findings
 - D1. Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions
 - D2. Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports
 - D3. Closing a Program, Site, Branch or Institution: Good Practices
 - E. Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures
 - F. Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs [Program Learning Outcomes]
 - G. Disclosure of Accrediting Documents and Actions of SACSCOC
6. Adjournment Serenity King

ITEM 2

January 13, 2016 Meeting Minutes

UT Dallas Dox: <http://dox.utdallas.edu/minutes1245/dckafmomju>

2018 SACSCOC Leadership Team

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 13, 2016 10:00AM
Lonestar Conference Room, AD 3.104

I. Attendees:

B. Hobson Wildenthal, Inga Musselman, Serenity King (Chair), Kim Laird, Clint Peinhardt, Marilyn Kaplan, Josh Hammers, Mary Jo Venetis, Nicole Leeper Piquero, Jessica Murphy, Joanna Gentsch, Vy Trang, Simon Kane, Ryan Dorman, Caroline Ries

II. Approval of Dec. 11, 2015 meeting minutes

Nicole Piquero motioned to approve, Clint Peinhardt seconded the motion. All in favor – minutes approved.

III. Announcements

Evaluator Registry

The list of memberships on the evaluator registry has been updated so that UT Dallas now has 9 possible evaluators. Gerry Burnham, Associate Provost and Professor in ECS, will serve as an evaluator at the reaffirmation of the University of Alabama - Huntsville in Feb. 2016 and will share his experience upon his return.

ACTION ITEM: If any members are interested to serve as an evaluator, let Serenity know and she will add their name to the registry next year.

ACTION ITEM: For next meeting - finalize committees and start discussing SACSCOC policies. Members need to visit <http://www.sacscoc.org/policies.asp> and become familiar with how the policies interact with what the leadership team does.

Institutional Obligations for Public Disclosure Policy

When this policy was introduced 2 years ago, it required institutions to have a website where institutional outcomes are listed. UT Dallas created a website listing the institutional outcomes using the existing outcomes website that Communications had. A section was added that linked to UT System's Productivity Dashboard and in particular, UT Dallas' section on the dashboard.

FR 4.1 Student Achievement – SACSCOC is looking for all the information in Principle 4.1 to be on the website but also incorporated into institutional goals.

ACTION ITEM: There needs to be a more appropriate place to list the outcomes, expand the website, and incorporate into a stand-alone, non-UT System-driven institutional outcome.

IV. Preliminary Recommendations

Group 1 (Kim Laird, Nicole Leeper Piquero, Marilyn Kaplan, Jessica Murphy, Mary Jo Venetis):

The group reviewed some peer institutions that have recently or are going through the reaffirmation process as well as UT Dallas' last reaffirmation. The group's proposal and rationale is located in the meeting packet (see Item 4C).

A question was asked: Is the separation of undergraduate and graduate education committees a common division at the other universities that were reviewed?

Answer: Yes, it was.

The group recommends 13 committees (including the subcommittees).

Group 2 (Joanna Gentsch, Josh Hammers, Clint Peinhardt, Inga Musselman, Serenity King):

The group used area institutions as a model that have large institutional effectiveness teams that conduct annual updates to accreditation writing. The group recommends 9 total committees: Leadership; Steering; QEP; Governance, Mission, and Administration; Faculty; Institutional Effectiveness; Learning and Student Resources; Financial and Physical Resources; Curriculum; and Programs and Instruction. Distance Education must be addressed in the principles. The writing groups are embedded within the committees.

UT Austin is also undergoing reaffirmation. Their review dates are the same as UT Dallas'.

The first draft of the CCR would consist of the removal of information that is no longer needed/relevant, updating weblinks, and outlining additional sections for current practices

Faculty Principles should be pulled out and they should be specifically assigned to a committee. It was recommended that Dr. Murray Leaf chair that committee.

ACTION ITEM: Group 2 will email a summary of their preliminary recommendations to the team after the meeting.

The final committee structure:

1. Leadership Team
2. Steering Committee
3. Mission, Governance, and Administration Committee

4. Programs, Curriculum Instruction Committee (with Undergraduate Education and Graduate Education subcommittees)
5. Institutional Effectiveness Committee
6. QEP Committee
7. Faculty Committee
8. Learning and Student Resources (including library) Committee
9. Financial and Physical Resources and Information Technology Committee

QEP council should include a small number of people that are on the other committees. Preferably, the council consists of a different group of people so they can focus on the QEP. The council should also include a representative from Communications, Staff Council, community members (UG and GR alumni), and a representative from Dr. Redlinger's office.

For the Steering Committee, ECS and NSM representatives need to be included. Gerry Burnham, Sue Sherbet, Josh Hammers, and also a representative from Toni Stephens' office are suggested.

Group 2 recommends that the committees have 50% new representation.

ACTION ITEM: Ryan and Serenity will create a spreadsheet with the principles assigned to each of the committees, combined with the list of the committee members from the last reaffirmation that are still at UT Dallas. Also included will be an updated personnel listing (new staff/personnel in the same positions i.e. Dean Blanchard replaced Dean Coleman) and the 2007 committee charges. The spreadsheet will be emailed to members the week of Jan. 18.

ACTION ITEM: Each team member will recommend personnel for each committee and send their recommendations to Serenity. The recommendations will be collated and handed out at the next meeting. The committee memberships will be finalized at the next meeting so the information can be shared with the faculty senate leaders.

V. Meeting Adjourned

ITEM 3A

Lunch and Learn Workshop Schedule

Friday, 2/5 (11:30 am-12:30 pm)

EPPS, AH, BBS, IS

GR 4.428

Wednesday, 2/10 (11:30 am-12:30 pm)

ECS, NSM

HH 2.402

Wednesday, 2/24 (11:30 am-12:30 pm)

JSOM, ATEC

JSOM 1.117

Thursday, 3/3 (11:30 am-12:30 pm)

Open to Everyone

JSOM 11.210

ITEM 5C

FR 4.1 Student Achievement Website
Analysis/Findings

Website: www.utdallas.edu/outcomes

FR 4.1 Student Achievement Website Analysis/Findings

The SACSCOC *Principle* FR 4.1 states that the student achievement success criteria may include the following elements:

1. Enrollment data
2. Retention
3. Graduation [rates]
4. Course completion (trend data showing completion by discipline)
5. Job placement rates (by degree program)
6. State licensing examinations (pass rates)
7. Student portfolios
8. Other means of demonstrating achievement of goals

Examination of Student Achievement Websites at 13 Texas Institutions

Each of the UT System institutions (9 institutions) and 4 Texas institutions (Texas A&M, Texas Tech, University of Houston, and University of North Texas) has a “student achievement” website that can be located through the SACSCOC member directory database. The SACSCOC database includes links to the appropriate websites. Each of the 13 Texas institutions’ student achievement website was examined between August 13 and August 18, 2015. Some web links provided PDF reports while other institutions provided complete information. These findings are recorded in a separate Excel spreadsheet (available upon request).

Website Investigation Results

The results indicated the average number of elements listed in the 13 Texas institutions’ student achievement websites is 3.79. The average is slightly higher for UT systems with a 3.9. Only UT Brownsville and UT Permian Basin’s websites included the first six elements shown in the FR 4.1 *Principle* list.

UT San Antonio has 5 elements: enrollment data, retention, graduation rates, job placement rates, and state licensing examination (pass rates).

The websites for UT Pan American, University of Houston (UH) and University of North Texas (UNT) show 4 elements. The elements for UH and UNT websites included enrollment data, retention, graduation rates, and job placement data. UT Pan American’s website did not include the enrollment data; instead it listed the state licensing exam pass rates.

UT Dallas’ student achievement website, called Outcomes (www.utdallas.edu/outcomes) has 3 elements (graduation rates, job placement data, and state licensing exams), matching the same elements shown by UT Arlington and UT Austin websites. UT Tyler, Texas A&M and Texas Tech also have 3 elements listed on their websites: enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.

UT El Paso is the only institution with two elements: graduation rates and job placement data.

Most websites also include the number of degrees awarded under the category of “other means”, the eighth element in the FR 4.1 *Principle* list. UT Dallas does not show this information in its Outcomes website. However, this information is addressed elsewhere in other UT Dallas websites.

Outcomes’ Missing Elements Addressed in Other UT Dallas’ Websites

The UT Dallas website, designed by the Office of Strategic Planning and Analysis (OSPA), includes the following elements: enrollment, semester credit hours, degrees and certificates awarded in its [statistical handbook](#). Information about retention is listed in OSPA’s [university profile](#). Retention as well as enrollment and graduation rates are also included in OSPA’s [common data set](#). The Career Center’s website includes the [job placement](#) trends with a link to the UT System’s [SeekUT](#) system.

It must be noted that UT Dallas’ student achievement website is not easily searchable through the www.utdallas.edu site unless the user knows the keywords or the exact web link to retrieve the website.

Further, on the Student Achievements tab on the Outcomes web page, the Dashboard Productivity link is listed but it has not been publicly available since August 2015; it may be available for those who have access to this specific site. The Dashboard link is still not available as of January 11, 2016. It may be more suitable to refer to the OSPA’s [statistical handbook](#) site instead.

On the Financial Strength tab / web page, it is actually a “job placement rate” page with salary overview data by graduate and undergraduate levels and disciplines. The web page includes a link to the UT System’s [SeekUT](#) site.

Other Information from SACSCOC Annual Meeting in December 2015

There was a presentation at the SACSCOC Annual Meeting in December 2015 to review the results from a survey that was sent to SACSCOC liaisons during summer 2015. The presenters conducted the survey to determine the average compliance (49.7% out of 706 SACSCOC institutions). Only 25 out of 706 SACSCOC institutions explicitly posted recent responses to FR 4.1. The presenters also examined the number of elements or measures posted in websites; they determined the average, which is 5.27 overall for 706 SACSCOC institutions. In Texas, the average is 4.74 elements. The most cited element is graduation rate followed by retention rate. Those who attended the session indicated that their websites are still being revised, and the presenters believed that many institutions are also revising (refining) their websites to be in compliance.

ITEM 5D1

Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited
Institutions

Also see UT Dallas' Reporting Substantive Changes at:
<http://go.utdallas.edu/substantive-change>



*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE FOR SACSCOC ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS

Policy Statement

Institutional Obligations:

1. 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.
2. 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.

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

- Any change in the established mission or objectives 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% of an educational program.
- The establishment of a branch campus
- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution
- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes only the initiation of a dual or joint academic program with another institution
- Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution
- Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of one or more of the accredited institution's programs

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.

Table of Contents

Glossary of Terms	3
The Policy	5
Commission Responsibilities	5
Institutional Responsibilities	5
Procedures for Reporting Substantive Changes: An Overview	5
Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change	6
Required Committee Visits	11
Policy Statements	12
Fees and Expenses	14
Procedure One:	15
The Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Approval Prior to Implementation	
Procedure Two:	20
The Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Only Notification Prior to Implementation	
Procedure Three:	22
Closing a Program, Site, Branch Campus or Institution	
Appendices	
Appendix A: Current Standards and Policy Statements Addressing Unreported Substantive Change	24
Appendix B: The Content of the Substantive Change Prospectus	26
Appendix C: Application for Member Institutions	29
Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level <i>(Hyperlink access only)</i>	

Glossary of Terms

Branch campus - 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

- 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

Contractual Agreement – typically is one in which an institution enters an agreement for receipt of courses/programs or portions of courses or programs (i.e., clinical training internships, etc.) delivered by another institution or service provider.

Consortial Relationship - A consortial relationship typically is one in which two or more institutions share in the responsibility of developing and delivering courses and programs that meet mutually agreed upon standards of academic quality.

Correspondence education - a formal educational process under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; courses are typically self-paced.

Degree completion program – a program 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.

Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs - Federal regulations define a direct assessment competency-based educational program as an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, uses direct assessment of student learning relying solely on the attainment of defined competencies, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program using the results of the assessment.

Distance education - 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.

Dual degree – separate program completion credentials each of which bears only the name, seal, and signature of the institution awarding the degree to the student.

Educational program – a coherent course of study leading to the awarding of a credential (i.e., a degree, diploma or certificate).

Geographically separate - an instructional site or branch campus that is located physically apart from the main campus of the institution.

Joint degree - a single program completion credential bearing the names, seals, and signatures of each of the two or more institutions awarding the degree to the student.

Modified prospectus - a prospectus submitted in lieu of a full prospectus for certain designated substantive changes. When a modified prospectus is acceptable, the Commission specifies requested information from the institution.

Notification - a letter from an institution's chief executive officer, or his/her designated representative, to SACSCOC President summarizing a 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. The policy and procedures for reporting and review of institutional substantive change are outlined in the document "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges."

Significant departure – 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?

Teach-out agreement - 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.

Teach-out plan - a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 50% 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. This applies to the closure of an institution, a site, or a program. Teach-out plans must be approved by SACSCOC in advance of implementation.

The Policy

Commission Responsibilities

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accredits an entire institution and its programs and services, wherever they are located or however they are delivered. It is responsible for reviewing all substantive changes that occur between an institution's decennial reviews, determining whether the changes have affected the quality of the total institution, and assuring the public that all aspects of the institution continue to meet defined standards.

SACSCOC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an agency whose accreditation enables its member institutions to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. To maintain its recognition with the U.S. Department of Education, SACSCOC has incorporated federal requirements into its substantive change policy and procedures. Some of those requirements specify that an institution seek and receive approval prior to the initiation of a substantive change so that the change can be included in the institution's scope of accreditation.

Institutional Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of an institution to follow SACSCOC substantive change procedures and inform SACSCOC of substantive changes as specified in those procedures. If an institution is unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, it should contact SACSCOC staff for consultation. SACSCOC accredits institutions, not systems. While a system may provide SACSCOC with important information regarding changes planned or underway at its institutions, **it is expected that each institution will follow the reporting requirements of the substantive change policy.**

Procedures for Reporting: An Overview

There are three procedures for addressing the different types of substantive changes included in this document:

- Procedure One for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring *Notification and Approval Prior to Implementation*
- Procedure Two for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring *Only Notification Prior to Implementation*
- Procedure Three for Closing a Program, Site, Branch Campus or Institution.

