

PROGRAM REVIEW OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION*

According to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), each SIU Carbondale degree program assigned a CIP code is reviewed at least once every eight years (see Guidelines for Review of Existing Units of Instruction, Research, and Public Service at Public Institutions, revised May 22, 2009, at <http://assessment.siu.edu/program-review/ibhe.html>). Exceptions to this requirement are new programs; they are reviewed within three years of their approval. Degree-specific accreditations are also accepted in lieu of the IBHE-mandated review, so long as they are conducted at least once every eight years (see Accreditation Review Overview <http://assessment.siu.edu>). All records and correspondence concerning these accreditation activities must be on file in the office of the Associate Provost for Academic Programs.

In between reviews and re-accreditation, however, programs are expected to report regularly on their assessment of student learning outcomes and to track annual performance indicators, as program faculty deem appropriate, above and beyond the indicators reported to the IBHE, which in turn reports to the Illinois General Assembly (enrollments, graduation, and costs per credit hour). Program-specific indicators include qualitative evaluation as well as quantitative measures on teaching, research, and service. Similarly, every four years, program faculty will update their assessment and strategic planning to address benchmarks set by the IBHE and by the program faculty in their last self study. This planning exercise is not intended to replicate another self study, but to prepare some documents important for the next review.

Annual assessment reports and indicator dashboards, as well as mid-cycle strategic and assessment plans, will be incorporated into the formal review process to reduce paperwork as much as possible. To the same end, this documentation will also be used in the exceptional reviews arising from circumstances outlined in the Program Change Review Committee Report (see <http://pvcaa.siu.edu/links.html>). Every effort will be made to make use of digital records also to simplify and facilitate reporting.

In substance, program review is an examination of the current "state of health" of each department's degree programs. The review provides evidence of the progress that the programs have made since the last review, and it should document the short- and long-range goals to improve them. The reviewers' role is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and to consider their status within the discipline. The review process affords an opportunity to determine whether the programs meet the program faculty's aspirational standards and then to facilitate the establishment of corrective actions necessary to carry out the programs' strategic plan. Program review can also provide the basis for documenting and acknowledging excellence in teaching, research, and service by the faculty and staff.

According to the IBHE, however, an essential component of program review is the "documentation of student learning outcomes" as well as the "identification of actions for program improvement." Clearly, for all degree programs, these two components are linked: outcomes assessment data are critical to identifying what actions to take to improve teaching and learning; without them, the review process is incomplete. Consequently, all program reviews must attend to student learning – in the self study prepared by the faculty, in the reports written by the reviewers, and in the response administrative leaders provide to the self-study and to the reports – as required by the IBHE and by nearly all accrediting bodies, including the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association.

THE SELF STUDY

The self study is prepared in accordance with best practices, as outlined on the Office of Assessment and Program Review (OAPR) webpage (<http://assessment.siu.edu/program-review/self-study%20.html>). The Chair/Director of the academic unit and its program faculty should take a look at the components of an appropriate self study, starting with the one prepared for the program's previous review, a copy of which is on file in the Associate Provost for Academic Programs office. A suggested list of documentation is also available on the OAPR webpage (<http://assessment.siu.edu/program-review/tools-and-templates.html>).

A critical component of the self-study is the set of aspirational standards that the program faculty must set for the review. Like the criteria for accreditation review, the professional/disciplinary expectations of faculty research, instruction, and service, as well as the assessment of student learning outcomes, are critical to the success of the review. Generally 4 to 6 of these expectations/standards, taken from the programs' strategic plan, will need to be addressed in the self study for the reviewers to use in their evaluation of the program. If the faculty set no criteria of their own, then the reviewers will need to provide some themselves, as appropriate to the discipline they share with the faculty. At a minimum, these standards must include benchmarks set by the IBHE on enrollments, graduate rates, and costs per credit hour, as defined by the Program Change Review Committee Report (approved by the Faculty Senate and Graduate Council in 2012) available on the Provost webpage as noted above.

For examples of other self studies, program faculty may check with the OAPR.

