

Northern Virginia Community College

Policy and Procedures for Reporting Substantive Change

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accredits Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and its programs and services, regardless of location or delivery method. This accreditation provides public documentation of institutional quality and enables the College to participate in federal programs.

In order to maintain its accreditation with SACSCOC, the College must demonstrate compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement*. One standard with which NOVA must comply is Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 - Substantive Change:

The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes.

The SACSCOC policy statement on *Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges* (February 2013) defines substantive change as a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Official notification from SACSCOC is required prior to implementation of any substantive change. If we do not notify SACSCOC of a substantive change before we implement it, we can be sanctioned. In addition, without SACSCOC acknowledgement of a substantive change, students placed in programs or receiving instruction at sites affected by the change are not eligible for federal financial aid.

Substantive changes that NOVA must report to SACSCOC fall into two broad categories. One set of substantive changes relates to the initiation and discontinuance of academic programs. The other set of changes relates to the initiation and discontinued use of off-campus sites. While Academic Services has all the information it needs to monitor new and discontinued programs, it cannot do the same for off-campus sites without information provided by the campuses and outreach programs.

Roles and Responsibilities

As noted above, NOVA can only remain in compliance with SACSCOC substantive change policy if faculty and staff in many offices collect and share information. The roles and responsibilities of several key positions and one committee are described below.

Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Services (EVP):

Serves as the SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison and is responsible for ensuring NOVA's compliance with all substantive change policies. As the Liaison, the Executive Vice President assures that all substantive changes are reported in a timely manner.

Provosts:

Provide oversight for off-campus course offerings by all divisions at their campus. Assure that deans and outreach staff under their supervision are aware of substantive change reporting requirements. Appoint a Substantive Change Liaison for their campus.

Associate Vice President for Academic Services (AVPAS):

Reports all new and discontinued programs. Supervises the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance. Shares all MOUs associated with off-campus sites with the Vice President for Fiscal and Administrative Services before they are signed.

Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance:

Works closely with campus personnel, college staff, and the Academic and Student Services Compliance Committee to assist the EVP and the AVPAS in monitoring for instances of substantive change and to prepare required documentation for timely and complete notification of substantive change to SACSCOC. Monitors policy changes, monitors new off-campus sites, and drafts reports of changes to off-campus sites and academic programs. Also assists the EVP and AVPAS in complying with other areas of academic and student services policy. Maintains the *Academic and Student Services Compliance* website designed to inform the entire College community of pending compliance actions, substantive changes and SACSCOC notifications and approvals. Emails the Provosts on a monthly basis to inquire about plans for off-campus sites.

Academic Deans:

Initiate off-campus course offerings in compliance with substantive change policies. Keep the campus Substantive Change Liaison informed of off-campus course offerings planned for future terms. With associate and assistant deans, assure that off-campus courses are taught by faculty who meet VCCS-29 criteria or who have an approved JR and follow NOVA course content summaries and syllabus requirements.

Directors of Outreach Programs:

Examples of Directors of Outreach Programs include the Director of Dual Enrollment, Director of Community Based Organizations, and Executive Director of College and Career Pathways. Assist the Academic Deans in initiating off-campus course offerings in compliance with substantive change policies and help keep the campus Substantive Change Liaison informed of off-campus course offerings planned for future terms. Work with Academic Deans to assure that off-campus courses are taught by faculty who meet VCCS-29 criteria or who have an approved JR and follow NOVA course content summaries and syllabus requirements.

Faculty:

Understand this policy for the purpose of identifying substantive changes and reporting them to their campus Substantive Change Liaison or appropriate dean.

Campus Substantive Change Liaisons:

Represent a campus or community outreach program. Serve on the Academic and Student Services Compliance Committee and work closely with the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance in order to track and report off-campus sites. Compile off-campus

credit offerings from all divisions and report changes and off-campus activities to appropriate Provost.

Academic and Student Services Compliance Committee:

Chaired by the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance, includes campus and community outreach Substantive Change Liaisons, the Director of Dual Enrollment, the Clery Act Coordinator, a representative of the Office of College-wide Financial Aid, a representative of the Office of Military Services, and other parties responsible for identifying or initiating off-campus sites. The Committee will meet quarterly to review and confirm anticipated off-campus sites and expansion of coursework at non-approved sites in an intercampus and interdisciplinary manner. Once a new site has been confirmed, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will send a *Letter of Confirmation* to the NOVA parties responsible for the new site.

Types of Change and Procedure for Handling Each Change

As noted earlier, the substantive changes we must report center around new or discontinued programs or new or discontinued off-campus sites. The following provides more detail about the procedures to be used for specific substantive changes.

