

Substantive Change Policy

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Section 1: Purpose

This policy and its associated procedures outline how the College complies with the SACSCOC Substantive Change policy and ensures all substantive changes are reported to SACSCOC in a timely fashion. The policy assures the public that substantive changes do not hinder the College's ability to maintain all standards of accreditation and quality. As a requirement of accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Virginia Peninsula Community College is responsible for notifying and obtaining Commission approval (when required) prior to the implementation of a substantive change.

Section 2: Scope and Function

Substantive changes include high-impact, high-risk changes to an institution, and can impact the quality of educational programs and services provided. To ensure fiscal, administrative, and operational capacity, resources, support services, quality of instruction, and continuity prior to substantive changes being made, notification and approval from SACSCOC is required. This policy outlines the process by which substantive changes are reported to SACSCOC, ensures approval is obtained prior to implementation of substantive changes, and assigns responsibility for this process.

Section 3: Definitions

- 3.1 **Substantive Change:** SACSCOC defines a substantive change as, "A significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution." Accreditation is based upon, "Conditions existing at the time of the most recent evaluation and is not transferable." Therefore, changes must be reported to SACSCOC to ensure continued compliance with standards of

accreditation. For the full list of potential substantive changes, reference the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures.

- 3.2 **SACSCOC Liaison:** A senior faculty member or administrator, appointed by the President of Virginia Peninsula Community College, who serves as the primary contact person for SACSCOC staff. The SACSCOC Liaison coordinates SACSCOC accreditation activities at VPCC, submits the annual profile and other accreditation reports to SACSCOC, notifies SACSCOC of substantive changes, ensures the institutional data collected by SACSCOC is accurate, maintains an archive of all accreditation materials, reports, reviews, and correspondence, helps prepare for and serves as a reference person during decennial review processes and site visits, ensures compliance with accreditation requirements is incorporated into planning and evaluation processes, and familiarizes faculty, staff, students, and College leadership with the Principles of Accreditation and SACSCOC policies.
- 3.3 **Substantive Change Workgroup:** Group of knowledgeable VPCC personnel, convened by the SACSCOC Liaison, to prepare the notification packet, prospectus, or teach-out plan to be submitted to SACSCOC.
- 3.4 **Intended Implementation Date:** An institution's forward-looking, good faith estimate of when it will begin a substantive change. The intended implementation date is provided by the institution when a substantive change is submitted for review. Implementation must occur within two (2) years of the approval date, except where otherwise provided in policy. If implementation is delayed beyond two (2) years, then another prospectus or application is required. The Actual Implementation Date of the Substantive Change CANNOT precede the approval date.
- 3.5 **Submission Deadline:** Deadline for a substantive change prospectus, application, or notification submission. Deadlines are determined by the type of SACSCOC Board of Trustees review that is required and the intended implementation date. Consult the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures for specific deadlines.
- 3.6 **Approval Date:** The approval date of a substantive change is the date of the SACSCOC Board of Trustee's action to approve. Substantive Changes cannot be approved retroactively and are not included within the Institution's accreditation until the Approval Date.

Section 4: Process and Responsibilities

Virginia Peninsula Community College is required to notify or secure SACSCOC approval prior to implementing a substantive change in accordance with SACSCOC Accreditation Standard 14.2 and the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures.

It is the responsibility of the SACSCOC Liaison at Virginia Peninsula Community College to ensure that all substantive changes are appropriately reported to SACSCOC, and approval is obtained prior to implementation of the change. The specific reporting requirements and timelines vary based upon the type of substantive change.

- 4.1 **Institutional Changes:** organizational changes that impact the entire College. These changes typically require Cabinet approval, and the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Transformation is responsible for initiating the substantive change process with the SACSCOC

Liaison. It is the Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Transformation's responsibility to ensure all institutional changes are reported to them.

- 4.2 **Program Changes:** academic program-specific changes involving curriculum, new programs, closing programs, method of instruction or delivery, cooperative arrangements, or other major programmatic changes. It is the responsibility of the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs to initiate the substantive change process with the SACSCOC Liaison. It is the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs' responsibility to ensure all program changes are reported to them.
- 4.3 **Off-Campus Instructional Sites:** changes to programs or courses held at off-campus instructional sites, or the addition or closure of off-campus sites. It is the responsibility of the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs to initiate the substantive change process with the SACSCOC Liaison. It is the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs' responsibility to ensure all program changes are reported to them.

When the SACSCOC Liaison is notified of an impending substantive change, they will pull together a Substantive Change Workgroup of knowledgeable personnel to prepare the notification packet, prospectus, or teach-out plan to be submitted to SACSCOC.

A timeframe for developing and submitting the required documents will be set, based upon the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. The Substantive Change Workgroup will clarify the Intended Implementation Date and Submission Deadline. When SACSCOC approval is required, implementation cannot precede the Approval Date, which is the date of the SACSCOC Response Letter.

The Substantive Change Documentation will be submitted by the SACSCOC Liaison before the appropriate submission deadline. The submission deadline, anticipated approval date, and intended implementation date will be communicated to the appropriate VPCC personnel. Implementation of the change cannot proceed prior to receipt of SACSCOC approval, except where permitted by the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures. The SACSCOC Liaison will follow up with the appropriate VPCC personnel if additional information is required and when an approval decision is communicated to them.

A log of all substantive changes will be maintained by the division of Institutional Effectiveness and Transformation that will include a list of all substantive changes, the implementation date, the submission deadline, the date submitted to SACSCOC for review, and the approval date. A record of substantive change submissions and correspondence with SACSCOC will be retained. The SACSCOC Liaison is responsible for reviewing this policy's effectiveness annually.

Section 5: Procedures

See Virginia Peninsula Community College [PRE-802-01 Substantive Change Procedures](#).

Section 6: References

- 6.1 [SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures](#)
6.2 [SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation \(2024\), Standard 14.2](#)

Section 7: Schedule and Responsibilities for Periodic Reviews

It is the responsibility of the Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Transformation to conduct periodic reviews, at least annually, of this policy and procedures. It is the responsibility of the SACSCOC Liaison to ensure this policy and procedures remain up to date with any changes made to the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy and Procedures or SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation.

Section 8: Review and Revision History

Initial review of this policy will occur on or around October 29, 2025.

Section 9: Effective Date and Approval

Reviewed and approved: October 29, 2024

- College President, Dr. Towuanna Porter Brannon
- Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Kerry Ragno
- Vice President for Workforce Development and Innovation, Todd Estes
- Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success, Daniela Cigularova
- Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Transformation, Steven Felker
- Chief of Staff and Director of Strategic Initiatives, Ada Badgley