



Xavier University of Louisiana Substantive Change Policy

Xavier University of Louisiana is responsible for compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges (COC) Substantive Change Policy. The SACS policy states that:

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. The Commission on Colleges accredits institutions not systems. While a system may provide the Commission with important information regarding changes planned or underway at its institutions, it is expected that each institution will follow the reporting requirements of the substantive change policy.

Categories of Substantive Change

SACS substantive changes fall into three categories:

1. Notification and approval of the commission **prior** to implementation of the change; these changes require the university to submit a prospectus that documents the requested change;
2. Notification **prior** to implementation; and
3. Review and approval of consolidations and mergers.

The specific types of changes that require **prior approval of the Commission with a prospectus are:**

1. Initiating coursework at a more advanced level than approved;
2. Expanding at a current degree level;
3. Initiating a branch campus;
4. Initiating an off-campus site where students can earn 50% or more program credits;
5. Initiating distance learning where 50% or more of a program is offered;
6. Initiating a certificate program either at a new off-campus site for a previously approved program or one that is a significant departure from a previously approved program;
7. Altering significantly the length of a program;
8. Initiating degree completion programs;
9. Initiating joint degrees with another institution;
10. Changing from clock hours to credit hours;
11. Altering significantly the educational mission of the University;
12. Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status;
13. Relocation of a main or branch campus; and
14. Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution.

The types of changes that require **prior notification to the Commission:**

1. Initiating an off-campus site where students can earn 25-49% program credits;
2. Initiating distance learning where 25-49% of a program is offered;
3. Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium;
4. Expanding programs that are significantly different from current programs offered at previously approved off-campus sites;
5. Relocation of an off-campus instructional site; and
6. Closing an institution or program

Xavier University of Louisiana Substantive Change Adherence Process

Below are the steps required to ensure compliance with the SACS Substantive Change Policy.

Proposals Requiring a Prospectus

Academic and administrative changes that are categorized by SACS as requiring a prospectus must adhere to the following process:

1. At least 9 months prior to the implementation of the change (18 months in the cases where coursework will be offered at a more advanced level than approved by SACS or the initiation of a merger or consolidation with another institution), approval is granted by the appropriate Academic Council for academic program changes and/or the Administrative Staff and the University Planning Council for administrative changes.
2. One month after internal approval is granted, the prospectus is presented to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (SVPAA), through the College Dean, for academic changes, and both the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Accreditation Liaison for administrative changes.
3. The prospectus is sent to SACS by the Accreditation Liaison after approval of the President no later than one month after submission to the SVPAA and the Accreditation Liaison.

Proposals Requiring Only Prior Notification

Academic and administrative changes that are categorized by SACS as requiring only prior notification must adhere to the following process:

1. At least 2 months prior to the implementation of the change, approval is granted by the appropriate Academic Council for academic program changes and/or the Administrative Staff and the University Planning Council for administrative changes.
2. The notification is sent to SACS by the Accreditation Liaison after approval of the President in consultation with the SVPAA no later than one month after approval.

Among the first check points for substantive change at Xavier are the approval processes for academic and administrative modifications.

Academic Program Changes

The process to change academic programs is outlined in Section II of the Faculty Handbook and requires approval from the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (SVPAA). Prior to approving proposals, the SVPAA ascertains whether the proposal constitutes a substantive change. If a prospectus is required, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, working with the Dean of the College, assists the academic unit in addressing the SACS Substantive Change Policy. It is the responsibility of the SVPAA to ensure compliance with the SACS Substantive Change Policy with respect to academic changes.

The following are classified as academic program changes and require a prospectus:

1. Expanding at a current degree level;
2. Initiating a certificate program either at a new off-campus site for a previously approved program or one that is a significant departure from a previously approved program;
3. Altering significantly the length of a program; and
4. Initiating degree completion programs

The following are academic program changes and require prior notification to SACS:

1. Initiating programs/courses offered through contractual agreement or consortium; and
2. Expanding programs that are significantly different from current programs offered at previously approved off-campus sites

Administrative Changes

The administrative changes listed below require the approval of the Administrative Staff and the University Planning Council. Both the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Accreditation Liaison are members of these committees and would inform these bodies that proposals of this nature are substantive changes. The Accreditation Liaison is responsible for ensuring compliance to the SACS Substantive Change Policy for developing the prospectus, when necessary, for administrative modifications.

The following are classified as administrative changes and require a prospectus:

1. Initiating a branch campus;
2. Changing governance, ownership, control, or legal status;
3. Relocation of a main or branch campus; and
4. Initiating a merger/consolidation with another institution.

Relocation of an off-campus instructional site is as an administrative change and requires prior notification to SACS.

Academic and Administrative Changes

Changing the mission of the University requires broad input and is a part of the University's Strategic Planning process. Both the Accreditation Liaison and the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs serve on the University Planning Council which drives institutional planning. Should the mission be significantly altered, the Accreditation Liaison assumes responsibility for

ascertaining whether the modified mission constitutes a substantive change and develops the prospectus for submission to SACS. The remaining substantive changes must follow both the academic and administrative approval processes described above.

The following SACS substantive changes are both academic and administrative and require a prospectus:

1. Initiating coursework at a more advanced level than approved;
2. Altering significantly the educational mission of the University;
3. Initiating an off-campus site where students can earn 50% or more program credits;
4. Initiating distance learning where 50% or more of a program is offered;
5. Initiating joint degrees with another institution; and
6. Changing from clock hours to credit hours

The following SACS substantive changes are both academic and administrative and require prior notification to SACS:

1. Initiating an off-campus site where students can earn 25-49% program credits;
2. Initiating distance learning where 25-49% of a program is offered; and
3. Closing an institution or program

Xavier Substantive Change Committee

In addition to the above processes and procedures, the University has formed a Substantive Change Committee that meets each semester to forecast prospective Substantive Changes, both academic and administrative, on the institutional horizon. This Committee meets at least once each semester to examine information and trends from various areas across the University including institutional planning and research, academic departments, and the mandates of professional accrediting bodies.

The Committee is chaired by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and includes the following members: Accreditation Liaison; Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs; Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Dean, College of Pharmacy; Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Associate Dean, College of Pharmacy; Director, Institute of Black Catholic Studies; Chair, Division of Education; and Director, Institutional Research.

Substantive Change Policy for Emergencies

As part of Xavier University's Emergency Preparedness Plans, the Office of Academic Affairs (<http://www.xula.edu/emergency/documents/VPAA%20hurricane%20plan%20--%20web%20portion.pdf>) has established guidelines and procedures in the event there is an unforeseen disruption in the class schedule. The plan includes an Academics Emergency Response Team (AERT) that assists the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs with implementing the Academic Affairs contingency plans in emergency situations.

For campus closures of three days or less, all academic department chairs and managers should report their current location to their immediate supervisor by the second day of evacuation. Members of the AERT will discuss via conference call (or email) possible changes to the Academic Calendar. Academic department chairs and managers will be informed of any changes.

The following activities are implemented for more extended campus closures:

- AERT members will prepare for the implementation of online courses;
- The Office of Technology Administration (OTA) will prepare key software applications and check system redundancy needed for an extended evacuation period;
- Announcements will be made on the University Emergency website concerning the commencement of online courses. The University Librarian and the Distance Learning Coordinator will also be contacted;
- Separate Faculty and Student web pages will be activated on the University Emergency website with pertinent announcements;
- Faculty and student rosters will be developed from data entered on the University Emergency Registries.

Each semester, the University populates the Online Courses Database consisting of electronic course materials that can be maintained and updated in the event of an extended campus closure. All Xavier courses are assigned a BlackBoard platform.

Within 30 days of a large-scale disaster that prompts a campus closure, Xavier's Accreditation Liaison will request contingency approval of necessary substantive changes. If it is anticipated that these changes will be in effect for six months or more, the Accreditation Liaison and the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs will be responsible for the development of the required prospectus.