Navigating Substantive Change

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Objectives for today

- Learn of recent changes
- Hear an Overview of the Substantive Change Process
  - Why, what, and how we review

- Discover common reasons for proposal rejections
- Questions to consider when preparing a proposal for review

New in 2017

- Updated Sub Change Manual
- Non-degree program reporting/approval
- Retirement of Degree Level Approvals Policy
- Screening required for all new degree programs (online submission)
- Guidelines for the Review of Graduate Programs available

What is Substantive Change?

Definition:

A change that may significantly affect an institution's quality, objectives, scope, or control.

Why does WSCUC Review Changes?

Mandated by the Department of Education to ensure that any substantive change to the educational mission or program(s) of an institution after the agency (WSCUC) has accredited or pre-accredited the institution does not adversely affect the capacity of the institution to continue to meet the Standards of Accreditation.

-Title 34: Education §602.22

How:

Program improvement through peer review. Commission's commitment to quality assurance expands on federal mandate.

What triggers a review?

New Programs at a Degree Level

- First 3 programs are reviewed; then those programs that represent a significant departure from existing offerings

Distance Education Programs

- First 3 distance education programs are reviewed; then those programs that represent a significant departure from existing offerings
- 50% or more of the program is offered through distance education

Distance Education

- <u>50% or more </u>of the program is delivered by distance education.

- First 3 distance education programs are reviewed; then those programs that represent a significant departure from existing offerings

- Likewise, the first 3 on-ground programs will need to be reviewed for those institutions currently offering only distance ed offerings.

What triggers a review?

Competency-based Degree Program/Direct Assessment

- First 3 competency-based education programs are reviewed (1st is a Structural Change); then those programs representing a significant departure from existing offerings

Candidate institutions and newly accredited institutions

- All new degree programs for institutions with Candidacy status and newly WSCUC accredited institutions (through their first reaffirmation of accreditation).

What triggers a review?

Programs that are a <u>Significant Departure</u> from existing offerings.

Significant Departure considers:

- New programs not closely related to current offerings
- Programs requiring significant new academic, physical, and financial resources.
- Is the new program within an institution's competence and resources to implement?

- <u>All new degree programs need to submit a screening form to determine if a review is needed</u>.
- Could this significantly affect an institution's quality, objectives, scope, or control?

Screening Form Questions

- the two most closely related programs offered to the proposed program (if applicable) (CIP Codes)
- number of new courses required for the program
- number of new faculty are required
- a description of additional facilities and/or equipment needed
- a description of additional library/learning resources needed
- a description of any significant financial resources that may be needed for the program

What Triggers a Review?

Off-campus Locations (either domestic or international)

- Additional Location (staff review)
  - Offers at least 50% of at least one program
- Branch Campus (1st is a Committee Review)
  - Permanent facility
  - Own faculty and administrative organization
  - Own budgetary and hiring authority

What Triggers a Review?

Joint or Dual Degree Program

o See policy on Joint Degrees and Dual Degrees

Duration of program

o Change in clock or credit hours (25% increase or decrease)

Agreements with Unaccredited Entities

o See policy on Agreements with Unaccredited Entities

What Triggers a Review?
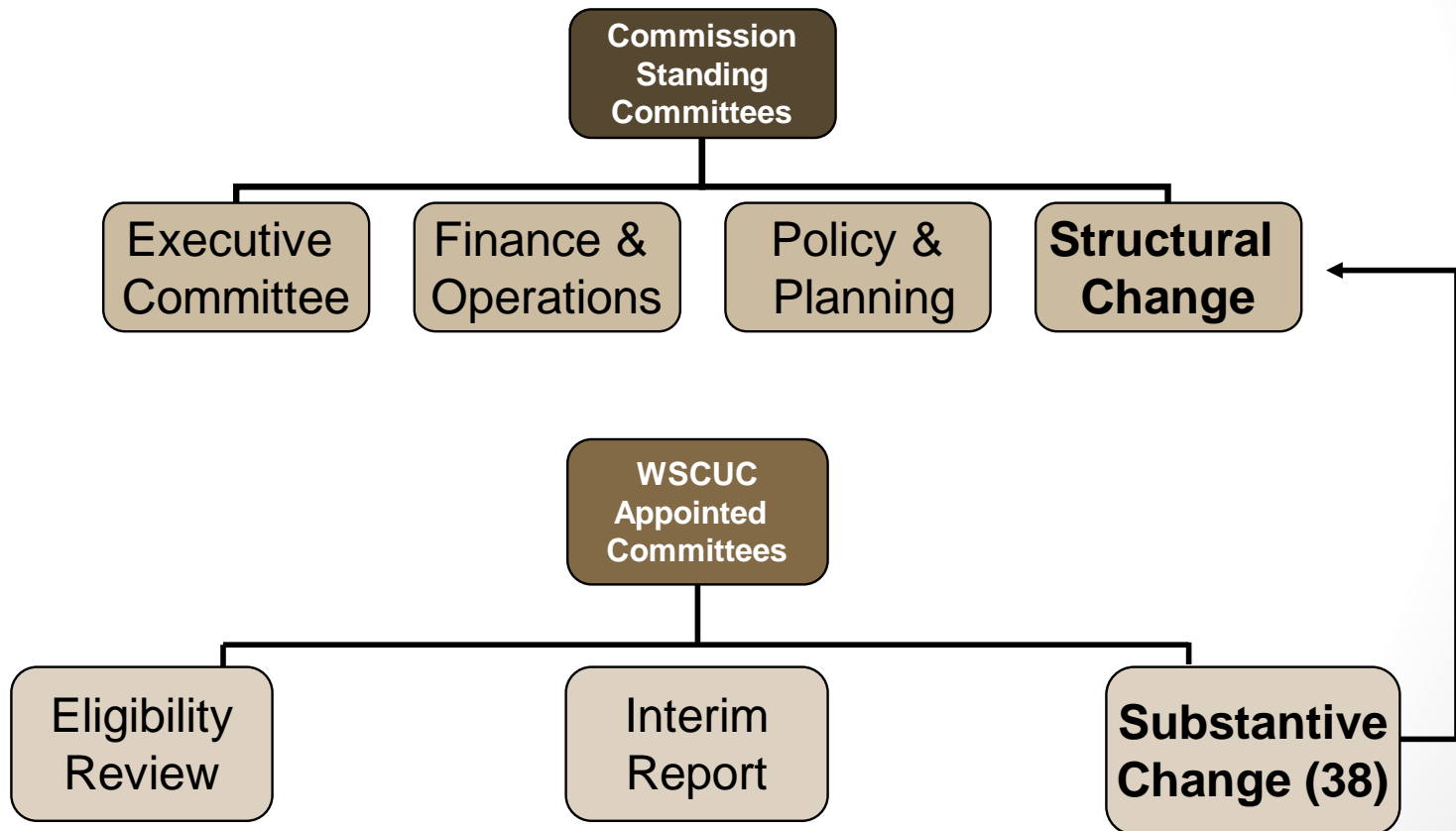
STRUCTURAL CHANGES

