

South Georgia College Substantive Change Monitoring Policy (2009)

1. References:

- a. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, *The Principles of Accreditation*, 3.12
www.sacscoc.org/pdf/2008PrinciplesofAccreditation.pdf
- b. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, *Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges*
www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Substantive%20Change%20policy.pdf
- c. University System of Georgia *Academic Affairs Handbook*, 2.03.02, "New Academic Programs"
<http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section2/2.03/2.03.02.phtml>
- d. University System of Georgia *Academic Affairs Handbook*, 2.12.01, "Off-Campus Instructional Siting"
<http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section2/2.12/2.12.01.phtml>
- e. University System of Georgia *Academic Affairs Handbook*, 2.12.02, "Off-Campus Instructional Site Policies and Guidelines"
<http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section2/2.12/2.12.02.phtml>
- f. University System of Georgia *Academic Affairs Handbook*, 3.01.02, "Undergraduate Admission Requirements for Transfer Students"
<http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section3/301-310/301-310.phtml>
- g. South Georgia College *Statutes*, Article IV.A.2, p. 23, "The Academic Council"
www.sgc.edu/faculty_staff/hr/documents/statutes.pdf

2. Institutional Accreditation Responsibility:

South Georgia College is responsible for compliance with the SACS COC Substantive Change Policy as a condition of the institution's continued accreditation. SACS defines substantive change as "a significant modification or expansion of the

nature and scope of an accredited institution.” Substantive change includes such issues particularly pertinent to South Georgia College as 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 establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers 50% or more of an educational program; and online (distance learning) delivery of 50% or more of an educational program. In addition, substantive changes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Initiating coursework or programs at a more advanced level than currently approved
- Expanding a current degree level
- 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
- Initiating programs at a lower degree level (*e.g.* certificates)
- Initiating a branch campus
- Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium
- Altering significantly the educational mission of the institution
- Relocating a campus
- Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status
- Altering significantly the length of a program
- Closing an institution/program

3. Substantive Change Monitoring Committee Responsibilities:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs, academic division chairpersons, SACS Liaison, and the Director of Entry Programs constitute the College's **Substantive Change Monitoring Committee**. The VPAA is the chairperson of this committee. Each of the committee members is responsible for being knowledgeable of the SACS COC substantive change policy, and the committee is responsible for informing the

College's President of proposals that may be considered a substantive change for the College. The committee is also responsible for updating the substantive change information, including this policy, on the College's website (www.sgc.edu) and for planning and implementing at least one faculty development session per academic year on the topic of substantive change. The committee is also instrumental in preparing any substantive change notification or prospectus necessary to ensure compliance with SACS policies. The committee meets at least once per semester.

No employee of South Georgia College will implement any change to a College policy, program, process, or property that might create a substantive change without the approval of the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee (remember the four "P's"). Anyone desirous of proposing a modification, addition, or deletion to the College's academic programs will first complete the "Substantive Change Checklist" found in Appendix A of this policy.

4. Distance Learning Oversight Committee Responsibilities:

The South Georgia College Distance Learning Oversight Committee was formed out of a need to monitor the number, type, and quality of online courses.

The Distance Learning Oversight Committee is charged with the following:

- Monitoring the percentage of credit courses in any degree or certificate program offered via online learning to ensure institutional compliance with SACS 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
- Working with academic divisions and the Office of Academic Affairs to assess the need for online course offerings

- Ensuring that any course offered online, whether fully online, hybrid, or partially at a distance, is the equivalent of the same traditional classroom course in terms of desired student learning outcomes; course objectives; assessment of learning; and use of assessment results to make changes in content, course materials, and/or course delivery
- Ensuring that there is evidence of collaboration among Division Chairpersons, traditional classroom instructors, and instructors of online courses in the determining of desired student learning outcomes; course objectives; assessment of learning; and use of assessment results to make changes in content, course materials, and/or course delivery
- Ensuring that materials used in online courses do not violate copyright laws
- Ensuring that resources available for online courses are the equivalent of resources available to students in traditional classroom courses (for example, library materials)
- Making recommendations to Division Chairs and the Vice President for Academic Affairs on faculty development related to online teaching and learning

This charge will be modified as necessary.

