



April 9, 2021

Dr. Joseph Christopher Maggio  
President  
Northwestern State University of Louisiana  
NSU, Caspari Hall, Suite 223  
Natchitoches, LA 71497

Dear Dr. Maggio:

Thank you for submitting the following substantive change:

Substantive change:

**OCIS 50% or More of Program  
Pineville High School  
1511 Line Street  
Pineville, LA 71360**

Submission date:

**6/4/2020**

Intended Implementation date:

**1/1/2021**

Case ID:

**SC010838**

Northwestern State University of Louisiana (NSU) plans to offer 50% or more of the credit for the Associate of General Studies degree program at the Pineville High School (PHS) off-campus instructional site.

In an email request dated October 7, 2020, SACSCOC requested the following additional information regarding the new site: Please provide a Faculty Roster Form describing the qualifications of only those faculty members assigned to teach specific courses at the site in the spring and fall semesters of 2021. Please provide a description of the physical resources available for instruction at the Pineville High School off-campus instructional site. Please provide a readable copy of the budget for the dual enrollment program at the Pineville High School off-campus instructional site.

In response to the first deferral request, adequate information regarding the physical resources and an updated budget copy was provided. In addition, a revised Faculty Roster Form was submitted. However, questions remained regarding the qualifications of five faculty members on the revised form. In a second deferral request dated March 2, 2021, SACSCOC again requested an updated Faculty Roster Form for those five faculty members.

NSU is committed to serving the needs of Louisiana through quality academic programs, research, economic development, and strategic partnerships. Research indicates a trend of more and more high school students enrolled in dual enrollment programs. Research has also shown that dual enrollment students are more likely to go on to earn a college degree. The Associate of General Studies represents a



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broad course of study and provides the flexibility for a student's adaptation to interests, background, time limitations, and career goals.

The target audience for the program is those high school students who meet the Louisiana Board of Regents and NSU criteria for enrollment in dual enrollment courses. The program will be ongoing with a growing number of students enrolled each year. Current student enrollment at Pineville High School is approximately 1,500 students. The program will be offered using face-to-face and online courses. NSU began offering dual enrollment courses in 2001 with strong faculty and administrative involvement. Based on its success of offering dual enrollment courses at numerous public and private high schools, the NSU believes it is well positioned to offer the Associate of General Studies degree program at the Pineville High School off-campus instructional site.

The Associate of General Studies degree program represents a wide range of academic disciplines. The degree program requires 60 credit hours for completion. As noted, sophomore, junior, and senior students must meet Louisiana Board of Regents and NSU Dual Enrollment Framework requirements to be admitted to the program. No special arrangements are necessary for grading, transcripts, or transfer policies. Arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of processes at the site are agreed upon in a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the University and the high school system. These arrangements include provision of facilities, monitoring of student academic progress, use of the LMS, and so on. Student achievement is assessed using the same competency or program student learning outcomes, assessment measures, and assessment tools as are used wherever or however the program is offered. Administrative oversight is provided by the assigned principal, counselor, or teacher at the site in conjunction with NSU administration, faculty, and staff who support the dual enrollment programs, as set forth in the MOU. The same is true for the monitoring of services and operations at the site.

The initial Faculty Roster Form described the qualifications of numerous faculty members teaching coursework at the site. The form appeared to include all faculty members teaching at the institution in 2018 and 2019. The first revised Faculty Roster Form provided qualifications for those persons teaching assigned courses at the site. However, information regarding five faculty members remained unclear, and a second request for additional information was requested for the following faculty:

- Barbara Richard holds the M.Ed. in Counseling and Guidance; teaches PSYC 1010, General Psychology
- Brian Cespiva holds the J.D.; teaches PSCT 2010, Government of the United States.
- Lacey Brown holds the M.N.S. (M.S.) in Natural Science; teaches MATH 1090, Trigonometry and MATH 120, College Algebra
- Margaret Ortigo holds the M.A. in Social Sciences; teaches SOC 1010, Principles of Sociology
- Paula Furr holds the Ed.D. in Educational Technology; teaches COMM 1010, Oral Communication



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The second response included adequate information regarding qualifications for the five. Barbara Richard has 26 graduate hours in psychology. Brian Cespiva has an undergraduate degree in political science and significant work experience in government and politics. Lacey Brown has 24 graduate credit hours in math. Margaret Ortigo has 18 graduate credit hours in sociology. Paul Furr has 47 credit hours in journalism and the teaching of oral communication. All appear to be qualified to teach the coursework assigned. Keep in mind that the ultimate determination of faculty qualifications is the responsibility of the peer review team who will assess the program as part of the institution's next SACSCOC accreditation review.

Library and learning resources appear to be adequate for the program. Standard library resources include adequate library staff, print and electronic materials, computer equipment, instructional services, and library consortia agreements. Discipline-specific electronic resources appear to be adequate for students and faculty at the site.

Student support services also appear to be adequate. Along with standard academic support services, for example, advisement, student records, admissions, and so on, other support provided to students includes disability services, counseling and career services, and the Academic Success Center. Along with academic guidance and support, the Academic Success Center provides testing services and tutoring.

Physical resources and financial support appear to be adequate for the high school site. The coursework taught to students at Pineville High School will be offered face-to-face as well as online. The facilities at the site provide over 275,000 square feet of classroom space. The facilities include a library with physical and virtual educational resources for its 1,500 students. The site provides internet capabilities with access points in every classroom. Each PHS student has access to an electronic device, usually a Chromebook, to access instructional programs. The dual enrollment budget provided projects a net revenue of approximately \$400,000 for high school dual enrollment programs. A contingency for dual enrollment is part of the overall strategic plan to increase dual enrollment programs in the state of Louisiana.

Evaluation and assessment follow a standardized Institutional Effectiveness (IE) model at NSU. Development and assessment of student learning outcomes (SLOs) are assigned in accordance with the current institutional strategic plan. Assessments are conducted on an annual cycle. SLOs must be specific, measurable, attainable, result-oriented, and tied to a specific timeframe. Following the annual process of preparing the assessments, gathering data for measurement, and analyzing the results of the assessments, the reports are reviewed and then gathered into an annual effectiveness document prepared by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness.

The site will be reviewed, and may include a site visit, as part of the institution's next fifth-year and/or decennial review.

**The Board of Trustees of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges reviewed the materials seeking approval of the Pineville High School off-campus instructional site**



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**(OCIS). It was the decision of the Board to approve the site and include it in the scope of the current accreditation.**

Enclosed is an invoice for \$500 to help defray the cost of reviewing the prospectus.

Should you need assistance, please contact Dr. Crystal A. Baird at 404-679-4501 or via email at [cbaird@sacscoc.org](mailto:cbaird@sacscoc.org).

Please include the Case ID number above in all submissions or correspondence about this substantive change.

*Note:* The SACSCOC substantive change policy was revised in 2020. It includes many new requirements and changes to previous requirements. The Substantive Change Policy and Procedures and learning resources are available on the substantive change webpage at [www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belle S. Wheelan".

Belle S. Wheelan, Ph.D.  
President

BSW/LCS:lp

Enclosure (invoice with liaison's copy only)

cc: Mrs. Veronica M. Biscoe, Executive Director, Institutional Effectiveness & Human Resources  
Dr. Crystal A. Baird