

Piedmont Virginia Community

Section I – Instruction & Student Services Policy

I – 115.0 Substantive Change Reporting (Formerly titled as Notification of Substantive Change)

Policy #:	I-115.0
Effective:	September 2008
Revised:	April 2023
Responsible Dept:	VP of Instruction and Student Services

1. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the college proactively identifies, manages, and reports to its accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), all substantive changes to the institution, in the timeframe and manner as outlined in the Commission’s *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* and the *Principals of Accreditation*.

2. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the college to maintain compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) substantive change policy and procedures through appropriate and timely reporting on areas of substantive change.

According to the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures, “substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Under federal regulations, substantive changes include:

- Substantially changing the established mission or objectives of an institution or its programs.
- Changing the legal status, form of control or ownership of an institution.
- Changing the governance of an institution.
- Merging/consolidating two or more institutions or entities.
- Acquiring another institution or any program or location of another institution.
- Relocating an institution or an off-campus instructional site of an institution (including a branch campus).
- Offering courses or programs at a higher or lower degree level than currently authorized.
- Adding graduate programs at an institution previously offering only undergraduate programs (including degrees, diplomas, certificates, and another for-credit credential).
- Adding a program that is a significant departure from the existing programs or method of delivery from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated.
- Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence courses.
- Adding a method of delivery to a currently offered program.
- Entering into a cooperative academic arrangement.
- Entering into a written arrangement under 34 C.F.R. § 668.5 under which an institution or organization not certified to participate in the Title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs offers less than 25% (notification) or 25-50% (approval) of one or more of the accredited institution’s educational programs.

- Changing the way an institution measures student progress, whether in clock hours or credit hours, semesters, trimesters, or quarters, or time-based or non-time-based methods or measures.
- Substantially increase or decrease the number of clock or credit hours awarded, or competencies demonstrated, or an increase in the level of credential awarded, for successful completion of one or more programs.
- Adding competency-based education programs.
- Adding each competency-based education program by direct assessment.
- Adding programs with completion pathways that recognize and accommodate a student's prior or existing knowledge or competency.
- Awarding dual or joint academic awards.
- Re-opening a previously closed program or off-campus instructional site.
- Adding a new off-campus instructional site/additional location, including a branch campus.
- Adding a permanent location at a site at which an institution is conducting a teach-out program for students of another institution that has ceased operating before all students have completed their program of study.
- Closing an institution, a program, a method of delivery, an off-campus instructional site, or a program at an off-campus instructional site.”
- Participating in the federal Prison Education Program providing PEL Grant access to confined or incarcerated students.

The college is required to notify or secure SACSCOC approval prior to implementing a substantive change.

The college is responsible for maintaining compliance with Standard 14.2 (Substantive Change) of the *Principles of Accreditation* and with the *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures* and related policies.

The President will notify SACSCOC of any Substantive Changes.

3. Procedures for Implementation

Compliance with the Commission's substantive change policy and procedures will require collaboration and cooperation across the college. In general, responsibilities fall into these categories:

- 3.1 The college President will sign and send to the President of the SACSCOC, as appropriate for the substantive change,
 - 3.1a Timely notifications summarizing proposed changes, or
 - 3.1b A timely substantive change prospectus or application.
- 3.2 The College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, as appointed by the President as required by SACSCOC, will be responsible for the following:
 - 3.2a Ensuring that compliance with substantive change requirements is incorporated into the planning and evaluation process of the institution.
 - 3.2b Preparing substantive change notification letters for the signature of the College President in accordance with the substantive change policies of the SACSCOC.

