Policy Development and Procedure for University Accountability

The Office of the President at Southwestern Christian University oversees the policy development process related to University Accountability. The policy development process reflects SCU’s shared governance structure and its commitment to accountability and transparency. This guide articulates the criteria that directs policy development and review, establishes standard procedures to ensure that policies are developed, approved, and reviewed consistently, and provides a single point of reference for information related to policy development and review. The process is designed to ensure that SCU policies undergo comprehensive review and meet all standards governing the University and Higher Education.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness collaborates with the respective policy owners in the Office of the President to develop and revise certain Presidential policies and coordinates review with the faculty senate, staff senate, and administration. Review of these policies is determined in accordance with the university’s ongoing systematic policy review cycle.

## University Accountability Policy Development: Process

* University Accountability policy development process should be clearly defined, transparent, and widely understood.
* University Accountability policy development follows a standard process from drafting to review to approval.
* University Accountability policy development is based on engagement and broad consultation. Academic Personnel solicits, analyzes, and integrates input and feedback from the Academic Deans and other stakeholders which is used to refine policy concepts and language.

## University Accountability Policy Development: Content

* Policy applies broadly across the university’s campuses and delivery methods.
* Policy is reflective of best practice. Policies align with the University’s mission, values, and principles. Policies provide specific direction for operations, administration, or programs.
* New policy and policy revisions are consistent with existing policy, including other university accountability policy, Presidential policy, and University Bylaws.
* Policy is reflective of current law. Policies are compliant with current federal and state requirements.
* Policy is written clearly. Policies are written using simple, clear, concise language that can be understood by everyone in the community, including non-subject matter experts. Policies use consistent terminology and complement each other. Specialized terms are defined.
* Policy is organized for continuity. Internal references and links should be correct. Policy development process While each policy initiative and process is slightly different, following slightly different timelines, there are five key stages involved in the policy.

## Development Process:

Initiation, development, review, approval, and implementation and maintenance. This Guide defines and describes the elements within each of the five stages:

1. Initiation.

Any member of the University community may suggest the need for new policy or revisions to existing policy, related to University Accountability, by submitting a request to the VPAA. Issues may emerge from trends on the campuses, through federal or state legislation or regulation, changes in best practices, new mandates, or in a variety of other ways. When reviewing a request, the VPAA and Dean’s Council will determine whether a need exists for policy change. They will then select a faculty member to oversee the policy change procedure. Additional faculty members may be appointed as an ad hoc committee.

Academic personnel conducts research and analysis of university policy archive files, comparator institution policy, current campus practice, and existing policy including University By-laws, University Accountability, and Academic Catalogs (to identify overlap). A policy consultation path and timeline are determined and a drafting team is identified, comprised of colleagues and/or constituents with subject matter expertise.

Policies pertaining to federal compliance or university accreditation may be drafted, altered, and/or implemented immediately by the President or VPAA without the consultation of governing boards to ensure the integrity of these areas. In this such cases, the policy is moved directly to the implementation stage.

1. Development.

Academic personnel discuss policy concepts and changes with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Accreditation Officer, Academic Council, and President’s Cabinet. Other department representatives are consulted based on subject matter. Conceptual discussions take place with the Academic Deans and, when relevant, consult representatives for subject matter expertise. The drafting team prepares an initial draft, incorporating input from these discussions, benchmarking, and best practice information as appropriate.

1. Review.

Academic Personnel formally circulates the proposed draft policy to solicit feedback from Faculty and Staff Senate. This feedback is reviewed, and policy revision or amendments to the language is considered by the faculty member or ad hoc committee overseeing the policy draft. Decisions made during the review process are discussed with the President’s Cabinet.

1. Approval.

Certain policies must be approved by the Board of Regents. Prior to approval, the University By-Laws will be reviewed. All other policies are approved by the President’s Cabinet.

1. Implementation and Maintenance

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for recording the final policy and ensures its inclusion in the University’s archives. New or revised policies are given to the Director of Institutional Effectiveness to be posted to the university website for public transparency. The university community is notified of the new or revised policy through Faculty and Staff Senate.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for placing new policies in the ongoing policy review cycle.

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