How to Successfully Navigate the Substantive Change Process

Ellie Fogarty
Vice President
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Carmella Morrison
Assistant Director for Substantive Change
Middle States Commission on Higher Education
Session Learning Objectives

- Become acquainted with the substantive change process from submission, to reader, to Commission sub-committee consideration, to (if required) Commission visits
- Understand the requirements of the substantive change request
- Provide tips on how to succeed with the process and to make the process meaningful for institutional renewal
Why Substantive Change?

- Institutions are always changing
- We must assume that everything done in the name of the institution is covered by its accreditation— including at its additional locations and branch campuses
- The U.S. Department of Education requires substantive change
Common reasons for substantive change

- Additional location (50%+ credits can be granted toward program)
- Branch campus
- Distance education (50%+ delivered toward program)
- Closures
- New Degree/Credential levels (lower or higher)
- Contractual Agreements
Substantive Change Process

1. Recognition that substantive change must be submitted
2. Submission within appropriate time guidelines
3. Peer Review by Committee on Substantive Change
4. Substantive Change Review by Executive Committee
5. Notification of Commission decision with possible follow-up
6. Possible Commission Visit
Common Pitfalls

- Little analysis; lots of description
- Little rationale
- Relevance to mission is ignored
- Financial information is not analytical
- Assumptions that main campus will supply expected resources without analysis in the substantive change request
- Not much reference to institutional assessment
Step One: Recognize Need

- Review guidelines on MSCHE web page
- Contact institutional liaison
Step Two: Prepare Report and Submit

- Use template provided by MSCHE (to be addressed later)
- Submission deadlines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submit request by:</th>
<th>For final approval by:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>February 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>April 30</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
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<td>September 1</td>
<td>October 31</td>
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Step Three: Consideration by MSCHE Committees

- Peer reviewers are from institutions such as your own
- Be prepared for requests for additional information
Step Four: Notification

- Look carefully at Commission action
  - Opening and closing dates are required
  - Possible Visit
  - State and/or Federal approval
  - Additional reports requested (Follow-up report)
  - Stipulations for PRR or Self-Study
Commission Visits

- For additional locations, <3 requires a visit
- Branch campuses
- International additional locations, first requires a visit
- Change in ownership and mergers
- Usually involves confirming that site is appropriate, that what was in report was appropriate, and that the institution has sufficient resources
Serving Our Institutions:
Substantive Change Templates

- Provide guidance for Institutions (seeking approval)
- Allows for consistency
- Assist reviewers
How to Submit a Substantive Change Request

- Go to the MSCHE website...
- Link to templates: http://www.msche.org/publications_view.asp?idPublicationType=2&txtPublicationType=Forms+On-line
- Answer all questions in template completely
- Submit each Substantive Change request on a separate form
Overall Tips for Success

- Review the Commission’s Policies and Procedures on Substantive Change
- Submit request at least 3-6 months prior to desired implementation
- Answer all questions completely
- Make sure request is understandable to an external reviewer
- Organize and label attachments
Resources on the Commission website

www.msche.org

- Substantive Change Policy
- Substantive Change Process
- Substantive Change FAQs
- Templates
- Substantive Change Follow-up Visits
- Dues and Fees
Questions