- 3.2c Preparing or ensuring preparation of any required substantive change prospectus or application for the signature of the President in accordance with the substantive change policies of the SACSCOC.
 - 3.2d Educating faculty and staff regarding SACSCOC Substantive Change policies and procedures, particularly when the Commission revises such policies or procedures.
 - 3.2e Maintaining a database of substantive change initiatives, action plans, and status.
 - 3.2f Presenting reports to the President’s Staff and the Academic Deans on active substantive change issues.
 - 3.2g For any initiative that requires substantive change notification or approval collaborate with the VP of Instruction and Student Services in initiative planning and implementation so that all SACSCOC requirements are satisfied in a timely manner.
 - 3.2h Serving as a contact person and communication liaison between SACSCOC staff and the college regarding the substantive change.
- 3.3 The Vice President for Instruction and Student Services will be responsible for the following:
- 3.3a Learning about and maintaining awareness of current Commission on Colleges Substantive Change policies.
 - 3.3b Identifying and ensuring appropriate training for faculty and staff in their area who should maintain awareness of Substantive Change.
 - 3.3c Initiating communication with the College’s SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison whenever any initiative is being considered that might meet the current SACSCOC definition of “substantive change.”
- 3.4 The SACSCOC substantive change compliance matrix has been adapted, below to clarify the types of substantive changes that the college must be aware of and to delineate responsibilities in identifying, reporting, and documenting each type of change. It will be the responsibility of the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison to maintain this table and to coordinate its implementation throughout the college.

Substantive Change Matrix

There are three procedures for addressing the different types of substantive changes:

- Procedure One (1) for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Notification and Approval Prior to Implementation – in some cases, as much as 12 months prior approval is needed before implementation.
- Procedure Two (2) for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Only Notification Prior to Implementation – usually in the form of a letter signed by the President.
- Procedure Three (3) for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Approval Prior to Implementation – typically six months before implementation.

Because a variety of individuals are involved in the substantive change process, the SACSCOC matrix below has been adapted to delineate responsibilities in identifying, reporting, and documenting substantive changes.

COMMON SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

Type of Change	Required Approval from SACSCOC	Committee Visit	Fee	Documentation and Submission Timeline	Responsible Offices at PVCC
Program Changes					
<p><i>Method of Delivery</i></p> <p>Adding a method of instructional delivery to an existing program requires notification prior to implementation, where 50% or more of the content is delivered.</p> <p>Teach-out and closure approval is necessary if a method of delivery is removed from an existing program.</p> <p>The three methods of delivery are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. competency-based education 2. distance education, 3. face-to-face instruction 	Procedure Two: Notification	No	No	<p>Notification prior to implementation</p> <p>Teach-out Plan for closure of a method of delivery</p>	VP-ISS, Deans, Faculty, SACSCOC Liaison
<p><i>New Program – Approval</i></p> <p>A new program with 50-100% new content is a significant departure from the institution’s existing programs and requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation.</p>	Procedure Three: Approval from the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	Yes	<p>Prospectus</p> <p>January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.</p>	VP-ISS, Deans, Faculty, SACSCOC Liaison
<p><i>New Program – Notification</i></p> <p>A new program with 25-49% new content is a significant departure from the institution’s existing programs and requires notification prior to implementation.</p>	Procedure Two: Notification	No	No	<p>Notification prior to implementation</p>	VP-ISS, Deans, Faculty, SACSCOC Liaison

<i>Program Closure</i>	Procedure Three: Approval from the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	No	Teach-out plan Should be submitted as soon as possible after the decision is made to close.	VP-ISS, Deans, Faculty, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Program Re-open</i> A closed program may re-open within five years of the closure date by submitting a notification.	Procedure Two: Notification	No	No	Notification prior to implementation	VP-ISS, Deans, Faculty, SACSCOC Liaison
Off-campus Instructional Site/Additional Location Changes					
<i>Off-campus Instructional Site Notification</i> An off-campus instructional site at which 25-49% of a program's instruction is delivered requires notification prior to implementation.	Procedure Two: Notification	No	No	Notification prior to implementation	VP-ISS, Deans, Faculty, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Off-campus Instructional Site Approval (including branch campus)</i> An off-campus instructional site at which 50% or more of a program's instruction is delivered requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. There are two site approval pathways: • approval by an extensive review • approval by limited review. The pathway available to an institution depends on • the number of sites previously approved by extensive review and • the status of an institution at the time a site prospectus is submitted to SACSCOC.	Procedure Three: Extensive Review: Approval of the Full Board of Trustees OR Reaffirmation Procedure Three: Limited Review: Approval from the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	Contingent	Yes	Prospectus Extensive Review: March 15 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and September 1 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year Limited Review: January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for	President, VP-ISS, Deans, Faculty, SACSCOC Liaison

				changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.	
<i>Off-campus Instructional Site Re-open</i> An off-campus instructional site previously approved for closure may be re-opened within five years of the closure date by submitting the notification.	Procedure Two: Notification	No	No	Notification prior to implementation	VP-ISS, SACSCOC Liaison

