**Academic Program Review: A Guide to Preparing the Self Study**

1. ***Learning Outcomes***

*Every academic program is designed to assist students in achieving student learning outcomes. Ultimately, the quality of the program must be judged on how well it produces those outcomes. Faculty members' perceptions, anecdotal information, and evidence of the quality of the teaching process are not sufficient. Necessary is evidence showing that the intended outcomes are realized. Two key questions must be answered: What are the intended learning outcomes of the program? To what extent are these outcomes being achieved?*

*Strong programs articulate clearly the outcomes for students' learning. These outcomes are made explicit and understandable to the students. They should include clear expectations about the purposes and character of introductory, middle-level, and culminating work; the nature of and rationale for program requirements; and the rationale for curricular structures as they relate to these outcomes.*

*Strong programs incorporate occasions for assessing student learning, for marking educational milestones in the program, and for evaluating cumulative learning. Assessment is intended to document the successes of the program; flag areas in which goals are not being met satisfactorily; and, ultimately, lead to improvements in the program.*

***1.1 Program and student learning outcomes are clearly identified and measureable.***

Provide your department's mission statement. For each major you offer, describe the intended purpose(s) of the major and the learning outcomes expected of all graduates. If the list of program outcomes is lengthy, you should provide a summary here and refer the reader to an appendix where the complete list is located. The intended outcomes should be measureable and stated in terms that permit judgments about the extent to which they are realized.

***1.2 The program uses appropriate evidence to evaluate achievement of program and student learning outcomes.***

Describe the evidence used to determine whether or not your graduates have achieved the program and student learning outcomes identified under criterion 1.1 for each major. These should include the results submitted in the Assessment Reports submitted annually and any additional information you believe is important to judge the success of your curriculum. Explain to the reader how each of these indicators provides useful information.

***1.3 The program makes use of information from its evaluation of program and student learning outcomes and uses the results for continuous improvement.***

Reproduce in the narrative or an appendix (if voluminous) the data collected. Describe the process used for regularly reviewing goals, courses, and curricular structures in light of the findings from these data. Summarize the conclusions which have been drawn from this analysis. Finally, describe any modifications which have been initiated to enhance the quality of your programs. In particular, show how the data have been used to build on strengths or overcome any weaknesses. For example, describe any changes in your goals, curricular requirements, course sequencing, development of new courses, restructuring of existing courses, changes in teaching/testing strategies, etc. which have been implemented in response to the information collected.

***1.4 The program directly aligns with the institution's mission.***

Provide narrative that addresses how the program fits within the university’s mission. Clearly delineate the connections between the program’s mission, student learning outcomes, and the university’s mission, providing examples of specific program components. For example, consider using a table that outlines key activities in terms of their contribution to the university’s mission, program mission, and SLOs.

1. ***Curriculum***

*In a strong program, required courses and designated electives fit together in a coherent whole. The organization of the program will vary from field to field. For all programs, however, the organizing principles and coherence of the curricular plan should be evident to students and faculty members alike.*

*Strong programs provide a solid foundation for growth and development in the discipline. They help students develop the capacity to use the methods and perspectives of the discipline(s) in framing questions and in developing increasingly sophisticated analyses of those questions. Recognizing that these capacities develop over time, these programs create curricular structures that provide students with opportunities to revisit issues they have met in prior courses and to bring to bear on those issues increasingly powerful analytic techniques.*

*Strong programs acknowledge and teach connections between issues of their field and issues of wider academic and "real-world" concern, not only in general education courses, but in the major field courses as well.*

*Strong programs help students learn about the variety of views and perspectives represented within each field. Engaging students in open discussion of questions and conflicts about the presuppositions, methods, and findings of the field represents a powerful teaching technique that fosters intellectual development.*

***2.1 The curriculum content and organization are reviewed regularly and results are used for curricular improvement.***

What mechanisms are in place for reviewing the structure and content of the curriculum? How frequently does a review take place? Refer to any relevant information in 1.3 above. Provide examples of how assessment data is utilized to make changes focused on curricular improvements to enhance student learning.

***2.2 The program has developed a process to ensure courses are offered regularly and that students can make timely progress towards their degree.***

Provide a sample four-year course of study in order to demonstrate that all requirements for the degree as well as the major may be fulfilled by a full-time student (taking a normal course load) within a maximum of eight regular semesters. Refer the reader to this table and explain how it allows students to select electives to satisfy their special interests. Include a table which shows the frequency with which you offer your courses in order to demonstrate that required courses and electives are offered with enough regularity to meet student needs/interests.

***2.3 The program incorporates appropriate pedagogical and/or technological innovations that enhance student learning into the curriculum.***

Provide examples of instructional methodology that actively engages the learner in the learning. Describe how technological tools are utilized to enhance teaching and learning in the major.

***2.4 The curriculum is aligned with and contributes to mastery of program and student learning outcomes identified in 1.1.***

Describe how the required courses contribute to mastery of program and student learning outcomes. Provide specific examples. A curriculum map may be useful.

***2.5 The curricular content of the program reflects current standards, practices, and issues in the discipline.***

Explain how the relevant portions of your course syllabi demonstrate that your curricular materials and content reflect current standards, practices, and/or contested issues in the discipline.

