

# **El Centro College**

## **Substantive Change Monitoring Policy**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish the requirements, procedures, and processes necessary to ensure timely coordination and notification of substantive changes to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), El Centro College's regional accrediting body.

### **Personnel Responsible for Policy Implementation and Compliance \***

Program Coordinators

All Instructional Division Deans (Executive Deans)

Executive Dean for Educational Partnerships

Dean of Distance Learning (Instructional Innovation and Academic Support)

Vice President for Academic Affairs

SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison

College President

\* Note – See flow chart, Substantive Change Process by Type

### **Effective Date**

March 2012

### **I. Overview**

As a condition of continued accreditation, El Centro College (ECC) is responsible for maintaining compliance with the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy. SACSCOC defines substantive change as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” For ECC, substantive change would address modifications in academic service delivery since the last decennial accreditation review. Such modifications would primarily involve the following conditions: addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure from institutional mission critical requirements, establishment of off-site location(s) offering fifty percent (50%) or more of instructional course activity; and online electronic mediated instruction contributing fifty percent (50%) or more toward program degree acquisition. With the advent of mandates requiring greater opportunities for educational access, other conditions requiring substantive changes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution,
- Any change in legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution,
- The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the institution was last evaluated,
- 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,
- A change from clock hours to credit hours,
- A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program,
- The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers at least 50% of an educational program,

- The establishment of a branch campus,
- Closing a program, off-campus site, branch campus or institution,
- Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement that includes only the initiation of a dual or joint academic program with another institution,
- Acquiring another institution or a program or location of another institution,
- Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out program for a closed institution, and
- Entering into a contract by which an entity not eligible for Title IV funding offers 25% or more of one or more of the accredited institution's programs.

## **II. Monitoring Conditions Requiring Substantive Change**

El Centro College has established and retained the functionality of a Substantive Change Monitoring Committee. The Substantive Change Monitoring Committee is a standing committee of the President's Cabinet with the specific responsibility for substantive change oversight.

At a minimum, the ECC Substantive Change Monitoring Committee's membership will include the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Executive Deans of instructional areas, SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, Institutional Research officer, and Curriculum Manager. The Accreditation Liaison chairs this committee. Each committee member is responsible for being knowledgeable of the SACSCOC substantive change policy and related assessment modes as identified in ECC's Institutional Effectiveness Program. The committee is responsible for informing the Vice President of Academic Affairs of proposals requiring considerations for substantive change. In addition, the committee is also responsible for updating the substantive change information, including this policy, on the college's website (<https://www.elcentrocollege.edu/aboutecc/accreditation/pages/default.aspx>) and conducting at least one professional development seminar during the academic year. Committee responsibility primarily addresses preparation of substantive change notifications and related prospectuses essential to compliance with SACSCOC policies. The committee is required to convene at least once per semester.

## **III. ECC Distance Learning Committee**

The ECC Distance Learning Committee, formed out of institutional effectiveness requirements to monitor the quality of academic courses utilizing asynchronous and synchronous instructional technology, is charged with monitoring the percentage of credit courses in any degree or certificate program offered via online learning to ensure instructional compliance with SACSCOC policies and regularly updating (at least once per academic year) the College's Substantive Change Monitoring Committee of online course status with regard to degree credit hour offerings.

## **IV. SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison Responsibilities**

The SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison provides the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee with regular updates on the SACSCOC substantive change policy and maintains academic program data profiles. The Accreditation Liaison also determines what action is necessary when a proposed modification represents a substantive change for the institution. Further, the Accreditation Liaison has primary responsibility for ensuring timely submission of notices and related prospectuses to the SACSCOC. The Accreditation Liaison is the point person for required follow-up actions and reporting.

## **5. Institutional Research Office Responsibilities**

The Institutional Research (IR) Office is the data custodian for the Colleague System, which contains academic program data and instructional degree activities. This information is critical for reviewing and tracking substantive change. The IR Office will assist the SACSCOC Liaison in maintaining data profiles and provide analytical data/support when requested.

## **6. College Curriculum Committee Responsibilities**

The College Curriculum Committee is a standing committee responsible for approving all academic course and program changes. The College Curriculum Manager will submit for review all changes recommended by the College Curriculum Committee to the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee and to the Distance Learning Committee for compliance with SACSCOC substantive change requirements.