Procedures for the following types of changes are included in a separate document, "[Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status.](#)"

- initiating mergers or consolidations
- acquiring any program or site from another institution
- adding as a permanent location any site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that is closing
- changes in governance, ownership, means of control or legal status

Procedures for approval of direct assessment competency-based education programs are in a separate document, "[Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs.](#)"

The initiation or revision of programs not offered for academic credit and that are not eligible for federal financial aid does not require reporting; however, such programs are subject to review at the time of reaffirmation.

Reporting the Various Types of Substantive Change

The different types of substantive change, the specific procedure to be used for each, their respective approval/notification requirements, and their reporting time lines are included in the table that follows. Please read the full text under the appropriate procedure for details regarding reporting.

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved	1	NA	NA	Yes	Application for Level Change Due dates: April 8 or September 15
Expanding at current degree level (<i>significant departure from current programs</i>)	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating a branch campus (See definition of "branch campus" on p. 3 of this document.)	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Relocating a main or branch campus	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Letter of notification with new address and starting date
Initiating degree completion programs	1	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice					
using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	1	NA	NA	Yes	Modified prospectus
that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	1	Yes	Approval required prior to implementation	Yes	Modified prospectus

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
Initiating other certificate programs					
using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	1	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution	1	NA	NA	Yes	Contact Commission Staff (Also see page 16, item 9)
Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution: (See "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards" policy)					
Joint Programs: with another SACSCOC accredited institution	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution
Joint Programs: with an institution not accredited by SACSCOC	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Dual Programs	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School and dual enrollment programs offered at the high school)					
Student can obtain 50% or more credits toward program	1	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
Student can obtain 25-49% of credit	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Letter of notification
Student can obtain 24% or less	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites					
Adding approved programs that ARE NOT significantly different from current programs at the site	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adding approved programs that ARE significantly different from current programs <u>at the site but NOT at the institution</u>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adding programs that ARE significantly different from current programs <u>at the site AND at the institution</u>	1	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Altering significantly the length of a program	1	NA	NA	Yes	Modified Prospectus
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	1	NA	NA	Yes	Justify reasons for change, indicate calculation of equivalency, and other pertinent information
Initiating a direct assessment competency-based program	See SACSCOC Policy " Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs "	Yes	6 months	Yes	Submit "Screening Form" with letter of notification. If Prospectus is required, due dates: April 8 or September 15.
Initiating distance learning					
Offering 50% or more of a program <u>for the first time</u>	1	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
Offering 25-49%	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of notification
Offering 24% or less	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
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 COC accredited institution	1	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the COC accredited institution	2	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Copy of the signed agreement
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	See SACSCOC policy " Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status "	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus Due dates: April 8 or September 15
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution	See SACSCOC policy " Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status "	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus Due dates: April 8 or September 15
Acquiring any program or site from another institution	See SACSCOC policy " Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status "	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing	See SACSCOC policy " Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status "	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus

Types of Change	Procedure	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution					
Institution to teach out its own students	3	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Yes	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification
Institution contracts with another institution to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	3	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Yes	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement detailing terms included with notification

Required Committee Visits

The following six types of substantive changes require on-site committee reviews within six months after implementation:

1. The initiation of an additional off-campus site/location at which a student can earn at least 50% of the credit toward an educational program, if any of the following applies: (a) the institution has a total of three or fewer additional locations, or (b) the institution has not demonstrated, to the satisfaction of SACSCOC, that it has a proven record of effective educational oversight of additional locations, or (c) the institution has been placed on sanction by SACSCOC or is subject to some limitation on its accreditation, or (d) the institution has been accredited by SACSCOC for less than ten years.

SACSCOC will conduct visits to the first three off-campus locations initiated by an institution that offer 50% or more of the credit for at least one program.

When an institution initiates its fourth off-campus site/location where 50% or more of a program's credits are offered, SACSCOC may, at its discretion, choose not to conduct visits to any of these additional sites at the times of their initiation if the institution has previously demonstrated a record of effective oversight of its off-campus educational locations and has not been placed on sanction. However, SACSCOC will require visits to a representative sample of sites at the fifth-year interval between scheduled reaffirmations if (1) the additional sites have been initiated since the last scheduled reaffirmation and (2) the sites have not been visited.

At any time, SACSCOC may choose to authorize visits to new sites developed between the fifth-year review and the next scheduled reaffirmation of accreditation.

At the time of reaffirmation, SACSCOC will conduct a thorough review of a representative sample of additional locations/sites where a student can obtain 50% or more of course work toward an educational program. The extent of the review will depend, in part, on whether there has been a recent review of the site(s).

2. The initiation of a branch campus. A branch campus is 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
 - 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

If it is determined that a branch campus has sufficient autonomy, the institution may be directed to seek separate accreditation for the unit. (See SACSCOC policy "[Separate Accreditation for Units of a Member Institution](#).")

3. The initiation of a change in governance/ownership with a change in control. (See SACSCOC policy "[Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status](#).")
4. The initiation of mergers/consolidations. (See SACSCOC policy "[Mergers, Consolidations, Changes of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status](#).")
5. The initiation of coursework, credit certificates, or degree programs at a different level than currently approved by SACSCOC. (Depending on the existing related programs offered by an institution, a committee visit may not be required for institutions moving from Levels III to IV or from Levels V to VI. See level classifications on page 14 of this document.)

6. The initiation of a direct assessment competency-based education program (at least 50% direct assessment)

The President of SACSCOC also is authorized to appoint a Substantive Change Committee to review an institution for any change requiring a more in-depth evaluation beyond the prospectus submitted by the institution. The report of the Substantive Change Committee will be used by the Board of Trustees of SACSCOC to determine the ongoing accreditation of an institution.

Policy Statements Regarding Substantive Change

1. The [Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement](#) applies to all programs and services of SACSCOC-accredited institutions wherever they are located or however they are delivered. Failure to comply with the Principles or with procedures referred to in this policy could result in the institution being placed on sanction or being removed from membership.
2. Denial of approval of substantive change is not appealable. An institution that fails to gain approval of the substantive change may resubmit a revised prospectus or application following the guidelines and time frames described in the Table on pages 6-9 of this document.
3. An accredited institution in the appeals process or in litigation with SACSCOC is not eligible for consideration of substantive change.
4. The SACSCOC substantive change policy applies only to SACSCOC-accredited institutions. Applicant and candidate institutions may not initiate substantive change.
5. Procedures One, Two, and Three may not address all substantive changes that SACSCOC will review in the interim between an institution's reaffirmation cycles. Therefore, the SACSCOC reserves the right to classify significant changes other than those described above as substantive in nature and to follow up accordingly. The follow-up procedure may include a committee visit.
6. An institution may withdraw its prospectus/application or may discontinue substantive change at any time during the review process by submitting a formal letter of withdrawal to the President of SACSCOC.
7. Once an institution submits its prospectus or application and the document is reviewed by either the Committee on Compliance and Reports or by SACSCOC staff, any information included therein that indicates possible non-compliance with any of the Core Requirements or Comprehensive Standards may lead SACSCOC to further review the institution, even if the prospectus is withdrawn or approval of the change is denied.
8. SACSCOC staff review all substantive changes requiring notification prior to implementation and conduct a preliminary review of all changes requiring final approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. All substantive changes described in Procedure One are referred to the Board of Trustees for approval as are the following cases:
 - a proposed substantive change requiring prior approval submitted by an institution currently on sanction. Proposals by an institution on sanction to close a program or an off-site instructional site will be reviewed and, if appropriate, approved by Commission staff.
 - a proposed substantive change submitted by an institution recently removed from sanction with particular attention to those involving non-compliance with Core Requirement 2.11.1 or Comprehensive Standard 3.10.1, both dealing with financial health
 - a proposed substantive change submitted by an institution currently on reimbursement for Title IV federal funding
 - the prospectus of an institution planning a merger/consolidation, change of legal status, governance, ownership or form of control. (See SACSCOC Policy "[Mergers, Consolidations,](#)

[Changes of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status.”\)](#)

- the prospectus for approval of a direct assessment competency-based educational program (50% or more of a program) (See SACSCOC Policy “[Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs.](#)”)
9. If an institution fails to report or to gain approval of a substantive change prior to its implementation and the nature of that change is not described in the list in item 8 above or those listed under Procedure One, the substantive change will be reviewed and, if possible, acted upon by staff. The issue of late submission, however, will be referred to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for action. If an institution fails to report or to gain approval of a substantive change prior to its implementation and the proposed change is among those included in the list in item 8 above or those listed under Procedure One, both the prospectus/application and the issue of late submission will be referred to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for action.
 10. All final decisions regarding the accreditation status of an institution are made by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Denial of substantive change and the imposition of sanctions are not appealable actions.
 11. Substantive changes of the types described in Procedures One and Two normally will not affect an institution’s cycle of reaffirmation of accreditation
 12. Following the approval of a degree level change by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, an institution may not initiate additional programs at the new degree level until after the Board takes positive action on its continued accreditation following the Substantive Change Committee visit authorized at the time of approval.
 13. The date of the letter of approval of a substantive change is considered the date on which the change is included as part of the institution’s accreditation.
 14. Extensive substantive changes by an institution may accelerate the date for the institution’s next reaffirmation. Examples of triggers for an accelerated reaffirmation include the following changes: proliferation of branches or off-campus sites, frequent mergers or consolidations with other institutions, significant increases in enrollments, or rapid proliferation of new educational programs.
 15. If an institution fails to follow SACSCOC substantive change policy and procedures, it may lose its Title IV funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse it for money received by the institution for programs related to the unreported substantive change. In addition, the institution’s case may be referred to SACSCOC Board of Trustees for the imposition of a sanction or for removal from membership. (See also Appendix A regarding standards and policies addressing unreported substantive change.)
 16. If an institution has educational programs and off-campus instructional sites that are inactive but not closed, the following applies:
 - If an institution does not enroll students in an educational program for five years, then after five years of no students enrolled and no major course offered for the educational program (if that educational program is a significant departure from other educational programs currently offered by the institution), the institution must submit a prospectus to reinstate the educational program prior to admitting students into and offering major courses for the educational program.
 - If an institution does not offer courses or programs at an approved off-campus instructional site for five years, then, after five years of no students enrolled and no courses offered at the off-campus instructional site, the institution must submit a prospectus for approval of the off-campus instructional site to reinstate any educational program at the off-campus instructional site whereby a student can obtain 50 percent or more credits toward any educational program offered by the institution.

The Commission will use information collected on the institution's completed "Institutional Summary Form Prepared for Commission Review," submitted as part of the fifth and decennial year reviews, as the mechanism for reporting the above educational programs and instructional sites that are deemed by the institution to be inactive but not closed.

Fees and Expenses

1. Denial of approval of substantive change is not appealable. An institution that fails to gain approval of the substantive change may resubmit a revised prospectus or application following the guidelines and time frames described in Procedures One and Two.

The following fees will be assessed to institutions for the review of an application or prospectus:

- \$500 For an institution seeking review of a substantive change prospectus or application for level change
- \$250 Per institution for a collaborative effort between two member institutions seeking review of a single prospectus
- \$175 Per institution for a collaborative effort among three or more member institutions seeking review of a single prospectus
- \$500 Per institution for review of a Category Three collaborative academic arrangement. The SACSCOC accredited institution(s) are responsible for ensuring payment.

2. Fees related to Substantive Change Committee visits

In addition to the fee assessed for reviewing the substantive change prospectus, the following total cost will be assessed to an institution hosting a Substantive Change Committee visit:

The actual cost of the committee
(Includes travel, lodging, food, and related expenses), ***and***

\$2,000 administrative fee

Document history:

Revised for the Principles of Accreditation: February 2004

Adopted: Commission on Colleges, June 2008

Revised: Board of Trustees, Commission on Colleges, June 2009, June 2011, December 2011

Revised: Executive Council, March 2012 and Board of Trustees, June 2012

Revised: Board of Trustees, December 2012, December 2013

Updated: June 2014

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PROCEDURE ONE

The Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Approval Prior to Implementation

Changes Requiring Approval

Substantive changes requiring submission of an application or a prospectus, and approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees prior to implementation by the institution are as follows:

1. **Initiating coursework, certificates, or programs of study at a different level than those previously approved by SACSCOC.** Institutions may not offer individual credit courses or programs beyond the level of current accreditation. Examples include: an associate degree-granting college initiating bachelor's degrees or a four-year institution initiating degrees at the master's level; a graduate institution initiating degrees at the undergraduate level, a baccalaureate degree-granting institution initiating occupational and technical degrees at the associate degree level. An institution requesting a level change should complete an ["Application for Members Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level."](#)

Note: Repackaging of an existing approved curriculum to create a new degree level, such as an institution that offers a full 120-hour baccalaureate program creating an associate degree from its lower-division offerings, usually requires only advance notification, not approval.

SACSCOC classifies institutions according to the highest degree level offered by an institution. Those classifications are as follows:

Level I	Offers the associate degree as the highest degree
Level II	Offers the baccalaureate degree as the highest degree
Level III	Offers the master's degree as the highest degree
Level IV	Offers the master's and specialist degree as the highest degrees
Level V	Offers three or fewer doctorate degrees as highest degrees
Level VI	Offers four or more doctorate degrees

An institution adding a fourth doctorate degree, causing it to be reclassified from Level V to Level VI, is required to request the level change in writing in order for SACSCOC to reclassify the institution within its data base.

Applications for a change from Level III to Level IV and Level V to Level VI will be reviewed and, if possible, approved by staff.

2. **Initiating certificate programs for workforce development.** These are typically offered at the request of an employer, either on campus or at the workplace. Offering previously approved certificate programs at an unapproved off-campus site requires approval of the site prior to implementation. Similarly, offering a certificate program that is a significant departure from existing approved certificate programs, either on or off campus, requires approval of the program prior to implementation. SACSCOC will waive the six-month notification requirement and accept a modified prospectus consisting of the name of the certificate, date of implementation, the complete physical address of the off-campus site (if applicable), a faculty roster, a discipline-specific description of library/learning resources, a description of physical facilities, and descriptions of courses to be offered at the site.
3. **Initiating other certificate programs.** Certificate programs consisting of courses drawn from the existing approved curriculum for a degree or diploma program do not require separate approval; they are considered to be included in the institution's current accreditation. However, to offer such a certificate at a new site requires approval of the site. A certificate that is a significant departure from previously approved programs must be approved in advance—the same as any other new educational program.

