

## Substantive Change Action Report

**Proposal Information:**

Proposal Review Date	Monday, September 27, 2010		
Institution	Point Loma Nazarene University		
Type of Substantive Change	New Degree Program		
Program Name/Location	MA in Special Education		
ALO	Margaret T. Bailey		
WASC Staff Liaison	Brenda Barham Hill	Committee Reviewers	Bill Ladusaw, Paula Levin

**Committee Action and Date (See Page 2):**

**Additional Information<sup>1</sup> (See Page 3):**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interim Approval on <u>September 27, 2010</u>  <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to Commission (No visit) on _____  <input type="checkbox"/> Fast Track Authorization on _____;  Fast Track Expiration Date: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notification of Implementation <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Site Visit Required <input type="checkbox"/> International Visit Required <input type="checkbox"/> Fast Track <input type="checkbox"/> Non Compliance  <p><sup>1</sup> Items checked or listed above must be fulfilled in order to finalize Substantive Change Approval</p>
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**Commission Approval and Date (For Institutional Tracking)<sup>2,3</sup>:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved on <u>September 27, 2010</u> 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.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved on _____

<sup>2</sup> 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 communication, as program-specific accreditation, such as that bestowed by specialized, professional, or programmatic accrediting organizations.

<sup>3</sup> Record the date that the Commission took action on this Substantive Change proposal for your records.

**Findings of the Committee:**

Commendations	1) PLNU presented a detailed and clear proposal, for the conversion of the MA Education to an MA Special Education 2) The new degree program is a thoughtful conversion in response to State credentialing requirements and the needs of public education 3) The development of a written teach out policy, which has been utilized to guide decisions on several existing programs is good and substantiated the existence of a clear process should a teach out be required for any of the Special Education program sites.
Recommendations	1) Proceed with plans to further articulate Information Literacy learning outcomes at course and program level 2) Continue the process started in by library staff to more formally articulate information literacy learning outcomes at the program and course level; 3) The faculty are encouraged to go beyond technology familiarity in the graduate program and courses to provide for engagement with information literacy outcomes appropriate to the development of a graduate research culture. 4) Continue thinking about how to sustain individual program sites; monitor Special Education

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program sustainability within MEd. program  
4) Continue to monitor closely the advising load of faculty in the Special Education program to ensure the needs of the students are fully support, both on campus and at site

**WASC Liaison Signature:**

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "Brenda Barham" followed by a stylized set of initials, possibly "HOP".

Date: September 30, 2010

## 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.