Motion to Approve the Academic Program Review Process and Template

Referred by FSEC

Motion

The Faculty Senate recommends the approval of the proposed process for Academic Program Review and the accompanying template.

Process

### Policy and Process for Academic Program Review during the 2016-2020 Cycle Spring 2015

As part of our internal governance process and in response to our institutional accreditor’s (SACS) standards, the Academic Program Review Committee (APRC) formally reviews each undergraduate and graduate program on a 5- year cycle. We also review how we do academic program assessments and try to improve the process and its utility.

Last year the APRC examined the review process and developed a modified model. To set the stage for the revised APRC process, a subgroup of the APRC met over the summer 2014 and reviewed best practices followed by other campuses, got feedback from the upper administration, and settled on some foundational principles. These being:

#### What is the purpose of Academic Program Review?

1. Critical assessment (including external contexts) in order to articulate future direction and to identify existing and potential paths toward excellence.
2. Provide evidence that the program is meeting goals established by faculty based on university, state, societal, disciplinary needs and goals.
3. Measure and analyze overall productivity and quality of performance (teaching, research and scholarship, service, patient care, etc.).
4. Guide decisions regarding program funding, continuation.

#### Rules of Engagement

Academic Program Review will:

1. Be forward looking.
2. Be participatory--- meaningful to faculty.
3. Include external contexts (the discipline; benchmarking; peer review).
4. Be feasible, manageable, efficient (e.g., not duplicative).
5. Contribute to decision-making: result in actionable recommendations.
   1. Could include a New Budget Initiative for pursuing program excellence.
6. Integrate assessment/evaluation, strategic planning and budget planning processes.

#### The Process

The revised process maintains many elements of the previous process but differs from the past practice in a couple of significant ways.

Programs that undergo national disciplinary accreditation will use a modified version of the Academic Program Review template. So as not to be duplicative, accredited programs, rather than complete the full program review template, will refer the APRC to the page or the link of their accreditation self-study/report where the APRC can locate the relevant information. If the accreditation report is silent on an item in the template, the program will provide the relevant information to the Committee. The rationale behind this change is to allow for a comparative assessment of programs, both accredited and unaccredited, based on the same metrics. If the  
program review process is to be used in recommending resource increases or reductions, a comparative program by program analysis is necessary.

Those programs without national accreditation in addition to completing the template will be given the opportunity and provided resources from the Provost’s Office to bring in an external disciplinary peer to review their programs as part of their program review. The rationale behind this recommendation is that, since accredited programs are expected to have external reviewers as part of their processes, unaccredited programs should have the same opportunity. Second, an external peer may provide new insights and approaches that may make a program better. The standard way these peers are identified is for the program/chair/dean to forward three to five names to the Provost who selects from that list.

Sections 1 – 5 of the template are essentially the same from the previous template. Section 3 asks programs to respond to data provided by the Office of Institutional Research as is current practice and Section 4 relies on data developed in conjunction with the Office of Assessment and is current practice. One addition to Section 4 asks programs to report on what they are doing to assist students in courses with high D, W and F rates.

The major changes to this process compared to the previous process are the elements of strategic forward thinking and explicit resource requests. Section 6 is added to allow programs to explicitly state what their facilities and resource needs are since the former template did not have that element. Sections 7 and 8 ask the departments to do an environmental scan of their disciplines and think about how they might respond to those emerging disciplinary issues and developments.

A new organizational development in the evaluation process is the continuation of the Institutional Effectiveness Day held at the beginning of fall semester to focus on program and learning assessment across campus. While the planning for the day is still underway, it is anticipated that one part of the day will be an opportunity for each department to meet as a group and focus on its data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Office of Assessment regarding productivity and achievement of learning outcomes. The goal here is to provide an opportunity for each academic unit to look internally and assess where the program is and how it may be enhanced.

Template

2015 Annual Report Response Template

## 1 PROGRAM INFORMATION

1.1 Brief overview of the program  
1.2 Mission statement for the program  
1.3 Describe the program’s relationship to other RU programs (e.g., courses support the core curriculum and/or professional programs; an interdisciplinary program is developed with other departments; etc.)

## 2 RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS PROGRAM REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Itemize each major recommendation and describe the program’s response to those recommendations.

## 3 PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY AND SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS

3.1 Enrollment  
3.2 Degree productivity  
3.3 Measures of program quality (may include but are not limited to: student performance on licensure/certification exams; job placement of graduates; graduate school placement; alumni and employer survey results; student conference presentations and publications, community engagement practices, etc.)  
3.4 What do the data tell you regarding the productivity and sustainability of your program?  
3.5 What actions or initiatives will you implement based upon that analysis?

## 4 STUDENT LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Briefly describe the means of assessing student learning outcomes. Means of assessing outcomes may include but are not limited to standardized tests, capstone course/program examinations, analyses of theses, portfolios and recitals, etc.  
4.2 Briefly describe the plan used to assess and improve the program on an on-going basis.  
4.3 Summarize improvements made as a result of the improvement plan.  
4.4 For courses with high D, F, W rates, what is the department doing to improve retention in those specific courses.

## 5 FACULTY SCHOLARLY AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES

5.1 Teaching productivity and activities designed to enhance teaching and the curriculum  
5.2 Research productivity  
5.3 Service, including service to public schools and the community  
5.4 Plans to enhance faculty development across th   e program including such things as acquiring more reassigned time for scholarly activities, workshop participation, mentoring programs, etc.

## 6 FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

6.1 Address the adequacy of resources and support services needed to implement the goals and objectives of the program. These could include: library resources; laboratories; equipment; space needs; support personnel; faculty; and/or other resources.

## 7 DISCIPLINARY TRENDS AFFECTING THE PROGRAM

7.1 Briefly describe emerging issues and trends in the discipline  
7.2 Examine how internal factors (e.g., current environment, program strengths and weaknesses, etc.), as well as external factors (e.g., economic, environment, demographic, technological, social, legal, governmental/political, competitive, etc.) could impact achievement of program goals, objectives and expected outcomes given these disciplinary trends.

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Identify areas for improvement of the program which are within the control of the program, including curricular changes if appropriate and/or recommendations for changes that require action at the Dean, Provost or higher levels.