4. **Initiating an off-campus (additional) site (site-based/classroom group instruction) at which students can earn at least 50% of the credits toward an educational program.** Locations at which instruction is offered by distance delivery, but students must be present on-site to access such instruction, are considered off-campus instructional sites and must be approved in advance.

Approval of an off-campus site is effective for a maximum of five years and will be reviewed again in the context of the fifth-year or decennial review.

For an institution replicating an approved educational program that is already offered at three or more approved sites, a modified prospectus consisting of a faculty roster, descriptions of the courses to be offered at the site, a description of discipline-specific library resources, a description of student support services, and a description of physical resources will suffice in lieu of responding to the requirements of a full prospectus.

5. **Initiating degree completion programs.** Degree completion programs usually include a compressed format with classes offered evenings or weekends to accommodate working adults, a requirement to transfer in some amount of previous college credit, and may include offering credit for career or life experience. The prospectus should include a discussion of how the degree completion program differs from the same program offered in traditional form, and how the institution will ensure that student learning outcomes are the same for both offerings. An example of such a change is adult or accelerated programs in management or organizational leadership.
6. **Initiating a branch campus.** A branch campus is 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 (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. The prospectus for a proposed branch campus must include a business plan for the branch campus that describes:
 - The educational program(s) to be offered at the branch campus;
 - The projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow at the branch campus; and
 - The operation, management, and physical resources at the branch campus.
7. **Initiating distance learning or correspondence courses and programs by which students can earn at least 50% of a program's credits through delivery in a format other than face-to-face.** Institutions must demonstrate that a student who registers for a distance or correspondence course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. Means of verification might include a secure login and pass code, proctored examinations, or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification. Processes used to verify student identity must also protect student privacy. Please see also the SACSCOC policy "[Distance and Correspondence Education](#)."
8. **Expanding at the institution's current degree level** (significant departure from current programs). What constitutes a "significant departure" from existing programs depends on what related programs are currently in place at a given institution. Refer to the Glossary of Terms for more specificity. Examples include the following: developing a new general education program, adding a master's degree in nursing when the institution is accredited at Level III but currently offers only a master's degree in education; an institution accredited at Level II (bachelor's degrees), offering only a bachelor's degree with a major in religion, adding three new bachelor's degrees with majors in biology, business administration, and computer science.
9. **Initiating a significant change in the established mission of the institution.** Significant changes in mission are those that lead to a fundamental shift in the nature of the institution. Examples include the following: the transformation of a technical college into a comprehensive community college, the initiation by a seminary of significant liberal arts offerings, the addition by a medical college of general education offerings, the initiation of an engineering school at a liberal arts institution. Editorial changes in the language of a mission statement are not substantive and need not be reported. See Commission staff regarding the prospectus. The change in mission may dictate a mix of required documentation.

10. **Changing from clock hours to credit hours.** The prospectus must include a clear explanation of the formula used to calculate equivalency of credit awarded. Please see also the SACSCOC policy "[Credit Hours](#)."
11. **Changing significantly the length of a program, substantially increasing or decreasing the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program.** Significant changes in program length are those with noticeable impact on the program's completion time. Examples include the following: expanding a certificate program from 250 contact hours to 450 contact hours; increasing a baccalaureate degree from 124 hours to 150 hours.
12. **Relocating a main or branch campus.** The prospectus should demonstrate that the new facilities maintain the institution's compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.11.
13. **Initiating a collaborative academic program with another institution not accredited by SACSCOC.** The prospectus should demonstrate compliance with the SACSCOC policy "[Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards](#)." Examples include joint degree or dual degree programs.
14. **Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs.** This applies if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the accredited institution. The prospectus must include a copy of the signed agreement.

The Procedure for Approval

Time of Notification

An institution undergoing substantive change requiring prior approval must provide written notification of the change to the President of SACSCOC in accord with the designated times outlined in the table on pages 6-9 of this document. In some cases, prior notification is not required.

If an institution is unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, it should contact SACSCOC staff for consultation.

Submission of a Prospectus or an Application

Prospectus: Prospectuses may be submitted in print form or on flash drive, CD or DVD (submit one copy). Once the prospectus has been submitted, the institution may advertise and recruit students to a new program or site as long as all materials clearly state that the program or site is pending approval by SACSCOC.

Application for Member Institutions Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level: The application for change of degree level must be submitted by **April 8** for consideration at the June meeting of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, or by **September 15** for consideration at the December meeting of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees to allow ample time for review and approval. Four copies of the completed application should be submitted to the President of SACSCOC as a print document or on flash drive, CD or DVD.

Staff Options

Upon receipt of a substantive change **prospectus**, a SACSCOC staff member will review the prospectus and any supporting material submitted by the institution and will recommend to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees one of the actions listed below:

1. approve the substantive change or
2. refer the substantive change to the SACSCOC Committee on Compliance and Reports for review and a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

Upon receipt of an **application** for initiating coursework or programs at a level different from that for which it is approved, the application will be forwarded automatically to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for review and approval at its next scheduled meeting: June or December.

Options of the Committees on Compliance and Reports Following Review of the Prospectus or of the Application

Prospectus: The Committee will review the prospectus and any additional material submitted, and will recommend one of the following actions:

1. accept the prospectus and recommend approval of the program, with or without a site visit. A site visit is required within six months after the initiation of the following approved substantive changes:
 - (a) consolidation/merger; a change of ownership resulting in a change of control; change of governance, ownership, legal status
 - (b) a branch campus
 - (c) an off-campus site at which a student can earn at least 50% of the credit toward an educational program, if any of the following applies: the institution
 - has a total of three or fewer additional locations at which 50% or more of a programs credits are offered, or
 - has not demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, that it has a proven record of effective educational oversight of additional locations, or
 - has been placed on sanction by SACSCOC or is subject to some limitation on its accreditation
2. defer action and seek additional information
3. recommend denial of approval of the substantive change and continue the institution's accreditation. The reason for denial of approval may have been caused by an institution's current non-compliance with a standard or requirement. Consequently, denial may be accompanied by monitoring or imposition of a sanction.

Application for Member Institutions Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level:

An application for offering programs at a level different from that for which the institution is approved is automatically referred to the Committees on Compliance and Reports, except for a change in degree levels from III to IV and from V to VI which are reviewed by staff. The Committee will review the application and any additional material submitted, and will recommend one of the following actions:

1. accept the application and approve the program, with a site visit within six months after initiation of the substantive change
2. defer action and seek additional information
3. deny approval of the substantive change and continue the institution's accreditation. The reason for denial of approval may have been caused by an institution's current non-compliance with a standard or requirement. Consequently, denial may be accompanied by monitoring or imposition of a sanction.

Preparation for a Substantive Change Committee Visit

When a Substantive Change Committee is authorized, it is charged with determining the institution's continued compliance with the Principles of Accreditation following the initiation of the change. The visit will occur within six months after initiation of the change. In preparation for this visit, the institution will complete the appropriate substantive change documentation template, which cites relevant Core Requirements, Comprehensive Standards and Federal Requirements, and the roster of faculty members who will be teaching in the program or at the site. Both the template and the Faculty Roster form are available on the SACSCOC Web site (www.sacscoc.org) under "Substantive Changes". The institution's

SACSCOC staff representative will inform the institution of the composition and schedule for the Committee.

**Options of the Committees on Compliance and Reports
Following Review by a Substantive Change Committee**

The report of the Substantive Change Committee, together with the response of the institution to the recommendations contained in that report (due within five months of the Committee visit), will be reviewed by the Committee on Compliance and Reports. The Committee on Compliance and Reports may recommend one of the following actions:

1. continue the institution in accreditation, with or without a monitoring report
2. continue the institution in accreditation, impose a sanction, and request a monitoring report, with/without a special committee visit (mandatory visit if placed on Probation)
3. discontinue accreditation

PROCEDURE TWO

The Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Only Notification Prior to Implementation

Changes Requiring Notification Only

Substantive changes requiring an institution to notify the President of SACSCOC prior to implementation by the institution are as follows:

1. For site-based/classroom group instruction (where the instructor is present)
 - a. **Initiating an off-campus site at which a student may earn at least 25% but less than 50% of credits toward a program.** The letter of notification must include the starting date and complete physical address of the new site.
 - b. **Moving an approved off-campus instructional site within the same geographic area to serve essentially the same pool of students.** The letter of notification must include the complete physical address of the old site, the complete physical address of the new site, and the starting date of the new site.
2. For distance learning/technology-based group or individual instruction (where the instructor and student are geographically separated), **offering for the first time credit courses via distance learning/technology-based instruction by which students can obtain at least 25% but less than 50% of their credits toward an educational program.**
3. **Initiating program/courses delivered through contractual agreement or a consortium.** This provision *does not apply* to articulation agreements with other institutions, clinical agreements, or internship agreements. The notification must include (1) a letter with the starting date of the agreement and the names of the institutions and programs involved and (2) a copy of the signed agreement.
4. **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 accredited institution.** A copy of the signed agreement must be provided.
5. **Repackaging of an existing approved curriculum** to create a new degree level, such as an institution that offers a full 120-hour baccalaureate program creating an associate degree from its lower-division offerings, usually requires only advance notification, not approval

Review Procedure

Time of Notification

An institution undergoing substantive change must provide written notification of the change to the President of SACSCOC prior to implementation. The letter must include the date of implementation of the proposed change, and for an off-campus site, the complete physical address of the location. If an institution is unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, it should contact SACSCOC staff for consultation.

Staff Options

Upon receipt and review of the substantive change notification, SACSCOC staff will recommend one of the following options to the President of SACSCOC:

1. acknowledge receipt of the notification and indicate that the change will be included in the scope of the institution's accreditation

2. acknowledge receipt of the notification and request additional information.

Upon receipt and review of additional information, if requested, SACSCOC staff may recommend one of the following options to the SACSCOC President:

1. acknowledge receipt of the additional information and include the change in the scope of the institution's accreditation,
2. refer the substantive change to the Board of Trustees of SACSCOC for review,
3. authorize a substantive change visit,
4. take other action as may be appropriate.

PROCEDURE THREE

Closing a Program, Instructional Site, Branch Campus or an Institution: Teach-Out Plans and Teach-Out Agreements

In accordance with Federal regulations, an institution is required to submit a teach-out plan to SACSCOC for approval if any of the following occurs:

1. The USDOE notifies the Commission that it has initiated an emergency action against an institution or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any Title IV, HEA program.
2. The Commission terminates accreditation or candidacy.
3. The institution notifies the Commission that it intends to cease operations entirely or close a location that provides at least 50% of at least one program.
4. A State Licensing or authorizing agency notifies the Commission that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked.

If an institution decides to close an educational program, approved instructional site, branch campus, or the entire institution, it must choose one of the following options:

1. The institution teaches out currently enrolled students; no longer admits students to programs; and terminates the program, the operations of an approved instructional site or a branch campus, or the operations of an institution after students have graduated. **(Teach-out plan)**
2. The institution enters into a contract for another institution or organization to teach out the educational programs or program. **(Teach-out agreement)**

Teach-out plans and teach-out agreements must be approved by SACSCOC prior to implementation. See *also* the SACSCOC Good Practices document "[Closing a Program, Site, Branch or Institution](#)"

Teach-out Plans

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.

To be approved, a teach-out plan must include the following information:

1. Date of closure (date when new students will no longer be admitted)
2. An explanation of how affected parties (students, faculty, staff) will be informed of the impending closure
3. An explanation of how all affected students will be helped to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption
4. An indication as to whether the teach-out plan will incur additional charges/expenses to the students and, if so, how the students will be notified
5. Signed copies of teach-out agreements with other institutions, if any
6. How faculty and staff will be redeployed or helped to find new employment

7. If closing an institution, arrangement for the storing of student records, disposition of final financial resources and other assets

Following review and approval of a teach-out plan that includes a program that is accredited by another accrediting agency, the Commission will notify that accreditor of its approval.

Teach-out Agreements

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 fifty percent or more of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study. Such a teach-out agreement requires SACSCOC approval in advance of implementation.

For approval by SACSCOC, the agreement must be between institutions that are accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency, be consistent with applicable standards in the Principles of Accreditation and with SACSCOC policies, and provide for the equitable treatment of students by ensuring that:

1. the teach-out institution has the necessary experience, resources, and support services to provide an educational program that is of acceptable quality and reasonably similar in content, structure, and scheduling to that provided by the closed institution; and
2. the teach-out institution demonstrates that it can provide students access to the program(s) and services without requiring them to move or travel substantial distances.

Please see the SACSCOC Good Practices document "[Closing a Program, Site, Branch or Institution](#)" for additional discussion of issues regarding closing of programs, sites, branch campuses or institutions.

Closing an institution without an agreement

If an institution accredited by SACSCOC closes and is no longer accredited, SACSCOC will seek assistance from the United States Department of Education and appropriate state agencies to help its students find reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional expense.

Approval Process

Time of Notification

As soon as the decision to close is made, the institution should provide to SACSCOC at the same time the following two pieces of information: (1) notification of the intended closing of a program, site, branch campus, or institution and (2) a teach-out plan for approval (including any teach-out agreements with other institutions).

Staff Options

Upon receipt and review of the notification of impending closure, SACSCOC staff will recommend that the President of SACSCOC acknowledge receipt of the notification and request the teach-out plan if was not included with the notification. Upon receipt and review of the teach-out plan, SACSCOC staff may recommend one of the following options to the SACSCOC President:

1. request additional information for the teach-out plan
2. approve the teach-out plan

Appendix A: Current Standards and Policy Statements Addressing Unreported Substantive Change

1. [Principles of Accreditation](#), Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1

The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes.

2. [“Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports”](#) – Policy Statement

If an institution fails to report a substantive change that requires prior approval or prior notification, the committee will take the following actions:

- a) If discovered during the off-site review. The Off-Site Review Committee will mark CS 3.12.1 out of compliance. The institution will be able to address the omission in its Focused Report and before the on-site review.
- b) If discovered during the on-site review. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee will mark CS 3.12.1 out of compliance and write a recommendation. The institution will address the recommendation in its response to the Commission.

