

## Substantive Change Policy and Procedures

As an institution accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Francis Marion is obligated to follow the *SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy*. The purpose of this University policy is to ensure that the requirements set forth in the substantive change policy of SACSCOC are met.

Proposals for: revisions of academic programs; mode of pedagogical delivery; geographical nature of the University (i.e., components located away from the main campus); or arrangements with others institutions are initiated at the school, department, or committee level. The Provost or President may also begin discussions with the relevant academic units whenever either of them thinks that a modification of current academic programs or modes of delivery would be beneficial for the University or the Community.

Initiatives of a substantial magnitude, regardless of the generative source, will be discussed by the President, Provost, and Vice President for Business Affairs to consider the advantages for the University and the community and the financial impact on the University. A feasibility study may be initiated to provide information about these factors. If it is determined that the proposal is fiscally feasible—either because of existing funds or the potential to get funding—the project is channeled through the appropriate University governance groups for approval.

The person/persons who prepare the document to present to the appropriate governance body should review it to determine if the nature or scope of the change is such that it would be cause a significant modification to the nature and scope of the University and/or its mission. Any of the following conditions constitute a substantive change. Notify the University SACSCOC liaison if you identify any of them; so that the proper procedure of the *Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions Policy Statement* can be implemented by the SACSCOC liaison:

- There is a change in the established mission or objectives of the institution
  - The proposed courses or program represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated by SACSCOC
  - The number of credit hours required to complete a program changes substantially
  - A degree or credential level which is different from those which are currently offered is needed
  - Francis Marion will enter into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes the initiation of a dual or joint academic program with another institution
  - The method for determining course credit (i.e., clock hours; credit hours) changes
  - At least 50% of an educational program will be offered at an additional location that is not physically contiguous with the main campus
  - An existing program, off-campus site, or branch campus will be closed
  - There is a change in the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution
  - A branch campus will be established
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- Francis Marion will acquire another institution or a program or location of another institution

- Francis Marion will acquire a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution
- Francis Marion will enter 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

In cases where there is ambiguity as to whether or not the change is significantly substantive to require a notification to SACSCOC or a petition for approval, the University liaison will communicate with the appropriate SACSCOC staff.

The following documents are distributed as indicated below:

- Instructions concerning submissions to the Academic Affairs Committee are distributed annually by the Provost's office staff to chairs/deans during the last week of August
- Instructions concerning submissions to the Graduate Council are distributed annually by the Provost's office staff to chairs/deans of academic units with graduate programs during the last week of August
- Items and are given to anyone who requests information from the Provost's Office concerning applications to the Academic Affairs Committee or the Graduate Council
- A copy of this policy document is distributed annually by the SACSCOC liaison to all members of the Academic Affairs Committee during the last week of August
- A copy of this policy document is distributed annually by the SACSCOC liaison to all members of the Graduate Council during the last week of August

The SACSCOC liaison receives and reviews agendas for the Academic Affairs Committee meetings and Graduate Council meetings.

If the project is approved by the General Faculty, the person(s) who are assigned to write the proposal to submit to the SC Commission on Higher Education will also work with the SACSCOC liaison who will prepare the substantive change notification or prospectus for SACSCOC.

If an administrative decision is made to discontinue, or substantially curtail, an academic program or partnership, the SACSCOC liaison will be notified by the Provost. The SACSCOC liaison will collaborate with the person who prepares the notification for the SC Commission on Higher Education to prepare a notification for SACSCOC.