



Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
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SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE FOR ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS OF THE COMMISSION ON COLLEGES

- Policy Statement -

Definition: Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. The policy and procedures for the reporting and review of institutional substantive change are described as outlined in the key below:

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The Policy

Commission Responsibilities

The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is an institutional accrediting body that accredits an entire institution and its programs and services, wherever they are located or however they are delivered. It is responsible for reviewing all substantive changes that occur between an institution's decennial reviews to determine whether or not the change has affected the quality of the total institution and to ensure the public that all aspects of the institution continue to meet defined standards.

In addition, the Commission on Colleges is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an accrediting agency whose accreditation enables its member institutions to seek eligibility to participate in Title IV programs. To maintain its recognition with the Department of Education and in accordance with CFR 34, Section 602.22, the Commission on Colleges must include procedures in its policies requiring prior approval of many institutional substantive changes before each change can be included in the agency's previous grant of accreditation to the institution.

Institutional Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of an institution to follow the Substantive Change Procedures of the Commission and inform the Commission of such changes in accord with those procedures. If an institution is unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, it should contact Commission staff for consultation.

Overview of Procedures for Reporting

There are three types of substantive change procedures:

Procedure One: Procedure for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring *Notification and Approval* Prior to Implementation

(Some examples include but are not limited to the following: initiating a program at a more advanced degree level, expanding at the current degree level if significant departure from current programs, initiating programs at a lower degree level, initiating a branch campus, initiating off-campus sites where a student can earn 50% or more credits toward a program, initiating or expanding distance learning programs offered electronically, altering the educational mission, changing governance or ownership or control, changing significantly the length of a program.) See AProcedure One@for the specific reporting and review process.

Procedure Two: Procedure for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring *Only Notification* Prior to Implementation

(Some examples include but are not limited to the following: initiating off-campus sites where a student will not be able to earn 50% or more credits toward a program, initiating programs/courses offered through a consortium or contractual agreement, relocating a campus.) See AProcedure Two@for the specific reporting and review process.

Procedure Three: Procedure for the Review and Approval of Consolidations/Mergers

See AProcedure Three@for the specific reporting and review process.

Refer to Appendix A for a graph outlining the types of substantive changes, their respective approval/notification requirements, their reporting time lines, and the specific procedure used for review.

Required Committee Visits

The following five types of substantive changes require on-site committee reviews:

1. The initiation of an additional off-campus site/location offering a program at which a student can earn at least 50 percent of his/her credits toward the program, if any of the following applies: (a) the institution has a total of three or fewer additional locations, or (b) the institution has not demonstrated, to the Commission's satisfaction, that it has a proven record of effective educational oversight of additional locations, or (c) the institution has been placed on Commission sanction or is subject to some limitation on its accreditation.

The Commission will conduct visits to the first three off-campus locations of this kind initiated by an institution.

When an institution initiates its fourth and subsequent off-campus site/location, the Commission may, at its discretion, authorize substantive change committees to review one or more of these additional locations. The Commission may choose not to conduct visits to any of these additional sites at the times of their initiation if the institution has previously demonstrated a record of effective oversight of its off-campus educational locations and has not been placed on sanction. The Commission, however, will require visits to a representative sample of sites at the fifth-year interval between scheduled reaffirmations if: (a) the additional sites have been initiated since the last scheduled reaffirmation, and (b) the sites have not yet been visited.

After the fifth-year interval, the Commission may choose to authorize visits to new sites developed between that time and the next scheduled reaffirmation of accreditation.

At the time of reaffirmation, the Commission will conduct a thorough review of a representative sample of institutional locations/sites where a student can obtain 50 per cent or more of the course work toward a degree program. The extent of the review will depend in part on whether or not there has been a recent review of the sites.

2. The initiation of a branch campus (*defined as 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 (1) permanent in nature, (2) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, (3) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization, and (4) has its own budgetary and hiring authority*)
3. The initiation of a change in governance/ownership with a change in control
4. The initiation of mergers/consolidations
5. The initiation of programs at a higher degree level than currently approved by the Commission.