At present, no student can earn more than 15 hours (23.44%) of an Associate's Degree through online courses offered by the College. Should the College decide to offer 25%-49% of a degree program online, the College's President will notify the President of SACS COC and the University System of Georgia prior to implementation of new online courses.

5. The College's SACS Liaison Responsibilities:

The SACS Liaison provides the members of the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee with regular updates (at least annually) on the SACS substantive change policy and works with the committee to determine if a proposed change is substantive. The liaison also determines what action is necessary when a proposed change is substantive and has the primary responsibility for ensuring that an

appropriate notice and/or prospectus is sent to SACS COC. The liaison is the point person for required follow-up actions and reporting.

6. The South Georgia College Off-Site Entry Programs and the Entry Program Oversight Committee Responsibility:

The South Georgia College Entry Programs on the campuses of Valdosta State University and Georgia Southwestern State University exist to provide Learning Support courses and thirty semester hours of the University System of Georgia's core curriculum to students who do not meet the entrance requirements of System regional universities. To be eligible to transfer from South Georgia College to a University System of Georgia regional or state university, students must have earned a minimum of thirty (30) semester credit hours, must have satisfied all Learning Support and College Preparatory Curriculum deficiencies, and must have earned a grade point average of at least 2.0 (University System of Georgia *Academic Affairs Handbook*, 3.01.02; <http://www.usg.edu/academics/handbook/section3/301-310/301-310.phtml>). The College's agreements with both Valdosta State University and Georgia Southwestern State University specify that once students accumulate thirty semester credit hours with a minimum 2.0 grade point average, they will transfer. If a student has not achieved a 2.0 average after accumulating thirty semester credit hours, the student can improve his/her average only by repeating courses previously taken. Students are not permitted to earn 50% or more of a degree program (64 hours). The entry program advisement guidelines are **Appendix B** of this policy.

The Entry Programs Monitoring Committee is comprised of the Vice President for Academic Affairs (chairperson), the academic division chairpersons, and the Director of Entry Programs. This committee is responsible for ensuring that no entry program student can earn 50% or more of the credit hours required for an Associate's Degree or more than 24% of a degree's credits from online (distance learning) courses. The committee meets at least once per semester.

7. Academic Council Responsibility:

As the statutory body responsible for approving all academic course and program changes, the College's Academic Council **must** coordinate with the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee. **No recommendation for a modification, addition, or removal of an academic course or program will even be considered by the Academic Council until it has been approved by the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee.** In accordance with the College *Statutes*, "the Academic Council shall evaluate all new courses and programs as well as changes in extant courses and programs for congruence with the purpose of South Georgia College. The Academic Council shall also review existing programs on a periodic basis for their continued adherence to institutional purpose and their quality and viability" (*South Georgia College Statutes*, August 14, 2006, p. 23). The Substantive Change Monitoring Committee is, therefore, an advisory body to the Academic Council and a substantive change oversight mechanism.

8. Substantive Change Timeline:

The SACS COC guidelines for reporting substantive change, as specified in the Commission’s document *Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges*, are the fundamental resource for reporting substantive change and for planning reporting. The guidelines are at the following address: (www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Substantive%20Change%20policy.pdf).