3. Policy Statement on Unreported Substantive Change

Unreported substantive changes requiring prior notification or prior approval come to the attention of the Commission through two means: (1) information discovered by the institution or by the Commission between periods of formal review by the Commission and (2) information discovered during an off-site or an on-site review by the Commission. The procedure for handling such unreported substantive changes is as follows:

- a) Upon discovery, the institution formally notifies the SACSCOC President of the unreported substantive change. The letter of notification must include the date of the original implementation of the change. A completed prospectus or application should accompany the letter for cases outlined in **Procedure One** of this document.
- b) Commission staff will review the substantive change prospectus, if required; and any additional information that may have been requested. Following analysis, Commission staff will recommend to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees one of the following actions:
 1. approve the program, with or without a site visit;
 2. refer the prospectus to the Committee on Compliance and Reports for review at its next meeting (June or December); or
 3. acknowledge receipt of the notification and indicate that the change will be included in the scope of the institution’s accreditation (an option only if prior notification is required).
- c) The issue of failure to comply with Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 of the *Principles of Accreditation* (Substantive change) will be forwarded automatically to the Commission’s Board of Trustees for action at its next meeting, if the change required prior approval. If the change required prior notification only, the issue of failure to report will be addressed in correspondence from the SACSCOC President.
- d) If the unreported substantive change requiring prior notification or prior approval is discovered during the institution’s off-site or on-site review for reaffirmation, SACSCOC will follow its policy as described on page 1 of [“Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports”](#). If it is discovered during review by another type of SACSCOC committee, the review committee will

write a recommendation. The recommendation will ask the institution to report the change in writing to SACSCOC and to provide in its response to the Committee Report a statement describing internal procedures established that would ensure future substantive change reporting and evidence that the procedures have been implemented. The institution's response will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees of SACSCOC for action on failure to report a substantive change.

Failure to Comply with Reporting Requirements

If an institution fails to follow SACSCOC substantive change policy and procedures, it may lose its Title IV funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse it for money received by the institution for programs related to the unreported substantive change. In addition, the institution's case may be referred to SACSCOC Board of Trustees for the imposition of a sanction or for removal from membership.

Appendix B: The Content of the Substantive Change Prospectus

[Not for use with the “Mergers, Acquisitions ” or the
“Direct Assessment Competency-Based ” Policies]

One copy of a prospectus should be submitted to the SACSCOC President on paper, flash drive, CD or DVD and include all applicable information below regarding the change. **Documents will not be accepted via e-mail.** The document should include a concisely worded narrative with the information specified in this Appendix. A prospectus normally does not exceed **25 pages** plus appendices. Please note that SACSCOC reserves the right to make amendments to the requirements outlined below for certain types of changes.

In lieu of a prospectus, SACSCOC will accept documentation submitted for approval to a system office or to a state coordinating or governing board, provided such documentation includes all the information required in a prospectus and includes an index correlating the submitted materials with the corresponding information required in a prospectus. Faculty qualifications, however, must be documented using the [Faculty Roster form](#). *Curriculum vitae* in lieu of a faculty roster will not be accepted.

Reminder: An institution initiating a level change must complete an [Application for Member Institutions Seeking Accreditation at a Higher or Lower Degree Level](#) and submit it in quadruplicate in lieu of completing a prospectus.

The following guidelines are generic; **each prospectus should be tailored to focus on the specific change being proposed.**

Cover Pages for a Substantive Change Prospectus

- Include name, phone number, and e-mail address of person to be contacted with questions regarding the prospectus
- List degrees that the institution is authorized to grant. As a subset of each degree, list majors available. (*Photocopy from catalog is acceptable*)
- List certificate, diploma and degree programs which are related to the proposed program(s)
- List institutional strengths that facilitate the offering of the proposed program(s)
- List of existing approved off-campus sites and their addresses

1. ABSTRACT (limit to one page or less)

Describe the proposed change; list the initial date of implementation; projected number of students, if applicable; description of primary target audience; projected life of the program (single cohort or ongoing); instructional delivery methods; and, if the change involves the initiation of an off-campus site, its complete physical address,

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Provide a clear statement of the nature and purpose of the change in the context of the institution’s mission and goals; evidence of the legal authority for the change (if authorization is required by the governing board or the state); and whether the proposed degree program or similar program is offered on the main campus or at other **approved** off-campus sites.

3. ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND PROGRAM PLANNING/APPROVAL

Briefly discuss the rationale for the change, including an assessment of need; evidence of inclusion of the change in the institution’s ongoing planning and evaluation processes; and documentation that faculty and other groups were involved in the review and approval of the new site or program.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE CHANGE

Provide a description of the proposed change, including the specific outcomes and learning objectives of the program and course descriptions for all courses in the proposed program. In the case of a change involving the initiation of a branch campus or an off-campus site, indicate the educational program(s) to be offered.

Describe any differences in admission, curriculum, or graduation requirements for students enrolled at new site(s), or any special arrangements for grading, transcripts, or transfer policies. Demonstrate compliance with FR 4.9 (Definition of Credit Hours) of the *Principles*. Describe administrative oversight to ensure the quality of the program or services to be offered. A prospectus for approval of distance learning should describe the infrastructure supporting the delivery method (training of faculty, development of courses for distance delivery, technical support for student and faculty).

5. FACULTY

Provide a complete roster (using the [Faculty Roster form](#)) of those faculty employed to teach in the program(s) referred to in the prospectus, including a description of those faculty members' academic qualifications and other experiences relevant to the courses to be taught in the program in question, course load in the new program, and course work taught in other programs currently offered. Please consult the "[Faculty Roster Instructions](#)" for guidance in completing the Roster for current faculty who will be supporting the change. Provide a narrative with supporting evidence that the number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the program; and describe the impact of the new initiative on faculty workload.

For distance learning programs, describe processes in place to ensure that students have structured access to faculty. For graduate programs, document scholarship and research capability of faculty; for doctoral programs, document faculty experience in directing student research.

6. LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Describe library and information resources—general as well as specific to the program—and staffing and services that are in place to support the initiative. If reliant upon other libraries, describe those collections and their relevance to the proposed program(s) and include a copy of formal agreements in the appendix. Relative to electronic resources, describe how students and faculty will access information, training for faculty and students in the use of online resources, and staffing and services available to students and faculty. If you are citing electronic databases accessed through consortial or statewide groups, please describe the discipline-specific suites of resources and not just the name of the consortium (such as Viva, TexShare, Galileo, Louis, etc.). For doctoral programs, document **discipline-specific refereed journals and primary source materials**.

7. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Provide a description of student support programs, services, and activities—general as well as specific to the change—in place to support this initiative.

8. PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Provide a description of physical facilities and equipment to support this initiative. Assess the impact that the proposed change will have on existing programs and services.

9. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The institution must disclose if it is currently on reimbursement for Title IV funding.

Provide a business plan that includes all of the following:

- a. a description of financial resources to support the change, **including a budget** for the first year of the proposed change (a three-year budget is requested for a new branch campus). The budget must be specific to the proposed change. Do not send a copy of the institutional budget.
- b. projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow
- c. the amount of resources going to institutions or organizations for contractual or support services
- d. the operational, management, and physical resources available for the change.

Provide contingency plans in case required resources do not materialize.

For institutions currently on sanction with SACSCOC for financial reasons, provide a copy of the most recent audit.

10. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Describe how the institution assesses overall institutional effectiveness as well as the means used to monitor and ensure the quality of the degree program(s), off-campus site(s), or other changes. Summarize procedures for systematic evaluation of instructional results, including the process for monitoring and evaluating programs at the new site, as well as using the results of evaluation to improve institutional programs, services, and operations. For compressed time frames describe the methodology for determining that levels of knowledge and competencies comparable to those required in traditional formats have been achieved.

11. APPENDICES

Appendices may include items such as copies of library and other cooperative or contractual agreements. All appendices should be referenced in the text.

*June 2009
Edited: February 2013
Edited: January 2015
Edited: November 2015*

Appendix C:
**[Application for Member Institutions Seeking Accreditation
at a Higher or Lower Degree Level](#)**

(Follow the above link to access the Application template.)

ITEM 5D2

Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports

Includes SACSCOC action(s) taken if unreported substantive changes discovered during Off-Site Review and/or On-Site Visit



*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
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REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION AND SUBSEQUENT REPORTS

- Policy Statement -

All institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) are required to undergo a review for reaffirmation of accreditation every ten years. After being granted initial accreditation by the Commission, new member institutions will be reviewed for reaffirmation of accreditation after five years, then every ten years thereafter. The Commission's review of institutions between decennial reaffirmation reviews in accordance with policies governing fifth-year interim reviews, special committee visits, and substantive change visits normally will not alter the specified date for the decennial reaffirmation review. (See policy statements "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions," "Special Committee Procedures and Team Report," and "The Fifth-Year Interim Report.")

The Commission reaffirms the accreditation of an institution as a totality. This accreditation extends beyond the parent campus to include all centers, branches, campuses, or other sites at which postsecondary degree or non-degree work is offered as well as all work offered through distance learning and correspondence education. The institution must include the review of all its operations in its Compliance Certification and the Commission will review them during the institution's reaffirmation.

The reaffirmation review will be conducted in accordance with procedures outlined in pertinent Commission documents including handbooks and other policies. (See, for example, the *Principles of Accreditation* and the *Handbook for Institutions Seeking Reaffirmation of Accreditation*.) The process will include compiling and submitting a Compliance Certification documenting compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation* and submitting a Quality Enhancement Plan for review by evaluation committees.

During the reaffirmation of accreditation process and in all other relationships with the Commission and with their other constituencies, member institutions are expected to maintain integrity, to abide by the *Principles of Accreditation* and all Commission policies and procedures, to provide the Commission complete and accurate information about institutional operations, to be candid and thorough in their own self-evaluations, to accept an honest and forthright peer assessment of institutional strengths and weaknesses, and to cooperate fully with the Commission during all aspects of the process of evaluation in an atmosphere of openness that enables peer evaluators to perform their duties with maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

Review of Distance Learning and Correspondence Education during the Reaffirmation Process

Institutions will include the review of their distance learning and correspondence education programs in the Compliance Certification that will be reviewed by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee will validate the content of the Compliance Certification and the pertinent findings of the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee. In its review, the On-Site Committee will determine whether the institution has adequate support services and personnel to operate distance learning and correspondence education programs effectively. (See also the Commission's policies, "Substantive

Change for Accredited Institutions” and “Distance Learning and Correspondence Education,” and Federal Requirement 4.8 of the *Principles of Accreditation*.)

Review of Off-Campus Instructional Sites during the Reaffirmation Process

Federal regulations require visits to institutional off-campus instructional sites and other campuses as a part of the institution’s decennial review. The Commission staff member will select a representative sample of sites at which 50 percent or more of a program is offered (taking into account such factors as geographic dispersion and number of students and programs at each site) to be visited. The evaluation committee, normally two per site, will usually be members of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee. The review of these visits will be completed either before or during the visit of the On-Site Committee to the main campus.

The purpose of the visit to the off-campus instructional site(s) is to determine whether or not the institution has adequate personnel, facilities, and resources to operate the off-campus site(s). The evaluation committee, therefore, will interview relevant faculty and staff at the site(s) with particular attention to student access to full-time faculty, student achievement, review facilities, and review appropriateness of other support activities such as library/learning resources and student services *vis-à-vis* the programs offered at the site(s), and any other pertinent compliance issues emerging from the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee report. The visiting committee will ensure that the institution has demonstrated sufficiently the comparability of student learning outcomes with those for the same or similar programs on the main campus. The institution would have included and addressed its instructional sites and campuses in its Compliance Certification. The Compliance Certification would have been reviewed by the Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee before these site visits.

If the visiting committee discovers noncompliance with any pertinent standard(s) in the *Principles of Accreditation*, an appropriate narrative and Recommendation will be drafted and submitted to the full On-Site Reaffirmation Committee for consideration and possible inclusion in the Reaffirmation Committee Report. In addition, an introductory paragraph describing the review of the off-campus site(s) and any differences from the main campus noted by the visiting committee will be included in the Reaffirmation Committee Report.

Institutional Reports Submitted after Reaffirmation

Each member institution is expected to submit a formal response to the report of the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee that demonstrates corrective action to the recommendations made by the Committee. If the institution’s response reveals continued noncompliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*, the Commission will request submission of monitoring reports until compliance is demonstrated. The maximum period for submitting monitoring reports is two years. The institution is subject to sanctions for noncompliance during the monitoring period and potentially to loss of accreditation at any time for noncompliance, particularly if compliance is not demonstrated during the two-year monitoring period. (See policy statement “Sanctions, Denial of Reaffirmation, and Removal from Membership.”)

Each member institution also is expected to submit a Fifth-Year Interim Report five years before its next reaffirmation review reporting on continued compliance with select Commission standards and on the effects of the implementation of its Quality Enhancement Plan on student learning. (See Commission policies “Reports Submitted for Committee or Commission Review” and “The Fifth-Year Interim Review.”) The Commission will notify institutions regarding the schedule for completion of this report.

Delay or Change of Reaffirmation Dates

Member institutions may not depart from the regular decennial review schedule except under extraordinary circumstances and then only by formal request to and approval by the President of SACS Commission. Normally, change in institutional executive leadership will not constitute adequate reason for delaying or rescheduling the review. The President of SACS Commission and the Executive Council of SACSCOC Board of Trustees retain the authority to delay or reschedule an institution’s reaffirmation review for reasons deriving from particular circumstances either at the institution or within the

Commission, including but not necessarily limited to balancing the workload within the Commission and its staff or other unusual circumstances. If an institution is on Probation at the time of its scheduled review for reaffirmation of accreditation before the Commission, the President of SACSCOC may act to defer action on reaffirmation pending resolution of the institution's probationary status.

