

College Operating Procedures (COP)



Procedure Title: SACSCOC Substantive Change Procedure
Procedure Number: 03-1604
Originating Department: Provost / Vice President of Academic Affairs

Specific Authority:

Board Policy n/a
Florida Statute n/a
Florida Administrative Code n/a

Procedure Actions: Adopted: 1/23/14

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this procedure statement is to comply with the substantive change procedures of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools - Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). This procedure is applicable to all units, departments, centers, and campuses.

Florida SouthWestern State College (College) is dedicated to the expansion of academic opportunities through the development and offering of programs and courses offered off-site or by electronic means, in support of the College's mission. The College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison will be consulted prior to beginning a process that results in a substantive change. Accordingly, the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is responsible for reporting any substantive changes to SACSCOC.

Guidelines:

The College is accredited by the SACSCOC. The accreditation provides public documentation of institutional quality and enables the College to seek eligibility to participate in federal programs. In addition to five-year and ten-year reviews by the SACSCOC, the College is required to follow substantive change procedures established by SACSCOC that include notification and approval by the SACSCOC prior to initiating a substantive change. "Substantive Change" means a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution as defined by SACSCOC. Failure to comply with the substantive change procedures of SACSCOC can result in serious consequences that include suspending the activity until approval is received, requiring the College to pay back financial aid dispersed to students, placing the College on sanctions, or removing the College's accreditation entirely.

Recent (February 2013) substantive change policy includes the following; however it is always better to check the current SACSCOC substantive change policy and contact the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison.

- 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 program

Certain substantive changes require prior notification to SACSCOC. Other substantive changes require submission of a substantive change prospectus prior to the implementation of the substantive change. Many substantive changes require on-site committee reviews by SACSCOC. In consultation with the SACSCOC policies and staff, the College's Accreditation Liaison determines the applicability of SACSCOC Substantive Change policy to the above described activities.

Procedure:

The College had developed procedures for departments and unit to follow when developing and delivering College courses off-site, electronically, or for a new program and program level, program closures, and contracts or consortial agreements for instruction. Prior to developing and delivering College courses off-site, electronically, or for a new program and program level,

please consult these procedures. These procedures can be found online at the [Academic Affairs College Operating Procedures](#) or by contacting the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison.

Depending on the specific nature of the change, it must be reported to SACSCOC as notification and approval in a timely manner. All submissions will be coordinated through the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison. Any unit or department initiating a substantive change to the College's current accreditation or reaffirmation must notify the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison as soon as the change is considered.

All questions about whether a change is substantive should be directed to the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison for guidance. All correspondence with SACSCOC will be submitted by the College President or the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison.