

## 3.12

### Substantive change

The institution notifies the Commission of changes in accordance with the Commission's substantive change policy and, when required, seeks approval prior to the initiation of changes. (*See Commission policy "Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions."*)

### Judgment

Compliance    Partial Compliance    Non-Compliance    Not Applicable

### Narrative

Tennessee Technological University (TTU) has a record of reporting substantive changes and gaining approval for those changes through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The University has an internal policy on Substantive Changes. The Office of the Provost and the SACSCOC Liaison are responsible for informing the SACSCOC of the substantive changes in accord with the Substantive Change policies and procedures of the Commission and the University, including seeking advance approval as necessary.

### Brief Background

Since the last reaffirmation of accreditation in 2006, four University officers have served as the University's SACSCOC Liaison over different years [1]. Prior to September 2012, the substantive change process was managed and monitored by the collaborative efforts of the SACSCOC Liaison, the Provost, the academic deans, and the Office of Academic Affairs, using the SACSCOC Substantive Change policy and procedures, as delineated by SACSCOC. During the preparation for the Fifth-Year Referral Report in 2012 and the review of institutional substantive changes in 2013, it was found that a couple of changes were not reported timely and appropriately, such as the dual degree program between TTU and FH Aachen in Germany and the off-campus instructional sites for offering 25 to 49 percent of the credit hours for the programs. The corrective actions were taken immediately, and the University received the SACSCOC acceptance/approval letters for the reported changes.

### University Policy

TTU adopted an internal Substantive Change Policy, Policy No. 221, in 2013 [2]. This policy outlines the institutional procedures for recognizing substantive changes, determining the responsibilities of individuals, and ensuring that all substantive changes are reported to SACSCOC in a timely fashion. The TTU Substantive Change Policy addresses all types of substantive changes described in the SACSCOC Substantive Change Policy Statement. The Office of the Provost and the SACSCOC Liaison are responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with the terms of the policy. Policy 221 on Substantive Changes is available at the university's website on its Policy Central webpage [3].

### Process of Reporting Substantive Changes to SACSCOC

The President of TTU is required to notify SACSCOC of any proposed modification of the essential characteristics of TTU as an educational institution. The faculty, staff, and administrators at the University are obliged to assist with recognizing and reporting such substantive changes. It is the duty of the departmental chairs, deans, directors, and like administrators to ensure that the Office of the Provost and the University's SACSCOC liaison are notified of planning for a modification that may prove substantive.

As of September 2012, the Associate Provost in the Provost's Office assumed the responsibilities for SACSCOC Liaison for TTU. The Associate Provost is the Executive Officer of the University Curriculum Committee, and serves on the University Academic Council and University Assembly. The Academic

Council assists the President of TTU by proposing actions to be taken, or legislating when authorized, on matters which relate to the total field of instruction, and the University Assembly receives, reviews, and approves reports from the Academic Council, Administrative Council, and the University Standing Committees that directly report to the University Assembly. The University SACSCOC Liaison works closely with the University administration and monitors any substantive changes that happen at the University. In addition, the SACSCOC Liaison communicates the requirements for reporting substantive changes to the President's Cabinet and Deans' Council at meetings.

Once a substantive change is identified, the University SACSCOC Liaison works with the individuals who are in a position to effect a substantive change to prepare necessary documents in accord with substantive change policies of the Commission and the University, including seeking advance approval as necessary. With assistance of the SACSCOC Liaison, the University President sends a notification letter that summarizes a proposed change to the SACSCOC President.

### **Evidence of Compliance with the Policies**

Table 1 presents a list of the substantive changes approved by SACSCOC. The table provides evidence of compliance with the Commission's requirements related to substantive changes. As an example of a recent substantive change of which the SACSCOC was notified, the SACSCOC approval letter, and TTU President's notification letter for the closure of the Bachelor of Science in Web Design program are included [4] [5].






Table 1. List of Substantive Changes Approved Since the Last Reaffirmation

<b>SACSCOC Approval Date</b>	<b>Description of Substantive Change</b>
3/5/2012	Acknowledgement of establishment of Bachelor of Science in Environmental and Sustainability Studies (not a substantive change)
4/1/2013	Closure of the Bachelor of Science in Web Design program in the Department of English and Communications, College of Arts and Sciences
6/3/2013	Establishment of a new concentration in Sport Management within the existing Master of Arts (M.A.) in the Department of Exercise Science, Physical Education and Wellness (EXPW), College of Education
6/28/2013	Establishment of a new concentration in Design, Emphasis in Digital Media within the existing Bachelor of Fine Arts program in the Department of Art, College of Education
11/11/2013	Approval of the planned closure of the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering and the academic program of Bachelor of Science in Industrial and Systems Engineering
11/21/2013	Establishment of a Professional Science Master's with a concentration in Environmental Informatics in the School of Environmental Studies, College of Interdisciplinary Studies
1/9/2014	Establishment of a Dual Degree program between Tennessee Tech University and FH Aachen, Germany. This dual-degree program is limited to the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration at Tennessee Tech University and the Bachelor of Business Studies at FH Aachen.
6/3/2014	Establishment of three new concentrations: (a) A new concentration in Educational Technology within the existing Specialist in Education (Ed.S.) in Curriculum and Instruction; (b) A new concentration in Business Intelligence and Analytics within the existing Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (B.S.B.A.) and (c) A new concentration in Child Life within the existing Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Human Ecology
10/14/2014	Acceptance of the notification of the 10 off-campus sites for offering 25-49% of the credit hours for the programs in education, engineering, and interdisciplinary studies.
10/31/2014	Establishment of nine new concentrations, curriculum revision of an existing concentration, and termination of two existing concentrations
4/21/2015	<p>Establishment of four Post-Master's Nursing Certificate programs (RODP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Nurse Practitioner (21 Credit Hours)</li> <li>• Nursing Administration (19 Credit Hours)</li> <li>• Nursing Education (15 Credit Hours)</li> <li>• Nursing Informatics (23 Credit Hours)</li> </ul>
4/27/2015	Establishment of a new concentration in Health Care Administration within the existing Master of Professional Studies (MPS) RODP and termination of a concentration in Information Technology (CSIT) within the existing Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Computer Science
5/20/2015	Establishment of two new concentrations (a) a concentration in Early Childhood education (non-licensure) within the existing Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Early Childhood education; (b) a concentration in Secondary Education (non-licensure) within the existing Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S.Ed.) in Secondary Education

## Conclusion

TTU is committed to notifying SACSCOC of changes in accordance with the SACSCOC substantive change policy. TTU's internal policy addresses all aspects of the SACSCOC substantive change policy. The University has processes to ensure campus awareness and appropriate reporting to SACSCOC. Therefore, TTU is in compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.12.1.

## Sources

-  [1] SACSCOC Liaison TTU 2005-2015\_20141224
-  [2] Policy 221 Substantive Change
-  [3] Policy Central Website
-  [4] SACSCOC Approval\_Closure of BS in Web Design
-  [5] President Oldham Letter to SACSCOC - Closure of BS in Web Design