Western Association of Schools and Colleges
Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities

Substantive Change Action Report

Proposal Information:

Proposal Review Date	September 27, 2011
Institution	University of Hawaii at Hilo
Type of Substantive Change	Distance Education
Program Name / Location	Bachelor of Science in Nursing
ALO	April R. Komenaka Scazzola
WASC Staff Liaison	Brenda Barham Hill
Committee Reviewers	Diana Demetrulias, Karen Dunn-Haley

Committee Action and Date (See Attached)

- [x] Interim Approval on 9/27/2011
- [ ] Refer to Commission (No visit) on _____

Additional Information[1] (See Attached):

- [x] Notification of Implementation
- [ ] Federal Site Visit Required
- [ ] International Visit Required
- [ ] Fast Track
- [ ] Non Compliance

[1] **Items checked or listed above must be fulfilled in order to finalize Substantive Change Approval**

Commission Approval and Date (For Institutional Tracking)[2,3]:

- [ ] Approved on _____

Implementation of an approved change must occur within two years of Commission approval. If the change will be implemented more than two years after the approval date; contact your WASC Staff Liaison to determine if the change requires re-approval.

- [ ] Not Approved on _____

[2] Commission approval of a new degree program signifies that the program is covered by the WASC accreditation of the institution as a whole. Approval by WASC should not be represented, in marketing materials or any other forms of communciation, as program-specific accreditation, such as that bestowed by specialized, professional, or programmatic accrediting organizations.

[3] Record the date that the Commission took action on this Substantive Change proposal for your records.

Findings of the Committee:

Commendations:

1. The Panel was impressed with significant commitment to the BA Nursing program as evidenced by full-time faculty from the on campus program teaching in the online program.

2. The University is to be commended for the Distance Learning Coordinator position which underscores its commitment to quality online education.

3. The Panel was impressed with the Online Quality Course Guidelines which have been developed to provide faculty with guidance on best practices in online course development and delivery.

4. Student need for the program was justified. The program is growing carefully, limiting enrollment growth to match resources.

Recommendations:

1. The Nursing faculty is encouraged to continue to refine program syllabi with online needs in mind, including descriptions of

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technical requirements, expectations for student engagement through threaded discussion, chat, 'netiquette,' etc.

2. The development and assessment of information literacy competency should be included in appropriate course syllabi and student learning outcomes assessment.

3. Program assessment should include a comparison of student achievement of learning outcomes between the on campus and online programs.

WASC Liaison Signature:

Brenda Barham Ghel /Gro

Date: 10/7/2011

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Committee Actions

Interim Approval:
All substantive change proposals must be ratified by the Commission. The Substantive Change Committee grants interim approval, with final approval taken in the form of ratification by the Commission. Interim approval by the Substantive Change Committee allows the institution to admit students, who would be eligible for financial aid, even as the Committee's decision awaits ratification by the Commission. The institution may advertise the program with the caveat that the program is contingent upon WASC approval, but **classes may not begin until final Commission ratification is received**.

Proceed to Site Visit:
A site visit is typically requested for structural change proposal reviews. The purpose of the site visit is to assess how the proposed change will be implemented, to answer questions identified by the panel and to determine the overall impact of the change on the institution. The findings of the visit will be sent to the institution for correction of errors and will be reviewed by the panel. If the panel finds the team report to be satisfactory, then it will be forwarded to the Structural Change Committee of the Commission for final review. The institution may advertise the program with the caveat that the program is contingent upon WASC approval, but **classes may not begin classes until final Commission approval is received**.

Refer to Commission—No Site Visit:
Certain types of Substantive Changes must be reviewed by the Structural Change Committee before proceeding to the Commission. Typically, a site visit is requested for structural change proposal reviews, but may be waived at the panel's discretion and forwarded directly to the Structural Change Committee for review. This action constitutes Interim Approval by the Substantive Change Committee and allows the institution to enroll students, who would be eligible for financial aid, even as the Committee's recommendation awaits ratification by the Commission. The institution may advertise the program with the caveat that the program is contingent upon WASC approval, but **classes may not begin classes until final Commission approval is received**.

Fast Track Authorization:
With Fast Track Authorization approval, the institution obtains the authority to submit Expedited Proposals that are reviewed by WASC staff only. These abbreviated proposals receive accelerated review for substantive changes within the scope of the approval, and exemption from the six-month, post-implementation site visit. At the end of the exemption period, a sampling of the sites implemented under the Fast Track Authorization is required to be visited, as per Department of Education regulations. Because Expedited Proposals are reviewed and approved by WASC staff, the institution does not need to schedule a review of the report. The institution must submit an application form and payment before for the review can begin. Once the Expedited Proposals has been found to be complete and within the context of the Fast Track authorization granted, the program or site may be implemented.

Additional Information (If Checked)

Notification of Implementation:
Under Standard One, it is the institution's responsibility to notify WASC when a program begins by using the Program Implementation Form. Submission of this form is required to confirm the existence of the program and will trigger inclusion of the program on the Off-Campus Distance Education Report (OCDE) area of the WASC website for purposes of financial aid eligibility verification by the U.S. Department of Education. Failure to notify WASC of the program implementation date within 30 days of the start date will result in the suspension of the program's approval, the need to suspend enrollments, and a potential loss of financial aid for students enrolled in the off-campus/distance education program. Repeated non-compliance with this requirement could also lead to a sanction of the entire institution under Standard One.

Federal Site Visit Required:
Federal law requires a new site be visited within six months of operation if 1) the institution has less than three off-campus locations; and 2) students at an international site are to qualify for U.S. federally funded financial aid under Title IV. If the institution certifies that students enrolled at the international site are not eligible for, and will not be seeking, federal financial aid, then the requirement of a site visit may be waived. In addition to the federally mandated visits, post implementation visits may be required by the Substantive Change Committee.

International Site Visit Required:
Department of Education regulations do not require a visit to international locations if the institution verifies that students at that site will not be seeking U.S. federally funded financial aid; however, the need to ensure the quality at these international sites has been a concern of the Substantive Change Committee. A site visit may be required for at least the first program in a new country within one year of implementation at the discretion of the Committee.

Non-Compliance:
It came to the Committee's attention that students had been enrolled into the program and/or introductory courses were offered prior to receiving WASC approval for the program. Implementing programs (constituting substantive changes) or admitting students into a program that has not been approved is not only a serious violation of WASC substantive change policy and federal regulations; it is also a violation of Standard 1 (see Criterion for Review 1.9). Institutions have a fiduciary responsibility to WASC and to their students to receive requisite approvals before commencing programs. WASC has a legal responsibility to the U.S. Department of Education to assure the integrity of its accredited institutions and to assure that any site where programs are offered, with or without the availability of financial aid, have received the necessary prior approvals. If such a pattern continues in the future, a sanction could be imposed on the institution. Please be sure to obtain all necessary approvals before implementing programs or off-campus locations in the future.