The Executive Director is also authorized to appoint a Substantive Change Committee to review an institution for any change requiring a more in-depth evaluation beyond the prospectus/application submitted by the institution. The report of the Substantive Change Committee will be used by the Commission to determine the ongoing accreditation of an institution.

In preparation for a Substantive Change Committee visit, the institution will be required to update its application (for a degree level change) or its prospectus (for other substantive changes) and submit the revised document to committee members in advance of the on-site visit.

Policy Statements Regarding Substantive Change

1. The *Principles of Accreditation: Foundations for Quality Enhancement* applies to all programs and services wherever they are located or however they are delivered. Failure to comply with the *Principles* or with procedures referred to in this policy could result in placing the institution on sanction or removing it from membership.
2. Denial of approval of substantive change is not appealable. An institution that fails to gain approval of the substantive change may re-submit a revised prospectus/application following the guidelines and time frames described in Procedures One and Two.

Institutions failing to gain approval of a planned consolidation/merger shall maintain their separately accredited status with the Commission. However, if the institutions continue with the change after denial of approval of the consolidation/merger, they shall lose their membership.

3. The "Policy" and its "Procedures" apply only to accredited institutions. Applicant and candidate institutions may not initiate substantive change until membership has been attained.
4. Procedures One and Two may not address all substantive changes that the Commission will review in the interim between an institution's reaffirmation cycles. Therefore, the Commission reserves the right to classify significant changes other than those described above as substantive in nature and to follow up accordingly. The follow-up procedure may include a committee visit.
5. An institution may withdraw its prospectus/ application or may discontinue substantive change at any time during the review process.

6. Staff will automatically refer the following institutional substantive change cases requiring prior approval to the Commission for action: (a) the proposed substantive change of any institution currently on any sanction; (b) the proposed substantive change of any institution recently removed from sanction, or from any sanction if it involved non-compliance with Core Requirement 2.11 or Comprehensive Standard 3.10 dealing with financial health; (c) the proposed substantive change of any institution currently on reimbursement for Title IV federal funding; (d) any substantive change implemented by an institution without securing prior approval, where required; (e) the application of any institution moving to an advance degree level; and (f) the prospectus of an institution planning a merger/consolidation.

Fees and Expenses

- 1 Fees related to the Review of an Application/Prospectus

The following fees will be assessed to institutions planning the initiation of a substantive change and requiring an application/prospectus review:

- \$300 For an institution seeking review of a single substantive change prospectus
- \$300 Per each type of substantive change submitted by an institution seeking review of a multiple proposal
- \$150 Per institution for a collaborative effort between two member institutions seeking review of a single prospectus
- \$100 Per institution for a collaborative effort among three or more member institutions seeking review of a single prospectus

2. Fees related to Substantive Change Committee visits

In addition to the fee assessed for reviewing the substantive change prospectus, the following fees will be assessed to an institution hosting a Substantive Change Committee visit:

- S The actual cost of the committee
(Includes travel, lodging, food, and related expenses), and
- S 25 per cent of the total cost of the committee

Institutional Non-Compliance with Reporting

If an institution fails to follow this substantive change policy and its procedures, the accreditation of the institution may be placed in jeopardy, the institution's case may be referred to the Commission for the imposition of a sanction, or the institution may lose its Title IV funding or be required by the U.S. Department of Education to reimburse it for money received by the institution for unreported substantive changes.

