**Important Information for Substantive Changes**

Changes to institutional offerings are subject to what SACSCOC calls a substantive change, meaning a significant departure from what the institution was previously authorized to offer. There are three results associated with program changes based on whether or not the change is a significant departure. The determination criteria and actions are described in Table 1. The list is not exhaustive and represents the most likely changes for TCU.

**Action Item:** *Please inform the Office of Institutional Effectiveness of all changes to programs, even if no SACSCOC action is needed. There needs to be documentation of the change and subsequent action or no action result.*

Table 1. Type of Substantive Changes and Associated Action

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| **Type of change** | **Result** |
| New Program with 50% or more new contenta | Approval |
| New Program with 25-49% new contenta | Notification |
| New program with <25% new contenta | No action |
| Method of delivery change (adding the ability to receive 50% or more instruction by new method) | Notification |
| Program Closure | Approvalb |
| Program Length (increase or decrease by 25% or more AND completion time increases or decreases by more than one term) | Approval |

aNew content is defined as new material that is not currently taught at the institution and applies only to program content (not general education/core). See examples at the end of this document.

bProgram closures do not need to wait for approval and can be initiated immediately after submission of the substantive change to SACSCOC. More information is in the next section.

The three results associated with a program change include approval, notification, or no action. These are explained in more detail below.

**Approval by SACSCOC** – requires a prospectus and in most cases needs a lead time of at least nine months after the program is approved at the university level. Approval by SACSCOC must be documented before students can be enrolled into the program.

* Programs with a July 1 to December 31 start date, such as a new program that is to start in a Fall semester, must have a prospectus submitted to SACSCOC by January 1 of that year.
* Programs with a January 1 – June 30 start date must have a prospectus submitted to SACSCOC by July 1 of the previous year.
* The prospectus can take up to three months to prepare so the time to start working with Institutional Effectiveness (IE) on the prospectus would be no later than October 1 or April 1 correspondingly. The IE office appreciates as early a notice as possible of an upcoming new program and is willing to help with the SACSCOC aspects of a potential new program during program development.
* EXCEPTION: a program closure (with required teach-out plan), defined by SACSCOC as the date when a program is closed to admission or entry, not the cessation of instruction, does not need to wait for approval from SACSCOC. The program closure must be submitted before admission is stopped, but once submitted, the institution can stop admitting students to the program.

**Notification to SACSCOC** – Approval is not required and the change can take effect the next day after the notification is submitted.

**No action** – Change is not a significant departure. Neither approval nor notification is required and the change can take effect immediately.

**New Content Examples:** New content is defined as new material that is not currently taught at the institution. The content pertains only to the program in question and does not include hours required for the Core Curriculum.

* A 120 Semester Credit Hour (SCH) program that includes 39 SCH of Core Curriculum
  + In this instance, after the core is removed, the remaining 81 SCH all belong to the program.
  + A new program proposal will include some existing course work from this program with the remaining SCH coming from new-to-TCU courses.
    - If 20 SCH (24.7%) or fewer are new, then no action is needed.
    - If 21 SCH (25.9%) to 40 SCH (49.4%) are new, then notification to SACSCOC is required and the change can proceed after the notification is sent.
    - If 41 SCH (50.6%) or more are new, then approval is needed and students cannot begin the program until the institution has received the approval letter from SACSCOC.
* If 70% of a proposed new program is made up of exiting courses taught at TCU, then only 30% is new content. Notification to SACSCOC is required (not approval).
* Reorganization or repackaging of existing coursework is not considered new content. For instance, if a nursing program broke apart the sequence of courses taught, put the new sequence in a different set of courses with new course numbers and new course titles, the actual content taught is not new to the institution and thus not a significant change.