- **New Degree Level**

- **Change of Ownership, Mission, Control**

- **First Competency-based Program**

Non-degree programs

WSCUC definition of a program: A series of courses, bearing academic credit, leading to a credential.

- Non-degree programs in existence prior to July 1, 2016 were grandfathered in to your institution's scope of accreditation.
- Those non-degree programs not related to an existing degree program or representing a significant departure will be reviewed.
- Implementation form available for those non-degree programs related to existing degree programs.

Who Conducts Reviews?

Commission Standing Committees

- Executive Committee
- Finance & Operations
- Policy & Planning
- **Structural Change**

WSCUC Appointed Committees

- Eligibility Review
- Interim Report
- **Substantive Change (38)**

Three Types of Review

Staff Review (most locations and some programs)
- Review by staff within 30 days

Committee Review (most common)
- Review by Substantive Change Committee panel
- Approval by the Commission

Structural Change
- Review by Substantive Change Committee panel
- Pre-implementation site visit
- Review by Structural Change Committee panel
- Approval by Commission
- Post-implementation site visit

The Review Process

Step 1: Submit **application** and **fee**
 at least 9 months [3 months for staff review] prior
 to implementation

Step 2: Submit **proposal** via Box.com
 2 months prior to conference call

Step 3: Preliminary review by WSCUC staff
 You have one week to respond

Step 4: Participate in **conference call** with reviewers

Step 5: Host **site visit** (for structural changes)

Step 6: Receive final approval from the Commission

Who Participates in the Review?

- 2-3 members of the Substantive Change Committee
- Substantive change staff or staff liaison
- Representatives from the institution
  - Program Director, Department Chair, Dean
  - **Faculty who wrote the proposal**
  - VPAA, Provost, President
  - ALO

  Depends on size of institution and type of change

Common reasons for proposal rejections

- Issues pertaining to:
  - Curriculum
  - Educational Effectiveness
  - Faculty
  - Finances
  - Program Need

  Also:
  - Technology
  - Student Support Services
  - Library and Information Resources

Questions to consider in proposal preparation

- **Curriculum** (CFRs 2.1, 2.2a)

  - Is the curriculum appropriate to the degree level?

  - Are the assignments of appropriate rigor and expectations for the degree level?

  - Are the number of credit hours earned and expectations for how those hours are earned both in an out of class provided?

- **Faculty** (CFRs 2.2b, 2.4, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.10)

  • Who will actually be assigned to teach in the program? (full or part time?)

  • How does the institution ensure faculty ownership of the program, especially in online programs and/or those that rely heavily on adjunct faculty?

Questions to consider in proposal preparation

- **Finances** (CFRs 3.1, 3.3, 3.4)

    • Does the budget cover the first three years of the program?

    • Are assumptions included in the budget?

    • Does the budget include student and faculty number and FTE projections? Is a realistic student retention rate identified?

    • Does the budget reflect true costs of launching and sustaining the program in areas such as marketing, IT, library, student support services, especially where increases in these areas are anticipated to be needed?

    • Is the budget specific to the program being proposed?

Questions to consider in proposal preparation

- **Educational Effectiveness** (CFRs 2.1 – 2.6, 2.10, 3.1, 3.3, 3.7, 3.10, 4.1 – 4.5)

  • Does the curriculum map show progression of learning from introductory to advanced levels?

  • Are all learning outcomes in the curriculum map achieved at an advanced level by the time the student has completed all courses in the program?

  • Does the assessment plan clearly outline the annual plan for assessing the program, as well as the individuals responsible for conducting the assessment and ensuring that information learned from the assessment is used to make improvements to the program?

  • Does the assessment plan include direct and indirect measures and does it include both formative and summative assessment?

  • Is achievement of all program learning outcomes assessed?

  • Is the program included in the institution's program review process?

  • Is teaching effectiveness evaluated in any means other than a student evaluation?

Questions to consider in proposal preparation

Program Need (CFRs 2.1, 4.1, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)

- Is the need for the program clearly documented beyond the institution's desire to offer the program?

- Does the evidence of need for the program include specific data about the institution and the region, in addition to national trends and employment outlook statistics?

- What activities has the institution undertaken to help assess need, e.g. student or graduate surveys, documenting the number of inquiries, business or professional indications of interest, etc.?

- Are the enrollment projections for the first three years provided?

Questions?

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Resources for Institutions on WSCUC website