Separate Accreditation for Units of Member Institutions

All extended units related to the parent campus through corporate or administrative control must be evaluated during reviews for institutions seeking candidacy, initial membership, or reaffirmation of accreditation. If an extended unit is sufficiently autonomous, it or the parent institution may request separate accreditation, or if the Commission determines that an extended unit is autonomous to the extent that control over that unit by the parent or its board is significantly impaired, the Commission may direct the extended unit to seek separate accreditation. (See policy statement "Separate Accreditation for Units of a Member Institution.")

Review of Institutional Units in a System

If an institution is part of a system or corporate structure, a description of the system operation must be submitted as part of the Compliance Certification for the decennial review. The description should be designed to help members of the peer review committees understand the mission, governance, and operating procedures of the system and the individual institution's role within that system.

Exception to Core Requirement 2.7.4

Core Requirement 2.7.4 of the *Principles of Accreditation* mandates that a member institution provide "instruction for all course work required for at least one degree program at each level at which it awards degrees" or provide an alternative approach to meeting this requirement. The Commission must approve any alternative approach. Each institution in this category must request the exception and submit supporting documentation at the time the degree program starts and again as part of the Compliance Certification submitted at the time of each reaffirmation of accreditation review. (See policy statement "Core Requirement 2.7.4: Documenting an Alternative Approach.")

Unreported Substantive Changes Discovered or Reported during Reaffirmation

If an institution fails to report a substantive change that requires prior approval or prior notification and that unreported substantive change is discovered during the off-site or the on-site review, the committee will take the following actions:

If discovered during the off-site review. The Off-Site Reaffirmation Committee will mark CS 3.12.1 out of compliance. The institution will be able to address this in its Focused Report and before the on-site review.

If discovered during the on-site review. The On-Site Reaffirmation Committee will mark CS 3.12.1 out of compliance and write a recommendation. The institution will address the recommendation in its response to the Commission.

For a full explanation, see Commission policy statement "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions."

Document History

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ITEM 5D3

Closing a Program, Site, Branch or Institution: Good Practices



*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
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CLOSING A PROGRAM, SITE, BRANCH OR INSTITUTION

Good Practices

A decision to close an educational program, site, branch campus, or the entire institution requires thoughtful planning and careful consultation with all affected constituencies. Every effort should be devoted to informing each constituency as fully as possible about the conditions compelling consideration of a decision of such importance, and all available information should be shared. As much as possible, the determination to close a program, site, branch campus, or the institution should be made through a consultative process and only after alternatives have been considered, but responsibility for the final decision to close rests with the institution's governing board. Because the immediate interests of current students and faculty are most directly affected, their present and future prospects require especially sensitive and timely attention and involvement.

If an institution decides to close an educational program, site, branch campus, or the entire institution, it must consider the following options:

1. The institution teaches out currently enrolled students; no longer admits students to programs; and terminates the program, the operations of a site or a branch campus, or the operations of an institution after students have graduated. The institution must submit to the Commission a teach-out plan for approval.
2. If the institution enters into a contractual teach-out agreement for another institution to teach out the educational programs or program, the teach-out agreement requires Commission approval in advance.

See Commission policy "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges," Procedure Three, for additional information on teach-out plans and agreements.

Teach-Out Plans and Agreements

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 50 percent of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include a teach-out agreement between institutions. In such cases and in accord with Federal regulation 602.24 (c), the institution is required to submit the teach-out plan to the office of the Commission on Colleges for approval prior to its implementation.

The institution may include a teach-out agreement as part of its teach-out plan. 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 percent of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study. If an institution includes a teach-out agreement as part of its teach-out plan, the agreement should be submitted to the Commission office for approval prior to its implementation.

Closing a Program

When the decision is made to close an educational program, the institution must make a good faith effort to assist affected students, faculty, administrative and support staff so that they experience a minimal amount of disruption in the pursuit of their course of study or professional careers. In all cases, individuals should be notified of the decision to close a program as soon as possible so that they can make appropriate plans. Students who have not completed their programs should be advised by faculty or professional counselors regarding suitable options including transfer to comparable programs. Arrangements should be made to reassign faculty and staff or assist them in locating other employment.

The Commission on Colleges will work with the U.S. Department of Education and the appropriate State agency, to the extent feasible, to ensure that students are given reasonable opportunities to complete their education without additional charge.

Closing a Site or a Branch Campus

An off-campus instructional site is a location geographically apart from the main campus at which 50 percent or more of the credit for at least one program is offered. Such sites must be approved in advance by the Commission on Colleges.

As stated in the Commission's policy "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges," a branch campus is 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 (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.

After the decision has been made to close a branch campus, or an additional site that is less permanent than that of the branch campus, all affected constituencies should be notified promptly including students, faculty, administrative and support staff. The chief executive officer should notify the Commission in writing as soon as possible. Every effort should be made to assist current students to continue their education without disruption. Faculty and staff either should be reassigned or assisted in locating other employment.

Closing an Institution

A decision to close an institution requires specific plans that provide for the students, the faculty, and the administrative and support staff, and the disposition of the institution's assets. Many considerations bear upon closing an educational institution and each situation will be unique. Nevertheless, general guidelines will be helpful to each institution considering closing.

A. The Students

Students who have not completed their degrees should be provided for according to their needs. Arrangements for transfer to other institutions will require complete academic records and all other related information gathered in dossiers which can be transmitted promptly to receiving institutions. Arrangements for the teach-out of programs should be in line with the requirements of the Commission's Substantive Change policy.

Agreements made with other institutions to receive transferring students and to accept their records should be in writing and in accord with Commission policy. Where financial aid is concerned, particularly federal or state grants, arrangements should be made with the appropriate agencies to transfer the grants to the receiving institution. Where such arrangements cannot be completed, students should be informed. In cases where students have held institutional scholarships or grants, appropriate agreements should be negotiated if there are available funds which can be legally used to support students while completing degrees at other institutions.

B. Academic Records and Financial Aid Transcripts

Arrangements should be made with the state board for higher education or another appropriate agency for filing of student records. If there is no state agency which can receive records, arrangements should be made with a state university, with the state archives, or with a private organization to preserve the records. Notification should be sent to every current and past student indicating where the records are being stored and what the accessibility to those records will be. Where possible, a copy of a student's record should also be forwarded to the individual student. The institution must notify the Commission regarding the final filing of student records.

C. Provision for Faculty and Staff

In every possible case, the institution should arrange for continuation of those faculty and staff who will be necessary for the completion of the institution's work pending the closing date. In those cases where faculty and staff will no longer be needed, the institution should make every effort to assist them in finding other employment. It should be understood that the institution can make no guarantees, but genuinely good faith efforts to assist in relocation and reassignment are essential.

D. Final Determinations

Determinations must be made to allocate whatever financial resources and assets remain after the institution provides for the basic needs of current students, faculty, and staff. When the financial resources of the institution are inadequate to honor commitments, the board should investigate prior to its decision to close what alternatives and protection are available under applicable bankruptcy laws. If bankruptcy can be avoided but funds are insufficient to maintain normal operations through the end of the closing process, the institution should not overlook the possibility of soliciting one-time gifts and donations to assist in fulfilling its final obligations.

Every effort should be made to develop defensible policies for dividing the resources equitably among those with claims against the institution. One of the most effective ways of achieving this goal is to involve potential claimants in the process of developing the policies. Time and effort devoted to carrying the process to a judicious conclusion may considerably reduce the likelihood of lawsuits or other forms of confrontation.

It is impossible to anticipate the many claims that might be made against the remaining resources of an institution, but institutions should give attention to the following three concerns:

1. Students have the right to expect basic minimal services during the final semester not only in the academic division, but also in the business office, financial aid office, registrar's office, counseling, and other essential support services. Staff should be retained long enough to provide these services.
2. Staff should be willing to accept the possibility of early termination of their contracts, provided that reasonable notice is given to all employees and that the reasons for retaining some personnel longer than others are based on satisfying the minimal needs of students and the legal requirements for closing.
3. Every effort should be made to honor long-term financial obligations (loans, debentures, etc.) even though the parties holding such claims may choose not to press them.

E. The Closing Date

The final action of the institution's governing board should be a formal vote to terminate the institution on a specified date. That date will depend on a number of factors including the decision to file or not to file for bankruptcy. Another key factor is whether or not all obligations to students will have been satisfactorily discharged.

F. Disposition of Assets

In the case of a not-for-profit institution, the legal requirements of a state must be carefully examined with respect to the disposition of institutional assets. Arrangements for the sale of the physical plant, equipment, the library, special collections, art, or other essential holdings, and for the disposition of any

endowments or special funds must be explored. In the case of wills, endowments, or special grants, the institution should discuss with the donors, grantors, executors of estates, and other providers of special funds, arrangements to accommodate their wishes. State laws regarding the disposition of funds from a non-profit institution must be meticulously followed.

All pertinent federal and state agencies need to be apprised of the institution's situation and any obligations relating to state or federal funds cleared with the proper authorities.

G. Other Considerations

An institution has the obligation to inform the Commission of its plans for closing and of its final closing date. The institution should establish a clear understanding with its creditors and all other agencies involved with its activities to assure that their claims and interests will be properly processed. Insofar as possible, the institution should assure that its final arrangements will not be subject to later legal proceedings which might jeopardize the records of its students or faculty.

Document History

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ITEM 5E

Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures



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AGREEMENTS INVOLVING JOINT AND DUAL ACADEMIC AWARDS: POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy Statement

This policy pertains to agreements between institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and accredited or non-accredited degree-granting institutions of higher education throughout the world for purposes of awarding academic completion awards, e.g., certificates, diplomas, or degrees.

For the purposes of review by SACSCOC, the following definitions apply:

- An agreement by two or more institutions to grant dual academic awards is one whereby students study at two or more institutions and each institution grants a separate academic award bearing only its name, seal, and signature.
- An agreement by two or more institutions to grant a joint academic award is one whereby students study at two or more institutions and the institutions grant a single academic award bearing the names, seals, and signatures of each of the participating institutions.

While SACSCOC member institutions may use alternative terms for agreements involving dual or joint academic awards (for example, “affiliations” or “partnerships” or “collaborations”) for purposes of reporting agreements involving dual or joint academic awards, they are responsible for using the above definitions and for following the appropriate procedures described below.

For the reporting of other arrangements or agreements not involving dual or joint academic awards, member institutions should consult the Substantive Change Policy and reporting requirements for other reviews by SACSCOC.

Responsibilities of SACSCOC Member Institutions

Provide Appropriate Information to SACSCOC: Member institutions are responsible for providing notification to SACSCOC of agreements involving dual or joint academic awards, providing signed copies of the agreements, and providing any other documentation or information required by SACSCOC policies and procedures for review. Specific required documentation is listed below.

Ensure Access to Partner Institutions’ Information: The member institution is responsible for ensuring that SACSCOC has timely access to the partner institutions’ materials, physical site(s) and personnel in conjunction with accreditation activities.

Ensure the Integrity of their Accreditation and their Awards: Because the SACSCOC accreditation that has been awarded to a member institution is not transferable to a partner institution—either in actuality or appearance—SACSCOC prohibits the use of its accreditation to authenticate courses, programs, or awards offered by organizations not so accredited with which it has formed partnerships. Likewise, member institutions

are responsible for ensuring the quality of courses, programs, or awards offered through relationships with other institutions, particularly those resulting in dual or joint academic awards.

Provide a Disclaimer Statement: Member institutions entering into agreements with institutions not accredited by SACSCOC for the awarding of either dual or joint academic awards and their non-SACSCOC partner institutions must use the following disclaimer statement in any materials describing the relationship. The member institution is responsible for reviewing, approving, and monitoring the non-SACSCOC partner institutions' statements of relationship to ensure conformity with the disclaimer:

[Name of SACSCOC member institution] is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award [state degree levels]. [Name of partner institution] is not accredited by SACS Commission on Colleges and the accreditation of [name of member institution] does not extend to or include [name of partner institution] or its students. Further, although [name of member institution] agrees to accept certain course work from [name of partner institution] to be applied toward an award from [name of member institution], that course work may not be accepted by other colleges or universities in transfer, even if it appears on a transcript from [name of member institution]. The decision to accept course work in transfer from any institution is made by the institution considering the acceptance of credits or course work.

Ensure Appropriate Percentages of Work Offered by the Member Institution: To receive an undergraduate academic award, students must earn 25 percent or more of the credits required for the award through the SACSCOC member institution's own direct instruction. To receive a graduate academic award, students must earn one-third or more of the credits through the SACSCOC member institution's own direct instruction.

Avoid Use of the SACSCOC Logo: Neither member nor partner institutions may use the SACSCOC logo in any of their materials or on websites. Use of the logo is reserved exclusively for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Ensure the Quality of Credits Recorded on Transcripts: When evaluating, accepting, and transcribing credits awarded through an agreement involving dual or joint academic awards, the member institution must ensure the following:

- Examine courses transferred in and transcribed from partner institutions to ensure that they meet the requirements of the member institution and the requirements of *The Principles of Accreditation*. (See a list of applicable requirements below.)
- Assess and monitor effectively courses and components completed through instruction by partner institutions. The assessment and monitoring should be accomplished by academically-qualified persons.
- Record on the academic transcript the name of the institution from which a course is taken. If a member institution desires to transcript as its own a course taken through an agreement with a partner institution, it must be able to demonstrate that the instruction was provided under the member's supervision and included approval of the academic qualifications of each instructor in advance and that regular evaluation of the effectiveness of each instructor occurs.
- Disclose fully the nature of the agreement on the transcript of the institutions awarding the degree.
- Reflect accurately in its catalog the courses being offered through the agreement if they are available to its own students as part of an educational program.
- Ensure that qualified and competent faculty members at each participating institution agree on the content and teaching methodologies of courses and education programs and on the qualifications of the faculty members who teach in the programs. Qualifications of teaching faculty must comply with the faculty competence requirements of the *Principles of Accreditation*.
- Ensure that the educational outcomes of a major or concentration offered as part of dual or joint award agreements are (1) comparable to the outcomes of the same major or concentration offered by the institutions or, if not offered by any of the participating institutions, (2) comparable to the outcomes of a peer institution external to the agreement that offers the same educational program's major or concentration.

- Ensure that, within the agreement, there is appropriate faculty accountability to the institutions accepting the credit, perhaps through dual faculty appointments or other approaches that include evaluation by the accepting institution.