*Adopted: Commission on Colleges, December 1999
Revised: Executive Council, April 2001
Revised for the Principles of Accreditation: February 2004*

PROCEDURE ONE:

Procedure for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Notification and Approval Prior to Implementation

Changes Requiring Notification and Approval

Substantive changes requiring notification and approval by the Commission on Colleges prior to implementation by the institution are as follows:

- ▶ Initiating certificate or degree programs, or coursework at a more advanced degree level than approved by the Commission (Examples include: a two-year college initiating bachelor's degrees or a four-year institution initiating degrees at the master's level. Institutions may not offer individual credit courses or programs beyond the level of current accreditation)
- ▶ initiating an off-campus (additional) site (site-based/classroom group instruction) at which students can earn at least 50 per cent of the credits toward the educational program
- ▶ initiating a branch campus (*defined as 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 (1) permanent in nature, (2) offers courses in educational programs leading to a degree, certificate, or other recognized educational credential, (3) has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization, and (4) has its own budgetary and hiring authority*)
- ▶ Initiating any change of legal status, governance, form of control, or ownership of the institution (Examples include: change from private to public or from public to private, a change of ownership, a change in the legal status or form of control of the institution)
- ▶ Expanding at the institution's current degree level (*significant departure from current programs*) (Examples include: adding a master's degree in nursing when the institution is accredited at Level III, but currently offers only a master's degree in education; or, for an institution accredited at Level II (bachelor's degrees), offering only a bachelor's degree with a major in religion, adding three new bachelor's degrees with majors in biology, business administration, and computer science)
- ▶ Initiating programs at a lower degree level **B** normally pertaining to programs that are significantly different from current degrees (Examples include: a graduate institution initiating degrees at the undergraduate level; a baccalaureate degree-granting institution initiating occupational and technical degrees at the associate degree level)
- ▶ Initiating any change in the established purpose/mission or objectives of the institution (Examples include: the transformation of a technical or specialized junior college into a comprehensive community college; the initiation by a seminary of significant liberal arts offerings; the addition by a medical college of general purpose offerings; the initiation of an engineering school at a liberal arts institution)
- ▶ Changing significantly the length of a program, substantially increasing the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program, or changing clock hours to credit hours (Example includes expanding a certificate program from 250 contact hours to 450 contact hours)
- ▶ Adding courses or programs that represent a significant departure, either in the content or method of delivery, from those offered when last evaluated
- ▶ Entering into a teach-out agreement or closing an institution (refer to separate procedure).

Time of Notification

The chief executive officer of an institution undergoing substantive change requiring prior approval must provide written notification of the change to the Executive Director six months in advance of implementation of the substantive change. The only exception to this deadline is the initiation of programs offered at a more advanced degree level. This change requires twelve months advance written notification.

If an institution is unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, it should contact Commission staff for consultation.

Submission of Prospectus

Upon notification, the Executive Director will ask the institution to submit a completed prospectus (application, in the case of an institution seeking approval of a change of degree level), if one has not been submitted. The prospectus/application must be submitted at least three months (nine months for degree level change) in advance of the planned implementation date to allow for ample time for review and approval. (Refer to Appendix B for descriptions of information to be included in the prospectus.)

Staff Options

Upon receipt of the substantive change prospectus/application and any other requested material, the Commission staff member will review the prospectus/application and will recommend to the Executive Director one of the following actions:

1. accept the prospectus and approve the program, with or without a site visit, or
2. refer the prospectus/application to the Committee on Compliance and Reports (standing committee of the Commission) for review (An application for initiating programs at a more advanced degree level and a prospectus for initiating a consolidation/merger are forwarded automatically to the Committee on Compliance and Reports.)

Options of the Committees on Compliance and Reports Following Review of the Prospectus/Application

If the Executive Director refers the prospectus/application to the Committee on Compliance and Reports, the Committee will review the prospectus/application, and any additional material submitted, and will recommend one of the following actions:

1. accept the prospectus/application and approve the program, with or without a site visit. A site visit is required following approval of
 - (a) programs at a more advanced degree level
 - (b) consolidation/merger
 - (c) branch campus (within six months of the establishment of the campus)
 - (d) off-campus sites at which a student can earn at least 50 percent of courses of an educational program, if any of the following applies: the institution (1) has a total of three or fewer additional locations, or (2) has not demonstrated, to the Commission's satisfaction, that it has a proven record of effective educational oversight of additional locations, or (3) has been placed on Commission sanction or is subject to some limitation on its accreditation)
 - (e) a change of ownership resulting in a change of control (within six months of the change of ownership).
2. defer action and seek additional information
3. deny approval of the substantive change, continue the institution's accreditation.