The College Curriculum Committee must report all course/program development activities to the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee. No recommendation for modification, addition, or removal of an academic course or program activity will be considered by the College Curriculum Committee until it has been approved by the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee. In accordance with established institutional policies and procedures, the College Curriculum Committee is primarily responsible for instructional service delivery oversight and ensuring congruence with ECC's role, scope, and mission. The College Curriculum Committee shall also review existing programs on a periodic basis for continued adherence to institutional role, scope, and mission.

## **7. Substantive Change Reporting Timeline**

Guidelines for reporting substantive change are published in the document Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions at <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>.

Note: Any institutional plan to implement a substantive change will be submitted to the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee at least 90 days prior to the deadline for the SACSCOC notification.

## Appendix A

### Glossary of Terms

from <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>

**Branch Campus** - a location of an institution that is geographically apart and independent of the main campus of the institution. A location is independent of the main campus if the location is

- permanent in nature
- offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential
- has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization and
- has its own budgetary and hiring authority

**Contractual Agreement** – typically is one in which an institution enters an agreement for receipt of courses/programs or portions of courses or programs (i.e., clinical training internships, etc.) delivered by another institution or service provider.

**Consortial Relationship** - A consortial relationship typically is one in which two or more institutions share in the responsibility of developing and delivering courses and programs that meet mutually agreed upon standards of academic quality.

**Correspondence Education** - a formal educational process under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; courses are typically self-paced.

**Degree Completion Program** – 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.

**Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs** - Federal regulations define a direct assessment competency-based educational program as an instructional program that, in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, uses direct assessment of student learning relying solely on the attainment of defined competencies, or recognizes the direct assessment of student learning by others. The assessment must be consistent with the accreditation of the institution or program using the results of the assessment.

**Distance Education** - a 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.

**Dual Degree** – separate program completion credentials each of which bears only the name, seal, and signature of the institution awarding the degree to the student.

**Educational Program** – a coherent course of study leading to the awarding of a credential (i.e., a degree, diploma or certificate).

**Geographically Separate** - an instructional site or branch campus that is located physically apart from the main campus of the institution.

**Joint Degree** - a single program completion credential bearing the names, seals, and signatures of each of the two or more institutions awarding the degree to the student.

**Modified Prospectus** - a prospectus submitted in lieu of a full prospectus for certain designated substantive changes. When a modified prospectus is acceptable, the Commission specifies requested information from the institution.

**Notification** - a letter from an institution's chief executive officer, or his/her designated representative, to SACSCOC President summarizing a proposed change, providing the intended implementation date, and listing the complete physical address if the change involves the initiation of an off-campus site or branch campus. The policy and procedures for reporting and review of institutional substantive change are outlined in the document "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges."

