

## SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE COLLEGE POLICIES

Policy Number: A. 5  
Policy Title: Substantive Change  
Relevant Board Policy: N/A  
Originating Unit: Office of the President  
Maintenance Unit: Office of the President

San Antonio College (SAC) is a member of and accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The U.S. Department of Education recognizes SACSCOC as an agency whose accreditation enables its members to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. SACSCOC has an obligation to the U.S. Department of Education to review and approve changes of a substantive nature initiated by its member institutions between decennial reviews. The SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy to which this policy refers, revised in 2010 to include expanded reporting requirements mandated by new federal regulations, can be found at [www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org). It states that:

- “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.”

The purpose of this policy is to establish institutional procedures for recognizing and approving substantive change and ensuring timely notification to the COC. The College’s SACS Accreditation Liaison is the individual responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

### DEFINITION:

According to SACSCOC, “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% 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."

***Substantive Changes requiring that Letters of Notification be sent to SACSCOC prior to implementation are:***

- Initiating an off-campus site at which a student may earn at least 25% but less than 50% of credits toward a program (*please be sure to include the street address and starting date*).
- Moving an approved off-campus instructional site within the same geographic area to serve essentially the same pool of students. The letter of notification must include the address of the old site, the address of the new site, and the starting date of the new site.
- 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% of their credits toward an educational program.
- Initiating programs/courses delivered through contractual agreement or a consortium. This provision *does not apply* to articulation agreements with other institutions, clinical agreements, or internship agreements.
- Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the accredited institution. A copy of the signed agreement must be provided.
- Repackaging of existing approved curriculum to create a new degree level, such as an institution that offers a full 120-hour baccalaureate program creating an associate degree from its lower-division offerings.
- Initiating a merger/consolidation, change of governance/means of control

***Substantive Changes requiring that a Prospectus be sent to SACSCOC and approval obtained from SACSCOC prior to implementation are:***

- Application for Level Change (eg. offering a Bachelor's degree).
- Offer 50% or more of a program at an off-campus site that has not been previously approved by the Commission
- Offering, for the first time, 50% or more of a program via distance delivery.

**SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE  
COLLEGE PROCEDURES**

Procedure Number: A.5

Procedure Title: Substantive Change

Relevant College Policy: A.5 – Substantive Change

Originating Unit: Office of the President

Maintenance Unit: Office of the President

- A. The President will maintain internal approval authority relating to each type of substantive change request sent to the SACSCOC.
  
- B. San Antonio College shall maintain academic program approval procedures and forms that:
  - 1. Recognize substantive changes related to academic programs (See attached matrix, *Appendix I*) in appropriate approval documents, including those related to curriculum review and dual credit agreements. These documents shall accompany any proposal for SACSCOC approval at each step;
  - 2. Require approval by the appropriate educational unit faculties and also include any recommendations offered by the corresponding department chair, dean, and/or Vice President prior to approval of academic substantive change by the College Academic Council;
  - 3. Provide for timely notification to the Commission on Colleges prior to change implementation, as required by the SACS substantive change policy.
  
- C. The Accreditation Liaison shall inform all responsible individuals at each level of the College, to include Vice presidents, Deans, Directors and Chairs, of the SACS substantive change policy and the institutional substantive change policy on a biannual basis (August and February) and at the same time shall request notification of substantive changes in planning for the next 12-month period. The 12-month timeframe will provide a long-range outlook to ensure that notifications can be carried out six months prior to implementation of substantive change. The Accreditation Liaison shall prepare the President's notification and/or request to the SACSCOC regarding the substantive changes that are reported.
  
- D. If a prospectus is subsequently required by the SACSCOC, the deans or appropriate senior administrators shall coordinate preparation of the prospectus and forward the prospectus to the Accreditation Liaison for final review.
  
- F. The Accreditation Liaison shall review a required prospectus and obtain approval of the President before preparing the prospectus for submission to SACSCOC by the President.

### Appendix I

Type of Change	Notification of SACS prior to implementation is required	Approval by SACS prior to implementation is required	Change is reported to the College's SACS liaison by	Mode of notification of SACS and timeline for submission of notification prior to planned implementation	Documentation prepared by
Initiating coursework or programs at a more advanced level than currently approved	No	Yes	Vice-President for Academic Affairs	Application for Level Change 12 months in advance and by either April 15 or October 1	Department Chair
Expanding at current degree level (significant departure from current program, e.g., number of faculty, new courses, learning resources, equipment and facilities, and other funded requirements)	Yes	Yes	Dean of the Arts and Sciences or Dean of Professional/Technical Education	Prospectus 6 months in advance	Department Chair
Initiating a branch campus	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months in advance	SACS Liaison
Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution: (See: <a href="#">"Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards."</a> ) Joint programs .....with another SACSCOC accredited institution	Yes	no	Vice-President for Academic Affairs	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution prior to implementation	Department Chair and Dean
.....with an institution not accredited by SACSCOC	yes	yes	Vice-President for Academic Affairs	Prospectus 6 months in advance	Department Chair and Dean
Dual programs	Yes	no	Vice-President for Academic Affairs	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution prior to implementation	Department Chair and Dean
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice					

