



RED ALERT!:
**Developing an Early Warning System
for Substantive Change**

**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Colleges
Annual Meeting
December 6, 2010**



UCF Overview

- complex level XI institution located in Orlando, Florida
- As of Fall 2010:*
- basic Carnegie classification: research universities (high research activity)
 - 2nd largest university in U.S.
 - 56,235 students (33,453 students in 2000*) ~68% increase
 - 1,415 acres on Orlando campus
 - 12 colleges, including a medical college
 - 216 degree programs (91 bachelor's, 92 master's, 3 specialist, 29 doctoral, 1 professional) (146 programs in 1999) 48% increase
 - 10 regional campuses and numerous other instructional sites
 - extensive distance learning offerings

**unfunded students were excluded from enrollment counts until 2003-04*



UCF Overview *(continued)*

- accreditation reaffirmed by SACSCOC in December 2006; no follow-up reports
- notable university-level key processes in place:
 - institutional effectiveness
 - faculty qualifications
 - planning and budget

3



Substantive Change Overview

Substantive Change: a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution

Background

Federal regulations require SACSCOC to provide oversight on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education in matters of substantive change. Oversight on substantive change was tightened following SACSCOC's last review by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Refer to the SACSCOC policy on *Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Commission on Colleges* for a complete list of the various types of change and procedures for addressing them.

<http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/081705/Substantive%20change%20policy.pdf>

4





Substantive Change Overview (continued)

Range of Substantive Change Reporting Requirements

Range of Time Frames for Contacting COC

- 12 months prior to planned implementation
- 6 months prior to planned implementation
- prior to implementation
- N/A

Most Common Types of Reporting Procedures

Procedure 1: requires notification and approval prior to implementation

Procedure 2: requires letter of notification prior to implementation

Most Common Documentation Requirements

- prospectus
- modified prospectus
- letter of notification
- other supporting documentation (e.g., copy of consortia agreement)
- none

5



Common Changes at Institutions in Growth Mode

- initiating a branch campus
- initiating off-campus sites
- expanding program* offerings at previously approved off-campus sites
- relocating an off-campus instructional site
- initiating distance learning
- expanding distance learning offerings

*A program leads to a credential (e.g., degree, certificate, diploma).

6





Expected Learning Outcomes

Outcome #1: Participants will appreciate the need for a proactive and systematic process for flagging substantive changes

Outcome #2: Participants will understand the importance of the following elements in establishing an effective process

- a. identification and clear articulation of responsible stakeholders
- b. role of key decision makers in the process
- c. integration of safeguards into existing business processes (checks and balances)
- d. common source data
- e. common operational definitions and replicable methodology
- f. data validation
- g. low threshold flags and SACSCOC reporting
- h. training and retraining
- i. ownership and control of responsible stakeholders
- j. (internal) sanctions for non-compliance
- k. continuous quality improvement

7



Challenges to Monitoring Change

Outcome #1

- decentralized academic divisions
- complex course offerings
- timely response to demands for
 - new degree programs
 - expanded course offerings
 - different delivery modalities
- “entrepreneurial spirit”

8





Conditions that Can Quickly Trigger Change

Outcome #1

- the institution's central distance learning office converts specific programs to a distance learning modality to increase access
- the College of Business Administration dean decides to offer the common core business curriculum on-line
- the Department of Criminal Justice decides to offer a graduate certificate program at a local police department
- a regional campus attempting to offer a wider variety of electives inadvertently offers a significant portion of courses toward degrees not officially "offered" at that site
- an instructor completes distance education training and decides to convert some courses to a distance format, which subsequently results in a significant portion of a program offered via a distance modality

9





Solution to Proactively Detecting Change

Outcome #1

proactive planning vs. reactive reporting

requires an

“Early Warning System”

10





Developing an Early Warning System

Focus of UCF's first Early Warning System:

Off-campus Instructional Site (IS) and Distance Learning (DL) Activity

11



Outcome #2a&b

Identification of Stakeholders and Role of Decision Makers

- Stakeholders responsible for monitoring and reporting IS and DL activity are identified in university policy and procedures
 - vice provost for regional campuses
 - college deans
 - dean of undergraduate studies
 - dean of graduate studies
 - other college deans
 - director of distributed learning

- Key decision makers are responsible for reporting expected changes to UCF's SACSCOC liaison *at time of initial planning*

