



# POLICIES *and* PROCEDURES

**Board of Trustees Policy Number:**  
ACAF 3.02

**Date of Adoption/Revision:**  
November 15, 2013/March 17, 2015

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Substantive Change Policy</b>
<b>AUTHORITY</b>	Office of the Provost
<b>APPLICABILITY</b>	<p>The policy applies to all College officers who can initiate, modify, review, approve, and allocate resources to any changes, including those to academic and non-academic programs and activities that may be considered a substantive change according to the latest revision of SACSCOC <a href="#">Policy for Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions</a>. Within academic areas, such changes can originate with: (1) individual or groups of faculty members; (2) department committees; (3) Department Chairs; (4) Deans and the Associate Provost; (5) Faculty Senate; (6) Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs; or (7) any other area reporting to the Provost.</p> <p>In those areas outside the academic areas, potential substantive changes may arise in: (1) individual units; (2) among supervisors in each area; (3) executive management teams within Vice Presidential or Executive Director Areas; or (4) with the Vice Presidents themselves. Furthermore, the need for a substantive change may come to the attention of the President or those in her direct reporting line.</p>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<p>The purpose of the policy is to establish the requirements, procedures, and processes necessary to ensure timely coordination and notification of substantive changes involving Bennett College to the college's regional accrediting body, the Southern Association of Colleges and School Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The policy complies with the SACSCOC <a href="#">Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement</a> as well as the Commission's policies and guidelines.</p>
<b>POLICY</b>	<p>In order to meet the commitment undertaken by virtue of its membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and its reaffirmation of accreditation, it is the policy of Bennett College to demonstrate continuing compliance with the <a href="#">Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement</a> by adhering to all standards, requirements, policies and procedures associated with the definition and scope of a substantive change and found in the latest revision of SACSCOC <a href="#">Policy for Substantive Changes for Accredited Institutions</a>.</p>

## PROCEDURES

### Definition of Substantive Change

A Substantive Change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution, as defined in SACSCOC's substantive change policy.

#### **Bennett College's responsibility is:**

1. To notify SACSCOC of substantive changes in a timely manner; and
2. In many cases to seek SACSCOC approval for up to six months before implementing the change.

The types of substantive change and the procedures for addressing them may be found in the Commission's policy on substantive change at <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/SubstantiveChange.pdf>.

In accordance with SACSCOC policies, Bennett College will notify SACSCOC of substantive changes prior to initiation and will seek approval of changes.

Substantive changes occur at different levels of the college. The College must notify SACSCOC or obtain approval before the change can be implemented:

1. If a department or division is considering one or more of the following changes at the Program/Course Level:
  - a. Adding coursework or programs at a different degree or credential level than currently approved;
  - b. Adding courses or programs that represent a significant departure from current practice, either in content or method of delivery (such as distance learning);
  - c. Initiating certificate programs at new off-campus sites or which differ significantly from existing programs;
  - d. Initiating a collaborative arrangement, such as a joint or dual degree program with another institution;
  - e. Increasing the length of a program significantly;
  - f. Initiating degree completion programs;
  - g. Closing a program approved at an off-campus site, branch campus, or institution.
2. If a department or division is considering one or more of the following changes at the department/division institutional level:
  - a. Initiating an off-campus site (including Early College High School programs offered at a high school);
  - b. Expanding program offerings at previously approved off-campus sites;
  - c. Initiating distance learning;

- d. Initiating programs or courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium;
  - e. Entering into a contract with an entity not certified to participate in United States Department of Education Title IV programs.
3. If the College is considering one or more of the following Institutional Level changes:
- a. Initiating a branch campus’
  - b. Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution;
  - c. Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution;
  - d. Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status of an institution;
  - e. Relocating a main or branch campus;
  - f. Moving an off-campus instructional site (serving the same geographical area);
  - g. Changing from clock hours to credit hours;
  - h. Acquiring any program or site from another institution;
  - i. Adding a permanent location at a site where the institution is conducting a teach-out for students from another institution that is closing.

[The Bennett College Substantive Change Process Matrix](#) shall serve as a guide for monitoring and identifying instances of substantive change at Bennett College and documents actions that require notification or prior approval from the Commission on Colleges.