Substantive Changes Related to New or Discontinued Programs

New Degree or Certificate Program

| Type of Change | Contact SACSCOC | Is prior approval from SACSCOC required before implementation? | Keyholder | Documentation |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Initiating a new degree/certificate <i>using existing approved courses</i> (Example: Cybersecurity A.A.S.) | After State Board or SCHEV approval | No, but SACSCOC acknowledgement is needed if students placed in the program are to be eligible for federal financial aid or will receive Military funding | AVPAS and SACSCOC liaison (EVP) | Notification Letter |
| Initiating a new degree/certificate <i>that is a significant departure from current programs</i> (Example: Competency Based Program) | 6 months prior to implementation of the new degree/certificate | Yes | AVPAS and SACSCOC liaison (EVP) | Prospectus |

New programs must be approved by faculty clusters and their deans. Proposals then must be approved by the Curriculum Committee, Administrative Council, and the local Board. Proposals for full degrees or certificates must then be forwarded to the VCCS for State Board approval. Some program types must also be approved by SCHEV staff, and some by the Council itself. The Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance, in conjunction with the

AVPAS, will review the program and decide if it is a significant departure from current programs. If the new program is not a significant departure, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will prepare a notification letter to be forwarded to the EVP/SACSCOC Liaison for review; the letter will then be sent to SACSCOC. If the new program is a significant departure, six months prior to implementing the new program, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance, in conjunction with the AVPAS, will prepare a letter and prospectus and forward it to the Executive Vice President for review and submission to SACSCOC.

After approval is received, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will update the Academic & Student Services Compliance webpage and notify the Director of College-wide Financial Aid and other key constituents.

Discontinued Degree or Certificate Program

| Type of Change | Contact SACSCOC | Is prior approval from SACSCOC required before implementation? | Keyholder | Documentation |
|---|---|--|-----------|--|
| Closing a program (internal teach-out plan) | Immediately following the decision to close the program | Yes | AVPAS | Description of teach-out plan and letter of notification |

The Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance and the AVPAS will work with the dean(s) responsible for the program to prepare appropriate documentation, including teach-out plan(s) where necessary. The Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will prepare a letter of notification and forward it to the EVP for approval and submission to SACSCOC immediately following the decision to close a program.

After SACSCOC approval is received, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will update the Academic & Student Services Compliance webpage and notify appropriate constituents.

Offering Credit at a New Level

| Type of Change | Contact SACSCOC | Is prior approval from SACSCOC required before implementation? | Keyholder | Documentation |
|--|-----------------|--|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Initiating coursework or programs at a different level than currently approved | 12 months | Yes | VCCS/NOVA President | Application for level change |

The associate degree is the highest degree NOVA or any other VCCS college is accredited to award; the Code of Virginia and VCCS policy state that community colleges offer education through the associate degree. If the College were to seek approval to award a higher level of

degree, the effort would be part of the VCCS as a whole. If VCCS policy and the Code of Virginia were revised to allow it, NOVA would submit an application for level change to SACSCOC by April 15 or October 1 of the year before we would begin to offer the higher level coursework or programs. The Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance would draft the application for level change and ensure 12 months advance notice.

If this were approved, before NOVA could offer any program at the new degree level, the program would have to go through the usual program approval process, from cluster through SCHEV. This type of substantive change is not anticipated by NOVA.

Substantive Changes Related to New or Discontinued Off-Campus Sites

New Off-Campus Sites

| Type of Change | Contact SACSCOC | Is prior approval from SACSCOC required before implementation? | Keyholder | Documentation |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---|---------------------|
| Initiating off-campus sites where students <i>can obtain</i> 50% or more credits toward <i>any</i> program (Example: 52% of Auto at Osbourn High School) | 6 months prior to implementation | Yes | Campus Substantive Change Liaisons and Director of Policy Compliance | Prospectus |
| Initiating off-campus sites where students <i>can obtain</i> 25-49% credits toward <i>any</i> program (Example: 42% of Childhood Dev. at Goodwill Industries) | Prior to implementation | No | Campus Substantive Change Liaisons and Director of Policy Compliance | Notification Letter |
| Initiating off-campus sites where students <i>can obtain less than 25%</i> of credits toward any program (Example: 19% of Gen. Ed. Cert. at Broad Run High School) | N/A | No | Campus Substantive Change Liaisons and Director of Policy Compliance will track these sites | N/A |
| Offering previously approved program at previously <i>approved off-campus</i> sites (Example: 54% of CSC Accounting at Ft. Myer) | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

When any department or division at NOVA anticipates offering credit courses at any new location, the Campus Substantive Change Liaison will contact the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance at least 6 months prior to the implementation date.

The Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance, with the cooperation of the initiating Campus Substantive Change Liaison, will prepare a prospectus and forward it to the SACSCOC Liaison for approval and submission to SACSCOC.