The Commission on Colleges makes final decisions regarding the accreditation status of an institution.

Preparation for a Substantive Change Committee Visit

If a Substantive Change Committee is authorized, it will be charged with determining whether the institution is in continued compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*. In preparation for this visit, the institution should update its substantive change prospectus/application, and, where appropriate, provide a complete roster of faculty who are teaching in the program.

An institution may not initiate any additional degree programs at the more advanced degree level that would be considered substantive change until after the Commission has taken positive action on its continued accreditation following a Substantive Change Committee visit.

Options of the Committees on Compliance and Reports Following Review by a Substantive Change Committee

The report of the Substantive Change Committee, together with the response of the institution to the recommendations contained in that report, will be reviewed by the Committee on Compliance and Reports. The Committee on Compliance and Reports may recommend one of the following actions:

1. continue the institution in accreditation, with or without a progress report, with or without sanctions of Warning or Probation
2. discontinue accreditation

All final decisions regarding the accreditation status of an institution will be made by the Commission on Colleges.

Changes to the Reaffirmation Review Cycle

Substantive changes of the type described in this document will not normally affect an institution's cycle of reaffirmation of accreditation except for institutions previously accredited at the associate's degree level which are newly accredited for baccalaureate programs or certificates that require the associate degree as a prerequisite, but do not constitute a baccalaureate program. Following approval of such programs, an institution must complete a self-study and have its accreditation reaffirmed within five years after the official action of accreditation.

Please refer to Appendix A for a graph outlining the various types of substantive changes and indicating their respective reporting deadlines.

PROCEDURE TWO:

Procedure for the Review of Substantive Changes Requiring Only Notification Prior to Implementation

Changes Requiring Notification Only

Substantive changes requiring an institution to notify the Commission on Colleges prior to implementation by the institution are as follows:

1. For site-based/classroom group instruction (where the instructor is present)
 - a. Initiating an off-campus site at which a student may earn more than 25 percent and less than 50 percent of credits toward a program
 - b. Adding significantly different degree programs at a currently approved off-campus site (does not apply to new sites)
2. For distance learning/technology-based group or individual instruction (where the instructor and student are geographically separated)
 - a. Offering first credit courses via distance learning/technology-based instruction by which students can obtain at least 25 percent of their credits toward a degree program (thereafter, reporting 50 percent or more of a degree program or an entire degree program)
 - b. Adding significantly different programs from previously reported programs offered through distance learning
7. Initiating significant changes in existing technology-based delivery systems in distance learning/off-campus programs
4. Initiating programs/courses delivered through contractual agreement or consortium
5. Relocating a main campus

Time of Notification

The chief executive officer of an institution undergoing substantive change must provide written notification of the change to the Executive Director prior to implementation. Upon notification, the Executive Director, or the designated staff member, will contact the institution regarding specific procedures for review of the substantive change.

If an institution is unclear as to whether a change is substantive in nature, it should contact Commission staff for consultation.

Submission of a Prospectus

Following notification, the staff member may ask the institution to submit a substantive change prospectus, if one has not previously been submitted and the staff has determined substantive change. The description must include the information described in Appendix B. The institution may be asked to provide additional information if staff have questions regarding the material content of the submitted prospectus.

Staff Options

Upon receipt of the substantive change prospectus or any other requested material, the institution will be informed as to whether or not the substantive change requires an on-site review by a visiting committee. Either the Executive Director or the Committee on Compliance and Reports (a standing committee of the Commission) may authorize a Substantive Change Committee to visit the institution. The Substantive Change Committee will be charged with determining whether the institution is in compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*.

