

ACCREDITATION

Policy 60150: Substantive Change

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist the College with maintaining compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 of the *Principles of Accreditation* of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

2. Policy

2.1 A significant modification or expansion in the nature and scope of an accredited institution is known as a substantive change. An institution with a substantive change is required to report that change. Germanna Community College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges (CoC) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. SACS accredits an entire institution and its programs and services, wherever they are located or however they are delivered. The Commission is responsible for reviewing all substantive changes that occur between an institution's reviews to determine if the change has affected the quality of the institution and to assure the public that all aspects of the institution meet defined standards. It is the institution's responsibility to follow the substantive change procedures as outlined by SACS.

2.2 The most common, but not all, of the substantive changes needing notification and/or a substantive change prospectus are:

- Initiation and expansion of distance learning programs
- Establishing branch campuses or additional instructional locations
- Addition of new degree programs
expanding to a new level
resulting in a significant modification in the institution's current offerings
- Consolidation/merger
- Change of governance or control

2.3 When 25 to 49% of a program's credits are to be delivered as described above, then notification only is needed. However, when at least 50% of a program's credits are to be offered, then notification to the CoC is necessary via the submission of a prospectus.

2.4 In most cases, substantive changes need to be reported at least six (6) months before implementation. If required, the prospectus is submitted three (3) months in advance.

2.5 The situations pertinent to Germanna Community College that will always trigger an on-site visit by the CoC are:

- Initiation of an additional location at which a student can earn at least 50% of his/her credits toward a degree/certificate program if the institution:
 - has a total of three or fewer approved locations; or,
 - has not demonstrated to the Commissions satisfaction that it has a proven record of effective educational oversight of additional locations; or
 - has been placed on sanction by the Commission or is subject to some limitation on its accreditation.
- The initiation of a branch campus.

2.6 There are two types of substantive changes: 1) notification only and 2) notification and approval.

- Potential substantive changes pertinent to Germanna Community College requiring only notification to SACS prior to implementation are as follows:
 - site based/classroom group instruction (where the instructor is present) and there is initiation of an off-campus site at which a student might earn more than 25% and less than 50% of credits toward a program, thereafter reporting 50% or more of a degree program;
 - site based/classroom group instruction (where the instructor is present) and the institution is adding significantly different degree programs (approved for the institution) at a currently approved off-campus site (does not apply to new sites);

- distance learning/technology-based group or individual instruction (where the instructor and student are geographically separated) and the college is offering credit courses via distance learning instruction and students can obtain at least 25% of their credits toward a degree program (thereafter reporting 50 % or more of a degree program or an entire degree program);
 - distance learning/technology-based group or individual instruction (where the instructor and the student are geographically separated) and the college is adding significantly different programs (approved for the institution) from previously reported programs offered through distance learning;
 - initiating significant changes in existing technology-based delivery systems in distance learning (off-campus programs);
 - relocating a main campus.
- Potential substantive changes pertinent to Germanna Community College that require notification and approval by SACS prior to implementation include the following:
 - expansion of distance learning programs;
 - establishing branch campuses
 - establishing additional instructional locations where when at least 50% of a program's credits are to be offered;
 - addition of new degree programs
 - expanding to a new level
 - resulting in a significant modification in the institution's current offerings
 - consolidation/merger
 - change of governance or control.

3. Procedure

4. Definitions

5. References

6. Point of Contact

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services

7. Approval and Revision Dates

Approved by President's Council on February 18th, 2008

ACCREDITATION

Substantive Change Procedures

1. Purpose

The purpose of these procedures is to assist the College with maintaining compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 of the *Principles of Accreditation* of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

2. Procedures

2.1. The procedures for substantive changes requiring **notification only** are as follows:

The appropriate Dean of Instruction and/or Dean of Distance Learning informs the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services, at least seven months prior to the change taking place, that the change is expected.

The Vice President will inform the Accreditation Liaison Officer and the President that a letter of notification of the change needs to be sent to the President of the Commission on Colleges.

The President will send the letter at least six months before the change is expected to take place; the President will inform the Deans, the Vice President and the Accreditation Liaison Officer if it appears that a writing team is needed to prepare additional materials for the proposal.

The Vice President will appoint the appropriate Dean(s) to head the writing team which is to include the Accreditation Liaison Officer.

When SACS responds with the decision, the President will alert the Accreditation Liaison Officer and the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services who will proceed to implement the plan.

2.2.1 The procedures for substantive changes requiring **notification and approval** are as follows:

The Deans of Instruction and Distance Learning will monitor program and course offerings at off-campus sites. When building the semester and summer schedules, courses offered at off campus sites will be noted in terms of the percentage of a program or potential program, and the history of courses offered at the site which add potential for having 50% of the

program available within seven months will be a factor included in an analysis of the offerings.

If the analysis shows that a student can earn 40% of credits toward a degree program, at least seven months before the initiation of the program/courses at full potential:

- The appropriate dean will consult with the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services who will notify the President and the College's Accreditation Liaison officer that the College is close to offering a program at 50%, and that a letter of notification for prior approval needs to be sent to SACS;
- Form a writing team that will include the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer, and begin to prepare a Substantive Change Prospectus document that addresses the situation of a student being able to earn 50% of credits toward a degree program at an off campus site.
- Submit the prospectus to the Vice President at least four weeks before it is to be submitted to SACS;
- The Vice President will note comments and submit the document to the President and the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer.
- Feedback will be provided to the appropriate dean(s) who will make adjustments, obtain appropriate signatures, and send the document so notification to SACS can be accomplished at least three months before initiation of the program at the site.