Ensure Compliance with Appropriate SACSCOC Requirements: Requirements and standards in the *Principles of Accreditation* which affect the implementation of agreements involving dual and joint academic awards are listed below. They should be considered when developing the agreement, documentation of compliance, and, if relevant, a substantive change prospectus:

- Integrity (Section 1)
- Institutional mission (CR 2.4)
- Faculty (CR 2.8 and CS 3.7.1)
- Learning resources and services (CR 2.9)
- Institutional Effectiveness: educational programs, to include student learning outcomes (CS 3.3.1.1)
- Academic program approval (CS 3.4.1)
- Admission policies (CS 3.4.3)
- Acceptance of academic credit (CS 3.4.4)
- Practices for awarding credit (CS 3.4.6)
- Consortial relationships/contractual agreements (CS 3.4.7)
- Institutional credits for a degree (CS 3.5.2 and CS 3.6.3)
- Student records (CS 3.9.2)
- Physical facilities (CS 3.11.3)
- Substantive change (CS 3.12.1)
- Program curriculum (FR 4.2)
- Publication of policies (FR 4.3)
- Program length (FR 4.4)
- Student complaints (FR 4.5)
- Recruitment materials (FR 4.6)
- Distance and correspondence education (FR 4.8), if applicable
- Definition of credit hours (FR 4.9)
- Policy: Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards: Policy and Procedures
- Policy: Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions
- Policy: Distance and Correspondence Education (if applicable)

Reporting Responsibilities and Procedures When Developing Agreements for Dual Academic Awards

Prior Notification: Entering into an agreement with a member or non-member institution involving a dual academic award is a substantive change that requires an institution to submit a letter of notification six months prior to implementation of the agreement and a final signed copy of the agreement. Formal, written acceptance of that notification and agreement by SACSCOC is required before implementation of the provisions of the agreement. (See note at the end of this policy for additional requirements if the agreement involves a new program which is significantly different from currently offered programs or an off-campus site where students may earn 50 percent or more of the credit in a program.) Expectations are that the agreement will reflect assumption of responsibility on the part of the member institution for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript and accepted toward a dual academic award. The following should be submitted to SACSCOC:

- A notification letter that includes a statement of intent, the anticipated beginning date of the agreement, a description of the agreement, the complete address/location of the parties involved in the agreement, and information for contact persons at each participating institution regarding the agreement.
- A copy of the final signed agreement.

Reporting Responsibilities and Procedures When Developing Agreements for Joint Academic Awards

Participating in agreements involving the offering of joint academic awards (as defined above) falls into three categories. Reporting responsibilities differ depending on the accreditation status of the institutions which are partnering with the SACSCOC member institution.

Category One: A SACSCOC member institution and partner institutions that are all SACSCOC accredited

Prior Notification by Each Member Institution: Entering into a *joint* academic award agreement with partner institutions which are all SACSCOC accredited institutions is a substantive change that requires (1) submission of prior notification at least six months in advance of implementation of the agreement and (2) a final signed copy of the agreement. Formal, written acceptance of the agreement by SACSCOC is required before implementation of the provisions of the agreement. (See note at the end of this policy for additional requirements if the agreement involves a new program which is significantly different from currently offered programs or an off-campus site where students may earn 50 percent or more of the credit in a program.) Expectations are that the agreement will reflect assumption of responsibility on the part of the member institution for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript and accepted toward a *joint* academic award. The following should be submitted to SACSCOC:

- A notification letter that includes a statement of intent, the anticipated beginning date of the agreement, a description of the agreement, the complete address/location of the parties involved in the agreement, and information for contact persons at each participating institution regarding the agreement.
- A copy of the final signed agreement.

Category Two: A SACSCOC member institution and at least one partner institution that is accredited by a U.S. Department of Education-recognized accreditor other than SACSCOC

Prior Notification by SACSCOC Member Institution: Entering into a *joint* academic award agreement with at least one partner institution which is accredited by a USDOE-recognized accreditor other than SACSCOC is a substantive change that requires (1) submission of prior notification at least six months in advance of implementation of the agreement along with the required documentation listed below and (2) a final signed copy of the agreement. Formal, written approval of the agreement by SACSCOC is required before implementation of the provisions of the agreement. (See note at the end of this policy for additional requirements if the agreement involves a new program which is significantly different from currently offered programs or an off-campus site where students may earn 50 percent or more of the credit in a program.) Expectations are that the agreement will reflect assumption of responsibility on the part of the member institution for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript and accepted toward a *joint* academic award. The following should be submitted to SACSCOC:

- A letter of notification that includes a statement of intent, the anticipated implementation date for the agreement, a description of the proposed agreement, the address/location of each institution involved in the agreement, and information for the contact person at each participating institution
- A copy of the final signed agreement
- Documentation that the non-SACSCOC partner institution is not on a public sanction with its accreditor
- Documentation that the courses or programs of the non-SACSCOC Partner institution(s) are consistent with the educational purpose and goals of the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s)
- Documentation that the institution meets the provisions of Comprehensive Standard 3.4.7 (Consortial relationships/contractual agreements), including the analysis of credits accepted in transfer
- A plan to monitor and ensure that the quality of contributions made by the partner institution(s) meets SACSCOC expectations

- A plan and process produced by the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s) ensuring that the agreement and awarding of a joint award does not result in the appearance of extending SACSCOC accreditation to partner institutions through promotional materials, academic publications, student transcripts, credentials verifying program completion, and releases to the news media. (See the disclaimer statement above.)
- Prototypes of official academic documents (e.g. student transcript, degree, diploma, certificate) involved in the agreement.

Category Three: A SACSCOC member institution and at least one partner institution that is not accredited by a USDE-recognized accreditor

Prior Notification by SACSCOC Member Institution: Entering into a *joint* academic award agreement with at least one partner institution which is not accredited by a USDOE-recognized accreditor is a substantive change that requires (1) submission of prior notification at least six months in advance of implementation of the agreement along with the required documentation below and (2) a final signed copy of the agreement. Formal, written approval of the agreement by SACSCOC is required before implementation of the provisions of the agreement. (See note at the end of this policy for additional requirements if the agreement involves a new program which is significantly different from currently offered programs or an off-campus site where students may earn 50 percent or more of the credit in a program.) Expectations are that the agreement will reflect assumption of responsibility on the part of the SACSCOC member institution for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript and accepted toward a *joint* academic award. The following should be submitted to SACSCOC:

- A notification letter that includes a statement of intent, the anticipated beginning date for the agreement, a description of the proposed agreement, the address/location of each institution involved in the agreement, and information for the contact person(s) at each participating institution
- A copy of the final signed agreement
- A description of (1) any external governmental or accrediting agency approval for the institution(s) or program(s) involved in the agreement, excluding the SACSCOC institution(s), (2) the process of quality assurance used by the agency granting this approval, and (3) any required legal or licensing approvals
- Documentation that the courses or programs of the non-SACSCOC Partner institution(s) are consistent with the educational purpose and goals of the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s)
- Documentation that the institution meets the provisions of Comprehensive Standard 3.4.7 (Consortial relationships/contractual agreements), including the analysis of credits accepted in transfer
- Documentation that faculty involved in the collaboration are qualified to teach assigned components or courses and a description of the means by which the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s) will monitor these qualifications (Submit a completed SACSCOC Faculty Roster Form.)
- Documentation describing the physical and learning resources that will support the collaboration
- A plan and process to monitor and ensure that the quality of contributions made by the partner institution(s) meets applicable SACSCOC requirements A plan and process produced by the SACSCOC-accredited institution(s) ensuring that the agreement does not result in the appearance of extending SACSCOC accreditation to partner institutions through promotional materials, academic publications, student transcripts, credentials verifying program completion, and releases to the news media. (See the disclaimer statement above).
- Prototypes of official academic documents (e.g. student transcript, degree, diploma, certificate) involved in the agreement

When necessary to ensure compliance with SACSCOC requirements, SACSCOC may request additional information concerning any of these agreements involving joint and dual academic awards.

Note: *If the joint or dual academic award arrangement involves offering 50 percent or more of a program at a previously unapproved off-campus site by a member institution or involves offering a new program which is significantly different from currently offered approved programs, notification is due six months prior to the implementation date with a prospectus for approval due at least three months prior to implementation.*

Document history

Note: Previously called "Collaborative Academic Arrangements"

Approved: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, June 2010

Revised: Executive Council, December 2010

Revised and Approved as "Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Programs":

Approved: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, December 2012

Reformatted: July 2014

ITEM 5F

Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs [Program Learning Outcomes]



*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

DIRECT ASSESSMENT COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Policy Statement

Academic credit has provided the basis for measuring the amount of engaged learning time expected of a typical student enrolled not only in traditional classroom settings but also laboratories, studios, internships and other experiential learning, and distance and correspondence education. Students, institutions, employers, and others rely on the common currency of academic credit to support a wide range of activities, including the transfer of students from one institution to another.

In recent years, some institutions have recognized the potential of innovative learning models and have developed creative programs that allow students the flexibility to learn at the pace that makes sense for them, both in career-technical and degree programs. Students progress in these programs by demonstrating their achievement of specific skills or knowledge. These programs, commonly called competency-based programs, fit into traditional learning models that measure progress in credit or clock hours, but increasing numbers do not. Direct assessment competency-based educational programs use the direct assessment of student learning in lieu of measuring student learning in credit or clock hours.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to institutions and evaluation committees on the Commission's expectations regarding the establishment and review of direct assessment competency-based programs and its hybrids as defined below.

Definitions. For the purpose of the application of this policy and in accord with federal regulations, the Commission uses the following definitions:

Competency: A competency is a clearly defined and measurable statement of the knowledge, skill, and ability a student has acquired in a designated program.

Competency-Based Educational Programs. A competency-based educational program is outcome-based and assesses a student's attainment of competencies as the sole means of determining whether the student earns a degree or a credential. Such programs may be organized around traditional course-based units (credit or clock hours) that students must earn to complete their educational program, or may depart from course-based units (credit or clock hours) to rely solely on the attainment of defined competencies.

Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs (*also referred to in this policy as direct assessment programs*). Federal regulations define a direct assessment competency-based educational program as an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, uses direct assessment of student learning relying solely on the attainment of defined competencies, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program using the results of the assessment.

Hybrid Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs (*also referred to in this policy as hybrid programs*). A hybrid competency-based educational program combines course-based competencies (clock and credit hours awarded) with non-course based competencies (no clock or credit hours awarded).

Characteristics of a Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Program. A direct assessment program has several characteristics:

1. It does not subscribe to conventional notions of the clock hour, seat time, term length, or the credit hour; rather, it relies on the student's ability to demonstrate clearly defined and measurable competencies in a designated program.
2. It is designed and delivered within the framework of the program's defined knowledge, skills, and competencies as demonstrated by students, rather than in terms of prescribed courses.
3. A student may acquire the requisite competencies from multiple sources and at various times other than, or in addition to, the learning experiences provided by the institution. As such, the length of time it takes to demonstrate learning may be different for each student.
4. It often allows for alternative approaches to teaching and learning.
5. It may rely almost exclusively upon students using direct assessment testing models to demonstrate their mastery of program and degree content.

Direct Assessment as a Substantive Change. Because the initiation of a direct assessment or a hybrid program constitutes the addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those offered when the institution was last evaluated, each program is considered a substantive change that requires approval by SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Substantive change policy statements related to direct assessment and hybrid programs, as well as to other types of substantive changes, can be found in Appendix A of this document.

Commission Obligations in the Review of Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs. In accord with federal policy as it relates to direct assessment competency-based programs only, SACSCOC is required to (1) evaluate the institution's offering of direct assessment programs and include them in the institution's grant of accreditation and (2) confirm the institution's claim of the direct assessment program's equivalence in terms of credit or clock hours and any other information that the DOE may require to determine whether to approve the institution's application. As with the identification of non-compliance with other standards of the *Principles of Accreditation*, the Commission is obligated to take action in accord with that used in relation to other standards of non-compliance. Because SACSCOC requires approval of direct assessment and hybrid programs, once approved, the offering of both types of competency-based programs will be included in the institution's award of accreditation.

Institutional Obligations. The Commission's requirements, policies, processes, and procedures are predicated on the expectation that an institution operates with integrity in all matters, including the maintenance of academic quality in the establishment of direct assessment competency-based educational programs. An institution is responsible for the academic quality of any credit or clock hour unit or any competency-based unit recorded on the institution's transcript, whether applied to a direct assessment or a hybrid program. In determining whether to approve a direct assessment or hybrid program, the Commission expects that the institution will comply with the following practices and procedures: (1) adhere to initial obligations and an expected framework; (2) ensure compliance with appropriate SACSCOC requirements and standards outlined in the *Principles for Accreditation* and with Commission policy; and (3) follow procedures for the notification and approval of the substantive change.

1. Adherence to Initial Obligations and an Expected Framework

Report the initiation of direct assessment and hybrid programs. The institution has an obligation to notify the Commission and seek approval for the offering of such programs. Once approved, the direct assessment and hybrid programs will be included in the institution's award of accreditation. To secure federal financial aid, the institution must also seek approval from the U.S. Department of Education—only if the entire program is a direct assessment competency-based program.

Identify institutional contributions. The institution offering the direct assessment is able to identify and articulate the educational contribution it provides to students in this program. Such contribution may take the form of modules, engagement with faculty, exercises, assessment of student learning or

other activities that either expand the student's knowledge beyond any prior learning that the student may have demonstrated upon entry into the direct assessment or hybrid competency-based program or that assist the student in documenting how prior learning translates to the attainment of competencies required for receiving academic credit.

Ensure the integrity of accreditation and awards. Because SACSCOC accreditation that has been awarded to a member institution is not transferable—either in actuality or appearance—SACSCOC prohibits the use of its accreditation to authenticate courses, programs, or awards offered by organizations not so accredited. If the SACSCOC-accredited institution has contracted with an external organization to provide part of or the entire direct assessment program, including course materials provided to students, the institution ensures that it retains sufficient control of the development and implementation of the program. The Commission's policies require the institution to seek approval of the contract at the same time it seeks approval to initiate a direct assessment and a hybrid program.

