

A-004.1 ACADEMIC PROGRAM PLANNING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

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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 external consultant evaluation.

A. Annual Collection of Data

The annual collection process includes the collection of data from the program's assessment activities, the Office of Institutional Research and Reporting, the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration and other offices on campus in the following program areas: 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 on the Academic Deans' website.)

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

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 is prepared by the academic program and should include numerical/statistical data to support claims made, should be brief and concise (20-30 single-spaced pages maximum), and should include as a minimum the following areas:

- a. Introduction
- b. Curriculum
- c. Program Assessment
- d. Students
- e. Faculty
- f. Service

- g. Distance Learning (if applicable)
- h. Resources (budget, space, equipment)
- i. Integrity
- j. Future Direction

2. Selecting and Scheduling an External Consultant

The department or academic program 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. Immediately after the Provost's approval, the department or academic program must contact the Deans' Office Administrator to begin the paperwork required to enter the external consultant into the system as a state employee or outside vendor. This process is required to allow payment after the completion and submission of the external consultant's report. Also upon approval, the consultant visit will be coordinated by the department or academic program in cooperation with the appropriate Dean. Every effort should be made to schedule a site visit over a period of two days.

3. Preparing for the External Consultant Site Visit

The department or academic program 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 made available 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 the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). 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, HLC activities, or Datum should be used in this process.

4. Site Visit Interviews

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

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

5. External 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 external 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 on the Academic Deans' website.)

6. Distribution of the Self Study and Report and External 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: The Academic Dean will ensure that documents related to Academic Program Reviews will be posted on the Academic Program Review t-drive.

- department chair
- program faculty
- appropriate Dean
- Provost
- University Library

7. Post-Review Analysis and Planning

Once the program and appropriate Dean have received the external consultant's final report, including the questionnaire, the department chairperson and academic program faculty will meet with the Dean to review the recommendations in order to determine which recommendations meet the program mission, vision, goals, student outcomes and the mission of the University. After the meeting the Dean will write an administrative/program response report that will include the date of the meeting, faculty in attendance and a summary of the external reviewer's recommendations that will be: (1) possibly implemented as recommended by the reviewer, or (2) will be attempted but with modifications appropriate to the program or (3) will not be used by the program. This should form the basis for the program's five-year plan. The purpose of the administrative/program response report is to ensure that feedback and recommendations obtained from the consultant are incorporated into program planning and for reference during the next program review. The program may wish to provide a separate detailed response to the Consultant Report to the Dean and the Provost. The administrative/program response report should propose anticipated changes to the program that faculty and students can incorporate to benefit both the program and institution. The administrative/program response report will be forwarded to the Provost and made available for use for accreditation. The Provost is responsible for seeing that any relevant recommendations from the administrative/program response report become elements of the University's strategic plan.

On file will be a four document set: Academic Program Self-Study, External Consultant's Final Report, the Administrative/Program Response Report and the Program's Five-Year Plan. (The five-year plan should be developed within three months after the Administrative/Program Response Report, if possible).

See also:

A-004 Academic Program Planning and Review