

Longwood University Faculty Senate  
**PROPOSAL/POLICY COVER  
SHEET**

This cover sheet is intended to provide information to members of the Faculty Senate about a new proposal/policy or about revisions to an existing proposal/policy. **If you are proposing a new policy, then attach the text of the policy to this form. If you are proposing a change to an existing policy, then attach the text of the current policy with any deleted language marked by a strikethrough and with new language marked by an underline. If you are deleting a policy, then attach the text of the policy to be deleted.**

**COMMITTEE(S)** that authored or sponsored this proposal: Accreditation and Compliance.

**TOPIC:** FPPM Sections I. F. Substantive Change Reporting Policy

**BACKGROUND** (Provide a brief statement describing the origins of this proposal, the nature of the problem it addresses, and the work completed to devise the proposal):

Federal regulations were updated in summer 2020, and institutional accreditors like SACSCOC had to update their substantive change policies in accordance with changes to federal requirements. The new SACSCOC substantive change policies and procedures were published online in December 2020.

**SUMMARY OF NEW POLICY OR PROPOSED CHANGES OR DELETIONS TO AN EXISTING POLICY** (Provide a brief list or statement describing the content of the policy or the proposed changes or deletions):

- 1) **New or updated definitions of terms: Approval (new in our policy); Cooperative Academic Arrangement (new, replacing more specific Degree Completion Program); Distance Education (update); Dual Academic Award (update); Joint Academic Award (update); Notification (update); Off-Campus Instructional Site (new, folds in Geographically Separate); Procedures One, Two, and Three (remove); Substantive Change (update); Teach-Out and Teach-Out Agreement (update).**
- 2) **Limits President and Board of Visitors approval to those items that require SACSCOC approval; if only SACSCOC notification is needed, PVPAA approval and President/BOV notification is required.**

**RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY OR PROPOSED CHANGES** (Provide a brief statement as to why the new policy, the changes, or the deletion is needed):

- 1) **These terms have been added or updated to reflect updates in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policies and Procedures.**
- 2) **Current policy states that any substantive change must be approved by the President and BOV. Given an expansion in what is deemed a substantive change, a distinction between approval and notification seemed reasonable.**

**Routing information and signature lines:**

Date submitted to Senate Executive Committee for Consideration:

Action(s) Taken:

Date first read at Faculty Senate:

Action(s) Taken:

Date final action taken by Faculty Senate:

Action(s) Taken:

Senate Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to the PVPAA (within 5 working days of Senate approval):

Action(s) Taken:

PVPAA: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to other administration:

Action(s) Taken:

Administrator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date (within 15 working days of PVPAA's signature): \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to the Board of Visitors:

## F. SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE REPORTING POLICY

### I. PURPOSE

Longwood University recognizes the importance of compliance with the ~~Substantive Change for SACSCOC~~ Substantive Change Policies and Procedures ~~Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges~~ policy statement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), which requires the University to report all substantive changes accurately and in a timely manner to SACSCOC. This policy exists specifically to establish, clarify and communicate the requirement that ~~all University changes deemed to be “substantive” must be approved by the President and Board of Visitors~~ the President and Board of Visitors must approve all University changes deemed to be “substantive”; if they must also be subsequently approved by with subsequent notification to and/or approval by the University’s regional-institutional accrediting body, SACSCOC. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (PVPAA) must approve all University changes deemed to be “substantive” if such changes require only notification to SACSCOC; the PVPAA must also notify the President and Board of Visitors.

SACSCOC accredits the University and its programs and services, wherever they are located or however they are delivered. SACSCOC is recognized by the United States Department of Education as an agency whose accreditation enables its member institutions to seek eligibility to participate in federally funded programs. SACSCOC requires accredited institutions to follow its substantive change procedures. In order to retain accreditation, the University is required to comply with SACS COC procedures concerning substantive changes.

While the purpose of this policy is to document the approval and transmittal process to SACSCOC, new, revised or discontinued degrees and establishment of distance learning sites may also require reporting and prior approval from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). The requirements of both agencies must be met; compliance with one does not constitute compliance with the other. This policy is primarily designed to address academic programs and curricular issues, although other defined substantive changes are also covered.

### II. DEFINITIONS

A. Approval: An official action by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees enabling an institution to implement a proposed substantive change.

A.B. Branch Campus: A location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution, and one where instruction is delivered. A location is independent of the main campus if

1. The location is permanent in nature.
2. The location offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential.
3. The location has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization and has its own budgetary and hiring authority. Source: SACSCOC.