2. Compliance with Appropriate SACSCOC Requirements and Standards

Requirements and standards in the *Principles of Accreditation* which affect direct assessment and hybrid programs are listed below. They should be considered when developing contracts, completing the substantive change prospectus, and demonstrating compliance. In addition, the prospectus template for approval of this substantive change refers to Commission policies that are applicable to competency-based programs.

Institutional Mission. The institution has a clearly defined mission and philosophy undergirding its direct assessment and hybrid programs. It has clearly defined goals and a framework for its programs that ensure an appropriate design for quality and learning, as appropriate for higher education. (CR 2.4)

Information to Students. The institution provides clear information to students outlining the structure and expectations of the direct assessment and hybrid programs, tuition and fees, and academic policies that apply to students in the programs. This information is clearly communicated to students prior to their admission to the direct assessment and hybrid programs. (FR 4.6)

Structure and Coherence of the Program. The institution outlines the structure of the direct assessment and hybrid programs and establishes clearly defined competencies related to the program and the learning outcomes that students must attain to be awarded the credential appropriate to higher education. The program has a clearly defined beginning, middle and end, and the institution has a mechanism for monitoring student progress towards acquisition of competencies and attainment of the credential being awarded at the end of the program. In undergraduate degree programs, the institution requires the successful attainment of competencies of a general education component at the collegiate level that is a substantial part of the degree, ensures breadth of knowledge, and is based on a coherent rationale. The institution clearly defines expectations for student work and the means for assessing the learning and competencies acquired through that work. The competencies required for the program build a unified body of knowledge that is consistent with a program or career path; that is, they are not taken as merely discrete units. (CR 2.7.2, CR 2.7.3, FR 4.2, and FR 4.4)

Student Admissions and Eligibility. The institution has an appropriate mechanism for determining prior to admission in the direct assessment program whether a student has the capacity to complete an educational credential within the program and, therefore, is eligible to enroll in that program. Even an open admissions institution should have such a mechanism for direct assessment competency-based alternatives. (CS 3.4.3)

Assessment of Programs and Student Learning. The institution regularly reviews its direct assessment and hybrid programs in light of its mission in order to ensure that it identifies any areas of weakness in the programs and implements timely improvements. (CS 3.3.1.1)

The direct assessment and hybrid programs rely on a strong foundation for assessment established by the institution, with demonstrated capacity to evaluate student work at the course and program

level in general education and in the major or concentration. At all levels, assessment supports academic improvement. The comprehensive student learning outcomes in the academic program area are reviewed regularly and reflect concepts generally agreed on by the related academic program(s). (CS 3.3.1.1, CS 3.5.1, and CS 3.5.3)

The institution has a mechanism for determining how modules and competencies in the direct assessment program are equivalent to traditional courses and credit or clock hours in a conventional course-based program, and how the modules and competencies are related to accepted expectations of academic achievement and rigor, as based on the following principles:

- Student work performed in courses/units composing direct assessment and hybrid programs (e.g., demonstrated mastery of tasks, assignments, competencies, etc.) are equivalent to student work performed in traditional courses (e.g., successful completion of tests, assignments, projects, etc.)
- Student learning outcomes and program outcomes in direct assessment programs offered by the institution are equivalent to student learning outcomes defined by the academic program in a traditional academic program.
- The application of student learning assessments (e.g., examinations, portfolios, projects, capstone presentations, and other recognized demonstrations of mastery, etc.) in direct assessment and hybrid programs are equivalent to the outcome assessments that are used in traditional courses.

These strategies will be responsive to the complexity of learning and the accumulation and integration of knowledge expected for the educational degree or credential. (CR 2.7.1, CS 3.4.6, and FR 4.1)

Faculty. Faculty or instructors with subject matter expertise in the student's academic program and in general education play a formative role in the competency-based student's academic program. While qualified faculty with subject matter expertise design the competency-based program's curriculum, this faculty or other similarly qualified faculty or instructors also regularly engage with students during the course of the program, provide expert assistance and support to students in the program, and have a meaningful role in directing and reviewing the assessment of competencies. Program faculty are well suited for this role by qualifications and experience and receive appropriate professional development and support from the institution in executing this role. While mentors or counselors may have an important role in competency-based programs in supporting or assisting students, they do not replace faculty or instructors with subject-matter expertise. In addition, the number of mentors and counselors assigned to the competency-based program is sufficient to work with enrolled students and qualified to advise students at the college level. (CR 2.8, CS 3.4.1, CS 3.4.10, CS 3.4.11, CS 3.7.1, CS 3.7.3)

Institutional Responsibility for Awarding the Credential. The institution offering a direct assessment program is able to identify and articulate the educational contribution it provides to students in this program. Such contribution may take the form of modules, engagement with faculty, exercises, assessment of student learning or other activities that either expand the student's knowledge beyond any prior learning that the student may have demonstrated at matriculation or that assist the student in documenting how prior learning translates to the attainment of competencies required for receiving academic credit. For an undergraduate program, the institution demonstrates its contribution to be at least 25 percent of the academic program; for a graduate program, it demonstrates a contribution of at least one-third of the direct assessment program. (CS 3.5.2 and CS 3.6.3)

Application of Academic Policies. The institution determines how its already-established academic policies in such areas as academic discipline, probation and suspension apply to students in the direct assessment program, and it makes appropriate amendments to its academic policies where appropriate. It is clear how the institution determines when a student in the program is not making sufficient progress and should be moved to a traditional course-based format to complete his or her academic program or when other disciplinary action should be taken. The institution develops policies that address SACSCOC and/or federal requirements, including credit hour definitions, transcript recording and reporting, the assessment and award of credit for prior learning, and the roles of faculty members and other educational professionals. (CS 3.4.5 and 3.4.6)

Acceptance and Awarding of Credit or a Unit of Competency. The institution demonstrates that students in the direct assessment or hybrid competency-based program are achieving at least the same outcomes and at the same academic rigor as in traditional programs and courses offered by the institution. The institution prepares and maintains a transcript for each student documenting both the competencies earned and the equivalent courses or credit hours based on expectations noted above. The transcript is prepared and updated during the course of the student's academic program so that it is available in the event that a student transfers to another institution or drops out prior to completing the competency-based program. Such equivalencies are also available at the program level for state and federal agencies and for the Commission in their review of the program. In addition, the transcript provides clear and sufficient information for other institutions and employers to understand the student's accomplishments. (CS 3.4.6 and FR 4.9)

The direct assessment programs provided by the institution are clearly distinguished from assessment of prior learning that may take place at the outset of the program. When students demonstrate competencies at the beginning of a program on the basis of prior learning, transcripts and other documents should make clear that these competencies are awarded as "prior-learning credit." Once the institution has identified prior-learning credit for each student, other competencies should be awarded only after the student has completed the modules that form the program or demonstrated mastery of the competencies defined by them. (CS 3.4.4, CS 3.4.6)

Contractual Agreements. The institution provides notification to SACSCOC of agreements involving direct assessment programs, providing signed copies of agreements, and providing any other documentation or information required by SACSCOC policies and procedures for review. In addition, the member institution ensures that SACSCOC has timely access to its contracted external organization's materials and accreditation-related activities. (CS 3.4.7)

Student Support Services and Access to Academic Resources. The institution offers student support services that appropriately guide students in these competency-based programs. In addition, the institution is prepared to assist students in a timely manner who drop out of these programs in making the transition back to a traditional course-based format so as to ensure that those students can continue to progress towards a degree or certificate. (CR 2.10 and CS 3.4.9) The institution provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to learning resources consistent with the competency-based academic programs. (CR 2.9)

Fees and Compliance with Title IV Funding. While the institution may charge a fee for its assessment of a student's prior learning as well as its transcription of competencies, the institution charges tuition only for those courses, modules, components, and services that the institution contributes in the development or formation of the student or for the term in which the student is enrolled in the direct assessment program. Similarly, the institution assists students in seeking Title IV student aid funds for those courses, modules or components of the academic program that the institution contributes to the development or formation of the student. It develops policies that address the disbursement of financial aid, and tuition charges and refunds. (FR 4.3 and FR 4.7)

3. Procedures for the Notification and Approval of Direct Assessment and Hybrid Programs

Before initiating direct assessment or hybrid competency-based educational programs (degree, diploma, and certificate), an institution must seek prior approval when the programs have either of the following characteristics:

- The entire program is direct assessment and relies exclusively on measured achievement of competencies rather than student learning through credit or clock hours, or
- At least 50 percent of the competency-based program is direct assessment.

Time of Notification. An institution offering direct assessment or hybrid competency-based educational programs must provide written notification of the change to the President of SACSCOC when it begins to offer 25 percent of a direct assessment program; that is, when a student can earn 25 percent of an educational credential (e.g., degree, diploma, certificate) based on measured achievement of competencies rather than credit or clock hours. The institution seeking approval to offer an entire program that is direct assessment or where at least 50 percent

of the competency-based program is direct assessment must notify the President of SACSCOC six months in advance of the initiation of 50 percent of the educational credential based on measured achievement of competencies rather than credit or clock hours.

Submission of a Prospectus An institution seeking approval of a direct assessment competency-based program or a hybrid direct assessment program should complete the screening form included as Appendix B of this document. After Commission staff have reviewed the document, the institution will receive a response either asking it to complete a full prospectus for approval of the proposed program or notifying the institution that the program does not constitute either a direct assessment or hybrid direct assessment competency-based program.

If the institution is directed to complete a prospectus, it must be submitted by April 15 for consideration at the June meeting of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, or by September 15 for consideration at the December meeting of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees to allow ample time for review and approval. The institution will be provided a link to the appropriate prospectus form when it is sent the SACSCOC letter requesting a prospectus. Four copies should be submitted to the President of SACSCOC as a print document, or an electronic device (e.g., flash drive, CD or DVD). Upon receipt of the prospectus, it will be forwarded to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for review and approval at its next scheduled meeting: June or December.

Options of the Committees on Compliance and Reports Following Review of the Prospectus

The Committee on Compliance and Reports, a standing committee of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, will review the prospectus and any additional material submitted, and will take one of the following actions:

1. accept the prospectus, recommend approval of the program, and authorize a substantive change committee visit. A committee visit is required within six months after the initiation of the program,
2. defer action and seek additional information, or
3. recommend denial of approval and continue the institution's accreditation. The reason for denial of approval may have been caused by an institution's current non-compliance with a standard or policy. Consequently, denial may be accompanied by monitoring or imposition of a sanction.

Options of the Committees on Compliance and Reports Following Review by a Substantive Change Committee

The report of the Substantive Change Committee, together with the response of the institution to any recommendations contained in that report (due within five months of the Committee visit), will be reviewed by the Committee on Compliance and Reports. The Committee may recommend one of the following actions:

1. continue the institution in accreditation, with or without a monitoring report,
2. continue the institution in accreditation, impose a sanction, and request a monitoring report, with/without a special committee visit (mandatory visit if placed on Probation), or
3. remove accreditation, subject to the provisions of SACSCOC policies and procedures.

Document History

*Approved: SACSCOC Board of Trustees, December 2013
Reformatted: August 2014*

Appendix A

Substantive Change Policy Statements Related to Direct Assessment and Hybrid Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs

1. The [Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement](#) applies to all programs and services of SACSCOC-accredited institutions wherever they are located or however they are delivered. Failure to comply with the *Principles* or with procedures referred to in this policy could result in the institution being placed on sanction or being removed from membership.
2. Denial of approval of substantive change is not appealable. An institution that fails to gain approval of the substantive change may resubmit a revised prospectus or application following the guidelines and time frames described in this policy statement.
3. An accredited institution in the appeals process or in litigation with SACSCOC is not eligible for consideration of substantive change.
4. The SACSCOC substantive change policy applies only to SACSCOC-accredited institutions. Applicant and candidate institutions may not initiate substantive change.
5. An institution may withdraw its prospectus/application or may discontinue substantive change at any time during the review process by submitting a formal letter of withdrawal to the President of SACSCOC.
6. Once an institution submits its prospectus or application and the document is reviewed by either the Committee on Compliance and Reports or by SACSCOC staff prior to approval by the Board, any information included therein that indicates possible non-compliance with any of the Core Requirements or Comprehensive Standards may lead SACSCOC to further review the institution, even if the prospectus is withdrawn or approval of the change is denied.
7. SACSCOC staff conducts a preliminary review of all changes requiring final approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. All substantive changes described in this procedure are referred to the Board of Trustees for final approval.
8. If an institution fails to report or to gain approval of this type of substantive change prior to its implementation, both the prospectus/application and the issue of late submission will be referred to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for action.
9. All final decisions regarding the accreditation status of an institution are made by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Denial of substantive change and the imposition of sanctions are not appealable actions.
10. The date of the letter of approval of a substantive change is considered the date on which the change is included as part of the institution's accreditation.
11. If an institution fails to follow SACSCOC substantive change policy and procedures, it may lose its Title IV funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse it for money received by the institution for programs related to the unreported substantive change. In addition, the institution's case may be referred to SACSCOC Board of Trustees for the imposition of a sanction or for removal from membership.

Appendix B

Screening Form for the Approval of Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs

Purpose of the Screening Form

An institution that intends to seek approval for one or more direct assessment competency-based educational programs (degree, certificate, diploma) should first complete the attached screening form so that Commission staff can determine whether the program requires prior notification or approval.

Definitions

For the purpose of the application of the Commission's policy, the Commission uses the following definitions:

Competency-Based Educational Programs. A competency-based educational program is outcome-based and assesses a student's attainment of competencies as the sole means of determining whether the student earns a degree or a credential. Such programs may be organized around traditional course-based units (credit or clock hours) that students must earn to complete their educational program, or may depart from course-based units (credit or clock hours) to rely solely on the attainment of defined competencies.

Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs (also referred to in this policy as *direct assessment programs*). Federal regulations define a direct assessment competency-based educational program as an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, uses direct assessment of student learning relying solely on the attainment of defined competencies, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program using the results of the assessment.

Hybrid Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs (also referred to in this policy as *hybrid programs*). A hybrid competency-based educational program combines course-based competencies (clock and credit hours awarded) with non-course based competencies (no clock or credit hours awarded).