12





Integration of Safeguards into Existing Processes

Outcome #2c

- undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees flag certain changes for deans of undergraduate and graduate studies
- annual survey of instructional sites and distance learning activity
- academic departments and regional campus administration separately report IS and DL activity (check and balance)

13



Common Source Data

Outcome #2d

- Office of Institutional Research (IR) provides preliminary report to academic affairs (all courses taught or scheduled to be taught off the main Orlando campus for a three year period – last, current, and next academic year)
- academic affairs reformats the report for distribution to academic departments and regional campus administration
- department chairs and regional campus administration review the IR data, compare it to the list of UCF approved IS and DL offerings, and complete survey noting any planned changes to program offerings (percent of programs offered at off campus IS or via DL)

14





Common Operational Definitions and Replicable Methodology

Outcome #2e

- percent of program offered is based upon credits earned *in the major*
- only credit hours offered by the unit responsible for the program are included in the calculation
- calculations should be based upon program offerings over an appropriate span of time (usually at least three years)
- program offerings must be calculated separately for each off-campus site at which the department offers courses
- reporting is based upon whether or not a student could reach one of the above thresholds in their program of study considering the courses offered, even if individual students do not personally elect to take the courses offered and even if the program is not “officially” offered at the site or via distance learning

15



Common Operational Definitions and Replicable Methodology

Outcome #2e

Courses “in the major” include:

- common program prerequisites
- undergraduate core requirements (lower/basic level)
- undergraduate core requirements (upper/advanced level)
- graduate core requirements
- concentration/specialization/track/area of study requirements
- (other) restricted electives offered by the unit responsible for the program

*Courses **excluded** in the count of credit hours in the major:*

- GEP courses (unless they can be counted in one of the above categories of courses)
- foreign language requirements (unless they fall in one of the above categories of courses)
- unrestricted electives
- restricted electives that are NOT offered by the unit responsible for the program (e.g., psychology program requires math or science electives not offered by the psychology department)
- not-for-credit courses
- courses that do not meet formally (e.g., independent study, thesis hours)

16





Common Operational Definitions and Replicable Methodology

Outcome #2e

Calculating Percent of Program Offerings

Instructional Sites Reporting

$$\frac{\text{Total credits in the major* offered via face-to-face modality}}{\text{Total credits in the major*}} = \% \text{ of program offered}$$

Distance Learning Reporting

$$\frac{\text{Total credits in the major* available via distance learning modality}}{\text{Total credits in the major*}} = \% \text{ of program offered}$$

Note: If course categories "in the major" involve a range of credits, use lowest end of range in denominator calculation (e.g., if 27-32 restricted electives are required, use 27)

*Substitute certificate program requirements for credit hours *in the major* to calculate the percent of a certificate program offered at an off-campus site or via distance learning

17




Data Validation

Outcome #2f

- department chairs and regional campus administration submit completed survey of instructional site and distance learning activity to academic affairs
- academic affairs identifies discrepancies and works with units to reconcile

18




Low Threshold Flags and SACSCOC Reporting

Outcome #2g

SACSCOC reporting requirements vary by type of change

Example: initiating a new off-campus instructional site

- ≤ 24% of program offered: no action required
- 25-49% of program offered: letter of notification prior to implementation (*Procedure 2*)
- ≥ 50 percent of program offered: letter of notification due 6 months prior to implementation and prospectus required (*Procedure 1*)
*SACSCOC must approve prior to implementation

19





Low Threshold Flags and SACSCOC Reporting

Outcome #2g

UCF Protocol

- report to SACSCOC if threshold is reached based on credits *in the major*
- GEP offerings at site are considered in the decision to report (no GEP at regional campuses)
- if unrestricted electives are available at the site from a different academic department, academic affairs initiates SACSCOC reporting
- SACSCOC liaison makes final call regarding whether or not new program offerings are significantly different from current offerings

20





Example: Sociology, B.A. Degree Requirements

Outcome #2d-g

Sociology, B.A. - 120 total semester hours required

- general education program (36 hours)
- common program prerequisites (3 hours)*
- lower/basic level core requirements (0 hours)*
- upper/advanced level core requirements (12 hours)*
- restricted electives (27 hours)*
- foreign language requirements (0-8 hours)
- unrestricted electives (34-42 hours)

**hours in the major*

21



Common Program Prerequisites (3 hours)

Outcome #2d-g

- SYG 2000 General Sociology (GEP)
- SYA 3110 Social Theory (3 hours)

