



Policy #:41001

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE POLICY

Effective Date: August 23, 2016

Responsible Executive: Office of the President

Responsible Officer: Provost/VP for Academic Affairs/SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

Division: Division of Academic Affairs

Reference: Council of Academic Deans

Review Cycle: Annual

Implementation Date: August 23, 2016

Revision Date(s):

I. PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

Establish requirements and procedures to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in a timely fashion. This policy outlines the various types of substantive changes, appropriate actions to seek approval of substantive change requests, and the roles and responsibilities of University administrative staff in the substantive change process.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

As an accredited SACSCOC institution, Grambling State University is required to notify the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of changes. Consistent with the [SACSCOC substantive change policy](#), the University follows policies and procedures established to recognize and report substantive changes in a timely fashion.

III. DEFINITION

According to SACSCOC, **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

IV. UNIVERSITY RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of Grambling State University to follow the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) substantive change policy and procedures and to inform the SACSCOC of substantive changes as specified in those procedures. The University is expected to follow the reporting requirements of the substantive change policy in a timely fashion. The President of Grambling State University is responsible for notifying the Commission of substantive changes. All members of the University faculty and staff are obligated to assist the President in recognizing and reporting substantive changes.

Failure to gain approval for substantive changes involving programs that qualify for federal financial assistance could jeopardize receipt of such funding. Failure to report substantive changes or any planned substantive changes can also result in the loss of University's accreditation for certificate and degree programs.

Henceforth, University policies and procedures have been established for recognizing and reporting substantive changes. The procedure for substantive changes lists specific types of substantive changes and identifies the parties responsible for preparing documents required for notification to SACSCOC for each.

A. Administrative Officers of Academic and Non-Academic Units

The administrative officers of both academic and non-academic units are responsible maintaining current knowledge regarding changes the Commission considers significant modifications, or expansion of programs, and the nature and scope of an accredited institution. These individuals should become familiar with the SACSCOC website (see <http://www.sacscoc.org>) and Substantive Change documentation (www.sacscoc.org/substantivechange.asp).

B. President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Department Heads, Academic Directors/Coordinators, Chair of the University Curriculum Committee, and Chair of the Graduate Council

These individuals have a vital responsibility to be aware of all changes at the institution and to screen such changes in the context of this policy and the SACSCOC substantive change policy to assure adherence. It is the duty of these individuals to inform the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs/SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison at the earliest point possible that a proposed change may be substantive in nature according to the SACSCOC definition.

C. University SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

The University SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is a senior leader whose role is to ensure ongoing compliance with SACSCOC accreditation standards, requirements and policies. This responsibility includes providing training and engaging in regular communication with faculty, staff, and students as well as to notify the Commission in advance of substantive changes and program developments in accordance with the substantive change policy of the Commission. At Grambling State University, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs fulfills this role.

The University SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison is also responsible for:

- Maintaining the University's policy on substantive change
- Keeping administrative and academic officers up to date on the substantive change policy
- Updating the substantive change policy after any change in policy and procedure has been approved
- Working with unit heads on any required follow-up requests by the SACSCOC for additional documentation or clarification

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- Posting all documentation associated with the notification and approval of substantive change on the University website
- Reviewing all substantive change documentation to ensure completeness and accuracy of data prior to the University's official submission to the SACSCOC
- Submitting required substantive change documentation to the President for approval and signature

Each individual hereby designated in sections A., B., and C, above, is required to be familiar and comply with these policies.