

PALO ALTO COLLEGE  
COLLEGE PROCEDURES

Procedure Number: A 14.0  
Procedure Title: Reporting Substantive Change  
Relevant Board Policy: [E.2.1 Accreditation and Substantive Change](#)  
[E.2.1.1 Substantive Change](#)  
Originating Unit: Vice President of Academic Success  
Maintenance Unit: Vice President of Academic Success and  
SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

I. Purpose: This procedure provides guidelines to ensure ongoing compliance with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Comprehensive Standard 14.2 (<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2018PrinciplesOfAcacreditation.pdf>), and follows the guidelines provided by the *Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions* policy statement (<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>).

II. Procedure Statement:

- A. The 2018 SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement defines substantive change as 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 of study at a degree or credential level different from 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% 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
  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
  14. Additional changes as identified by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees.

Twice each year, in August and February, the college Accreditation Liaison will meet with the college Vice Presidents, Deans, Chairs, and Directors to review all current SACSCOC substantive change policies. At this time the college procedure will also be reviewed to ensure alignment with current SACSCOC substantive change policies. During each of these meetings the Accreditation Liaison shall request from all present notification of and updates for program changes and substantive changes planned for the next 12 months. At this meeting all program changes and proposed substantive changes will be reviewed to confirm that all SACSCOC requirements will be met. The outcomes of this review shall be shared with the President of the college.

The Accreditation Liaison will work with the relevant Dean(s) and Vice President(s) to establish deadlines for required submissions to SACSCOC, as well as a calendar of intermediate deadlines for all steps required within the college approval process.

The college approval process for the substantive change shall include the steps listed in one of the four categories listed below. *These categories shall be reviewed and modified each year to ensure alignment with the current SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement.*

**Category A. If approval by SACSCOC is required prior to implementation:**

1. The relevant Dean and VP will coordinate the preparation of the prospectus, following the current guidelines and template provided by SACSCOC.
2. The draft prospectus will be forwarded to the Accreditation Liaison (and others at the college as may be deemed appropriate in each case) for review and approval.
3. Upon approval by the Accreditation Liaison, the prospectus will be forwarded to the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Council for review and approval. A special meeting of the Council will be called if necessary to meet the deadlines established for submission to SACSCOC.
4. Upon approval by the IE Council, the prospectus will be forwarded to the President for review and approval.
5. The President will provide the Chancellor with a copy of the prospectus.
6. Upon approval by the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee, the prospectus will be sent to the President of SACSCOC, following SACSCOC current requirements for method of submission. Copies will be provided to the President's office, the Accreditation Liaison, and the relevant VP and Dean.

**Category B. If only notification of SACSCOC is required prior to implementation:**

1. The relevant Chair or Director, working with his or her Dean and VP, will draft the notification letter.
2. The draft will be forwarded to the Accreditation Liaison for review and approval.
3. Upon approval by the Accreditation Liaison, the notification letter will be forwarded to the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Council for review and approval. A special meeting of the Council will be called if necessary to meet

- the deadlines established for submission to SACSCOC.
4. Upon approval by the IE Council, the letter will be forwarded to the President for review and approval.
  5. The President will provide the Chancellor with a copy of the letter of notification.
  6. Upon approval by the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee, the letter of notification, signed by the President, will be sent to the President of SACSCOC. Copies will be provided to the President's office, the Accreditation Liaison, and the relevant VP, Dean, and Director or Chair.

**Category C. If an approved teach-out plan is required prior to implementation:**

The 2018 *SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement* provides the following information regarding teach-out plans:

In accordance with Federal regulations, an institution is required to submit a teach-out plan to SACSCOC for approval if any of the following occurs:

1. The USDOE notifies the Commission that it has initiated an emergency action against an institution or an action to limit, suspend, or terminate an institution participating in any Title IV, HEA program.
2. The Commission terminates accreditation or candidacy.
3. The institution notifies the Commission that it intends to cease operations entirely or close a location that provides at least 50% of at least one program.
4. A State Licensing or authorizing agency notifies the Commission that an institution's license or legal authorization to provide an educational program has been or will be revoked.

If an institution decides to close an educational program, approved instructional site, branch campus, or the entire institution, it must submit to SACSCOC a teach-out plan for approval. If the plan includes teach-out agreements, then the agreements must also be approved prior to implementation.

Teach-out plans and teach-out agreements must be approved by SACSCOC prior to implementation. *See also* the SACSCOC Good Practices document "[Closing a Program, Site, Branch or Institution](#)"

1. The relevant Dean(s) and Vice President of Academic Success (VPAS) will coordinate the preparation of the teach-out plan and all associated documents, following the current guidelines provided by SACSCOC.
2. The draft teach-out plan with documents will be forwarded to the Vice President of Student Success (VPSS) for review and approval.
3. Upon approval by the VPSS, the draft plan with documents will be forwarded to the Accreditation Liaison (and others at the college as may be deemed appropriate in each case) for review and approval.
4. Upon approval by the Accreditation Liaison, the draft plan with documents will be forwarded to the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Council for review

and approval. A special meeting of the Council will be called if necessary to meet the deadlines established for submission to SACSCOC.

5. Upon approval by the IE Council, the draft plan and documents will be forwarded to the President for review and approval.
6. The President will provide the Chancellor with a copy of the approved teach-out plan and all associated documents.
7. The teach-out plan with associated documents will then be sent to the President of SACSCOC, following SACSCOC current requirements for method of submission. Copies shall be provided to the President's office, the Accreditation Liaison, the VPAS and VPSS, and all relevant Dean(s).

**D. If both notification and approval are required before implementation.**

Both notification and approval are required by the following:

MERGERS, CONSOLIDATIONS, CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP, ACQUISITIONS, AND CHANGE OF GOVERNANCE, CONTROL, FORM, OR LEGAL STATUS  
See policy statement <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Mergers.pdf>

OR

DIRECT ASSESSMENT COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS See policy statement  
<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/DirectAssessmentCompetencyBased.pdf>

1. The President will notify the Chancellor of the proposed substantive change.
2. Upon approval by the Chancellor or his designees, the President (and the Chief Executive Officer of the other institution if two institutions are involved and both are accredited by SACSCOC) and appropriate VP(s) will draft the letter of notification and all other documents that may be required for notification.
3. The draft letter and documents will be reviewed by the Chancellor or his designee.
4. Upon approval by the Chancellor or designee the President will submit the signed letter of notification and all required documents to the President of SACSCOC.
5. The SACSCOC President will respond with a request that the member institution(s) submit a (joint) written prospectus.
6. Upon response from the SACSCOC and request for the (possibly joint) prospectus, the relevant VP(s) will draft the prospectus and all other required documents.
7. The draft documents will be forwarded to the Accreditation Liaison (and others at the college(s) as may be deemed appropriate in each case) for review and approval.
8. Upon approval by the Accreditation Liaison, the documents will be forwarded to the Institutional Effectiveness (IE) Council for review and approval.
9. Upon approval by the IE Council, the documents will be forwarded to the President for review and approval.
10. The President will provide the Chancellor with copies of the documents for review and approval.

11. Upon approval by the Chancellor the documents will be sent to the President of SACSCOC, following SACSCOC current requirements for method of submission, with copies provided to the President's office, the Accreditation Liaison, and the relevant VP(s).

Issued: February 27, 2018

Approved: (Signed Dr. Mike Flores)  
President