

Substantive Change Policy

(Updated July 2012)

Bluefield College will be proactive in ensuring all incidences of substantive changes be reported in a timely manner as required by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools- Commission on Colleges.. The complete SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement can be found online at <http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>

Definition and Responsibility

According to SACSCOC, a substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. According to their Policy Statement, the following will be considered a substantive change (taken directly from the SACSCOC website):

- 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 at a degree or credential level above or below that which is included in institution's current accreditation or reaffirmation
- A substantial increase in the number of 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 percent of an educational program
- The establishment of a branch campus
- 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.

It is the responsibility of Bluefield College through the College liaison to report all substantive changes based on the Commission's policy and to follow all procedures and timelines as outlined in the Commission's policy statement. Bluefield College recognizes the timeline necessary in the reporting process. Such procedures may include

- notification and approval prior to implementation – in some cases, as much as 12 months prior approval is needed before implementation or
- only notification prior to implementation – usually requires a simple letter of notification prior to implementation.

Ensuring Timely Reporting of Substantive Changes to SACSCOC

Since the College liaison takes the lead in reporting all substantive changes, this person will have a presence on the College Leadership Team and will serve as a member of the Academic Council. At present, the SACSCOC liaison is the Vice President for Academic Affairs. It is the

responsibility of the SACSCOC liaison to insure that the College complies with SACSCOC policies for substantive change.

In order to do so, the liaison will present updates of current notifications to the Academic Council, the College Leadership Team and the Faculty and Curriculum Committee of the Board of Trustees once each fall and spring semester. This Academic Council includes all Deans of the College and has access to proposed changes as they are recommended. The College Leadership Team is comprised of the President's senior level cabinet. The Faculty and Curriculum Committee of the Board is responsible for oversight of academic programs. By keeping these entities informed and educated on the Substantive Change policy and activities, the College will be more proactive on reporting such changes in a timely manner as required.

Publishing/Awareness of the Bluefield College Substantive Change Policy

In order to make the campus aware of the Substantive Change Policy, the policy is published on the Bluefield College website at This page was established in the summer of 2012 and the campus was notified of the new site by email.

Reporting Substantive Change

Any possible Substantive Change for the College should be immediately reported to the SACSCOC liaison in order to determine if the change fits the definition of a substantive change as required by SACSCOC. The SACSCOC liaison will work with SACSCOC personnel to ensure that the correct procedure is followed.

All substantive change activity will be documented in the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison through a file maintained by the liaison.

Once the SACSCOC liaison has determined that the changes proposed fit the definition of a substantive change as required by SACSCOC, the President or his or her designee will notify SACSCOC with a written letter summarizing the proposed change, provide the intended implementation date, and list the complete physical address, if the change involves the initiation of an off-campus site or branch campus. The policy and procedures for reporting and review of institutional substantive change are on the SACSCOC website in the document —Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges. This information can be found at <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Substantive%20change%20policy.pdf>.