Options of the Committees on Compliance and Reports Following Review by a Substantive Change Committee

The report of the Substantive Change Committee, together with the response of the institution to the recommendations contained in that report, will be reviewed by the Committee on Compliance and Reports. The Committee on Compliance and Reports may recommend one of the following actions:

1. continue the institution in accreditation, with or without a progress report, with or without sanctions of Warning or Probation
2. discontinue accreditation

All final decisions regarding the accreditation status of an institution will be made by the Commission on Colleges.

Changes to Reaffirmation Review Cycle

Substantive changes of the type described in this document will not normally affect the cycle of reaffirmation of accreditation.

Please refer to Appendix A for a graph outlining the various types of substantive changes and their respective reporting deadlines.

PROCEDURE THREE:

Procedure for the Review and Approval of Consolidations/mergers

Definition

The Commission on Colleges defines a consolidation as the combination or transfer of the assets of at least two distinct institutions (corporations) to that of a newly-formed institution (corporation), and defines a merger as the acquisition by one institution of another institution's assets. For the purposes of accreditation, consolidations and mergers are considered substantive changes requiring review by the Commission on Colleges. (Examples include: a senior college acquiring a junior college; a degree-granting institution acquiring a non-degree-granting institution; two junior or senior colleges consolidating to form a new institution; or an institution accredited by the Commission on Colleges merging with a non-accredited institution)

Procedures for a COC Member Institution Initiating a Consolidation/Merger with another COC Member Institution (s)

Time of Notification: The chief executive officers of the member institutions undergoing merger/consolidation must provide written notification of the change to the Executive Director of the Commission on Colleges six months in advance of the designated date for final approval of the consolidation/merger by the new institution's governing board.

Upon notification, the Executive Director or designated staff member shall ask the institutions involved in the consolidation/merger to submit a combined written prospectus.

Submission of the Prospectus: The Commission on Colleges meets in the summer and in December. The prospectus for substantive change must be submitted to the Commission office at least **six weeks** prior to the date of the Commission meeting at which the prospectus shall be reviewed. The prospectus must describe how each institution plans to continue to meet the *Principles* while implementing the change. (Please refer to Appendix B for descriptions of information to be included in the prospectus.)

Review Process: The Executive Director of the Commission shall submit the prospectus to the Commission on Colleges. If the prospectus is accepted, the Commission shall approve the consolidation/merger of the institutions involved pending final approval by the new institution's governing board of the consolidation/merger. It also shall authorize the appointment of a Substantive Change Committee to visit the new institution to determine ongoing compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*. The institutions involved in the consolidation/merger shall be considered one accredited institution after the Commission has favorably acted on the prospectus and after the newly-formed institution has received final authority from its governing board.

The Substantive Change Committee visit shall occur within a year of the board's final approval of the consolidation/merger. The report of the Substantive Change Committee, together with the response of the institution to any recommendations contained in that report, shall be reviewed by the Commission on Colleges. The Commission shall (1) continue the new institution in accreditation, or (2) impose sanctions for failure to maintain compliance with the *Principles*.

If the Commission does not approve the prospectus for a consolidation or merger and the institutions do not proceed with the change, the COC-accredited institutions shall maintain their separately accredited status. However, if they continue with the change without prior approval, they shall lose their membership. The newly-formed institution may apply for accreditation with the Commission on Colleges in keeping with the Commission's accreditation procedures.

Changes to the Reaffirmation Cycle: The newly consolidated/merged institution shall be required to complete a self-study and achieve reaffirmation of accreditation within five years following the Commission's action to continue accreditation. The institution shall then maintain the normal ten-year reaffirmation of accreditation cycle. If the Commission determines that the substantive change adversely affects each member's continued compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*, the accreditation of all member institutions involved shall be placed in jeopardy.

**Procedures for a COC Member Institution Initiating
a Consolidation/Merger with a Non-COC Accredited Institution**

Time of Notification: The chief executive officer of the COC-accredited institution undergoing consolidation/merger must provide written notification of the change to the Executive Director six months in advance of the designated date for final approval of the consolidation/merger by the new institution's governing board. Upon notification, the Executive Director or designated staff member shall ask the COC-accredited institution to submit a written prospectus.