Any institutional plan to implement a substantive change will be submitted to the Substantive Change Monitoring Committee at least 60 days prior to the deadline for SACS notification.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT	
The foregoing Substantive Change Monitoring Policy has been approved by the South Georgia College Academic Council and the College President’s Cabinet. The policy is effective from the date of this document until superseded.	
Approved for the Academic Council: _____	Date: <u>8/28/09</u>
Carl B. McDonald, Council Chairperson Vice President for Academic Affairs	
Approved by the President’s Cabinet: _____	Date: <u>8/28/09</u>
Virginia M. Carson President, South Georgia College	

APPENDIX A

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE CHECKLIST

INTRODUCTION

Substantive change is a federal term pertaining to any "significant modification of the nature and scope of an accredited institution." Colleges and Universities must notify their accrediting body of potential or actual substantive change in a timely fashion and in many cases must receive approval for such change from the accrediting body before the initiative is implemented.

South Georgia College's regional accrediting body, the Commission on Colleges (COC) of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), is required by the federal government to monitor its constituents' compliance with the substantive change policy and to grant permission for major changes to occur. In order to ensure our compliance, all proposers of new programs, degrees, and other major initiatives should review the substantive change policy at the SGC website. In addition, anyone proposing a curriculum or instructional delivery change must fill out this checklist and submit it to the South Georgia College Liaison to SACS, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Carl B. McDonald, for consideration and approval before proceeding with the change.

Please feel free to call the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Carl B. McDonald, with any questions (912-260-4201) or email him at carl.mcdonald@sgc.edu.

CHECKLIST

This initiative . . .

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Initiates coursework or programs at a more advanced level than currently approved.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expands a current degree level (significant departure from current programs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiates a branch campus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiates off-campus sites where students can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allows students to obtain 25-49% of program credit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Adds a significantly different program at an approved site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiates distance learning offering 50% or more of a program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Offers 25-49% of a program by distance learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiates programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes the number of credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initiates a merger/consolidation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes governance, ownership, control or legal status of a college program or property.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alters significantly the length of a program.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Closes an institution/program; initiates teach-out agreements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your attention to this checklist, and for helping to ensure South Georgia's compliance with federal regulations.

APPENDIX B

South Georgia College Entry Programs Advisement Guidelines to Facilitate Transfer and Monitor Substantive Change

If a student is registering for his/her **first semester** in the SGC Entry Program, go directly to step #2.

1. If this is not the student's **first semester**, complete the "**Advisement Checklist to Facilitate Transfer**" before continuing with advisement. Completion of this form will allow you to monitor the student's progress toward transfer with 30 credit hours and a GPA of 2.0 or higher. **Do not allow a student to accumulate more than 31 credit hours (these hours do not include Learning Support or college preparatory curriculum deficiency hours).**
2. Determine any Learning Support (LS) Requirements based on COMPASS scores:
 - a. Reading – passing score is 74
 - b. English/Writing – passing score is 60
 - c. Math – passing score is 37
 - A score of 30 – 36 requires placement in Math 99.
 - A score below 30 requires placement in Math 97.

If COMPASS scores indicate placement in any Learning Support (LS) course, give the student a copy of the learning support pamphlet. Review the pamphlet, paying particular attention to the "three attempt rule" as well as the courses a student is limited to taking while enrolled in Reading 99. Also note that students required to enroll in Learning Support English and/or math cannot enroll in any credit English and/or math course, respectively.

3. Determine any College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC) requirements. These courses are identified in Self-Service Banner.

When scheduling students, priority must be given to LS and/or CPC requirements. LS and CPC requirements must be completed before transferring, but students may enroll in core curriculum courses while enrolled in LS, with exceptions regarding Reading 99. See the Learning Support pamphlet for a list of these courses.

Students must earn 30 credit hours from the core curriculum and have a 2.0 GPA before transferring to Georgia Southwestern or Valdosta State. **If a student accumulates 30-31 hours of credit but does not have at least a 2.0 overall grade point average, the only way he/she can bring up the gpa is to repeat a course or courses already taken. In order to prevent a violation of federal substantive change policy, do not allow a student to accumulate more than 31 hours of credit.** Students who do not understand this policy or who need advice on how to further their college career should schedule an appointment with the Entry Program Director (SGCEP/VSU) or the Entry Program Coordinator (SGCEP/GSWSU).