SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE WORKSHOP

COC Annual Meeting

December 10, 2006

COC Staff

- Rudy Jackson
- Ralph Russell
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Handouts

- Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions
- Joint Curricular Ventures Involving the Award of Credit by Member Institutions
- Distance Education: Policy Statement
- Transfer and Transcripting of Academic Credit
Substantive Change Defined

* A significant modification or expansion in the nature and scope of an accredited institution.

Institutional Responsibilities

* It is the responsibility of all member institutions to follow the Substantive Change procedures of the Commission and inform the Commission of such changes in a timely manner.

Two Types of Substantive Change

- Notification only
- Notification and approval (prospectus and/or other documentation)
Most Common Substantive Changes

- Initiation and expansion of distance learning programs.
- Establishing branch campuses or additional instructional locations.
- Addition of new degree programs:
  - Expanding to a new level.
  - Resulting in a significant modification in the institution’s current offerings.

Most Common (cont.)

- Consolidation/merger
- Change of governance or control

Initiation/Expansion of Distance Learning Programs

- 25-49% of a program’s credits, notification only
- 50%+ of a program’s credits, notification and approval—prospectus
- After initial program approval, notification only for significantly different programs
Establishing Branch Campuses/Additional Instructional Sites

- 25-49% of a program’s credits, notification only
- 50% or more of a program’s credits, notification and approval—prospectus
- Campus—requires committee visit
- If institution operates 3 or fewer sites (at which 50% + of a program’s credits are available), committee visit is required.

Addition of New Degree Programs

- Associate to bachelor’s degree (Level I to II)
- Bachelor’s to master’s degree (Level II to III)
- Master’s to specialist’s degree (Level III to IV)
- Master’s/specialist’s to doctoral degree (Level III/IV to V)

Addition of New Degree Programs (cont.)

- Process for adding a degree beyond level authorized by the Commission

  Complete Application for Level Change
  Notification required 12 months prior to implementation;
  application submitted 9 months prior to implementation.
  Reviewed by Commission
Addition of New Degree Programs (cont.)

- Adding a degree within the level currently authorized for the institution.
- Approval required if it is a significant departure from approved programs—prospectus.
  - Key question: what are significant departures?
  - Probably would not require a visit—but could

Mergers/ Consolidations

- Merger= 1 institution acquiring the assets of another institution
- Consolidation=combining 2 institutions into a new institution

On-site Committee Visits

1. Initiation of an additional location at which a student can earn at least 50% of his/her credits toward a degree/certificate program if the institution:
   - has a total of three or fewer approved locations; or,
   - has not demonstrated to the Commission’s satisfaction that it has a proven record of effective educational oversight of additional locations; or,
   - has been placed on sanction by the Commission or is subject to some limitation on its accreditation.
On-Site Visits

II. The initiation of a branch campus

III. The initiation of a change in governance/ownership with a change in control.

On-Site Visits

IV. The initiation of a merger/consolidation

V. The initiation of programs at a higher degree level than currently approved by the Commission.

Policy and Fees

The Principles of Accreditation applies to all programs and services wherever located or however delivered. Failure to comply with the Principles or the substantive change procedures could result in an institution being placed on sanction or removed from membership. An institution seeking review of a single substantive change prospectus will be assessed a fee of $300.00.
Procedure One: Notification and Approval

- Initiating programs at a more advanced degree level than previously approved.
- Initiating an off-campus site at which the student can earn at least 50% of a program’s credits.
- Initiating a branch campus.
- Initiating a change in ownership resulting in a change of control.
- Expanding at the institution’s current degree level when there is significant departure from current programs.

Procedure One: Notification and Approval

- Initiating programs at a lower level.
- Initiating a merger or consolidation.
- Altering an institution’s purpose.
- Changing the length of a program.
- Adding programs or courses that represent a significant departure from those that were in place when the institution was last evaluated.

Procedure Two: Notification Only

Substantive changes requiring prior notification includes:

- Site-based/classroom group instruction where the student can earn 25-50% of credits toward degree program.
- Adding significantly different degree programs (already among the institution’s approved programs) at a currently approved off-site location.
- Distance learning programs where student can earn at least 25% of credits toward a degree.
Procedure Two: Notification Only

- Initiating changes in existing technology-based delivery systems in distance learning or off-campus programs.
- Initiating programs/courses delivered through contractual agreement/consortium.
- Relocating a main campus.
- Adding significantly different programs offered through distance learning from those previously reported (programs already approved for the institution).

Timeframe for Reporting

- In most cases, substantive changes must be reported six months prior to implementation (with prospectuses submitted three months in advance).
- Level changes must be reported twelve months prior to implementation (and an application submitted nine months in advance).

Prospectus

The substantive change prospectus should include:

- Cover sheet
- Abstract
- Background information
- Assessment of need for the program/approvals
- Description of change
- Faculty qualifications
  -- Roster of Instructional staff
Prospectus (cont.)

- Description of library and information resources
- Description of physical resources
- Financial support (budget for first year)
- Evaluation and assessment procedures (systematic evaluation of instructional results)
- Appendices

Cover Sheet for Prospectus

- List all off-campus sites at which 50% or more of a program's credits are available.
- List all off-campus sites at which 25%-49% of a program's credits are available.
- List programs for which 50% or more of the program's credits are approved for electronic delivery.

Cover Sheet (cont.)

- List degrees which institution is authorized to grant. As a subset of each degree, list majors available.
- List institutional strengths which facilitate the offering of the proposed program.
Substantive Change Visiting Committee

- Focus
- Size
- Documentation
  - Institution has already prepared a prospectus
  - Prepares an abbreviated compliance certification document with relevant sections of the Principles

Length of visit

Frequent Omissions in Prospectus Development/Notification Process

- Implementation date
- Street address for off-campus instructional sites/campuses
- Clear description of the change
- Failure to follow outline in Appendix B of Substantive Change Policy

Panel of Practitioners

- Bob Bicknell, Howard Payne U.—off-campus instructional sites
- Carol Corbat, LSU Alexandria—level change
- Debbie Goodman, Southwest GA Technical College—distance learning
For more information:

Visit our Website at

www.sacscoc.org