When programs are to be added to a site or to distance learning, at least seven months before the initiation of the program at the site:

- The Dean of Instruction responsible for the program and/or the Dean at the campus closest to the off-campus site will inform the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services prior to the offering of the program.
- The Vice President will inform the President and the College's Accreditation Liaison officer that prior approval needs to be sought via a letter from the College's President to the SACS President.
- The dean(s) will form a writing team that will include the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer, and will begin to prepare a Substantive Change Prospectus document that will be submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services at least four weeks before it is to be sent to SACS and four months before initiation of the program at the site.
- The Vice President will make comments and forward the document to the President of the College and the Accreditation Liaison Officer for comments and approval.
- The deans will make adjustments, obtain appropriate signatures, and send the document so notification to SACS can be accomplished at least three months before initiation of the addition of the programs.

When a program or degree that is significantly different from already approved programs is/are to be added to an already approved off-campus location, at least seven months prior to the offering:

- The Dean of Instruction at the campus closest to the off-campus site will inform the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services.
- The Vice President will inform the President and the Accreditation Liaison Officer that a letter of notification will need to be sent to the President of SACS.
- The dean will form a writing team that will include the College's Liaison Officer, and will begin to prepare a Substantive Change Prospectus.
- The dean will submit the prospectus to the Vice President at least four weeks before it is to be sent to SACS and four months before initiation of the program or degree.
- The Vice President will make comments and submit the document to the President and the College's Accreditation Liaison Officer for comments.
- Feedback will be provided to the appropriate dean(s) who will make adjustments, obtain appropriate signatures and send the document so notification to SACS is accomplished at least three months before initiation of the significantly different program or degree.

When at least 50% of credits toward a degree are to be offered via distance learning, at least seven months before initiation prior to the offering:

- The Dean of Distance Learning, in conjunction with the Dean of Instruction who is responsible for the program, will inform the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services about the program.
- The Vice President will notify the President of the College and the College Liaison Officer that a letter of notification is needed for SACS.
- The dean will form a writing team to include the Accreditation Liaison Officer, and will prepare a Substantive Change Prospectus document.
- At least four weeks before the document needs to go to SACS and four months before initiation of the program, the document will be given to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services.
- The Vice President will make comments and give a copy to the President and the Accreditation Liaison Officer for comments.
- Feedback will be provided to the appropriate dean(s) who will make adjustments, obtain appropriate signatures and send the document so notification to SACS can be accomplished at least three months before initiation of the distance learning program(s).

When initiating a branch campus:

- The Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services in conjunction with the Accreditation Liaison Officer will notify the President of the College that a notification needs to be sent to SACS at least six months prior to the campus opening.
- The President will send the letter to SACS.
- The Vice President in conjunction with the Liaison will form a writing team and prepare the Substantive Change Prospectus.
- The document will be presented to the President at least two weeks before needing to be sent to SACS, and 3 1/2 months before initiation of the branch campus.

When changing the length of a program:

- At least seven months prior to offering the change, the Dean of Instruction responsible for the program and, if applicable, the Dean of Distance Learning, will inform the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services.
- The Vice President will notify the President of the College and the College Liaison Officer that a letter of notification is needed for SACS.
- The dean will form a writing team to include the Accreditation Liaison Officer, and will prepare a Substantive Change Prospectus document.
- At least four weeks before the document needs to go to SACS and four months before initiation of the program, the document will be given to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services.
- The Vice President will make comments and give a copy to the President and the Accreditation Liaison Officer for comments.
- Feedback will be provided to the appropriate dean who will make adjustments, obtain appropriate signatures and send the document so notification to SACS can be accomplished at least three months before initiation of the change in length of the program.

When adding programs or courses that represent a significant departure from those that were in place when the institution was last evaluated, depending on the nature of the program or courses:

- The Dean of Instruction responsible for the program and/or the Dean of Distance Learning as appropriate will notify the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services.
- The Vice President will notify the President of the College and the College Liaison Officer that a letter of notification is needed for SACS.
- The dean will form a writing team to include the Accreditation Liaison Officer, and will prepare a Substantive Change Prospectus document.
- At least four weeks before the document needs to go to SACS and four months before initiation of the program, the document will be given to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services.

- The Vice President will make comments and give a copy to the President and the Accreditation Liaison Officer for comments.
- Feedback will be provided to the appropriate dean who will make adjustments, obtain appropriate signatures and send the document so notification to SACS can be accomplished at least three months before initiation of the addition of programs or courses that represent a significant departure from those that were in place when the institution was last evaluated.

When SACS responds with the decision, the President will alert the Accreditation Liaison Officer and the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Services who will proceed to implement the plan.

3. References

Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions, Policy Statement; Principles of Accreditation, 1.3.1; Institutional Responsibility for Reporting Substantive Changes, Principles of Accreditation

Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges – Policy Statement,

Resource Manual for the Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement.

The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement

R. Jackson, R. Russell, G. Lord, J. Allen. Substantive Change Workshop. CoC Annual Meeting, 12-10- 2006.]