Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) is committed to adhering to the policies and requirements of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS). The university is also committed to establishing and maintaining procedures to ensure compliance with THECB and SACS policies and providing information to faculty and staff regarding curricular and organizational changes requiring notification and/or approval.

**Procedures**

The university will notify THECB and SACS of substantive changes prior to initiation and, where required by rules, will request approval of changes. The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for submitting all communication to the appropriate governing body.

Substantive changes include but are not limited to:

- off-campus course and program offerings;
- distance education course and program offerings;
- online course and program offerings;
- transmission of courses or programs through electronic means including teleconferencing;
- courses and programs offered in conjunction with another institution through consortia or dual degree agreements;
- adding a significantly different program;
- offering courses or programs at a more advanced or lower level;
- significantly altering the length of a program;
- initiating degree completion programs;
- renaming or establishing new academic organizational units (e.g., departments or schools);
- establishing a branch campus or off-campus instructional site;
- establishing a merger or consolidation;
- discontinuing a program or instructional site; and
- changes in governance.

The university is required to notify THECB and SACS of substantive changes and to request approval in accordance with THECB and SACS policies. For example, SACS requires notification prior to implementation when offering 25-49% of the coursework required for program completion online, off-campus, or through distance education. SACS requires
notification at least six months in advance and prior approval when offering 50% or more of the coursework required for program completion online, off-campus, or through distance education. Also, SACS requires notification, including submission of a prospectus, and approval six to 12 months before certain changes are initiated such as new degree programs that are a significant departure from current degree program offerings.

When preparing and reviewing course and program proposals that may involve a substantive change, proposal sponsors (i.e., faculty) and curriculum committees must follow and document adherence to curriculum review and approval policies and processes described in the university policy on Curriculum Reviews, Modifications and Approvals (5.7). In addition, academic units must prepare a prospectus in accordance with the requirements outlined in the SACS Substantive Change Policy and THECB substantive change guidelines. The SACS prospectus and/or THECB proposal must accompany the Curriculum Change Request.

The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for conducting an ongoing review of curricular revisions to identify changes that may be substantive in nature and may require reporting or prior approval by THECB and/or SACS. The provost and vice president for academic affairs will make the final determination of changes and will initiate appropriate reporting and approval processes in compliance with THECB and SACS policies and procedures.

Cross Reference: Curriculum Reviews, Modifications and Approvals (5.7); SACS Substantive Change Policy; THECB guidelines

Responsible for Implementation: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Contact for Revision: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Forms: Forms for program revision, course proposals, substantive change, distance education and laboratory/course fee requests are available at the Academic Affairs website http://www.sfasu.edu/acadaffairs/.

Board Committee Assignment: Academic and Student Affairs