Substantive Change to Academic Programming

Policy Statement

Before initiating any significant changes in academic programming—such as adding a new degree program, delivering an existing on-campus program in a distance/online mode, offering a program at a higher degree or credential level, or offering an existing program in a new location, among others—the college/department/unit initiating the change must notify the Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) as soon as such a change is considered. Additionally, OIE will review each proposal made to the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA) to determine if it should be considered a substantive change and therefore need to go through the notification and/or approval processes for SACS and any program-specific accreditors. In the event of a dispute as to whether a proposed change is considered substantive in nature, final review of the proposed change will be the responsibility of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Purpose
This requirement is intended to ensure compliance with external accreditation requirements, including those of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and any relevant program-specific accrediting agency. Depending on the scope of the initiative, several months or longer lead time is necessary to meet accreditation standards of notification and approval before the change can be implemented.

Entities Affected by the Policy

- Departments, colleges, or units initiating significant changes in academic programming

Policy Background

Accreditors, such as SACS, require prior notification and, in some cases, prior approval of academic changes they deem substantive. Failure to provide the required notification or to seek the prior approval from the accrediting body can be considered non-compliant and can result in sanctions; therefore, Eastern Kentucky University has established this policy in order to ensure its compliance with the relevant principles of accreditation. Furthermore, this policy ensures that substantive changes are identified and that the required notifications are made and approvals sought. Finally, this policy will ensure that records of substantive changes to academic programs will be kept in one location in the University.
Procedures

Training
Training will first be provided to academic leaders as to what is considered a substantive change by SACS, and what steps must be taken to notify and/or seek approval from SACS. Academic units intending to make changes that may be substantive in nature according to SACS and/or their respective program accrediting agencies will notify the Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) in writing as soon as the change is being considered in order to ensure sufficient lead time.

Notification of Significant Change
(By Initiator to Executive Director of OIE)
Initiators of academic programming changes should notify OIE in writing that a change is being considered. Notification should include a detailed description of the change and a timeline for planned implementation of the change.

Review of CAA Proposals
OIE will also review each proposal to CAA before the formal meeting occurs in order to identify any substantive changes not already identified by the academic unit proposing the change. If such a proposal is identified, OIE will notify the Chairperson of CAA before the formal meeting to ensure appropriate discussion and action on the proposal.

Determination of Substantive Change
The Executive Director of OIE will determine whether a change is substantive and will notify the initiator of the decision. If the initiator disagrees with the decision, an appeal may be filed with the Provost, whose decision is final.

Develop Action Plan
If a change is determined to be substantive, OIE will work with the relevant parties to develop an action plan that will ensure compliance with the requirements of the accrediting body.

Notification of Substantive Change
(By University/Program to Accreditor)
The President will notify SACS of substantive changes at the time and in the manner determined by SACS policy. Notification of program accrediting bodies will be made according to their regulations.

Feedback to Initiator
OIE will inform the initiator of any decision made by the University or by accrediting bodies and may request additional information or action from the initiator.

Definitions

Credential Level
SACS classifies institutions based on the highest degree awarded by the institution. Those classifications are as follows:
- Level I Offers the associate degree as the highest degree
- Level II Offers the baccalaureate degree as the highest degree
- Level III Offers the master's degree as the highest degree
- Level IV Offers the master's and specialist degree as the highest degree
- Level V Offers three or fewer doctorate degrees as highest degrees
- Level VI Offers four or more doctorate degrees

Distance Mode
Delivery instruction method in which the majority of interaction between the instructor and students and among students occurs when the participants are not in the same location. Instruction may be synchronous or
asynchronous and may involve the use of correspondence, audio, video, and/or computer technologies.

Higher Degree
Degree levels based on ascending order: certificate, associate, bachelor, master, and doctorate.

Notification (per SACS)
Notification constitutes a letter from the institution's chief executive officer to the President of the Commission summarizing the proposed change, providing the intended implementation date, and listing the street address, if the change involves the initiation of an off-campus site.

Off-campus site
Any location not on the Richmond campus.

On-campus site
The Richmond, Kentucky campus.

Online Mode
A distance delivery instruction method in which the majority of interaction between the instructor and students and among students occurs when the participants are not in the same location and when a web-based tool is used. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous.

Substantive/Significant Change (EKU)
A considerable change in academic programming. This change includes but is not limited to:
- adding a new degree program
- delivering an existing on-campus program in a distance/online mode
- offering a program at a higher degree or credential level
- offering an existing program in a new location

Substantive Change (per SACS)
A significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.

University
Eastern Kentucky University

Responsibilities

College Dean
- Attend substantive change training sessions.
- Notify Executive Director of OIE as soon as any substantive change is considered.
- Work with OIE to prepare necessary documents for substantive change notifications/applications.

Council on Academic Affairs
- Provide Executive Director of OIE with copies of all proposals submitted to the CAA at least 3 working days prior to any meeting.
- Work with OIE to identify potential substantive changes and ensure that such changes are referred to OIE for appropriate actions.

