3.12.1

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.

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V	Compliant	☐ Non-Compliant	☐ Not Applicable
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Narrative

Note: Text for all linked documents below can be increased/decreased for ease of reading by pressing your keyboard's Ctrl key while rotating the mouse wheel.

Angelo State University 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.

ASU was last reaffirmed by the Commission in 2002. Since then, the institution has implemented five types of substantive changes that have required notification to the Commission—closing programs, expanding programs at current levels, initiating and closing off-campus sites, initiating programs at a more advanced level, and initiating online mode of delivery. In each case, ASU has notified the Commission of the substantive change in accordance with the Commission's Substantive Change Policy and has sought prior approval when necessary, with the following exceptions: 1) shortly following the Commission's July 1, 2011, revision regarding notifications related to program terminations, the institution was notified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board of the decision to close low-producing programs, and ASU did not have sufficient time to request permission from the Commission prior to ceasing to admit students; and 2) ASU did not notify the Commission in a timely manner regarding the initiation of the institution's first online degree program. Each of these exceptions has been addressed to the satisfaction of the Commission, as explained below, and processes were implemented to ensure ASU's ongoing compliance with the Commission regarding substantive changes (ASU OP 02.06, Reporting Substantive Changes to Southern Association of Colleges and Schools—Commission on Colleges).

SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES IMPLEMENTED SINCE 2002

Following is a summary of each of the five types of substantive changes that have been implemented at ASU since its last reaffirmation by the Commission in 2002.

Closing Programs

As a public institution in Texas, ASU is subject to the rules of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), which has the authority to close programs at public institutions of higher education based on low enrollment. When the THECB notifies ASU that a program will be closed, ASU notifies the Commission. Effective July 1, 2011, the Commission revised its Substantive Change Policy to require institutions to receive permission from the Commission for terminating programs prior to the date that the

institution ceases to admit students. In the fall of 2011, the THECB informed ASU of actions taken based on a review of ASU's low-producing programs. These actions included program closures. The institution did not have sufficient time to request permission from the Commission prior to ceasing to admit students. ASU notified the Commission of these program closures, as follows:

- On July 11, 2011, ASU notified the Commission that as of August 21, 2011, the following programs would be closed due to low enrollment: the BS degree in Interdisciplinary Studies for several areas of teacher certification or specialization, the BS degree in Biochemistry, the BS degree in Chemistry with Secondary Certification, the MEd degree for the Educational Diagnostician, and the MEd degree for Reading Specialist (ASU letter July 11, 2011). On September 14, 2011, the Commission accepted notification of termination of these programs but noted that in the future, ASU should ask for permission prior to the date that ASU ceased to admit students to programs, in accordance with the July 1, 2011, revision of the Substantive Change Policy (SACS letter September 14, 2011).
- On September 14, 2011, ASU notified the Commission that as of August 17, 2011, the BA degrees in Art, French, and German along with the MA degrees in History and Multi-disciplinary Studies and the MS in Multidisciplinary Studies had been closed because they had been low-producing for some time (ASU letter September 14, 2011). On November 28, 2011, the Commission accepted notification of termination of these programs but noted that in the future, ASU should ask for permission prior to the date that ASU ceased to admit students to programs, in accordance with the July 1, 2011, revision of the Substantive Change Policy (SACS letter November 28, 2011).
- On November 15, 2011, ASU notified the Commission that the MBA in Accounting and the BBA/MBA Integrated Accounting degree programs had been closed due to low enrollment (ASU letter November 15, 2011). The two students enrolled in the programs were contacted prior to action by the department. One enrolled in the Integrated Professional Accountancy program and the other in the Master of Professional Accountancy program. The Commission accepted notification on December 15, 2011 (SACS letter December 15, 2011).

Since then, ASU has requested permission from the Commission to close programs prior to ceasing to admit students, as follows:

- On January 27, 2012, ASU requested permission from the Commission to close the Associate of Applied Science in Nursing program effective August 15, 2013 (ASU letter January 27, 2012). The Commission had not responded as of August 1, 2012.
- On January 31, 2012, ASU requested permission from the Commission to close the Master of Science in Kinesiology program effective August 15, 2012 (ASU letter January 31, 2012). The Commission had not responded as of August 1, 2012.
- On April 18, 2012, ASU requested permission from the Commission to close the Master of Public Administration program effective August 15, 2012 (ASU letter April 18, 2012). The Commission had not responded as of August 1, 2012.
- On April 20, 2012, ASU requested permission from the Commission to close the Bachelor of Science in Clinical Laboratory Science program effective August 15, 2012 (ASU letter April 20,

- 2012, BS in Clinical Laboratory Science). The Commission had not responded as of August 1, 2012.
- On April 20, 2012, ASU requested permission from the Commission to close the Master of Science in Nursing for Clinical Specialist program effective August 15, 2012 (ASU letter April 20, 2012, MSN Clinical Specialist). The Commission had not responded as of August 1, 2012.

Expanding Programs at the Current Degree Level

On November 5, 2010, ASU notified the Commission that it was in the process of expanding its bachelor's and master's degree programs (ASU letter November 5, 2010). On May 3, 2011, ASU submitted prospectuses for programs in five areas of Security Studies—Bachelor of Border Security, Bachelor of Cultural Competence and Security Studies, Bachelor of Cultural Fluency and Security Studies, Master of Science in Border Security, and Master of Security Studies—with the anticipated start date of the fall 2011 semester (ASU letter May 3, 2011). In a letter dated September 26, 2011, the Commission approved these programs with an implementation date of fall 2011 (SACS letter September 26, 2011, Security Studies).

