School of Engineering Curriculum Committee
Substantive Change Trigger policy

Once presented with program or course changes, the School of Engineering Curriculum Committee (SoECC) will evaluate the requested changes to determine whether a Substantive Change is being requested. Substantive Change is defined as one that may significantly affect an institution's quality, objectives, scope or control. Substantive Changes that must be reported to WASC include the following:

1. Any change in the established mission or objectives of the institution.

2. Any change in the legal status, form of control, or ownership of the institution.

3. The addition of courses or programs that represent a significant departure, in either content or method of delivery, from those that were offered when the agency last evaluated the institution.

4. The addition of courses or programs at a degree or credential level above that which is included in the institution's current accreditation or pre-accreditation. At this time, UC Merced must seek WASC approval for ANY new degree at the bachelors, masters, or doctoral level.

5. A change from clock hours to credit hours.

6. A substantial increase in the number of clock or credit hours awarded for successful completion of a program. Any change in the number of clock or credit hours should be brought to the attention of the Academic Liaison Officer (ALO) and Accreditation Coordinator in charge of Substantive Change to determine whether WASC review is necessary.

7. The establishment of an additional location geographically apart from the main campus at which the institution offers **at least 50 percent** of an educational program.

If the SoECC determines that a substantive change has been requested they will proceed as outlined by the UC Merced Undergraduate Council. This process is as follows:

1. Prior to submission of a program proposal for UGC approval, it must be included in the University Five Year Perspectives report (submitted annually by the university to the Office of the President). A brief program description should appear in the report at least one year, but preferably two years, before implementation.

2. Faculty are responsible for developing the degree program proposal, in consultation with the School Dean.[1] The proposed program must be approved by the faculty of the

[1] It will save time if faculty also consults the WASC Substantive Change specialist at this point in the process in order to get on the WASC review calendar. Faculty should review

School (or other designated faculty unit). A memo from the School faculty reporting the vote of the faculty and any faculty discussion pertinent to the proposal should be included with the proposal. The Dean submits the proposal to the Academic Senate with his/her endorsement. Schools are encouraged to submit proposals for new degrees to UGC at least 9 months prior to the desired date of degree initiation to allow sufficient time for review and approval by both UGC and WASC.

3. The proposal is reviewed by UGC for academic merit, and by CAPRA, in consultation with the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost, on resource implications. If needed, UGC may consult with individuals external to the committee to provide additional expertise or comment.

4. Undergraduate Council either approves or disapproves program.

5. If approved, the Registrar, the Academic Senate, and the Office of the President are notified.

6. If approved, UGC notifies the responsible School or College which must, in turn, notify the campus WASC ALO and WASC Substantive Change Specialist.

7. With the assistance of the ALO and Specialist, the responsible faculty must prepare and submit required Substantive Change documentation for WASC review. Until such time as WASC has completed the substantive change review process and approval has been received, all public publications or announcements regarding new degree programs should contain an asterisk or footnote indicating that the program is “pending the review of our accreditation agency, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).”

8. The ALO will notify UGC, the Registrar, and the School when WASC review is complete.

If any questions arise regarding whether a change is considered a substantive change, the SoECC will consult with the ALO and WASC Substantive Change Specialist to determine whether WASC review is necessary prior to granting approval.

---

the WASC template for new degree proposals in order to ensure that all necessary questions are addressed in the initial proposal to the UGC.