Department Chair/Program Coordinator/Unit Head
- Attend substantive change training sessions.
- Notify Dean as soon as any substantive change is considered.
- Notify Executive Director of OIE as soon as any substantive change is considered.
- Work with OIE to prepare necessary documents for substantive change notifications/applications.
Policy 4.3.3
Volume 1, Academic Affairs
Chapter 3, Courses, Programs, and Degrees
Section 9, Substantive Change to Academic Programming

Executive Director of Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- Provide training and technical assistance prior to and during the substantive change process.
- Work with chairs/program coordinators/unit heads and deans to prepare necessary documents for substantive changes.
- Act as a liaison to the Provost concerning all substantive change issues.
- Ensure that appropriate notification of substantive changes is made within the University and to outside accreditors.
- Maintain a database of substantive change proposals.
- Maintain records or all documents concerning substantive changes submitted to and received from accrediting bodies.
- Stay current with SACS and other accrediting body policies regarding substantive change.

Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Review and approve substantive changes prior to submission to accrediting bodies.
- Act as final arbiter of substantive change classification.

University President
- Provide notification letter to SACS (and other accrediting bodies as necessary) when substantive changes are considered by the University.

Violations of the Policy
Failure to follow this policy may result in an academic program change being stopped or suspended until such time as the University can come into compliance with the policies of the accrediting body.

Institutional failure to follow the policy with regard to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools could result in the following: "the accreditation of the institution may be placed in jeopardy, the institution's case may be referred to the Commission for the imposition of a sanction, or the institution may lose its Title IV funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse it for money received by the institution for unreported substantive changes."

Interpreting Authority
- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Relevant Links
SACS Substantive Change Policy

Policy Adoption Review and Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 8, 2007</td>
<td>Provost Council</td>
<td>Recommended Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 28, 2007</td>
<td>Board of Regents</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
f. Coaching Minor-new program

g. Fire & Emergency Services Certificate-new program

h. Occupational Safety Certificate-new program

Following presentation and discussion, Mr. Turner made a motion for approval. Dr. Bizzack second. The motion passed by voice vote. Details on the approved items recommended by the Council on Academic Affairs are included in the Official Minutes of the Board of Regents.

Late Enrollment in Course Policy
Dr. Piercey presented for approval the proposal to establish a policy that makes clear late enrollment deadlines. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that students adhere to best academic and educational practices and enable departments to offer courses and curriculum effectively. Additionally, the policy clarifies special cases or exemptions. Following Dr. Piercey's presentation and discussion, Ms. Rogers made a motion to approve. Ms. Barton second. The motion passed by voice vote. The full text of the Late Enrollment in Course Policy is included with the Official Minutes of the Board of Regents.

Substantive Changes to Academic Programming Policy
Dr. Piercey presented for approval a proposed Substantive Changes to Academic Programming Policy, the purpose of which is to ensure compliance with external accreditation requirements, including those of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and any relevant program-specific accrediting agency. Following Dr. Piercey's presentation and discussion, Dr. Bizzack made a motion to approve. Mr. Fulkerson second. The motion passed by voice vote. The full text of the Substantive Changes to Academic Programming Policy is included with the Official Minutes of the Board of Regents.

Credit for Non-Collegiate Instruction Policy
Dr. Piercey presented for approval a proposed Credit for Non-Collegiate Instruction Policy which enables credit to be awarded for certain non-collegiate experiences when those experiences have been evaluated by qualified faculty, and when an official articulation agreement exists. Following Dr. Piercey's presentation and discussion, Mr. Abney made a motion to approve. Mr. Fulkerson second. The motion passed by voice vote. The full text of the Credit for Non-Collegiate Instruction Policy is included with the Official Minutes of the Board of Regents.

Waiver of University Policy 3.2.4 (Transfer Credits)
Dr. Piercey presented for approval a proposal to provide a blanket waiver of the policy on transfer credits to allow students to transfer credits earned at Bowling Green Technical College (BGTC) and Gateway Community and Technical College (GCTC). He noted that current policy allows the transfer of credits only from regionally accredited institutions. Further, Dr. Piercey advised that although Bowling Green Technical College and Gateway Community and Technical College are part of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), neither institution is presently accredited by the
I. Substantive Change to Academic Programming Policy

II. Issue

This requirement is intended to ensure compliance with external accreditation requirements, including those of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and any relevant program-specific accrediting agency.

III. Background

Accreditors, such as SACS, require prior notification and, in some cases, prior approval of academic changes they deem substantive. Depending on the scope of the initiative, several months or longer lead time is necessary to meet accreditation standards of notification and approval before the change can be implemented.

Failure to provide the required notification or to seek the prior approval from the accrediting body can be considered non-compliant and can result in sanctions; therefore, Eastern Kentucky University has established this policy in order to ensure its compliance with the relevant principles of accreditation. Furthermore, this policy ensures that substantive changes are identified and that the required notifications are made and approvals sought. Finally, this policy will ensure that records of substantive changes to academic programs will be kept in one location in the University.

IV. Alternatives

Because this policy ensures compliance with the University’s accrediting agency, no alternative exists.

V. President’s Recommendation

Based on the recommendation of the Provost and the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the President recommends approval.