Substantive Change Policy

As a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Bevill State Community College (BSCC) ensures compliance with all policies and procedures required by SACSCOC, including any substantive change requirements. This is outlined in the SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation, Standard 14.2: Substantive Change and is applicable to all programs and services regardless of location.

General Information

BSCC is accredited by the SACSCOC. The accreditation indicates that the College "has 1) a mission appropriate to higher education, 2) has resources, programs, and services sufficient to accomplish and sustain that mission, and 3) maintains clearly specified educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and appropriate to the degrees its offers, and that indicate whether it is successful in achieving its stated objectives."[1]

In addition to the College's fifth year and decennial reviews by the Commission, the College is expected to develop and follow an "institutional policy regarding substantive change, covering all different types of changes."[2] The term "substantive change" is defined by the SACSCOC as a "significant modification or expansion of the nature or scope of an accredited institution."[3]

Substantive change includes, among others, the following:

- Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution or its programs.
- 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.
- 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.

[1] See *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*, p. 3
[2] See *SACSCOC Resource Manual, Standard 14.2: Substantive Change*, p. 149
[3] See *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*, p. 2

Certain substantive changes require only notification to the SACSCOC. Other substantive changes may require the college to seek approval prior to initiation of changes and/or an on-site committee reviews by the SACSCOC. The President and Accreditation Liaison have the responsibility to notify the SACSCOC of the proposed change(s) prior to deadlines set forth in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy.[4]

Policy & Procedures for Monitoring and Reporting Changes

The College is dedicated to the expansion of academic opportunities that support the overall mission of the College. BSCC has developed procedures to ensure that all divisions and units of the College monitor and respond accordingly to any proposed changes at the institution that constitutes a substantive change under the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy. Before developing or delivering courses off-site, electronically, or for a new program and program level, closing a program, and/or entering into a contract or consortial agreement for instruction, please consult these procedures. The BSCC Substantive Change Policy and Implementation Checklist is published on the College's website or can be obtained by contacting the Accreditation Liaison.

In addition, the Accreditation Liaison will share the College's policy and any changes to the policy, as needed, with College administrators during President Cabinet meetings which include senior level administrators, Academic Council meetings that involve divisional deans, and/or Strategic Planning meetings that include a variety of personnel from directors of departments, academic division chairs, and senior level administrators. This policy is reviewed annually to determine its effectiveness.

All submissions will be coordinated through the College's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison. Any substantive changes that require approval by the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees must be received by January 1 for fall implementation or July 1 for spring implementation. Therefore, the Accreditation Liaison should be consulted as soon as possible to ensure timely submission of a notification or prospectus. All correspondence with the SACSCOC will be submitted by the College President and/or the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison using the "Institutional Portal."

Procedures

The following steps will be used by faculty/staff members, divisions and units of the College when determining and reporting substantive change:

1. Directors, Division Chairs, Deans, etc., considering a change such as those identified in the bulleted list above must notify the Accreditation Liaison immediately of the proposed change for further guidance. If the Accreditation Liaison becomes aware of a potential change through other avenues, the Accreditation Liaison will immediately follow-up with the faculty/staff, division, or unit involved to obtain more information and provide guidance related to the next steps.

2. Directors, Division Chairs, Deans, etc., will be directed to complete the *BSCC Substantive Change Implementation Checklist* (Appendix S) to assist the Accreditation Liaison in determining the proper course of action related to the potential change.

[4] See *Substantive Change Policy and Procedures*, p. 7

3. The Accreditation Liaison will determine if the proposed change fits the definition of a substantive change as outlined in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and if required, consult with the College's SACSCOC Vice-President or the SACSCOC Director of Substantive Change. If changes are considered substantive, the Accreditation Liaison will determine the specific procedure for reporting the change to the SACSCOC and notifies the appropriate faculty/staff member, division, or unit of the College.

4. The Accreditation Liaison will work with the faculty/staff member, division, or unit involved to gather the data and documentation necessary to complete the specific procedure as required by the SACSCOC. If a prospectus is required, the Accreditation Liaison will work with appropriate parties to meet the submission deadline.

5. The BSCC Substantive Change Implementation Checklist must be routed and approved by the College-wide Curriculum Committee if modifying a program or adding a new program, the College-wide Divisional Dean, and the appropriate President's Cabinet member before submission to the Accreditation Liaison for review.

6. The Accreditation Liaison will work with the President's Office for final approval and to notify the Commission in writing of the proposed change by the method identified in the SACSCOC Substantive Change policy.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Initial Policy Developed and Adopted 2009
Policy Revision 2012
Policy Revision and Title Changes/ Implementation Checklist Developed, February 2017
Revisions to Title Changes, October 2018
Policy Revision to include SACSCOC Policy Changes, October 2021
Revisions to Title Changes and Modification of Implementation Checklist, May 2025