

## Substantive Change Policy

### Definition

Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an institution accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). 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 percent 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 such as a dual degree program or a joint degree 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 Substantive Change Policy of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) is updated frequently. Faculty and administrators should refer to the policy on the [SACSCOC website](#) for the most recent interpretation of what constitutes a substantive change.

### Policy

Before initiating any modifications/additions/deletions in academic programming that would constitute a substantive change, the faculty member or administrator initiating the change must notify the Provost's office in writing as soon as such a change is considered. If the current SACSCOC Institutional Accreditation Liaison (IAL) is not the Provost, the IAL and Provost will work to reach consensus whether the proposal constitutes a substantive change. The Provost's Office will communicate to all relevant stakeholders regarding the status of the proposal with instructions about the next appropriate action.

The Provost will represent the IAL on President's Cabinet and will report any proposed substantive change in a timely way.

### **Procedure**

Most substantive changes that occur at Pfeiffer will be curriculum proposals. The Provost's Office will ensure that the curriculum proposal form contains a required area for the faculty member making the proposal to indicate whether it constitutes a substantive change. During the approval process, at the stage of the dean's review, the dean will consult with the IAL regarding any proposal where substantive change is an issue. Even if the faculty member has not indicated on the proposal form that it constitutes a substantive change, the dean should refer any proposal to the IAL for review where a substantive change may be concerned.

There are many categories of substantive change which are not necessarily related to the curriculum approval process: delivering a degree program (new or existing) in an unapproved mode of delivery, offering programs at a level higher or lower than currently approved, offering a program (new or existing) in a new location, entering into a collaborative academic agreement, closing a program, etc. Any modification that might result in a substantive change should be put on the President's Cabinet meeting agenda by the administrator responsible for it. During the deliberation, the IAL will be consulted regarding whether the proposal is a substantive change.

In both situations, the IAL will make a recommendation to the Provost. The Provost will review each proposal to determine whether it should be considered a substantive change and therefore need to go through the notification and/or approval processes for SACSCOC and any program-specific accreditors. In the event of a dispute as to whether a proposed change is considered substantive in nature, final review of the proposed change will be the responsibility of the Provost.

This requirement is intended to ensure compliance with external accreditation requirements, including those of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) and any relevant program-specific accrediting agency.

Depending on the scope of the initiative, a lengthy lead time is necessary to meet accreditation standards of notification and approval before the change can be implemented. The person initiating the substantive change should submit the proposal at least six months prior to the intended implementation.

**Effective Date:** 10/25/2021, Superseding version formerly in Faculty Handbook.