B.C. Degree Completion Program~~Cooperative Academic Arrangement~~: A program typically designed for a non-traditional undergraduate population such as working adults who have completed some college-level course work but have not achieved a baccalaureate degree. Students in such programs may transfer in credit from courses taken previously and may receive credit for experiential learning. Courses in degree completion programs are often offered in an accelerated format or meet during evening and weekend hours, or may be offered via distance-learning technologies. An agreement between a SACSCOC-accredited institution and another entity (or entities) to deliver program content recorded on the SACSCOC institution's transcript as its own (e.g., consortia, collaborative agreements with international institutions). Source: SACSCOC.

C.D. Distance Education: A method of delivery formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) ~~in a course~~ occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. ~~A distance-education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber-optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program.~~ Source: SACSCOC.

D.E. Dual Degree~~Academic Award~~: A student receives instruction at two (or more) institutions in prescribed curricula leading to each institution granting academic awards at the same credential level. ~~Separate program completion credentials each of which bears only the name, seal, and signature of the institution awarding the degree to the student.~~ Source: SACSCOC.

E.F. Educational Program: A coherent course of study leading to the awarding of a credential (~~i.e.g.,~~ a degree, diploma or certificate). Source: SACSCOC.

F. Geographically Separate: ~~An instructional site or branch campus that is located physically apart from the main campus of the institution.~~ Source: SACSCOC.

H.G. Joint Degree~~Academic Award~~: A student receives instruction at two (or more) institutions in prescribed curricula leading to the institutions granting a single academic award ~~single program completion credential~~ bearing the names, seals, and signatures of each participating institution. ~~of the two or more institutions awarding the degree to the student.~~ Source: SACSCOC.

I.H. Level: SACSCOC's taxonomy categorizes institutions by the highest degree offered. Longwood University is designated as a Level III institution because it offers the master's degree as the highest degree.

J.I. Merger/Consolidation: SACSCOC defines a consolidation as the combination or

transfer of the assets of at least two distinct institutions (corporations) to that of a newly-formed institution (corporation), and defines a merger as the acquisition by one institution of another institution's assets. For the purposes of accreditation, consolidations and mergers are considered substantive changes requiring review by the Commission on Colleges. (Examples include: a senior college acquiring a junior college, a degree-granting institution acquiring a non-degree-granting institution, two junior or senior colleges consolidating to form a new institution, or an institution accredited by the Commission on Colleges merging with a non-accredited institution). Source: SACSCOC.

~~K.J.~~ Notification: A letter from an institution's chief executive officer or ~~their~~<sup>his/her</sup> designated representative to SACSCOC ~~President~~ to summarize a proposed change, provide the intended implementation date, and list the complete physical address, if the change involves ~~the initiation of~~ an off-campus instructional site ~~or branch campus~~. Source: SACSCOC.

~~L.~~ Off-Campus Instructional Site: A location geographically apart from an institution's sole main campus and where instruction is delivered. This may or may not be a branch campus. Source: SACSCOC. ~~Procedure One: SACSCOC procedure associated with a substantive change that requires SACSCOC notification and approval prior to implementation. Changes under Procedure One require notification, a prospectus or application, and may involve an on-site visit. Source: SACSCOC.~~

~~N.~~ Procedure Two: SACSCOC procedure associated with a substantive change that requires SACSCOC notification prior to implementation. Source: SACSCOC.

~~P.~~ Procedure Three: SACSCOC procedure associated with closing a program, instructional site, branch campus, or institution. Source: SACSCOC

~~K.~~

~~R.L.~~ Significant Departure: A program that is not closely related to previously approved programs at the institution or site or for the mode of delivery in question. To determine whether a new program is a significant departure, it is helpful to consider the following questions:

1. What previously approved programs does the institution offer that are closely related to the new program and how are they related?

~~1.2.~~ What percentage of the required coursework is new?

~~2.3.~~ Will significant additional equipment or facilities be needed?

~~3.4.~~ Will significant additional financial resources be needed?

~~4.5.~~ Will a significant number of new courses be required?

~~5.6.~~ Will a significant number of new faculty members be required?

~~6.7.~~ Will significant additional library/learning resources be needed?

~~7.8.~~ Will the CIP code change?

Source: SACSCOC, SCHEV.