Submission of the Prospectus: The Commission on Colleges meets in the Summer and in December. The prospectus for substantive change must be submitted to the Commission office at least six weeks prior to the date of the Commission meeting at which the prospectus shall be reviewed. The prospectus must describe how the member institution plans to continue to meet the *Principles* while implementing the change. *(Please refer to Appendix B for descriptions of information to be included in the prospectus.)*

Review Process: Upon receipt of the prospectus, the Executive Director of the Commission will refer it to the Commission on Colleges for review. At either its June or December meeting, the Commission shall either (1) accept the prospectus and authorize the appointment of a Substantive Change Committee to visit the institution, (2) deny acceptance of the prospectus, or (3) defer action to the next Commission meeting, pending submission of additional information.

If the prospectus is accepted, the institutions can begin implementation of the consolidation/merger. During this time, the accreditation status of the COC-accredited member institution will remain unchanged until after the consolidation/merger has been approved by the Commission.

The Substantive Change Committee visit shall occur within twelve months of its authorization. The report of the Substantive Change Committee, together with the response of the member institution to any recommendations contained in that report, shall be reviewed by the Commission on Colleges. The Commission shall (1) approve the consolidation/merger of the newly-formed institution, (2) deny the consolidation/merger for failure of the new institution to comply with the *Principles*, or (3) defer action.

If the Commission does not accept the prospectus for a consolidation/merger or the Commission does not approve the consolidation/merger following the visit by the Substantive Change Committee and the COC-accredited institution does not proceed with the change, the member institution shall maintain its separately accredited status. However, if the member institution continues with the change without prior or final approval, it shall lose its membership. The newly-formed institution may then apply for accreditation with the Commission on Colleges in keeping with the Commission's accreditation procedures.

Changes to the Reaffirmation Cycle: The newly consolidated/merged institution shall be required to complete a self-study and achieve reaffirmation of accreditation within five years following the Commission's action to continue accreditation. The institution shall then maintain the normal ten-year reaffirmation of accreditation cycle. If the Commission determines that the substantive change adversely affects each member's continued compliance with the *Principles of Accreditation*, the accreditation of the COC member institution involved shall be placed in jeopardy.

APPENDIX A

Reporting Timelines for Substantive Change

Below is a graph which lists the types of substantive change, indicates whether prior approval or prior notification is required, and states the deadline for Commission notification.

<i>Type of Substantive Change</i>	<i>Prior Approval Required</i>	<i>Required Prior Notification</i>	<i>Time frame for contacting COC before Initiating Change</i>
Initiating programs at a more advanced degree level	YES	YES	Twelve months
Expanding at current degree level (departure from current programs)	YES	YES	Six months
Initiating programs at lower degree level	YES	YES	Six months
Initiating branch campus	YES	YES	Six months
Initiating off-campus sites (where student can obtain 50% or more credits toward a program)	YES	YES	Six months
Initiating off-campus sites (where student will not be able to obtain 50% or more credits toward a program)	NO	YES	Prior to implementation
Initiating or expanding distance learning programs offered electronically	YES	YES	See procedure
Initiating programs/courses delivered through contractual agreement or consortium	NO	YES	Prior to implementation
Initiating a merger/consolidation	YES	YES	Six months
Altering the education mission or objectives of the institution	YES	YES	Six months
Relocating a campus	NO	YES	Prior to implementation
Changing governance, ownership, or control	YES	YES	Six months
Changing significantly the length of a program	YES	YES	Six months

APPENDIX B:

The Content of the Substantive Change Prospectus

Directions: The prospectus to be submitted to the Commission on Colleges should include all applicable information below regarding the change. Note references in parenthesis to the Core Requirements (CR) and Comprehensive Standards (CS) in the *Principles of Accreditation*. If the Commission authorizes a Substantive Change Committee visit, the institution will be required to update its prospectus and submit the revised document to committee members in advance of the on-site visit.