...using existing approved courses	No	No	NA	None	NA
...at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	No	Yes	Dean of Professional/Technical Education	Modified prospectus Prior to implementation	Department Chair
...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	Yes	Yes	Dean of Professional/Technical Education	Modified prospectus Prior to implementation	Department Chair
Initiating other certificate programs					
... using existing approved courses	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
... at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	No	Yes	Dean of Professional/Technical Education	Prospectus Prior to implementation	Department Chair
...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	Yes	Yes	Dean of Professional/Technical Education	Prospectus 6 months in advance	Department Chair
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School and dual enrollment programs offered at the high school) where...					
...Student can obtain 50% or more credits toward program	No	Yes	Department Chair	Prospectus	Department Chair
...Student can obtain 25-49 percent of credit	Yes	No	Department Chair	Letter of notification Prior to implementation	Department Chair
...Student can obtain 24 percent or less	No	No	NA	None	NA
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites					
...Adding programs that are significantly different from current programs <u>at the site</u>	No	No	NA	None	NA
...Adding programs that are NOT significantly different from current programs <u>at the site</u>	No	No	NA	None	NA
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution	No	Yes	President	Contact Commission staff	SACS Liaison

Initiating distance learning...					
...Offering 50 percent or more of a program for the first time	No	Yes	Department Chair	Prospectus	Department Chair
...Offering 25-49 percent	Yes	No	Department Chair	Letter of notification Prior to implementation	Department Chair
...Offering 24 percent or less	No	No	NA	None	NA
Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	Yes	No	Vice-President for Academic Affairs	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement Prior to Implementation	Department Chair
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months in advance and either by April 15 or Sept 15	See "Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership: Review and Approval."
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months in advance and either by April 15 or Sept 15	See "Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership: Review and Approval."
Relocating a main or branch campus	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months in advance	SACS Liaison
Relocating an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	Yes	No	Vice-President for Academic Affairs	Letter of notification Prior to implementation	SACS Liaison
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	No	Yes	Director of Enrollment Management	Justify reasons for change, indicate calculation of equivalency, and other pertinent information	Department Chair or Program Coordinator and Dean
Altering significantly the length of a program	No	Yes	Department Chair, Dean	Prospectus	Department Chair
Initiating degree completion programs	No	Yes	Dean of Arts and Sciences	Prospectus	Department Chair

Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution					
...Institution to teach out its own students	Yes	Yes	Vice-President for Academic Affairs	Description of teach out plan w letter of notification Prior to implementation	Department Chair
...Institution contracts with another institution to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	Yes	Yes	Vice-President for Academic Affairs	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach out agreement detailing terms included with notification Prior to implementation	Department Chair or Program Director
Acquiring any program or site from another institution	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months prior	See "Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership: Review and Approval."
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing	Yes	Yes	President	Prospectus 6 months prior	See "Mergers, Consolidations and Change of Ownership: Review and Approval."

Questions regarding Substantive Change can be directed to Dr. Sarah Armstrong, Director of Substantive Change at SACSCOC, at [sarmstrong@sacscoc.org](mailto:sarmstrong@sacscoc.org).

*Links to SACSCOC Policies, Procedures and Instructions Regarding Substantive Change*

- Substantive Change Policy <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Substantive%20change%20policy.pdf>
- Substantive Change Letter of Notification <http://www.sacscoc.org/forms/principle/subchange/SC%20Letter%20of%20Notification.doc>
- Content of the Substantive Change Prospectus <http://www.sacscoc.org/forms/principle/locked%20Prospectus.doc>
- Procedure One: Requiring Notification and Approval Prior to Implementation, page 14 <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Substantive%20change%20policy.pdf>
- Procedure Two: Requiring Only Notification Prior to Implementation, page 19 <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Substantive%20change%20policy.pdf>
- Off-Campus Sites, Documentation for the Substantive Change Committee <http://www.sacscoc.org/subchg/policy/Distanceandcorrespondencepolicyfinal.pdf>

- Application for Accreditation at a More Advanced Degree Level  
<http://www.sacscoc.org/subchg/policy/LockedApplicationforMemberInstitutionsSeekingAccreditationataMoreAdvancedDegreeLevel.doc>
- Closing an Institution or Program: Teach-Out Arrangement  
<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Close%20program%20campus%20institution.pdf>
- Faculty Roster Form  
<http://www.sacscoc.org/subchg/policy/FACULTYROSTERFORM3.doc>
- Faculty Roster Instructions  
<http://www.sacscoc.org/subchg/policy/FACULTYROSTERINSTRUCTIONS.pdf>
- Agreements Involving Joint and Dual Academic Awards  
<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/AgreementsInvolvingDualandJointAwards.pdf>
- Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Mergers.pdf>