S.M. **Substantive Change:** A significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. ~~According to SACSCOC, s~~Substantive changes ~~includes but are not limited to:~~

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 ~~a courses or programs~~ that represents 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. Initiating programs by distance education or correspondence course.
- ~~4.6.~~Adding a method of delivery to an existing program.
- ~~5.7.~~A change from clock hours to credit hours.
- ~~6.8.~~A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program.
- ~~7.9.~~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.
- ~~8.10.~~The establishment of a branch campus.
- ~~9.11.~~Closing a program, off-campus site, method of delivery, branch campus or institution.
12. Entering into a ~~collaborative-cooperative~~ academic agreement/rangement such as a dual or joint academic award with another institution.
- ~~10.13.~~ Initiating programs designed for prior learning.
- ~~11.14.~~Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution.
- ~~12.15.~~Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach- out program for a closed institution.
- ~~13.16.~~Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible-certified for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of part of one or more of the accredited institution's programs.

Source: SACSCOC.

T.N. **Teach-Out:** The process and time period of a written teach-out plan by which the University provides instructional and academic support services to students enrolled at a site that has been closed and/or in a program that has been discontinued. The teach-out ~~plan process often extends well beyond the closing of a site or program to allow time for enrolled students to complete their programs in a reasonable amount of time, provides an orderly process, the equitable treatment of students, minimal disruption and additional costs to students, and covers all enrolled students regardless of their progress to completion.~~ Source: SACSCOC.

U.O. **Teach-Out Agreement:** A written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students covered by a teach-out plan to and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 50 percent or more of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have

~~completed their program of study. Such a teach-out agreement requires SACSCOC approval in advance of implementation.~~ Source: SACSCOC.

### **III. APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all University officers who can initiate, review, approve, and allocate resources to any changes, including those to academic and non-academic programs and activities that may be considered a substantive change according to SACSCOC ~~Policy for Substantive Change~~ Policy and Procedures for Accredited Institutions. Within academic areas, such changes can originate with individuals or groups of faculty members, Department committees, Department Chairs, Deans and Associate Deans, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (PVPAA), Faculty Senate, or any other area reporting to the ~~PVPAA~~ Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

In those areas outside of Academic Affairs, potential substantive changes may arise in individual units, among supervisors in each area, executive management teams within Vice Presidential areas, or with the Vice Presidents or Cabinet. Further, the need for a potential substantive change may come to the attention of the President or those in ~~his/her~~ their direct reporting line.

Each individual hereby designated is required to be familiar and comply with this policy.

### **IV. POLICY**

As the University pursues structural and programmatic changes, the President and Board of Visitors must approve all University changes deemed to be “substantive” if they must also be subsequently approved by SACSCOC. The PVPAA must approve all University changes deemed to be “substantive” if such changes require only notification to SACSCOC; the PVPAA must also notify the President and Board of Visitors. ~~all of those changes deemed to be “substantive” changes require approval by the President, Board of Visitors and the SACSCOC.~~

The University will follow the substantive change procedures of SACSCOC, and inform the SACSCOC of such changes and proposed changes in accord with those procedures. Regardless of the origination point, all substantive changes must be tracked and reported under this policy.

### **V. ENFORCEMENT**

#### **A. Responsibility**

1. **SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison:** The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs serves as the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison. In the years between accreditation reviews, the liaison is responsible for ensuring the timely submission of annual institutional profiles and other reports as requested by the Commission. The liaison is responsible for the accuracy of all information submitted to the Commission and for ensuring ongoing compliance with Commission standards, policies, and procedures beyond

reaffirmation. During the Reaffirmation Cycle, the liaison serves on the SACSCOC Reaffirmation Leadership Team and oversees all staffing aspects of the Reaffirmation process. The liaison is responsible for internal and external monitoring of substantive change progress, and responsible for reporting final change status.

2. **Vice Presidents:** The vice presidents are responsible for their respective areas bringing forward any potential substantive changes under this policy.
  3. **President:** The president, with the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, is responsible for the accuracy of all information submitted to SACSCOC and for ensuring ongoing compliance with SACSCOC standards, policies, and procedures beyond reaffirmation. The president is responsible for oversight and final reporting of substantive changes to SACSCOC.
- B. Sanctions: If Longwood University fails to follow SACSCOC procedures for notification and approval of substantive changes, its total accreditation may be placed in jeopardy. For that reason, the sanction for failure to follow this University policy must be sufficient to avoid such failure. If an academic program, unit or officer initiates a substantive change without following the procedures outlined in this policy, the President or ~~PVPA Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs~~ may direct the immediate cancellation or cessation of that change, with due regard for the educational welfare of students, when it is discovered. In areas outside of Academic Affairs, the same sanction may be applied by the President or relevant Vice President.

## ***VI. PROCEDURE***

Procedures do not require approval of the Board of Visitors.

*References: Faculty Senate, October 4, 2012; February 14, 2019; Board of Visitors, December 7, 2012; March 22, 2019*