22





Outcome #2d-g

Core Requirements (12 hours)

Lower/Basic Level (0 hours)

- SYG 2000 General Sociology (GEP/ CPP)

Upper/Advanced Level (12 hours)

- SYA 3110 Social Theory (CPP)
- SYA 3400C Applied Social Statistics (4 hours)
- SYA 4300C Research Methods (4 hours)
- SYA 4450 Data Analysis (4 hours)

23



Outcome #2d-g

Restricted Electives (27 hours)

Select from the following

- SYA 3120 Contemporary Social Theory
- SYA 4650C Community Action and Involvement
- SYA 5625 Proseminar
- SYA 5652 Advanced Population
- SYD 3410 Urban Society
- SYD 3700 Race and Ethnicity
- SYD 3800 Sex and Gender in Society
- SYD 4020 Birth, Death, and Population Trends
- SYD 4510 Environment and Society
- SYD 4810 Women in Contemporary Society
- SYD 4813 Women, Law, and Social Change
- SYG 2010 Social Problems
- SYO 3000 Contemporary Society
- SYO 3360 Social Organization and Human Relations
- SYO 3410 Patterns of Mental Health in Society
- SYO 3530 Social Power and Inequality
- SYO 4100 Family Trends
- SYO 4200 Religion in Society
- SYO 4250 Education and Social Achievement
- SYO 4300 Political Sociology
- SYO 4400 Medical Sociology
- SYP 3300 Fads, Crowds, and Social Action
- SYP 3400 Social Change
- SYP 3510 Sociology of Deviant Behavior
- SYP 3511 Sociology of Murder
- SYP 3520 Criminology
- SYP 3530 Juvenile Delinquency
- SYP 3540 Sociology of Law
- SYP 3551 Patterns of Alcoholism in Society
- SYP 3562 Patterns of Domestic Violence in Society
- SYP 3602 Patterns of Popular Music in Society
- SYP 3630 Popular Culture in Society
- SYP 3650 Sports and Society
- SYP 4000 Sociological Social Psychology
- SYP 4004 Constructing Social Issues
- SYP 4514 Patterns of Violence in Society
- SYP 4521 Crime Victims in Society
- SYP 4536 Gangs and Society
- SYP 4550 Patterns of Drug Abuse in Society
- SYP 4730 Patterns of Aging in Society
- SYP 4732 Minority Aging
- SYP 5525 Sociological Criminology

24





Outcome #2d-g

Calculation

- **numerator** = total number of credit hours *in the major* offered face-to-face at an off-campus site (up to maximum credits allowed in each category)
- **denominator** = total number of required credit hours *in the major*

3 hours	common program prerequisites
12 hours	core requirements
<u>27 hours</u>	restricted electives
42 hours in the major*	
36 hours	general education program
0 – 8 hours	foreign language requirement
<u>34-42 hours</u>	unrestricted electives
120 total hours	required for degree program

**Denominator = 42 hours in the major*

25



Outcome #2d-g

Threshold Flagging Examples

Sociology, B.A. Example

$\frac{9 \text{ hours in the major offered at the off-campus site}}{42 \text{ hours in the major}} = 21.4 \text{ percent}$

< 25 percent courses offered = nothing to report to SACSCOC

$\frac{12 \text{ hours in the major offered at the off-campus site}}{42 \text{ hours in the major}} = 28.6 \text{ percent}$

25-49 percent courses offered = notify SACSCOC

26





Outcome #2d-g

Threshold Flagging Examples

Sociology, B.A. Example...continued

21 hours in the major offered at the off-campus site = 50.0 percent
42 hours in the major

**≥ 50 percent courses offered = notify SACSCOC
(may require substantive change prospectus)**

If unrestricted electives or GEP courses are available at the instructional site, substantive change notification process is initiated as appropriate.

