



POLICY STATEMENT 116

REPORTING SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE TO SACSCOC

POLICY DIGEST

Monitoring Unit: Office of Academic Affairs

Initially Issued: September 4, 2013

Last Revised: October 30, 2018

I. PURPOSE:

To establish the requirements and procedures to ensure that Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College (LSU) notifies the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the university's regional accrediting body, of all substantive changes in a timely fashion, and when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of those changes.

II. DEFINITIONS:

According to SACSCOC, a substantive change is “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution” (see Source A). Under federal regulations, substantive change includes the following:

- A. Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution
- B. Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution
- C. 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
- D. 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
- E. A change from clock hours to credit hours
- F. A substantial increase or decrease in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program
- G. 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
- H. The establishment of a branch campus
- I. Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus, or institution
- J. Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes only the initiation of such as a dual degree program or a joint academic degree program with another institution
- K. Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution
- L. Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teachout program for a closed institution
- M. Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25 percent or more of one or more of the accredited institution's programs

III. GENERAL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of LSU A&M to report all substantive changes and to follow all procedures and timelines as delineated in the commission's

policy statement on substantive change:

- A. Procedure One – Review of substantive changes requiring notification and approval prior to implementation (notification may also be required).
- B. Procedure Two – Review of substantive changes requiring only notification prior to implementation.
- C. Procedure Three – For closing a program, site, branch campus, or institution.
- D. A separate set of procedures is available for the following changes (see Source B):
 - 1. Initiating mergers or consolidations;
 - 2. Acquiring an institution or location (including programs) or site from of another institution; or
 - 3. Initiating a change of ownership;
 - 4. Initiating a change of governance, control, form, or legal status; and
 - 5. Adding as a permanent off-campus location any instructional site a location where at which the institution is conducting a teach-out for students of another institution that is closing; and changes in governance, ownership, means of control or legal status.

These specific procedures, including the time frame for contacting the commission and the type of documentation required for each, are included in a comprehensive table within the Commission’s policy statement (see Source B).

This university policy statement applies to all faculty or staff members who have the authority to initiate, review, approve, or allocate resources to changes that may be considered a substantive change. Academic and support units, committees, or administrators proposing and/or approving changes that are substantive in nature must inform the university’s SACSCOC liaison in writing via the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. The SACSCOC liaison shall be appointed by the Executive Vice President & Provost.

Once the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and the SACSCOC liaison have reviewed the proposed change(s) and determined that it qualifies as a substantive change as defined by the Commission’s policy, the President or his or her designee via the SACSCOC liaison will notify SACSCOC with a written letter and will submit any other relevant materials as required in the above-noted procedures. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness SACSCOC liaison will maintain a file of all substantive change activity. Academic and support units proposing substantive changes should not implement those changes until written confirmation from the SACSCOC Office of Institutional Effectiveness that the required SACSCOC notification and/or approval for a substantive change has been completed.

Failure to comply with SACSCOC substantive change policy and procedures may result in the loss of the university’s Title IV funding, or the university may be required to reimburse the U.S. Department of Education for any money it received for programs related to the unreported substantive change. Additionally, the university may be referred to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for the imposition of a sanction or for removal from membership.

This policy statement shall be reviewed annually and updated by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness SACSCOC liaison as changes occur to the SACSCOC policy on substantive change.

IV. SOURCES:

- A. SACSCOC Policy Statement “Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges” (<http://www.sacscoc.org/policies.asp>)
- B. SACSCOC Policy Statement “Mergers, Consolidations, Change of Ownership, Acquisitions, and Change of Governance, Control, Form, or Legal Status” (<http://www.sacscoc.org/policies.asp>)