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

Type of Change	Required Approval from SACSCOC	Committee Visit	Fee	Documentation and Submission Timeline	Responsible Offices at PVCC
Institutional Changes					
<i>Change in measure of student progress to completion.</i>	Procedure Three: Approval from the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	Yes	Prospectus January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.	President, VP-ISS, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Competency-based education by course/credit-based approach – institutional level approval.</i>	Procedure Three: Approval from the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	Yes	Prospectus January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1	VPISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison

				through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.	
<i>Distance Education – Institutional-level approval</i>	Procedure Three: Approval from the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	Yes	Prospectus January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.	President, VIPISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Governance Change</i>	Procedure One: Notification and Approval of the Full Board of Trustees	Yes	Yes	Notification and Prospectus March 15 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and September 1 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year.	President, College Board, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Institution Closure</i>	Procedure Three: Approval from Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	No	Teach-out plan January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the	President, College Board, President's Staff, SACSCOC Liaison

				subsequent calendar year.	
<i>Institution Relocation</i>	Procedure Three: Approval from the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	Yes	Prospectus January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.	President, College Board, President's Staff, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Institution, Program, or Location Acquisition from another institution</i>	Procedure One: Notification and Approval of the Full Board of Trustees	Yes	Yes	Notification and Prospectus March 15 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and September 1 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year.	President, College Board, President's Staff, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Institutional Contingency Teach-out Plan</i> An institutional contingency teach-out plan must be approved if any of the following occur: a. the institution is placed on probation by SACSCOC, b. SACSCOC acts to end the institution's accreditation, c. the institution's state authorization is revoked, d. the institution is on provisional certification for federal financial aid by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE),	Procedure Three: Approval from Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	No	Teach-out plan January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the	President, President's Staff, SACSCOC Liaison

e. the institution is on reimbursement for federal financial aid by USDE or f. the institution is the subject of emergency action by USDE.				subsequent calendar year.	
<i>Level Change</i>	Procedure Three: Approval of the Full Board of Trustees	Yes	Yes	Level change application March 15 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and September 1 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year.	President, VP-ISS, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Merger/Consolidation</i>	Procedure One: Notification and Approval of the Full Board of Trustees	Yes	Yes	Notification and Prospectus March 15 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and September 1 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year	President, President's Staff, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Mission Change</i> A significant change in the established mission of an institution requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. A mission change fundamentally alters the character of an institution and its portfolio of academic programs or other mission-driven activities.	Procedure Three: Approval from Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	Yes	Prospectus January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30	President, President's Cabinet, SACSCOC Liaison

				of the subsequent calendar year.	
<i>Ownership, Means of Control, or Legal Status Change</i>	Procedure One: Notification and Approval of the Full Board of Trustees	Yes	Yes	Notification and Prospectus March 15 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and September 1 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year	President, President's Cabinet, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Prison Education Program – Institutional-level Approval</i>	Procedure One: Notification and Approval of the Executive Council of the Board OR Full Board of Trustees	Yes	Yes	Prospectus and Site Visit for Approval of First Two PEP Sites January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.	President, VP-ISS, Academic Deans, President's Cabinet, SACSCOC Liaison
Program Changes					
<i>Clock-Credit Hour Conversion</i>	Procedure Three: Approval from Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	No	Prospectus January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be	VP-ISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison

				implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.	
<p><i>Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment</i></p> <p>A program in which 50% or more of the program may be earned through the direct assessment approach to competency-based education (CBE) requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation. Each direct assessment CBE program requires SACSCOC approval, independent of prior direct assessment program approvals for the institution.</p>	<p>Procedure Three: Approval of the Full Board of Trustees</p>	Yes	Yes	<p>Prospectus</p> <p>March 15 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in June of the same calendar year, and September 1 for review at the Board's biannual meeting in December of the same calendar year</p>	<p>VP-ISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison</p>
<p><i>Competency-based Education by Direct Assessment</i></p> <p>A program in which 25-49% of the program may be earned through the direct-assessment approach to competency-based education (CBE) requires SACSCOC notification prior to implementation.</p>	<p>Procedure Two: Notification</p>	No	No	<p>Notification prior to implementation</p>	<p>VP-ISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison</p>
<p><i>Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Title IV Entities</i></p>	<p>Procedure Two: Notification</p>	No	No	<p>Notification prior to implementation</p>	<p>VP-ISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison</p>
<p><i>Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Approval</i></p> <p>An agreement with an entity (or entities) not certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education Title IV programs to deliver 25-50% of a program's content recorded on the SACSCOC institution's transcript as its own requires SACSCOC approval prior to implementation.</p>	<p>Procedure Three: Approval from Executive Council of the Board of Trustees</p>	No	Yes	<p>Prospectus</p> <p>January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.</p>	<p>VP-ISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison</p>

<p><i>Cooperative Academic Arrangement with Non-Title IV Entities – Notification</i></p> <p>An agreement with an entity (or entities) not certified to participate in U.S. Department of Education Title IV programs to deliver less than 25% of a program’s content recorded on the SACSCOC institution’s transcript as its own requires notification prior to implementation.</p>	<p>Procedure Two: Notification</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Notification prior to implementation</p>	<p>VP-ISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison</p>
<p><i>Correspondence Education</i></p>	<p>Procedure Three: Approval from Executive Council of the Board of Trustees</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Prospectus January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.</p>	<p>VP-ISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison</p>
<p><i>Dual Academic Award</i></p>	<p>Procedure Two: Notification</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Notification prior to implementation</p>	<p>VP-ISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison</p>
<p><i>Joint Academic Award with non-SACSCOC Institution(s) or Entity(ies)</i></p>	<p>Procedure Three: Approval from Executive Council of the Board of Trustees</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Prospectus January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.</p>	<p>VP, AVP, Dean, VP-ISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison</p>
<p><i>Joint Academic Award with SACSCOC Institution(s)</i></p>	<p>Procedure Two: Notification</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Notification prior to implementation</p>	<p>VP-ISS, Deans, SACSCOC Liaison</p>

<p><i>Program Designed for Prior Learning</i></p> <p>Initiating a program requiring students to possess prior learning as a condition of admission requires notification prior to implementation.</p>	<p>Procedure Two: Notification</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Notification prior to implementation</p>	<p>VP-ISS, Deans, Faculty, SACSCOC Liaison</p>
<p><i>Program Length Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • program credit hours (or an equivalent or comparable measure of progress such as clock hours or demonstrated competencies) increase or decrease by 25% or more <p>— AND —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students' expected time to completion increases or decreases by more than one term or its equivalent or comparable measure. 	<p>Procedure Three: Approval from Executive Council of the Board of Trustees</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Prospectus</p> <p>January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.</p>	<p>VP-ISS, Deans, Faculty, SACSCOC Liaison</p>
<p>Off-campus Instructional Site/Additional Location Changes</p>					
<p><i>Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation – Non-branch campus</i></p> <p>The new location must serve the same geographic area or the same pool of students. Otherwise, the current location must be closed (requires a teach-out plan and closure approval), and the new location must be subject to notification or approval.</p>	<p>Procedure Two: Notification</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Notification prior to implementation</p>	<p>President, VP-ISS, SACSCOC Liaison</p>
<p><i>Off-campus Instructional Site Relocation – Branch Campus</i></p> <p>The new location must serve the same geographic area or the same pool of students. Otherwise, the current location must be closed (requires a teach-out plan and closure approval), and the new location must be subject to notification or approval.</p>	<p>Procedure Three: Approval from Executive Council of the Board of Trustees</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Prospectus</p> <p>January 1 for changes to be implemented July 1 through December 31 of the same calendar year, and July 1 for changes to be implemented January 1 through June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.</p>	<p>President, VP-ISS, SACSCOC Liaison</p>

<i>Off-campus Instructional Site Name or Address Change</i>	Procedure Two: Notification	No	No	Notification prior to implementation	President, President's Cabinet, SACSCOC Liaison
<i>Off-campus Instructional Site Closure</i>	Procedure Three: Approval from Executive Council of the Board of Trustees	No	No	Teach-out Plan Should be submitted as soon as possible after the decision is made to close	President, President's Cabinet, SACSCOC Liaison