On May 4, 2011, ASU submitted a prospectus for the Masters in Criminal Justice program (ASU letter May 4, 2011). In a letter dated September 26, 2011, the Commission approved this program with an implementation date of August 22, 2011 (SACS letter September 26, 2011, Criminal Justice).

Initiating and Closing Off-campus Instructional Sites

On April 7, 2008, ASU notified the Commission that 1) the institution had begun delivering course work at Junction, Marble Falls, and Fredericksburg, Texas, and that the course work available at these sites did not exceed 25 percent of the credits required for any given ASU program; 2) for the Masters of Education in Guidance and Counseling program, 25–50 percent of required credit hours could be available at the Marble Falls and Fredericksburg locations by summer 2008, and more than 50 percent of credit hours for the program could be available at those locations by spring 2009; 3) more than 50 percent of the credit hours for the Master of Education in Student Development and Leadership program could be available at the Marble Falls and Fredericksburg locations by spring 2009 (ASU letter April 7, 2008, Off-Campus Sites).

The Commission accepted notification on June 17, 2008, and asked for the physical addresses of the sites (SACS letter June 17, 2008), which were sent on December 3, 2008, along with prospectuses for the three sites (ASU letter December 3, 2008; ASU Addresses of Off-Campus Sites). On October 27, 2009, ASU notified the Commission that it would begin offering credits at Boerne, Texas (ASU letter October 27, 2009). The Commission accepted notification on April 5, 2010 (SACS letter April 5, 2010).

None of the four sites ever reached the Commission's next reporting threshold of offering 50 percent or more of the credits required for any given ASU program. Although the programs started as hybrid programs—part face-to-face meetings at the off-campus sites and part electronic delivery—they soon were delivered strictly electronically. Therefore, course offerings were not affected when, in fall 2010, the Fredericksburg, Junction, and Marble Falls sites were closed. The same held true for the Boerne site, which was closed in August 2011. ASU sent notification to the Commission on December 6, 2011, regarding all

four sites (ASU letter December 6, 2011; note that the Marble Falls site is referred to as Highland Lakes in this document). The Commission responded on March 5, 2012, and accepted notification of the closure. (SACS letter March 5, 2012).

Initiating Programs at a More Advanced Degree Level

On June 22, 2007, ASU notified the Commission that it was working towards a Level III to Level V substantive change with its first doctorate, a Doctor of Physical Therapy program (ASU letter June 22, 2007). On May 1, 2008, ASU submitted the prospectus for the level change, more than a year in advance of the anticipated summer 2009 start date (ASU letter May 1, 2008). The Commission approved the program at its June 2008 meeting and notified ASU on July 11, 2008 (SACS letter July 11, 2008).

Initiating Online Mode of Delivery

Because of a number of reasons, including staff turnover, ASU did not notify the Commission in a timely manner regarding its first online program. On June 22, 2007, ASU notified the Commission that 100% of the courses in its first online program, the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), were now available online and that the institution would submit a prospectus for the MSN program in April 2008 (ASU June 22, 2007). In April 2008, the new Liaison discovered that, in 2004, the MSN program had surpassed the Commission's reporting threshold of offering 50% or more of its credits online and that ASU had failed to notify the Commission of this substantive change. On April 7, 2008, ASU notified the Commission of this oversight (ASU letter April 7, 2008, Online Delivery, Nursing) and provided a copy of ASU's new Internal Process to Ensure Timely Compliance, which became ASU OP 02.06, Reporting Substantive Changes to SACS-COC. In another letter of the same date, ASU also notified the Commission that its Superintendent Certification program had been available in its entirety online since 2005 (ASU letter April 7, 2008, bullet 4, Online Delivery, Superintendent Certification). On April 16, 2008, ASU sent the prospectus for the MSN program (ASU letter April 16, 2008).

On June 17, 2008, the Commission accepted notification that the MSN program had crossed the 50% threshold for online delivery and requested that ASU resubmit the faculty roster with more information and answer a question about the nursing simulation lab (SACS letter June 17, 2008, p.2). ASU responded to this request on August 26, 2008 (ASU letter August 26, 2008, bullets 2 and 3). At this point, no more communication can be found by either ASU or the Commission regarding the MSN online program. However, in the same June 17, 2008, letter to ASU, the Commission requested that ASU submit a prospectus for its online Superintendent Certification program (SACS letter June 17, 2008, p. 1, bullet 4), which ASU did on August 20, 2008 (ASU letter August 20, 2008). The Commission approved the Texas Superintendent Certification online program on November 20, 2008 (SACS November 20, 2008).

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO ENSURE TIMELY COMPLIANCE

In its letter of August 20, 2008, ASU also included an explanation for its failure to notify the Commission in a timely manner regarding its first online program and described steps already taken to ensure Compliance in the future. Those steps included information sessions with deans and department heads (Deans and Department Heads minutes April 17, 2008, #4), the hiring of a curriculum coordinator to

analyze curricular submissions (ASU letter August 20, 2008, bullet 2), and development of the new operating policy and procedures for reporting substantive changes (ASU OP 02.06, Reporting Substantive Changes to Southern Association of Colleges and Schools—Commission on Colleges). In addition, ASU has established clear processes for reviewing and approving new programs and changes to existing programs to ensure that SACS is notified of any substantive changes in a timely manner (ASU OP 04.05, Approval Process for New Degree Programs). For more information about this process, including example documentation of a recently approved new program, please see Comprehensive Standard 3.4.1, Academic program approval.