Programs that Require Prior Approval

An institution must seek prior approval when it offers a direct assessment competency-based educational program characterized by the following:

1. The entire educational program is direct assessment and relies exclusively on measured achievement of competencies rather than student learning through credit or clock hours; or
2. At least 50 percent of the competency-based program is direct assessment; that is, 50 percent or more of the educational program relies on measured achievement of competencies rather than credit or clock hours.

An institution is required to provide formal notification when it begins to offer 25 percent of a direct assessment program; that is, when a student can earn 25 percent of an educational program based on measured achievement of competencies rather than credit or clock hours.

Directions

Please complete the following screening form and send it to:

Office of Substantive Change
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, GA 30033-4097

After reviewing the completed form, Commission staff will determine whether (1) the institution has provided sufficient information to constitute notification or (2) the institution will need to complete a Substantive Change Prospectus for Direct Assessment and Hybrid Direct Assessment Competency-Based Programs.

Directions:

Please provide responses to each of the questions below:

Date of submission: _____

1.	Name of Institution: (City, State)	
2.	Institutional Contact Person:	Name: Phone number: Email Address:
3.	Name of Proposed Educational Program (e.g. degree, diploma, certificate as well as major, concentration, or other designated area of study, if applicable)	
4.	In lieu of credit or contact hours, check the percentage of the program that relies solely on the attainment of defined competencies as a measure of student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> 100% defined by attainment of competencies <input type="checkbox"/> 75-99% defined by attainment of competencies <input type="checkbox"/> 50-74% defined by attainment of competencies <input type="checkbox"/> 25-49% defined by attainment of competencies
5.	Will Title IV student financial aid be offered for this program?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

ITEM 5G

Disclosure of Accrediting Documents and Actions of SACSCOC



*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

**DISCLOSURE OF ACCREDITING DOCUMENTS
AND ACTIONS OF THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES
AND SCHOOLS COMMISSION ON COLLEGES (SACSCOC)**

Policy Statement

I. The Compliance Certification, the Quality Enhancement Plan, Monitoring Reports, and Applications for Membership

An institution may release for internal or public distribution the contents of its Compliance Certification, its Quality Enhancement Plan, or its Application for Membership. The Commission may also allow Compliance Certifications, Quality Enhancement Plans, and Applications for Membership to be used by educators who are conducting research, the purpose of which is the improvement of the accrediting process. The U. S. Department of Education and the Council of Higher Education Accreditation may be allowed access to these documents, but only in conjunction with the process of recognition of the Commission by either of these agencies.

Monitoring reports submitted by institutions will not be released to the public by the Commission except as noted under Item V of this document. These reports, however, may be released by the institution after action has been taken by the Commission.

II. Visiting Committee Reports

An institution may release its visiting committee report. Quotation in institutional publications or excerpts from the visiting committee report must also be accompanied by a note stating that a copy of the entire report can be obtained from the institution. If an institution publicly characterizes the findings of a visiting committee report, the institution must also state that a copy of the entire report can be obtained from the institution.

Whether the institution releases the entire report or excerpts, the release must include the title page of the report and the following Commission statement that has been incorporated on the title page:

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is responsible for making the final determination on accreditation based on the findings contained in this report, the institution's response to issues contained in the report, other assessments relevant to the review, and application of the Commission's policies and procedures. Final interpretation of the *Principles of Accreditation* and on the accreditation status of the institution rests with SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

The Commission will not release visiting committee reports to the public, except as noted under Item V of this document. With the approval of the institution, the Commission may allow access to a report by those conducting research, the purpose of which is the improvement of accreditation. For purposes of the recognition process only, visiting committee reports of member and applicant institutions may be examined by the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. The

Commission may also share the visiting committee reports with other accrediting commissions of higher education.

III. Disclosure by SACSCOC of Institutional Accreditation Documents to Third Parties

Requests for disclosure—by other agencies, institutions, or individuals—of any institutional accrediting documents may be granted only upon the receipt of written approval of disclosure by the subject institution or after proper subpoena and/or court order. If disclosure is sought by subpoena and/or court order, the institution whose documents are being requested will be notified of the request immediately to enable the institution to file its objections to the appropriate court.

IV. Minutes and Correspondence

Minutes of the Executive Council shall be accessible to members of the Council and SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Minutes of the Board of Trustees and the College Delegate Assembly shall be published on the SACSCOC website or in the *Annual Reports of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges*. Minutes of the Committees on Compliance and Reports and ad hoc committees shall be accessible to members of the Executive Council and the Board of Trustees.

An institution which has officially appealed an adverse action of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees will have access to those sections of official minutes that pertain to the adverse action.

The Commission will not release correspondence with member and applicant institutions except under exceptional circumstances as decided by the President of SACSCOC or the Executive Council or as noted under Item V of this document.

The Commission may share correspondence between members or applicant institutions with other accrediting commissions of higher education, or with the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, or the U. S. Department of Education in conjunction with the recognition process.

V. Public Statements by Institutions

In accord with federal regulation 34 CFR 602.23, if an institution elects to disclose its accredited or candidate status granted by the Commission's Board of Trustees, the institution must disclose an accurate statement of status, including the specific degree levels covered by that status and the name, address, and telephone number of the accrediting agency. The institution is required to comply with related statements in the *Principles of Accreditation*.

If an institution uses the public forum to take issue with an official action (relating to that institution) of SACSCOC Board of Trustees or with related activities, or provides incorrect or misleading information about its accredited or candidate status or about the contents of visiting committee reports or about the Board of Trustees accrediting action with regard to the institution, then the Commission may consider this action a breach of Integrity (Principle 1.1 of the *Principles*) or evidence of any of the other standards and take one of the following actions: (1) the President of SACSCOC may make available to the public relevant information, including peer review committee reports and notification letters; (2) the President of SACSCOC may authorize a special committee to review institutional compliance with PR 1.1 (Integrity) or any other related standards; or (3) the President of SACSCOC may refer the case to the Board of Trustees for action on the institution's accreditation. This provision does not apply to the announcement by an institution that it intends to appeal an adverse action.

VI. Information Required by the U.S. Department of Education, the Appropriate State Licensing or Authorizing Agency, and the Appropriate Accrediting Agencies

In accordance with 34 CFR Section 602.26, the Commission provides the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, appropriate State licensing or authorizing agencies, and appropriate accrediting agencies written notice of the following decisions and actions:

- a. decisions on initial or renewed accreditation (notification within 30 days of the Board of Trustee's decisions)
- b. final decisions on probation or warning (public sanctions), or final decisions to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate accreditation or candidacy (notification same time as informing the institution, not to exceed 30 days after the decision)
- c. a brief statement by the Commission summarizing reasons for denial, withdrawal, suspension, or termination and the official comments, if any, that the affected institution may wish to make with regard to that decision, or evidence that the affected institution has been offered the opportunity to provide official comment (notification within 60 days of the decision)
- d. decision of an institution's voluntary withdrawal from accreditation or candidacy or an accreditation suspension (notification within 30 days of the decision).

In accordance with federal regulation 34 CFR 602.27, the Commission submits, upon request from the U.S. Secretary of Education, information regarding an accredited or candidate institution's compliance with its Title IV, HEA program responsibilities, including its eligibility to participate in Title IV, HEA programs, for the purpose of assisting the Secretary in resolving problems with the institution's participation in these programs. In addition, the Commission submits the name of any institution it accredits that the Commission has reason to believe is failing to meet its Title IV, HEA program responsibilities or is engaged in fraud or abuse and the reason for the Commission's concern.

The Commission will inform the institution when it submits the institution's name to the Secretary for any of the reasons cited above unless either of the following conditions apply: (1) Commission staff has reviewed the institutional case and the issues presented by the U.S. Department of Education and has concluded that confidentiality is necessary to resolve issues identified by the Department or (2) the Department specifically requests that the contact remain confidential.

In accordance with federal regulation 602.28, the Commission, upon request, shares with other appropriate recognized accrediting agencies and recognized State approval agencies information about the accreditation and candidacy status of an institution, and any adverse actions it has taken against an accredited or candidate institution.

The application of SACSCOC for recognition constitutes a grant of authority to the U.S. Secretary of Education to conduct site visits and to gain access to Commission records, personnel, and facilities on an announced or unannounced basis (CFR 602.10(b)).

VII. Information Released to the Public

The Commission provides to the public written notice of the following decisions and actions:

- a. decisions on initial or renewed candidacy and accreditation (notification within 30 days of the Board of Trustees decision)
- b. final decisions on probation or warning (public sanctions), or final decisions to deny, withdraw, suspend, revoke, or terminate accreditation or candidacy (notification within 24 hours of informing the institution)

- c. a brief statement summarizing reasons for denial, withdrawal, suspension, or termination and the official comments, if any, that the affected institution makes regarding the action (notification upon request)
- d. decisions of an institution's voluntary withdrawal from accreditation or candidacy or an accreditation suspension (notification upon request).

The Commission maintains and makes available to the public the following documents: *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*; "Accreditation Procedures for Applicant Institutions;" "Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports;" and "Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions." See SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).

VIII. Required notices and documents submitted to the U.S. Department of Education

In accordance with 34 CFR 602.27, the Commission on Colleges notifies the U.S. Secretary of Education of any changes to policies, procedures, and standards that affect the Commission's scope of recognition with the U.S. Department of Education or its compliance with the criteria for recognition.

In addition, the Commission submits the following documents to the U.S. Department of Education: a copy of its Annual Report; a copy of its directory of accredited and candidate institutions, as updated annually; and, upon request by the Secretary, a summary of the Commission's major accrediting activities during the previous year.

IX. Information about member or applying institutions made available to the public

The Commission will release the following information about member or applying institutions:

- a. For all institutions, the name of the institution, current accreditation status (applicant, candidate, member), address and contact numbers, degree levels offered, approximate enrollment, and type of governance
- b. For a member institution, the date of initial candidacy (if applicable), initial accreditation, recent reaffirmation of accreditation, and next reaffirmation of accreditation
- c. For an applicant or candidate institution, the date of authorization of a candidacy committee, date of initial candidacy, date of candidacy renewal, and the date of initial membership
- d. The date and type (candidacy, initial accreditation, reaffirmation, substantive change, special) of an institution's most recent on-site evaluation, subsequent Board of Trustee action, specific areas of the Principles identified for continued monitoring (if applicable), and authorization of a special committee resulting from Board of Trustee action (if applicable)
- e. Date of submission and type of institution's most recent monitoring report, subsequent SACSCOC Board of Trustees action, specific areas of the *Principles* identified for continued monitoring (if applicable), and authorization of a special committee resulting from Board of Trustee action (if applicable)
- f. Due date and type of institution's next monitoring report (if applicable) resulting from previous review of an on-site evaluation or of a monitoring report
- g. The date and nature of any negative action taken by the Board of Trustees (warning, probation, denial of reaffirmation, denial of authorization of a candidacy committee, denial of approval of substantive change) and the reasons for the action citing specific areas of the Principles
- h. The date and nature of any adverse action taken by the Board of Trustees (the appealable actions of denial of candidacy, removal from candidacy, denial of membership, removal from membership) and the reasons for the action citing specific areas of the Principles

- i. For an adverse action, whether the institution has appealed and, if applicable, the date of the appeal
- j. Any action of the Appeals Committee of the College Delegate Assembly and the effective date of the decision.

The Commission will post on its website disclosure statements for the following actions regarding the accreditation status of institutions: (1) institutions placed or continued on Warning or Probation; (2) institutions removed from accreditation or candidacy; (3) institutions denied initial candidacy or accreditation; (4) institutions denied authorization of a candidacy committee; and (5) special committees authorized separate from another Board of Trustee action. Such a statement will disclose the following information about an institution: (1) the status of the institution, (2) the definition of the Board of Trustee action taken, (3) the reason for the action, (4) the next step in the institution's review, and (5) any other recent action taken by the Board of Trustees that can be disclosed.

If the Board of Trustees removes an institution from candidacy or membership, the Commission may release a statement to the institution's academic community informing faculty, staff, students and other affected parties of the decision of the Commission and reasons for the action.

X. Information made available during the Business Meeting of the College Delegate Assembly

The names of institutions acted upon by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees during its summer and annual meeting will be read during the Business Meeting of the College Delegate Assembly. Those actions are listed below. When announcing appealable actions during the College Delegate Assembly Business Meeting, the reading will be prefaced using the following statement: "Appealable actions do not go into effect until the appeal period of ten days following notification has expired. If the institution appeals within this time period, it maintains the status held prior to the Board of Trustee decision until the appeal has been resolved."

- a. Reaffirmation of accreditation
- b. Denial of reaffirmation, continuation of accreditation, and imposition of Warning or Probation
- c. Awarding of initial membership
- d. Denial of initial membership
- e. Awarding of initial candidacy
- f. Removal from candidacy
- g. Denial of candidacy
- h. Removal from Warning or Probation
- i. Imposition or continuation of Warning or Probation
- j. Removal from membership

XI. Information Published on SACSCOC's Website

The following Board of Trustee actions will be posted on the SACSCOC's website:

- a. Reaffirmation of accreditation
- b. Denial of reaffirmation, continuation of accreditation, and imposition of Warning or Probation

- c. Awarding of initial membership
- d. Denial of initial membership
- e. Awarding of initial candidacy
- f. Renewal of candidacy status (within the four-year period)
- g. Removal from candidacy
- h. Denial of candidacy
- i. Authorization of a Candidacy Committee
- j. Denial of authorization to host a Candidacy Committee
- k. Approval of substantive change
- l. Continued accreditation following review of substantive change
- m. Denial of approval of substantive change
- n. Removal from Warning or Probation
- o. Imposition or continuation of Warning or Probation
- p. Removal from accreditation
- q. Authorization of a Special Committee (separate from another Board of Trustee action)
- r. Continued accreditation following review by a Special Committee (separate from another Board of Trustee action)

Where appropriate, written announcements will include those actions which have been appealed by including the following statement: "Subsequent to the official action of SACSCOC Board of Trustees, the institution has appealed the decision. Until the decision of the Appeals Committee is final, the institution maintains the status held prior to the Commission's appealable action."

Document History

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