Policy Statement on Unreported Substantive Change

Unreported substantive changes requiring prior notification or prior approval come to the attention of the Commission through two means: (1) information discovered by the institution or by the Commission between periods of formal review by the Commission and (2) information discovered during an off-site or an on-site review by the Commission. The procedure for handling such unreported substantive changes is as follows:

a) Upon discovery, the institution formally notifies the SACSCOC President of the unreported substantive change. The letter of notification must include the date of the original implementation of the change. A completed prospectus or application should accompany the letter for cases outlined in Procedure One of this document.

b) Commission staff will review the substantive change prospectus, if required; and any additional information that may have been requested. Following analysis, Commission staff will recommend to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees one of the following actions:

1. approve the program, with or without a site visit;
2. refer the prospectus to the Committee on Compliance and Reports for review at its next meeting (June or December); or
3. acknowledge receipt of the notification and indicate that the change will be included in the scope of the institution’s accreditation (an option only if prior notification is required).

c) The issue of failure to comply with Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1 of the Principles of Accreditation (Substantive change) will be forwarded automatically to the Commission’s Board of Trustees for action at its next meeting, if the change required prior approval. If the change required prior notification only, the issue of failure to report will be addressed in correspondence from the SACSCOC President.

d) If the unreported substantive change requiring prior notification or prior approval is discovered during the institution’s off-site or on-site review for reaffirmation, SACSCOC will follow its policy as described on page 1 of “Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports”. If it is discovered during review by another type of SACSCOC committee, the review committee will write a recommendation. The recommendation will ask the institution to report the change in writing to SACSCOC and to provide in its response to the Committee Report a statement describing internal procedures established that would ensure future substantive change reporting and evidence that the procedures have been implemented. The institution’s response will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees of SACSCOC for action on failure to report a substantive change.

Failure to Comply with Reporting Requirements

If an institution fails to follow SACSCOC substantive change policy and procedures, it 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 programs related to the unreported substantive change. In addition, the institution’s case may be referred to SACSCOC Board of Trustees for the imposition of a sanction or for removal from membership.