When preparing and reviewing course and program proposals that may involve a substantive change, proposal sponsors (i.e., faculty, administrative divisions ) and curriculum committees must follow and document adherence to curriculum review and approval policies and processes described in the Curriculum Manual. In addition, academic units proposing a new program or requesting approval for changes falling under the SACSCOC definitions for substantive or organizational changes must prepare a prospectus in accordance with the requirements outlined in the SACS Substantive Change Policy. The SACS prospectus proposal must accompany the Curriculum Change Request and must be reviewed and acted upon by the Curriculum Committee at the time of the request for curriculum change in accordance with Bennett College policies and procedures for curriculum review and approval.

**Procedures for Implementation**

- A. The academic or administrative officer or division initiating the substantive change will:
  - 1. “The academic or administrative officer or unit initiating the substantive change will:
  - 2. Prepare and submit an [Academic Program Planning Questionnaire](#) to the Provost or Accreditation Liaison to determine if potential program changes could result in a substantive change report. If

deemed a substantive change and a prospectus is required:

3. Collect the necessary documentation for any substantive change request approved by Provost or Accreditation Liaison as specified in the [Requirements for a Substantive Change Prospectus for SACSCOC](#).
4. For academic units, prepare a prospectus in accordance with the requirements outlined in the SACS Substantive Change Policy to accompany the Curriculum Change Request to be reviewed and voted upon by the Curriculum Committee in conjunction with the request for the curriculum change.
5. Prepare and submit the letter of notification (prior to implementation) and/or the prospectus report (due to SACS six months in advance of implementation and due to the accreditation liaison one month before that date).
6. SACSCOC allows the use of the phrase “pending SACSCOC approval” wording during SACSCOC review; **however, for items that require approval prior to implementation, the program cannot start until the approval letter is received.**

B. The Accreditation Liaison is the individual appointed by the President of the College to help ensure the College remains in compliance with SACS accreditation requirements and policies. The SACSCOC accreditation liaison will:

1. Track changes to the Principles of Accreditation and regularly disseminate changes to the Bennett College community and coordinate the reporting and completion of required SACSCOC activities.
2. Update the College’s substantive change policy and procedures as needed based on the SACSCOC policy and ensure substantive change activity is posted on the College website.
3. The Accreditation Liaison will present the college’s Substantive Change Policy Procedures statement to college constituencies annually at the Fall Faculty and Staff Institute. If more frequent updates are required, the Accreditation Liaison will inform each constituency group of the updates. Each division, departmental and program head will be asked to verify receipt of the college’s substantive change information and document when the information is shared within that area.
4. Review the Substantive Change Request Form for completeness, appropriateness and consistency with SACSCOC policies and standards. The liaison will work with a proposal initiator as needed to address any deficits.
5. Work with initiators on approved requests to prepare any necessary documentation including a letter of notification and/or prospectus report and compile other documentation to ensure all relevant SACSCOC policies and standards are addressed and submitted in the necessary timeframe.
6. The liaison will coordinate with the appropriate college vice

president concerning needed actions and follow-up activities. The liaison will make recommendations for updating the Substantive Change Policy as SACSCOC policies and principles change.

7. The Accreditation liaison will maintain information on SACSCOC substantive changes submitted by the college to SACSCOC.

**Annual Review and Dissemination of the Policy**

The Accreditation Liaison will update the Senior Leadership Team and chairpersons about changes in SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy annually. The Bennett College Substantive Change Policy and the “Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges Policy” are posted on the Bennett College website. The SACSCOC policy, procedures and related documents will be reviewed annually by the Provost or Accreditation Liaison. The college’s policy statement will be updated as needed to ensure current information is disseminated to maintain continuing compliance with the Substantive Change Policy for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges.

The Accreditation Liaison will present the college’s Substantive Change Policy Procedures statement to college constituencies annually at the Fall Faculty and Staff Institute. If more frequent updates are required, the Accreditation Liaison will inform each constituency group of the updates. Each division, departmental and program head will be asked to verify receipt of the college’s substantive change information and document when the information is shared within that area.

**Unreported Substantive Change**

If a substantive change is discovered to have been implemented without notification to the SACSCOC accreditation liaison, the appropriate vice president on campus has the responsibility to immediately notify Bennett College’s SACSCOC accreditation liaison. The SACSCOC accreditation liaison is then responsible for notifying the president of Bennett College of the change. Either a notification letter or a prospectus (or both) will be prepared by the accreditation liaison and the president of the College. The president of Bennett College will send the required documentation (e.g., notification letter and/or prospectus and supporting documentation) to the president of SACSCOC for review and final approval.

**The President of Bennett College is responsible for sending all notification and prospectuses to SACSCOC.**

**Replaces policy:**

***Date November 15, 2013***