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Approved by: David C. Danahar

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PROCEDURE

ACADEMIC PROGRAM PLANNING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

The two key elements in Program Reviews at Southwest Minnesota State University include the annual collection of data followed by a periodic evaluation including a self-study and outside consultant evaluation.

A. Annual Collection of Data

The annual collection process includes the collection of data from the program's assessment activities, the Research and Institutional Grants office, and other offices on campus in the following program areas:

- 1) Demographics
- 2) Enrollment
- 3) Measurable Outcomes
- 4) Effectiveness
- 5) Fiscal Resources

This data should be available to the academic departments on an annual basis to allow programs to make adjustments in activities between the five-year reviews. (*A Guide to the Annual Collection of Data for Programmatic Review is available in the Office of the Academic Deans.*)

B. Periodic Program Review

The actual periodic review is held on a five-year cycle with exceptions provided for external agency timelines. Participation by the full program faculty is expected. Every effort should be made to include student input where appropriate. The periodic review includes several components:

1. Program's Self-Study and Report

The self-study report is prepared by the academic program, should include numerical/statistical data to support claims made, should be brief and concise (20 single-spaced pages maximum), and should include as a minimum the following areas:

- a. Introduction
- b. Curriculum
- c. Students
- d. Faculty
- e. Service
- f. Distance Learning (if applicable)
- g. Resources (budget, space, equipment)
- h. Integrity
- i. Future Direction

j. Other

(A Guide to Program Self Study Report is available in the Office of the Academic Deans.)

2. Selecting and Scheduling an External Consultant

The academic department will be responsible for identifying and forwarding a list of 2-3 potential external program review consultants to the Dean. The Dean in consultation with the department will recommend a consultant to the Provost for approval. Once approved, the consultant visit will be coordinated by the Dean in cooperation with the department. Every effort should be made to schedule a site visit over a period of two days.

3. Preparing for the Consultant Site Visit

The department is responsible for assembling documentation in support of its self-study report. Materials such as course syllabi, texts, laboratory manuals, and other course-related items should be available in a central location for review. In addition, examples of student work such as tests, projects, assignments, and research should be available to the consultant. This is similar to “patterns of evidence” required by NCA. Every effort should be made to demonstrate student success. Examples of faculty scholarly work should also be available. Wherever possible, data already collected by assessment activities, NCA activities, or Datum should be used in this process.

4. Site Visit Interview

The consultant should conduct interviews with the following individuals or groups:

- department chair
- faculty members of the department
- undergraduate and graduate (if appropriate) students of the program
- Dean of the college
- members of the program advisory board (if applicable)
- staff in the unit or department
- others from the University community who have some association with the program
- alumni, employers, etc. (by phone if necessary)

5. Consultant’s Report and Questionnaire

The external consultant should be viewed as an outside quality advisor whose main responsibility is to assess the quality of the program. In addition to completing the Consultant’s Questionnaire, the consultant will complete a Consultant’s Report providing written recommendations that should be implemented to improve the quality of the program. *(A Guide to the External Consultant’s Report and Consultant’s Questionnaire is available in the Office of the Academic Deans.)*

6. Distribution of the Self Study and Report and Consultant’s Report

Copies of the program’s Self Study and Report and the external consultant’s report including the reviewer questionnaire shall be sent to the following offices:

- department chair
- program faculty

- Dean
- Vice President for Academic Affairs
- University Library

7. Post-Review Analysis and Planning

Once the program has received the external consultant's final report, it should begin to develop a Plan for the next five years. The purpose of the Plan is to ensure that the feedback obtained from the consultant is incorporated into program planning. The program may wish to provide a separate detailed response to the Consultant Report to the Dean and the Provost. The Plan should propose anticipated changes to the program that faculty and students can incorporate to benefit both the program and institution. The Plan should be forwarded to the Dean for Comment by October 1 of the year following the consultant visit. The Dean shall comment on the report directly to the department chair. The department shall have 30 calendar days to make any revisions and forward the final plan to the Dean with a copy to the Provost and the University Library.

The Provost is responsible for seeing that any relevant recommendations of the approved programmatic Plan become elements of the University's strategic plan.

See also:

A-004 Academic Program Planning and Review