THE REVIEW TEAM

The review team will normally consist of one or two internal reviewers from SIU Carbondale and two external reviewers from off-campus.

The appointment of one internal reviewer is made from a list of five faculty nominees furnished by the unit in consultation with the collegiate Dean. Units must avoid nominating reviewers with potential bias or conflicts of interest with the program or its faculty. Current or former collaborators, mentors, and students of unit faculty and staff are inappropriate, as are past reviewers of the unit (see Guidelines in Program Selection of Preferred Reviewers, <http://assessment.siu.edu/program-review/tools-and-templates.html>). The Associate Provost for Academic Programs, in consultation with the Provost, appoints one nominee, as appropriate, to the team. When the faculty member has agreed to serve in this capacity, the Associate Provost for Academic Programs will submit his or her name to the Faculty Senate for confirmation. If one or more of the programs under review in a unit under review is post-baccalaureate, a second internal member of the team is appointed by the Program Review Committee of the Graduate Council.

The internal reviewer(s) will meet with the Associate Provost for Academic Programs for an orientation prior to the external reviewers' site visit to discuss their respective roles and responsibilities as equal partners in the review.

At least two external reviewers, as appropriate, will assume leadership in writing the review report in close consultation with the internal reviewer(s). The unit Chair/Director, in cooperation with the faculty whose programs are under review, proposes a minimum of five individuals external to the university who are respected members of their disciplines. In providing these nominees, the Chair/Director and faculty must ensure that there is no potential bias or conflicts of interest. Current or former collaborators, mentors, and students of unit faculty and staff are inappropriate, as are past reviewers of the unit. These names are submitted to the Associate Provost for Academic Programs, who in consultation with the collegiate Dean and the Provost, will make the final decision on the selection of the consultants. When two individuals have agreed to serve, the Associate Provost for Academic Programs will submit their names to the Faculty Senate for approval.

The consultants are brought to the campus for a two-day visit where they will meet with the internal reviewer(s), tour supporting facilities (such as offices, classrooms, laboratories and the library), and interview the faculty, staff, students, and administrators. They will also collaborate directly with the internal reviewer(s) to draft a single review report. Initial communication with the consultants is handled by the program. The Associate Provost for Academic Programs will follow up with an official invitation, after which the program will make arrangements for travel and honoraria.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The principal information sources are the annual assessment reports and the dashboards of performance indicators, the mid-cycle assessment and strategic plans, the self-study document, Academic Analytic datasets on research productivity, and other verifiable sources datasets, whenever available. These and

comparable materials will be assembled in the program self study, following instructions and formats provided by the Associate Provost for Academic Programs (see Self Study Checklist on <http://assessment.siu.edu/programreviewforms.html>).

The review team will augment its understanding of these documents with personal interviews of administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The program Chair/Director will schedule these meetings with the appropriate administrative leaders, including the collegiate Dean/Graduate Dean and the unit Chair/Director. Following a formal agenda pre-approved by the Associate Provost for Academic Programs, reviewers will also visit with program faculty, support staff, and undergraduate/graduate students. With the understanding that the review is about programs not about personnel, reviewers may choose to ignore additional materials and confidential meetings offered by individual faculty members.

THE REPORT

At the conclusion of the site visit, in consultation with the internal reviewer(s), the external consultants will share an oral summary of their findings with the Provost office. After the site visit, however, the external consultants will prepare, jointly or individually, a written report reflecting their judgment regarding the status of the degree programs, including their administration, faculty, funding, and quality. Discussion of the program's assessment of student learning outcomes must also be included. In keeping with the program faculty's aspirational standards, the report will conclude with specific recommendations for changes, as appropriate, in the unit's structure, operation, planning, programs, and student learning outcomes assessment. A draft of the report is sent to the Associate Provost for Academic Programs for preliminary review before distribution to the Provost, the collegiate Dean, the Graduate Dean, the internal reviewer(s), the program Chair/Director, and the Program Review Committee of the Graduate Council.

The external consultants are strongly encouraged to submit their report(s) within three weeks of the visit to campus. The Associate Provost for Academic Programs will assist the consultants in any way possible to meet the deadline as well as the requirements of the report.