1. **ABSTRACT** (limit to one page or less)

Describe the proposed change; its location; initial date of implementation; projected number of students, if applicable; description of primary target audience; projected life of the program (single cohort or ongoing); and instructional delivery methods.

2. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Provide a clear statement of the nature and purpose of the change in the context of the institution's mission and goals; evidence of the legal authority for the change (if authorization is required by the governing board or the state); and whether the proposed degree program or similar program is offered on the main campus or at other off-campus sites. (CR 2.1, CS 3.1.1)

3. **ASSESSMENT OF NEED AND PROGRAM PLANNING/APPROVAL**

Discuss the rationale for the change, including an assessment of need; evidence of inclusion of the change in the institution's ongoing planning and evaluation processes; and documentation that faculty and other groups were involved in the review and approval of the new site or program. (CR 2.5, CS 3.4.1)

4. **DESCRIPTION OF THE CHANGE**

Provide a description of the proposed change, including the specific outcomes and learning objectives of the program, a schedule of proposed course offerings for the first year, and a copy of course syllabi. In the case of changes involving the initiation of branch campuses or off-site programs, indicate the educational program to be offered. Describe any differences in admission, curriculum, or graduation requirements for students enrolled at the new site(s), or any special arrangements for grading, transcripts, or transfer policies. Describe administrative oversight to ensure the quality of the program or services to be offered. (CR 2.7.2, CS 3.3, CS 3.4, CS 3.5, CS 3.6)

5. **FACULTY**

Provide a complete roster (using the ARoster of Instructional Staff form) of those faculty employed to teach in the program(s), including a description of those faculty member's academic qualifications and course load in the new program as well as course work taught in other programs currently offered; evidence that adequate faculty members are assigned to support the program; and the impact of the new initiative on faculty workload. (CR 2.8, CS 3.7)

For distance learning programs, describe processes in place to ensure that students have structured access to faculty. For graduate programs, document scholarship and research capability of faculty.

6. **LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES**

Describe library and information resourcesBgeneral as well as specific to the programBand staffing and services that are in place to support the initiative; if reliant upon other libraries, describe those collections and their relevance to the proposed program(s); include a copy of formal agreements in the appendix; relative to electronic resources, describe how students and faculty will access information, training for faculty and students in the use of online resources, and staffing and services available to students and faculty. (CR 2.9, CS 3.4.14, CS 3.8)

7. **PHYSICAL RESOURCES**

Provide a description of physical facilities and equipment to support this initiative. Assess the impact that the proposed change will have on existing programs and services. (CR 2.11, CS 3.10.4, CS 3.10.6, and CS 3.10.7)

8. **FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Provide a business plan that includes the following: (a) a description of financial resources to support the change, including a budget for the first year; (b) projected revenues and expenditures and cash flow; (c) the amount of resources going to institutions or organizations for contractual or support services; and (d) the operational, management, and physical resources available for the change. Provide contingency plans if required resources do not materialize. For consolidations/mergers, and for institutions currently on sanction with the Commission for financial reasons, provide a copy of the most recent audit (audits from all institutions involved in consolidations/mergers). (CR 2.11, CS 3.10.1-CS 3.10.5, CS 3.10.7)

9. **EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

Describe how the institution assesses overall institutional effectiveness as well as the means used to monitor and ensure the quality of the degree program(s), off-campus site(s), or other changes. Summarize procedures for systematic evaluation of instructional results, including the process for monitoring and evaluating programs at the new site, as well as using the results of evaluation to improve institutional programs, services, and operations. For distance learning instruction or compressed time frames, describe the methodology for determining that levels of knowledge and competencies comparable to those required in traditional formats have been achieved. (CR 2.5, CS 3.3.1)

10. **APPENDICES**

Appendices may include items such as (1) vitae of key faculty; (2) selected letters of support; (3) copies of library and other cooperative agreements, etc.

Please note that the Commission on Colleges reserves the right to make amendments to the above requirements for certain types of changes. Institutions initiating level changes must request and complete an AApplication Form@in quadruplicate.

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