

## **E.2.1 (Policy) Accreditation and Substantive Change**

Responsible Department: Vice Chancellor for Academic Success

Board Adoption: 10-22-13

Last Board Action: 01-26-21

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### **Accreditation**

Each of the Alamo Colleges shall be members of and accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The U.S. Department of Education recognizes SACSCOC as an agency whose accreditation enables its members to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV programs.

Accredited institutions periodically conduct internal reviews involving their administrative officers, staffs, faculties, students, trustees, and others appropriate to the process. The internal review allows an institution to consider its effectiveness in achieving its stated mission, its compliance with the Commission's accreditation requirements, its efforts in enhancing the quality of student learning and the quality of programs and services offered to its constituencies, and its success in accomplishing its mission. The Chancellor and Presidents at each college are the individuals responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented. Ownership of compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation: Foundation for Quality Enhancement* of SACSCOC rests with each College President. The College President will inform the Chancellor of any anticipated actions to be taken regarding accreditation requirements.

### **Substantive Change**

SACSCOC has an obligation to the U.S. Department of Education to review and approve changes of a substantive nature initiated by its member institutions between decennial reviews.

The purpose of this policy is to establish institutional procedures for recognizing and approving substantive change and ensuring timely notification to, and required prior approval from SACSCOC. The Chancellor and Presidents are the individuals responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented. The College Presidents and Vice-Chancellors will inform the Chancellor of any anticipated actions to be taken regarding accreditation requirements.

A substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Substantive change includes high-impact, high-risk changes and changes that can impact the quality of educational programs and services.

### **Institutional Obligations**

- As a member institution; each of the Alamo Colleges are required to notify SACSCOC of changes in accordance with the substantive change policy and, when required, seek approval prior to the initiation of changes.  
Each of the Alamo Colleges are required to have written procedures to ensure that all substantive changes are reported to the Commission in a timely manner. This procedure must be approved through institutional processes and published in institutional documents accessible to those affected and to the public.

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### **Non-compliance with Reporting Requirements**

If an institution is non-compliant with Substantive Change Policy and Procedures or Standard 14.2, 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.

Reference:

SACS Principles of Accreditation 3.12.1 – Substantive Change