Accreditation Issues and International Initiatives

Panelists:

Marcy Stoll, Vice President
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges

Richard Osborn, Vice President
Western Association of Schools & Colleges

Moderator: Susan Carvalho, University of Kentucky

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Powerpoint and handouts (plus additional documents) can be found at:

www.uky.edu/IntlAffairs/AIEA.html
CS 3.4.7: The institution ensures the quality of educational programs and courses offered through consortial relationships or contractual agreements, ensures ongoing compliance with the *Principles*, and periodically evaluates the consortial relationship and/or agreement against the mission of the institution. *(See Commission policy “Collaborative Academic Arrangements.”) (Consortial relationships/contractual agreements)*
Definition: Substantive change is a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution. Under federal regulations, substantive change includes ... Entering into a collaborative academic arrangement such as a dual degree program or a joint degree program with another institution ...
What is a Collaborative Academic Arrangement?

Collaborative academic arrangements are agreements between institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and accredited or non-accredited degree-granting institutions of higher education throughout the world for purposes of awarding academic credits and/or educational program completion credentials.
What IS NOT a Collaborative Academic Arrangement?

• Dual enrollment – high school students taking college courses for concurrent credit – is not included in this policy.

• Traditional transfer-articulation agreement – such as an arrangement between a community college and four-year institution – is not included in this policy.
What is a Collaborative Academic Arrangement?

Institutions describe collaborative academic arrangements in many different ways, most commonly identifying them as dual or joint educational programs, affiliations, partnerships, consortial agreements, and other similar terms.
What is a Collaborative Academic Arrangement?

The most common forms of collaborative academic arrangements are dual educational programs and joint educational programs. For the purposes of accreditation and review by SACSCOC, the following definitions apply:

• A dual educational program is one whereby students study at two or more institutions, and each institution awards a separate program completion credential bearing only its own name, seal, and signature.

• A joint educational program is one whereby students study at two or more institutions and are awarded a single program completion. (Often two or more institutions’ name on award.)
SACSCOC accreditation awarded to a Member institution is not transferrable to a Partner institution – either in actuality or appearance.
Member institutions are responsible for ensuring the integrity of their accreditation and of their education programs when entering into collaborative academic arrangements.
In accordance with the SACSCOC policy on substantive change, Member institutions are responsible for notifying and providing SACSCOC with signed final copies of the agreements governing their collaborative academic arrangements.
These agreements must address the requirements set forth in the collaborative academic arrangements policy and its procedures.
For all such arrangements, SACSCOC accredited institutions assume responsibility for:

1. The integrity of the collaborative academic arrangements
2. The quality of credits recorded on their transcripts
3. Compliance with accreditation requirements
How do I know?
Basic Questions

• Is the SACSCOC Member institution awarding its degree based on coursework completed at another institution? If yes, what percentage?

• Is the SACSCOC Member institution guaranteeing the awarding of academic credits and/or educational program completion credentials as a result of the agreement with a Partner institution?
How do I know?
Basic Questions

- Who is in control of the course content/program – SACSCOC Member or Partner institution?

- Who supervises the faculty member(s) teaching – SACSCOC Member or Partner institution?

- Who is responsible for the student and his/her education – SACSCOC Member or Partner institution?
Two Examples

• A successful partnership...

• A not so successful partnership...
Building a Secure World Through International Education

Richard Osborn
Western Association of Schools & Colleges

Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges & Universities (ACSCU)
Major Areas of Focus

• Dual and Joint Degrees

• Off-site International Programs Processed Through Substantive Change Policies (some due to federal DOE policies and others internal to WASC to bring consistency)
**Definition:** A joint degree program is one in which a program is offered collaboratively by two or more accredited institutions and leads to the award of a single degree issued jointly by participating institutions.
Major Principles

• Conform to WASC Standards and policies ensuring integrity and quality

• Clear written agreements

• Consistent with mission

• Primary purpose is educational
Major Principles

• Sound credit award practices

• Approved within faculty and administration decision-making policies

• Truthful representations

• Completion in timely fashion
Major Principles

• Appropriate recruitment practices
• Sound business plan
• Appropriate program level, content, and standards

• Adoption of student learning outcomes, expectations for student achievement, and means to assess student achievement
Major Principles

- Analysis of student needs and success
- Advising services
- Admission policies
- Sufficient and qualified faculty and staff
Major Principles

- Information resources, technology, and facilities
- Teach-out plans
- Sound planning and budgeting
Status and Relationship with Partner Institution(s)

- Can be offered with other WASC/ACSCU-accredited institutions, other regionally accredited institutions, other educational institutions with national or specialized accreditation recognized by USDOE, or educational institutions in other countries.
Status and Relationship with Partner Institution(s)

- Joint degrees not allowed with unaccredited entities within the United States.

- International institutions must be approved by appropriate governmental entity.
Residency Requirement

- A “substantial proportion of the credit awarded” earned in courses offered by WASC/ACSCU-accredited institution and taught by its faculty
Substantive Change Application

• If partnership is with a non-USDOE-accredited institution, approval required through Substantive Change

• If partnership is within WASC or with another USDOE-approved agency, exempt if both institutions have approval to offer the degrees
Definition: A dual degree program is defined as a program of study offered collaboratively by two institutions that leads to the award of a separate degree from each of the participating institutions.
This policy does not apply to programs of study in which two entities (e.g., schools, colleges, departments) within one institution offer two distinct degrees that share some course requirements (e.g., a MBA from a business school and an MSW from a school of social work).
Major Principles:
• Same as for Joint Degrees

Status of and Relationship with Partner Institution(s):
• Same as for Joint Degrees

