Substantive Change Policy

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General Description

Policy Summary:

This policy describes the kinds of substantive changes that SACSCOC considers and outlines a procedure for ensuring that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC policy.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all substantive changes are reported in accordance with SACSCOC policy.

Scope:

This policy applies to all board members, administrators, faculty, and staff who are in the position to make significant modifications or expansions to the nature and scope of Trinity University's operations, governance, or educational offerings.

Exceptions:

There are no exclusions for this policy.

Policy Content

A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Under federal regulations, substantive change includes institutional activities such as (1) changing the established institutional mission or objectives, (2) changing the institution's legal status, form of control, or ownership, (3) adding or removing courses/programs that represent a significant departure in content or in method of delivery, (4) adding courses/programs at a degree or credential level above the institution's current accreditation, (5) changing from clock hours to credit hours, (6)

substantially increasing the number of clock or credit hours for completion of a program, (7) adding an off-campus location at which the institution offers at least 50 percent of an educational program, or (8) establishing a branch campus. Trinity University is required to notify SACSCOC or secure SACSCOC approval prior to implementing a substantive change.

Substantive Change Procedure for Curricular Changes
The University Curriculum Council (UCC) will notify the University's Accreditation Liaison before implementing any curricular changes that might qualify as substantive changes according to SACSCOC (e.g., adding or re-opening a program, closing a program, changing program length, and changing method of delivery for a program).

The Accreditation Liaison will determine whether the proposed change qualifies as a substantive change according to the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy. If the change under consideration is determined to be a substantive change, the Accreditation Liaison will complete the required documentation and submit it to SACSCOC. In addition, the Accreditation Liaison will notify the director of financial aid of the proposed change.

If the change only requires notification to SACSCOC, the Accreditation Liaison will inform the UCC when the notification has been submitted. The change can be implemented immediately after SACSCOC has been notified. If the change requires approval from SACSCOC, the Accreditation Liaison will inform the UCC when approval has been received from SACSCOC so that the change can be implemented.

Substantive Change Procedure for Non-Curricular Changes

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) will notify the University's Accreditation Liaison before implementing any changes that might qualify as substantive changes according to SACSCOC. If the change under consideration is determined to be a substantive change, the Accreditation Liaison will complete the required documentation and submit it to SACSCOC.In addition, the Accreditation Liaison will notify the director of financial aid of the proposed change.

If the change only requires notification to SACSCOC, the Accreditation Liaison will inform the ELT when the notification has been submitted. The change can be implemented immediately after SACSCOC has been notified. If the change requires approval from SACSCOC, the Accreditation Liaison will inform the ELT when approval has been received from SACSCOC so that the change can be implemented.

Performance Evaluation

Consequences of Policy Violation:

The Compliance Certification for SACSCOC reaffirmation will require that Trinity provide:

- Copies of correspondence from SACSCOC documenting submission of materials for notification or approval of substantive change.
- Examples of internal documents showing the policy is working (e.g., completed program approval forms, UCC minutes)

If an institution is non-compliant with SACSCOC's Substantive Change Policy and Procedures or Standard 14.2 (Substantive change), its accreditation may be in jeopardy. An unreported substantive change may require a review of the institution's substantive change policy and procedures document by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Non-compliance subjects the institution to monitoring, sanction, or removal from membership. Failure to secure approval, if required, of a substantive change involving programs or locations that qualify for Title IV federal funding may place the institution in jeopardy with the U.S. Department of Education, including reimbursement of funds received related to an unreported substantive change.

Terms & Definitions

Terms and Definitions:

Term:	Definition:
SACSCOC	The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges - Trinity University's institutional accreditor.
Substantive change	A significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.
Notification	Some substantive changes (see SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy) require notification only. Notifications can be submitted any time before implementation, and once Trinity has submitted the notification, the change may be implemented before a response from SACSCOC is received.

Term:	Definition:
Approval	Some substantive changes (see SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy) require approval by either the SACSCOC Board of Trustees or the Executive Council of the Board of Trustees. Submission deadlines vary depending on the kind of approval needed, and the change must not be implemented until Trinity has received approval from SACSCOC.
Accreditation Liaison	The primary contact person at Trinity for SACSCOC staff. All substantive changes must be submitted to SACSCOC by the Accreditation Liaison.

Attachments

Trinity University Curricular Substantive Change Form

Related Documents

Related Documents:

Document Type:	Document Name:	Document Number:
Policy	Faculty Handbook 2026-2027	ACAD-0002

Related Content:

https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/SubstantiveChange.pdf

Revision Management

Revision History Log:

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Vice President Approval:

Name:	Title:
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