

BLINN COLLEGE ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS MANUAL

SUBJECT: *Substantive Change Procedure (SACSCOC)*

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 5, 2009; amended August 26, 2014, and October 23, 2018

BOARD POLICY REFERENCE: GK(LOCAL)

PURPOSE

The College District shall comply with the current Principles of Accreditation of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC or the Commission). The Commission accredits the College District in its entirety, as well as its programs and services, including geographical locations and modality of delivery.

The College District shall adhere to the [Commission's Substantive Change Policy Statement](#) by utilizing the procedures below. The Administration designed the procedures to provide efficient and timely internal mechanisms that will allow the College District to report all modifications meeting the definition of a substantive change. In some cases, the College District need only notify SACSCOC of a substantive change. In other cases, however, the College District must obtain prior approval from SACSCOC. Please consult the SACSCOC Liaison (the Dean of Institutional Research & Effectiveness) prior to beginning the substantive change process to avoid delays and potential violations of the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement.

DEFINITIONS

Substantive Change

Per SACSCOC, a “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
- Adding courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that the College District offered when SACSCOC last evaluated the institution
- Adding courses or programs at a degree or credential level above that which the College District includes in the current accreditation or reaffirmation
- A change from clock hours to credit hours
- A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours the College District awards for successful completion of a program
- The establishment of an additional location or the addition of courses at a location geographically apart from the main campus, at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program

- The establishment of an additional location or the addition of courses at a location geographically apart from the main campus, at which the institution offers 25-49% 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 conducts 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 College District's programs

Primary Notification Responsible Positions

Vice Chancellors retain primary responsibility for ensuring that their administrators properly notify the SACSCOC Liaison in accordance with this procedure. The following College District personnel are responsible for notifying their respective Vice Chancellor of any substantive changes. This list is a guide and does not preclude other employees of the College District from notifying the SACSCOC Liaison of a possible substantive change.

- Assistant Vice Chancellors
- Instructional Deans (e.g., academic, health science, or technical)
- Assistant Deans
- Curriculum Committee Chair
- Director (e.g., academic, health science, technical, dual credit)

PROCEDURES

Internal Notification

The College District utilizes an internal notification process for substantive changes. Successful notification occurs when an administrator informs the SACSCOC Liaison of a substantive change by completing the [Substantive Change Notification Form](#) with the appropriate signatures. After receiving a completed substantive change notification form, the SACSCOC Liaison will determine appropriate next steps, such as preparation of a [New Program Prospectus Form](#) or a Degree Close-Out Form. Administrators must notify the SACSCOC Liaison about new programs or new off-site locations, preferably no less than nine months in advance of implementing the proposed change in order to allow ample time for the College District to prepare the requisite documentation and appropriate SACSCOC notification.

1. Substantive Change Awareness and Training – The College District uses the following measures to facilitate awareness and training regarding substantive changes. By staying informed and educated on the substantive change procedure, the College District is proactive with regard to reporting qualifying changes to the SACSCOC.

- a. The SACSCOC Liaison provides training sessions to College District committees and other groups requesting training to review the SACSCOC substantive change policy and answer specific questions related to significant changes. During these sessions, the SACSCOC Liaison will provide comprehensive training to ensure that the College District staff is following appropriate guidelines. At all training sessions, the SACSCOC Liaison will distribute copies of the SACSCOC Substantive Change policy, the Blinn College Administrative Regulation for GK(LOCAL), the Substantive Change Notification Form, and the New Prospectus Form. The forms are available on the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness webpage.
 - b. The SACSCOC Liaison will provide regular inquiry notifications via email to prompt the responsible administrator/academic officer who oversees an area where substantive change is most likely to occur (e.g., Dual-Credit, Health Sciences, Academic Transfer, and Technical Education).
2. Notification – The primary staff member responsible for notification shall contact the SACSCOC Liaison via the [Substantive Change Notification Form](#) when the College District first proposes a revision, addition, or deletion that meets the definition of a substantive change. The SACSCOC Liaison will receive a completed Substantive Change Notification Form signed by the relevant Dean (if applicable), the Curriculum Committee, (when appropriate), and the Vice Chancellor of the affected area(s). Administrators must notify the SACSCOC Liaison regarding new programs or new off-site locations, preferably nine months in advance of the proposed change in order to allow ample time for document preparation and appropriate notification.
3. Substantive Change Determination – Once notified, the SACSCOC Liaison will work with the appropriate college officials to determine how to proceed. The SACSCOC Liaison will assist with clarifications by returning the notification form to the individual who initiated the notification with the substantive change process approved or revised, as appropriate, along with guidance for next steps. Following approval, the SACSCOC Liaison will take the lead in coordinating and submitting the proper notification or prospectus to the Commission.
4. New Program Prospectus or Degree Program Close-Out Form – If the SACSCOC Liaison determines that SACSCOC will require a prospectus or modified prospectus, or a degree program close-out exists, the primary individual requesting the change will submit a [New Program Prospectus](#) or Degree Program Close-Out Form. The New Program Prospectus Form provides guidance for gathering the types of information necessary to complete the prospectus.

The chart on the following page illustrates the process described above.

Substantive Change Internal Notification Process