A complete review of off-campus sites and course offerings will take place twice a year, in March and October. The compliance committee will meet to review all anticipated new off-campus sites, and additional course offerings at all non-approved sites.

After SACSCOC approval is received, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will update the Academic/Student Services webpage and notify appropriate constitutes.

Moving an Off-Campus Site

| Type of Change | Contact SACSCOC | Is prior approval from SACSCOC required before implementation? | Keyholder | Documentation |
|---|-------------------------|--|--|---------------------|
| Moving an off-campus site (within the same campus service area) | Prior to implementation | No (prior notification <i>is</i> required) | Person responsible for the relocation, Campus Substantive Change Liaison | Notification letter |

The Campus Substantive Change Liaison will contact the Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance Director with the new location address and implementation date. The Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will prepare a letter of notification and forward it to the SACSCOC Liaison for approval and submission to SACSCOC. After notification is received the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will update the website with the new address.

Branch Campuses

NOVA has no branch campuses. The following procedures would be followed only if we initiated a branch campus.

| Type of Change | Contact SACSCOC | Is prior approval from SACSCOC required before implementation? | Keyholder | Documentation |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------|
| Relocating a main or branch campus | 6 months prior to implementation | Yes | President & Admin Council | Prospectus |
| Initiating a branch campus | 6 months prior to implementation | Yes | President & Admin Council | Prospectus |

In coordination with the SACSCOC Liaison and other key stakeholders, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will aid in preparing the prospectus and appropriate documentation. The SACSCOC Liaison will forward the documentation to the President's Office for signature and submission to SACSCOC.

After SACSCOC approval is received, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will update the Academic/Student Services webpage and notify appropriate constitutes.

Discontinuing Use of Off-Campus Site

| Type of Change | Contact SACSCOC | Is prior approval from SACSCOC required before implementation? | Keyholder | Documentation |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Closing an approved site (internal teach-out plan) | Immediately following the decision to close the site | Yes | Responsible party and Campus Substantive Change Liaison | Description of teach-out plan and letter of notification |

The Substantive Change Liaison will work jointly with the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance to prepare appropriate documentation, including teach-out plan(s) where necessary. The Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will prepare a letter of notification and forward it to the SACSCOC Liaison for approval and submission to SACSCOC immediately following the decision to close a site.

After SACSCOC approval is received, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will update the Academic/Student Services webpage and notify appropriate constitutes.

Working with Other Colleges

SSDL

| Type of Change | Contact SACSCOC | Is prior approval from SACSCOC required before implementation? | Keyholder | Documentation |
|--|-------------------------|--|------------------|---|
| Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium | Prior to Implementation | No (prior notification <i>is</i> required) | Initiating party | Letter of Notification and copy of signed MOU |

Other Collaborative Programs

| Type of Change | Contact SACSCOC | Is prior approval from SACSCOC required before implementation? | Keyholder | Documentation |
|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| Initiating a joint or dual degree with another SACSCOC institution | Prior to implementation | No (prior notification is required) | President & Admin Council | Copy of signed MOU and contact information for |

| | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| | | | | each institution |
| Initiating a joint or dual degree with an institution not accredited by SACSCOC | 6 months prior to implementation | Yes | President & Admin Council | Prospectus |
| Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV Programs if the entity provides <i>25% or more</i> of an educational program offered by NOVA | 6 months prior to implementation | Yes | Initiating party | Prospectus |
| Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in USDOE Title IV Programs if the entity provides <i>less than 25%</i> of an educational program offered by NOVA | Prior to implementation | No (prior notification is required) | Initiating party | Letter of Notification and Copy of signed MOU |

In coordination with the SACSCOC Liaison and other key stakeholders, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will aid in preparing the prospectus and appropriate documentation. The SACSCOC Liaison will forward it to the President's Office for signature and submission to SACSCOC.

After SACSCOC approval is received, the Director of Academic and Student Services Policy Compliance will update the Academic/Student Services webpage and notify appropriate constituents.

Enforcement

Responsibility for the enforcement of this policy and procedure resides with the College President. The Provosts are responsible for the enforcement of this policy and procedure at their campuses, and changes on their campuses. The Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Services serves as the liaison to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges is charged with the responsibility to report substantive changes in a timely manner. No substantive change can be implemented until a letter of approval or an acceptance of notification is received from the Commission on Colleges.

Review

The Office of the Executive Vice President/SACSCOC Liaison will initiate a review of this process each year in June to evaluate how the process is working and to revise procedures for improvement, if necessary.

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Reviews:

Resources

1. *Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges* (February 2013) - SACSCOC Policy Statement:

<http://www.sacscoc.org/SubstantiveChange.asp>

2. *The Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* (2012 Edition):

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2012principlesofaccreditation.pdf>