The Dean's' Report: The collegiate Dean reviews the team's report and other pertinent information, and discusses the findings with the Chair/Director to express their mutual concerns and interests. The Dean then develops a report that summarizes, analyzes, and interprets the implications of the review findings for the Provost and for the Vice Chancellor for Research/Graduate Dean, if a graduate program is under review. If the collegiate Dean and the program's Chair/Director and faculty differ on the reports, the program may send its own response to the Provost, copied to the collegiate Dean.

The Provost's Recommendations: The Provost reviews the Dean's report and meets with the Dean and the Vice Chancellor for Research/Graduate Dean, as appropriate, to discuss his or her recommendations. The Provost will prepare a written memorandum to the Dean summarizing recommendations for the program.

OUTCOME OF REVIEWS

Recommendations resulting from the review are implemented by those normally responsible for the delivery of the programs, typically the Chair/Director, faculty, and staff. The faculty of the unit will take into consideration any suggestions for changes in curricular requirements, in addition to other relevant matters. The collegiate Dean will consider changes in personnel assignments or budgeting for the unit from collegiate resources or request additional resources for program improvement or expansion. The Graduate Dean may either increase or decrease the number of fellowships or take other appropriate actions. The Provost may use program review findings as a basis for RMEs (Reasonable and Moderate Extensions), internal reallocation, and RAMP (Resource Allocation and Management Program) and Non-RAMP requests.

If serious problems are identified, then the program will be reviewed again in a specified time frame, reasonable for the particular conditions identified in the original review. Similarly, if the IBHE flags programs as underperforming, especially in enrollments, graduation rates, and costs per credit hour, another review will be triggered, following the procedures set out by the Program Change Review Committee

(PCRC) Report in 2012 (see weblink on page 1). The two review processes – one mandated by the IBHE described here and the other outlined by the PCRC Report – must be coordinated to ensure that programs are strengthened in a timely fashion while not unduly burdening them by additional administrative documentation.

In consultation with the unit Chair/Director, the Dean, and the Vice Chancellor for Research/Graduate Dean, the Associate Provost for Academic Programs will report on the review process to the Provost, the Campus-Wide Assessment Committee (CWAC), and the Chair of the Graduate Council's Program Review Committee each year. This report will identify trends evident in the review process, the self-studies, the reviewers' reports, the Deans' reports, and the Provost's recommendations, especially as they pertain to performance indicators, student learning outcomes assessment, and strategic plans, and program improvement. The CWAC will use the Associate Provost's report to monitor and consider changes in the assessment of student learning. And the Provost will use the Associate Provost's report, as appropriate, in preparing the annual Performance Report to the SIU President's Office, the SIU Board of Trustees, and the IBHE.

Follow-up on all reviews is the responsibility of the Associate Provost for Academic Programs, who will assist the Provost in drafting the memoranda at the conclusion of the review process. The Associate Provost's oversight of review recommendations includes meeting with the program faculty and staff, visiting teaching and research facilities, reviewing annual indicator dashboards and assessment reports, and monitoring the mid-cycle development and updating of assessment and strategic plans. Where appropriate in light of the reviews and their follow-up, the Academic Provost for Academic Programs recommends budgetary and staffing adjustments to the Dean and the Provost.

*Reviews of research and service centers will be conducted in a manner similar to academic programs. Because of their mission-specific mandates, centers will work with the Associate Provost for Academic Programs to plan for individualized reviews. Similarly, medical school program reviews are coordinated by the Office of the Dean and Provost, SIU School of Medicine. Cooperative programs of the SIU Carbondale and the SIU SoM are reviewed together by the offices of the SIU Carbondale Provost and the SIU SoM Provost. While the names of SIU Carbondale committees are utilized in this document, equivalent SIU SoM committees will be used for medical school program reviews. SIU Carbondale program reviews are managed by the SIU Carbondale Associate Provost for Academic Programs. The SIU SoM Assistant Provost for Institutional Planning manages the medical school's program reviews.

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