**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:

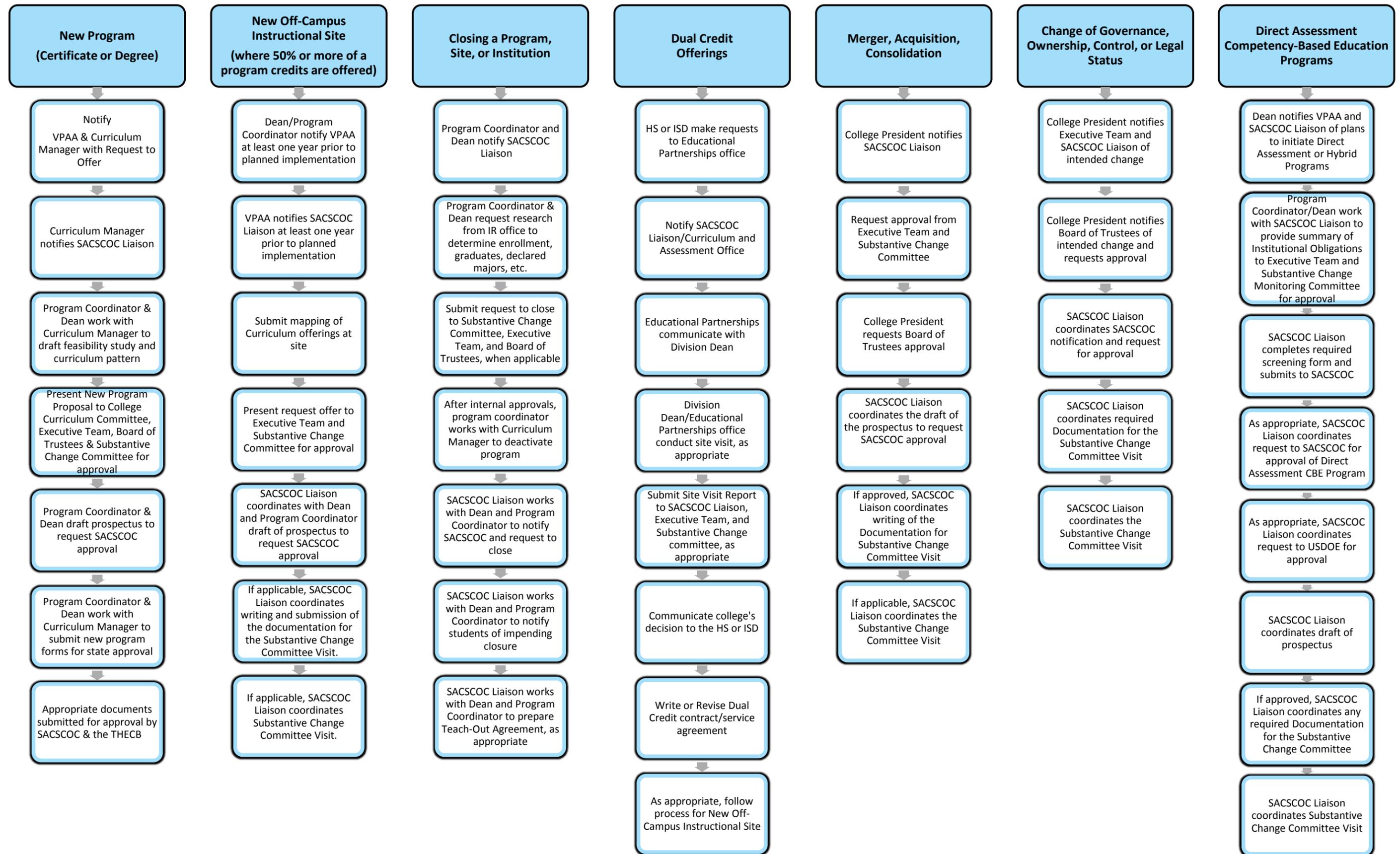
- What previously approved programs does the institution offer that are closely related to the new program and how are they related?
- Will significant additional equipment or facilities be needed?
- Will significant additional financial resources be needed?
- Will a significant number of new courses will be required?
- Will a significant number of new faculty members will be required?
- Will significant additional library/learning resources be needed?

**Teach-Out Agreement** - a written agreement between institutions that provides for the equitable treatment of students and a reasonable opportunity for students to complete their program of study if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 50% or more of at least one program offered, ceases to operate before all enrolled students have completed their program of study. This applies to the closure of an institution, a site, or a program. Such a teach-out agreement requires SACSCOC approval in advance of implementation.

**Teach-Out Plan** - a written plan developed by an institution that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 50% or more of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study, and may include, if required by the institution's accrediting agency, a teach-out agreement between institutions. This applies to the closure of an institution, a site, or a program. Teach-out plans must be approved by SACSCOC in advance of implementation.

# El Centro College Substantive Change Process by Type

## Appendix B



### El Centro College Substantive Change Routing Approval Form

Name of the Degree Program: \_\_\_\_\_

Originating Division: \_\_\_\_\_

- Check one:  This substantive change involves a new degree program to be offered online or at an off-campus location.  
 This substantive change is an existing and approved degree program to be offered at an off-campus location or utilizing a distance education delivery format.  
 This substantive change involves a change in modality.  
 This substantive change involves a change in credit hours.  
 This substantive change is a new program.  
 This substantive change is a program closure.  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Approvals:**

**1. Program Coordinator:** The ECC and SACSCOC policies and procedures have been followed in the preparation of this substantive change.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

**2. Division Dean:** I have reviewed and verified that the action steps executed by the Program Coordinator and ensure that all ECC, SACSCOC, and federal policies and procedures pertaining to the substantive change have been met.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

**3. Accreditation Liaison:** I have reviewed and approved the substantive change and verify that all ECC, SACSCOC, and federal policies pertaining to the substantive change have been met.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

**4. VP of Academic Affairs:** I have reviewed and approved the substantive change and verify that all ECC, SACSCOC, and federal policies pertaining to the substantive change have been met.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

**5. College President:**

I approve the substantive change and recommend notification to the SACSCOC.  
 I cannot approve the substantive change at this time and recommend the following actions - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)