

The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Substantive Change Policy

- INTERIM -

<u>Number</u>	02.01.53
<u>Division</u>	Academic Affairs
<u>Date</u>	August 2015
<u>Purpose</u>	To establish a policy and procedures for reporting substantive changes in academic curriculum, policy, and/or operations to governing bodies outside the university.
<u>Policy</u>	The University is responsible for obtaining approval or informing, often in advance, of any substantive changes in academic curriculum, policy and/or operations to governing bodies outside the university. These governing bodies include accrediting bodies, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), the State of Alabama Department of Education, and the State of Alabama Nursing Board. In addition, the UAH faculty, staff and students have an important role in developing, reviewing, and giving input on academic curriculum, policy and other substantive changes.

Procedure **Definitions and Requirements**

In its policy on Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions, SACSCOC defines substantive change broadly as any “significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” The term “substantive change” includes items that are required by regulations of the U.S. Department of Education governing accrediting bodies of higher education institutions (34 CFR Sec. 602.22), as well as some additional items required by SACSCOC.

SACSCOC informs institutions of their institutional obligations:

1. “Member institutions are required to notify the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of changes.”

2. “Member institutions are required to have a policy and procedure to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Commission in a timely fashion.”

“Under federal regulations, a 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”

“The SACSCOC Board of Trustees has approved additional substantive changes that require notification and, in some cases, approval prior to implementation.”

The most current SACSCOC requirements, policies, and definitions can be found on the SACSCOC website, including cases where approval is needed prior to implantation (<http://www.sacscoc.org>).

The Provost appointed SACSCOC Liaison works with departments, colleges and other campus units to notify and remind them of their responsibilities for complying with this policy on substantive changes. The SACSCOC Liaison serves as a resource to the campus regarding substantive change and ensures that information regarding this policy, associated resources available from SACSCOC, and answers to questions are available to the campus community.

Approval Procedure for a Substantive Change

At the earliest stage of preliminary planning, vice presidents, deans and directors notify the Provost in writing and copy the SACSCOC Liaison of any potential change that could be deemed substantive as defined in this policy. These notifications include: (a) the title of the proposed change; (b) a brief description of the change, including its nature (e.g., new educational program, initiation of distance education) and its scope (one program, multiple programs in one college, inter-collegiate program, etc.); (c) contact information for the responsible individual; (d) a delineation of the steps in the approval process (e.g., The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama, Alabama Commission on Higher Education, etc.) including a tentative timeline for each step of the approval process; and (e) the earliest possible date for implementation.

After consultation with appropriate individuals and entities, the Provost determines whether the proposed change should move forward for further development, be modified, or be set aside. If the decision is made to move forward with a substantive change, the steps in the approval process are finalized, and a timeline established.

It is the responsibility of the Provost and the UAH Office of Academic Affairs to notify SACSCOC when substantive changes occur. In accordance with the Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions policy, some changes require that prior approval be obtained from SACSCOC before they can be implemented.

When the unit receives approval of the proposed substantive change from the Provost, the proposers of change must follow the approved steps for approval and the established timeline and keep the Provost and the SACSCOC Liaison apprised of the progress toward implementation of the potential change. In conjunction with those involved with the change, the Provost and the SACSCOC Liaison oversee the process of preparing appropriate notification to SACSCOC, The Board of Trustees, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and other official entities in the approval process.

Review

Academic Affairs will review this policy every five years or sooner as needed.

Approval

Chief University Counsel

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

President