



FAULKNER UNIVERSITY

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE

Section: **Academic - University Registrar**
 Policy Number: **xxxx**
 Past Revisions: **N/A**

Effective: **June 1, 2012**
 Revision: **N/A**
 Reviewed: **September 2017 DR**

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all substantive changes at Faulkner University (FAU) are reported to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) in a timely fashion. [Member institutions are **required** to notify the SACSCOC of changes in accordance with its substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval their prior to the initiation of changes.]

Definition: 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 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 SACSCOC Board of Trustees **has approved additional substantive changes** that require notification and, in some cases, approval prior to implementation. The SACSCOC policy and its

procedures (available on its website, <http://www.sacscoc.org/index.asp>) address substantive changes identified through both Federal regulations and its own Board approval.

SACSCOC Procedures Outlining Substantive Change: There are three procedures for addressing the different types of substantive changes included in SACSCOC's policy:

- *Procedure One* for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Notification **and** Approval Prior to Implementation;
- *Procedure Two* for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring **Only** Notification Prior to Implementation;
- *Procedure Three* for Closing a Program, Site, Branch Campus or Institution.

Procedures for the following types of changes are included in a separate SACSCOC document entitled, "*Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status.*" Under Federal regulations and for the purposes of SACSCOC policy, these substantive changes include:

- Initiating mergers or consolidations;
- Acquiring any program or site from another institution;
- Adding as a permanent location any site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that is closing;
- Changes in governance, ownership, means of control or legal status.

The initiation or revision of programs not offered for academic credit and that are not eligible for federal financial aid does not require reporting; however, such programs are subject to review at the time of reaffirmation.

Procedure One: These substantive changes require notification, submission of an application or a prospectus, and approval by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees prior to implementation by the institution. They are as follows:

- Initiating coursework, certificates, or programs of study at a different level than those previously approved by SACSCOC.
- Initiating certificate programs for workforce development.
- Initiating other certificate programs. [Certificate programs consisting of courses drawn from the existing approved curriculum for a degree or diploma program do not require separate approval; they are considered to be included in the institution's current accreditation. However, to offer such a certificate at a new site requires approval of the site. A certificate that is a significant departure from previously approved programs must be approved in advance—the same as any other new program.]
- Initiating an off-campus (additional) site (*site-based/classroom group instruction*) at which students can earn at least 50 percent of the credits toward an educational program.
- Initiating degree completion programs.
- Initiating a branch campus.

- Initiating distance learning or correspondence courses and programs by which students can earn at least 50 percent of a program's credits through delivery in a format other than face-to-face.
- Expanding at the institution's current degree level (*significant departure from current programs*).
- Initiating a significant change in the established mission of the institution.
- Changing from clock hours to credit hours.
- Changing significantly the length of a program, substantially increasing the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program.
- Relocating a main or branch campus.
- Initiating a collaborative academic program with another institution not accredited by SACSCOC.
- Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs.

Procedure Two: These are substantive changes requiring an institution to only notify the President of SACSCOC prior to implementation by the institution. They are as follows:

- For site-based/classroom group instruction (where the instructor is present):
 - a. Initiating an off-campus site at which a student may earn at least 25 percent but less than 50 percent of credits toward a program.
 - b. Adding significantly different programs if 50 percent or more of the credit for such programs may be earned at the site.
- For distance learning/technology-based group or individual instruction (where the instructor and student are geographically separated):
 - a. Offering for the first time credit courses via distance learning/technology-based instruction by which students can obtain at least 25 but less than 50 percent of their credits toward an educational program.
 - b. Adding programs (approved for the institution) that are significantly different from previously reported programs offered through distance learning.
- Adding correspondence education courses or programs that are significantly different from those that were initially approved for the institution or site.
- Initiating programs/courses delivered through contractual agreement or a consortium.
- Moving an approved off-campus instructional site within the same geographic area to serve essentially the same pool of students.
- Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides less than 25 percent of an educational program offered by the accredited institution.

Procedure Three: Closing a Program, Instructional Site, Branch Campus or an Institution: Teach-Out Plans and Teach-Out Agreements.

In accordance with Federal regulations, an institution is required to submit a teach-out plan to SACSCOC for approval if any of the following occurs:

1. The USDOE notifies the Commission that it has initiated an emergency action against an institution or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any Title IV, HEA program.
2. The Commission terminates accreditation or candidacy.
3. The institution notifies the Commission that it intends to cease operations entirely or close a location that provides at least 50% of at least one program.
4. A State Licensing or authorizing agency notifies the Commission that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked.

If an institution decides to close an educational program, approved instructional site, branch campus, or the entire institution, it must choose one of the following options:

1. The institution teaches out currently enrolled students; no longer admits students to programs; and terminates the program, the operations of an approved instructional site or a branch campus, or the operations of an institution after students have graduated. (***Teach-out plan**)
2. The institution enters into a contract for another institution or organization to teach out the educational programs or program. (***Teach-out agreement**)

Teach-out plans and teach-out agreements **must be approved in advance of implementation** by SACSCOC.

[*Teach-out agreement - a written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location **that provides fifty percent or more of at least one program offered**, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study.

***Teach-out plan** - a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location **that provides fifty percent or more of at least one program**, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions.]

Faulkner's Procedures for Addressing Substantive Change: The following procedures delineate how Faulkner University complies with the SACSCOC Substantive Change policy (summarized above and thoroughly on its website), as well as how it ensures that all substantive changes are reported in a timely fashion.

1. All significant modifications or expansions of the nature and scope of the institution, as described in this policy, are brought to the attention of the University's Accreditation Liaison.

2. Once the Liaison is satisfied that the change falls under the purview of this policy, he/she submits the policy through the University's approved curricular process, as stipulated in its Curriculum Committee by-laws.
3. Approved changes (deemed substantive) are then relayed to the SACSCOC per the directives of the policy.
4. All substantive changes will comply with the timeline provided by the SACSCOC's Substantive Change guidelines as stipulated on its website.
5. The Liaison will regularly familiarize faculty, staff, and students with the Commission's accrediting policies and procedures, to assist university constituents to recognize changes that should be identified as substantive. This will serve in large measure to prevent the inadvertent implementation of a substantive change contrary to the dictates of this policy.
6. The Liaison will catalog and archive all substantive changes for easy access and reference. Furthermore, the Liaison will regularly peruse changes at the University to ensure against the inadvertent implementation of a substantive change contrary to the dictates of this policy.