Substantive Change Policy:
• Same as for Joint Degrees
At least half of the credit toward the degree is earned in courses offered by the WASC-accredited institution.
WASC does not approve awarding dual degrees for substantially the same body of work. WASC/ACSCU-accredited institutions may not offer a dual degree with a partnering institution for which the student is awarded two degrees of the same name for completion of what would normally be the course of study for one degree (e.g., a MBA from one institution and a second MBA from another institution for the same set of 30 to 36 semester units that would normally lead to a single MBA).
Partnering institutions may, however, offer two degrees with the same name provided that the degree program complies with the provisions of this policy and the WASC/ACSCU Standards of Accreditation, that the degree program is sufficiently extensive and unique in design, and that it exceed the amount of academic work typically required for a single degree.
In dual degrees, no more than 25 percent of the credits being offered at the upper-division level of undergraduate degrees or at the graduate level may be double-counted or overlap. Institutions offering dual degrees must have clearly articulated policies and standards on the transfer of credits for dual degrees with the maximum being no more than the credit hours cited in this policy. Institutions in consortial agreements are exempt from the overlap limits outlined in this policy.
Institutions offering dual degrees must take care so as not to mislead students and the public about the meaning and content of the dual degree. Therefore language must be used on permanent student records, including transcripts and diplomas, to indicate that the program in which the student was enrolled is a dual degree program. In keeping with good practice, student transcripts should indicate which courses are completed at the partnering institution.
Coming Into Compliance

• Three years to come into full compliance

• Now required to provide information on Annual Report
Challenges

• 1-2-1 China Program (already approved through WASC’s Substantive Change process with praise and now a new policy that puts them out of conformity)

• Strict enforcement or waivers? (Is 29.5% close enough?)

• Several anticipated test cases
Key Issue for WASC Commission

INTEGRITY
International Off-Site Programs
Requirements

• Substantive Change required if giving federal aid with on-site visit within six months if more than 50% of the degree is offered at the international location

• If no federal aid given, site visit required if the program is the first to be offered in a country but can be waived
Requirements

• Moving toward one-person site visit teams

• “Fly-in” model is done virtually rather than an on-site visit where permanent facilities are not located

• See handout on “Decision Guide for International Site Visits”
Examples of International Substantive Change Requests

#1 – Approved a MS in Info Systems and Tech in India that expected 30 students but only 7 signed up so are teaching out the program.

#2 – Offering a Master of Laws program in Vienna without approval and denied when brought to Sub Change so are closing the program.
Examples of International Substantive Change Requests

#3 – Approved a MA in Curriculum and Instruction in Shanghai, China. Commended for guarantee of enrollment by partner institution, established curriculum and willingness to share faculty and programs. Recommended a signed MOU, on-line courses fully adapted to on-line resources before beginning, and courses designed for cross-cultural context.
#4 – Approved MS in Clinical Psychology in Singapore. Commended for need, adaptiveness to cultural context, and alignment of program between US and international location. Recommended focus on assessment with faculty training and institutional support, assessment methods and measures going beyond indirect measures including periodic review of student work, faculty coherence between two campuses, development of international faculty creating a community, and site visit within one year.
Examples of International Substantive Change Requests

#5 – Denied dual degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology in Turkey due to lack of degree already being offered by partner without adequate expertise, US core faculty too limited, lack of oversight by US institution, revision of MOU, standing of international faculty and their appointment, maintenance of records, grievance policy, assurance of US standards of performance, resolution of conflicts between partners.
#6 – Approved Executive MBA in Vietnam. Commended for alignment of mission, program director thorough understanding, and designed to meet student’s needs. Recommended development of course outcomes aligned with program outcomes, demonstration of master’s level engagement and rigor, program assessment plan development with key indicators of quality with evidence collected and analyzed by faculty for improvement.
Examples of International Substantive Change Requests

#7 – Approved MS in Electrical Engineering in India. Commended institution for international alignment, innovation, and commitment of full-time faculty to program. Recommended careful faculty monitoring, balance of on-line and in-person to ensure adequate student time to do classwork while working, ongoing assessment.
Examples of International Substantive Change Requests

#8 – A.S. in Medical Radiography in Saudi Arabia. Commended for excellent facilities, financial commitments, and relationship with local professionals. Recommended that local faculty be skilled in assessment to verify that program learning is comparable to U.S., and continued details on assessment matrix to describe assessment tools and strategies aligned with types and levels of learning anticipated by each SLO in program.
Examples of International Substantive Change Requests

#9 – Approved Lifestyle Medicine MPH in France. Commended for long tradition of off-campus health-related programs, consistency with mission, and well stated program learning outcomes. Recommended continued development of assessment activities to ensure course learning objectives alignment with program learning outcomes between U.S. and off-campus location.
Examples of International Substantive Change Requests

#10 -- Approved B.A. Interdisciplinary Studies in American Samoa. Commended for responsiveness to need, alignment with institution’s emphasis on globalization, and high reliance on tenure-track faculty. Recommended future proposals use more traditional revenue/expense spreadsheet.
Examples of International Substantive Change Requests

#11 – Approved China 1-2-1 Program (School of Agricultural Science and Technology). Commended for powerful potential for outreach to China, good match, learning outcomes assessment plan superior, distinct program with program review and learning outcomes assessment activities. Recommended to develop more fully the educational effectiveness assessment plan particularly for co-curricular activities especially for Chinese portion of program.
Other Issues

• Some institutions keep under 50% to avoid Substantive Change.

• A greater trend toward blending of off-campus international programs and online with hybrid approaches being used.
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Questions? Comments? Input?

For further questions:
Dick Osborn, WASC: rosborn@wascsenior.org
Marcy Stoll, SACSCOC: mstoll@sacscoc.org