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**Subject: Substantive Change**

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**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Tidewater Community College's compliance with the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 for substantive change notification and approval.

**2. Policy**

Tidewater Community College shall notify and provide appropriate documentation to SACSCOC of substantive changes that are significant modifications or expansions in the nature and scope of the college. SACSCOC shall be informed of such changes according to the procedures set forth in its [Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement](#) and delineated in the Procedures section below.

**3. Responsibilities**

The Vice President for Student Learning and Chief Academic Officer, in consultation with the campus provosts and the college's SACSCOC Liaison, shall be responsible for monitoring compliance with procedures that are consistent with this policy and that comply with applicable policies and procedures of SACSCOC. The SACSCOC Liaison shall be responsible for ensuring that procedures for reporting substantive change comply with the requirements set forth in the Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement.

#### 4. Procedures

4.1 The procedures, prior notification requirements, timeframe for contacting the SACSCOC, prior approval requirements, and documentation requirements for all matters related to substantive change are delineated in the table below which is extracted from the SACSCOC Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement.

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved	NA	NA	Yes	Application for Level Change Due dates: April 15 or September 15
Expanding at current degree level ( <i>significant departure from current programs</i> )	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating a branch campus	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating a certificate program at employer's request and on short notice				
...using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	NA
...at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	NA	NA	Yes	Modified prospectus
...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	Yes	Approval required prior to implementation	Yes	Modified prospectus
Initiating other certificate programs				
... using existing approved courses	NA	NA	NA	NA
... at a new off-campus site (previously approved program)	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
...that is a significant departure from previously approved programs	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution	NA	NA	Yes	Contact Commission Staff
Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Letter of notification and copy of signed agreement
Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus Due dates: April 15 or September 15

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
Initiating joint or dual degrees with another institution:  Joint programs - with another SACSCOC accredited institution  - with an institution not accredited by SACSCOC  Dual programs	Yes  Yes  Yes	Prior to implementation  6 months  Prior to implementation	NA  Yes  No	Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution  Prospectus  Copy of signed agreement and contact information for each institution
Initiating off-campus sites (including Early College High School and dual enrollment programs offered at the high school)  ...Student can obtain 50 percent or more credits toward program  ...Student can obtain 25-49 percent of credit  ...Student can obtain 24 percent or less	NA  Yes  NA	NA  Prior to implementation  NA	Yes  NA  NA	Prospectus  Letter of notification  NA
Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites  ...Adding programs that are significantly different from current programs <u>at the site</u>  ...Adding programs that are NOT significantly different from current programs <u>at the site</u>	NA  NA	NA  NA	NA  NA	NA  NA
Altering significantly the length of a program	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating degree completion programs	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
Acquiring any program or site from another institution	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus Due dates: April 15 or September 15

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
Initiating distance learning...				
...Offering 50 percent or more of a program <u>for the first time</u> (Adding subsequent programs requires advance notification <b>only</b> for programs that are significant departures from the originally approved programs)	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
...Offering 25-49 percent	Yes	Prior to implementation	No	Letter of notification
...Offering 24 percent or less	NA	NA	NA	NA
Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV programs				
... if the entity provides 25% or more of an educational program offered by the COC accredited institution	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
... if the entity provides less than 25% of an educational program offered by the accredited institution	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Copy of the signed agreement
Relocating a main or branch campus	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus
Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographic area)	Yes	Prior to implementation	NA	Letter of notification with new address and starting date
Changing from clock hours to credit hours	NA	NA	Yes	Justify reasons for change, indicate calculation of equivalency, & other pertinent information
Altering significantly the length of a program	NA	NA	Yes	Prospectus
Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing	Yes	6 months	Yes	Prospectus

Types of Change	Prior Notification Required	Time Frame for Contacting COC	Prior Approval Required	Documentation
Closing a program, approved off-campus site, branch campus, or institution				
...Institution to teach out its own students	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Yes	Description of teach-out plan included with letter of notification
...Institution contracts with another institution to teach-out students (Teach-out Agreement)	Yes	Immediately following decision to close	Yes	Description of teach-out plan, copy of signed teach-out agreement detailing terms included in notification

- 4.2 The Vice President for Student Learning and Chief Academic Officer will inform the college's SACSCOC Liaison of any potential substantive change, as delineated in the above chart, prior to review or action by the President's Executive Staff.
- 4.3 The Vice President for Student Learning and Chief Academic Officer, working with the college's SACSCOC Liaison and the President, will prepare any required letters of notification and/or prospectuses for delivery to SACSCOC within the required timeframe as specified in the Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement.
- 4.4 The college's SACSCOC Liaison will review the SACSCOC Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges in February and August of each year. Subsequently, the SACSCOC Liaison will report the results of the review to the President and the President's Executive Staff to include: 1) the impact of any policy changes on all units of the college; 2) a review of the appropriate notification and/or approval procedures; 3) a review of appropriate follow-up actions as described in the SACSCOC Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges; and 4) a review of all required notifications and/or approvals and their respective timelines as prescribed by the SACSCOC Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges.

## 5. Definitions

**Substantive Change** – a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Under federal regulations, substantive change includes:

1. any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution;
2. any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution;

3. 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;
4. the addition of courses or programs at a degree or credential level above that which is included in the institution's current accreditation or reaffirmation;
5. a change from clock hours to credit hours;
6. a substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program;
7. 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;
8. the establishment of a branch campus;
9. closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution;
10. entering into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes only the initiation of a dual or joint academic program with another institution;
11. acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution;
12. adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution; and
13. 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.

## **6. References**

[SACSCOC Policy Statement – Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges](#)

## **7. Review Periodicity and Responsibility**

The SACSCOC Liaison shall review this policy in February and August of each year and, if necessary, recommend revisions.

## **8. Effective Date and Approval**

This policy is effective upon its approval by the College President on February 28, 2013.

Policy Approved:

Procedure Developed:

Edna V. Baehre-Kolovani, Ph.D.  
President

Curtis K. Aasen  
Director of Institutional Effectiveness

## 9. Review and Revision History

The initial version of this policy was approved July 26, 2012.

- Revision 1
  - Revised to reflect changes made by SACSCOC to the procedures set forth in its Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges Policy Statement.

Approved February 28, 2013 by President Edna V. Baehre-Kolovani, Ph.D.