27



Outcome #2h

Training and Retraining

- clearly documented and replicable methodology
- optional calculators available
(<http://www.vpaa.ucf.edu/accreditation.php>)
- workshops for new and returning academic administrators (e.g., fall Dean's Director's and Chair's workshops)
- road shows
- "help-line"
- academic affairs follow-up

28





Outcome #2h

Early Warning Calculator Undergraduate Programs

Calculating Percent of Program Offered at an
Off-campus Site or via Distance Learning

Credits "in the major" <small>Courses satisfying GEP or foreign language requirements should only be included in the early warning calculation counts if they also fall into one of the categories below.</small>	(1) Total Credits Required "in the major" <i>Denominator</i>	(2) Total Credits for Distinct Courses Offered or Expected to Offer at Site During 2008-09, 2009-10, & 2010-11 <i>Numerator</i>
Common Program Prerequisites	3	3
Core Requirements (lower level)	0	0
Core Requirements (upper level)	12	12
Concentration/Track/Specialization/Area of Study	0	0
Restricted Electives Offered by Your Unit	27	9
Other Required Courses Offered by Your Unit	0	0
TOTAL CREDITS	42	24
Percent of Program Offered (at site or via distance modality) <small><i>total credit hours required / total credits offered/scheduled</i></small>	57.14%	

29





Outcome #2h

Early Warning Calculator Graduate Programs

Calculating Percent of Program Offered at an
Off-campus Site or via Distance Learning

Credits "in the major"	(1) Total Credits Required "in the major" <i>Denominator</i>	(2) Total Credits for Distinct Courses Offered or Expected to Offer at Site During 2008-09, 2009-10, & 2010-11 <i>Numerator</i>
Prerequisites	0	0
Core Requirements	12	6
Concentration/Track/Specialization/Area of Study	0	0
Restricted Electives Offered by Your Unit	9	3
Other Required Courses Offered by Your Unit	6	0
TOTAL CREDITS	27	9
Percent of Program Offered (at site or via distance modality) <small><i>total credit hours required / total credits offered/scheduled</i></small>	33.33%	

30





Ownership and Control for Responsible Stakeholders

Outcome #2i

- person's responsible for proactively notifying UCF SACSCOC liaison of changes are clearly identified in university policy and procedures – policy requires notification at time of initial planning

UCF policy 4-505 Reporting of Substantive Change:
<http://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4-505ReportingofSubstantiveChangeFINAL.pdf>

UCF Substantive Change Procedures Matrix
<http://www.vpaa.ucf.edu/files/SCprocedures.pdf>

- if a substantive change prospectus is required by SACSCOC, the unit is responsible for its preparation
- completed prospectus must be approved by UCF SACSCOC liaison in academic affairs prior to submission to the president for approval

31





(Internal) Sanctions for Non-compliance

Outcome #2j

- units projecting greater than 50 percent of a program at a site without prior notification are required to drop instruction to below the 50 percent threshold until SACSCOC notification and approval is completed
- additional penalties may be placed on units that do not report 25-49 percent and more than 50 percent course offering thresholds in a timely manner

32





Outcome #2k

Continuous Quality Improvement

- ongoing re-evaluation of system effectiveness – *Are we timely in our reporting efforts?*
- ongoing improvements
 - development of master base-line list of UCF approved IS and DL activity
 - development of calculations library by discipline
 - new reporting tools (e.g., calculators, simplified survey instrument)
 - further integration into existing university procedures (e.g., involvement of undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees)

33



Take Away Points (learning outcomes)

Outcome #1: Compliance with SACSCOC substantive change reporting requirements requires a proactive and systematic process for flagging changes at your institution.

Outcome #2: It is important to consider a number of elements when developing an effective *Early Warning System*.

34





Keys to a Successful Early Warning System

- identify responsible stakeholders in university policy and procedures
- integrate safeguards into existing business processes (checks and balances)
- give accountable stakeholders ownership and control
- use common source data
- develop common definitions and replicable methodology
- validate collected data (e.g., reconciliation of department chair's and regional campus' reports)
- set flags for internal reporting at low thresholds

35



Keys to a Successful Early Warning System *(continued)*

- identify a single reporting line to SACSCOC (UCF president or SACSCOC liaison housed in academic affairs)
- train and re-train
- set sanctions for non-compliance
- engage in continuous quality improvement

36





Things to Consider When Developing an Early Warning System

- culture of your institution
- input from key stakeholders
- existing processes that you can integrate with and refine
- timing
 - data collection (e.g., When is the data good data?)
 - internal compliance reporting (e.g., at time of initial consideration)
 - SACSCOC reporting (e.g., once flagged at low threshold)

37



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38





Questions ???

39



Links to Presentation and Handouts

Power Point Presentation
<http://vpaa.ucf.edu/files/SACS2010ppt.pdf>

Handout: *Examples for Calculating the Denominator*
<http://vpaa.ucf.edu/files/SACS2010Handout.pdf>

40