***2.6. The curriculum fosters analytical and critical thinking and problem-solving.***

Describe the teaching and testing methodologies used to develop critical thinking skills at all course levels and explain how your methodologies serve their intended purposes.

Include any contested issues introduced in your beginning and/or intermediate courses and explain how you engage your students actively with these issues.

***2.7 The design of degree program specific courses provides students with a solid foundation.***

Describe how the course content and course sequencing are designed to provide students with a solid foundational understanding of the desired program outcomes. Include descriptions of the measurement tools (tools may be appended) you deploy that support assessment of these efforts.

***2.8 The curriculum reflects a progressive challenge to students and that depth and rigor effectively prepares students for careers or advanced study.***

Describe how the curriculum progressively builds from introduction of topics and/or concepts to summative assessment of those topics/concepts in a way that is meaningful to both the student and the program. Your curriculum map should demonstrate this progressive building of topics/concepts from introductory courses through the program toward capstone/cumulative coursework.

***2.9 The curriculum encourages the development of and the presentation of results and ideas effectively and clearly in both written and oral discourse.***

Describe how the program uses both written and oral discourse, i.e., required papers, required presentations, as part of the assessment of student learning for the program. Include any rubrics utilized for those assessments.

***2.10 The curriculum exposes students to discipline-specific research strategies from the program area.***

Describe how students are introduced early to the modes of inquiry and methodology of the discipline. Explain how these are utilized in assignments for subsequent courses and how you ensure that seniors exit the program with a demonstrated ability to apply the approaches of the discipline. In addition, refer to any independent study courses or regular courses that are designed to allow the opportunity for students to engage in appropriate undergraduate research. Identify the frequency of student participation during the past five years.

1. ***Student Experience***

*Strong programs include quality teaching in an environment conducive to student success. Strong programs are taught by faculty who place a high priority on the quality of their teaching. Teaching quality involves not only the performance in the classroom, but the learning atmosphere fostered and supported by the teacher. It includes attending to the needs of students with a diversity of interests, backgrounds, and learning styles. It includes interacting with students both inside and outside the classroom in relation to the overarching learning goals of the undergraduate academic experience as well as to the goals of a particular course or program. It includes staying current with the instructional practices of the discipline and with recent research in teaching and learning, followed by a willingness to alter teaching styles on the basis of that knowledge. It includes responsibility for addressing the shared goals of the overall program in planning courses and in giving feedback to students on their work and progress. Student evaluations of the faculty’s effectiveness are regular and the results are used as a basis for improvement.*

*Quality advising is more than monitoring students to ensure that they are making satisfactory progress toward a degree, and it is more than suggesting choices among possible options. Quality advising includes discussing goals and expectations of the program, the institution, and the student. It includes discussing opportunities in the field and strategies for achieving students' goals both during and after their program of study. It includes discussing the relationship among courses in the program and between the program and general education. High quality advising is built upon knowing each student's background, beliefs, hopes, and expectations. Ideally, advising is an interactive process that makes a definite contribution to the student's education, informs faculty members about students' concerns, and results in a shared understanding of a plan or plans of action that will serve well the needs of the student.*

*The learning environment of strong programs provides practical support and encouragement for students' intellectual growth and development. This includes frequent opportunities for interaction and dialogue among students, between students and faculty members, and with professionals in the field, in addition to that which occurs in the classroom. Such contacts seek to include a wide variety of groups, ideas, and perspectives.*

*Strong programs are supported by adequate library holdings and access to the necessary electronic information in the field.*

***3.1 The program provides students with opportunities to regularly evaluate the curriculum and faculty relative to the quality of their teaching effectiveness.***

Provide a copy of the current departmental instrument for student evaluation of the instructor/course. Explain how the reliability and validity (credibility) of the instrument was established. Describe the frequency of use.

***3.2 The program ensures students are exposed to professional and career opportunities appropriate to the field.***

Describe any student clubs, seminars, or interest groups associated with your program(s) which are designed to provide opportunities for interaction outside the classroom. Show the extent of membership and participation during the last five years. In addition to these activities, describe any opportunities for interaction with professionals in the field. Refer to any relevant information found in 2.9 and 2.10.

***3.3 The program provides students with the opportunity to apply what they have learned to situations outside the classroom.***

Describe any field experiences provided in the program which allow pre-professional experience and “hands-on” application of classroom learning.

***3.4 The program seeks to include diverse perspectives and experiences through curricular and extracurricular activities.***

Describe how the curriculum is structured to include, where appropriate, the perspectives and experiences of underrepresented groups. Include course instruction and reading materials, sponsored events such as a lecture series, etc. Do you periodically review your curriculum to ensure, where appropriate, the inclusion of relevant new scholarship by or about underrepresented groups?

***3.5 Students have access to appropriate academic support services.***

Describe the academic support services available for students within your program(s). Data on how often these support services are utilized will be helpful. Describe how faculty in your department are trained to provide appropriate and effective advising for students. Additionally, describe any opportunities students are provided to evaluate the advising process.

1. ***Faculty***

*Strong programs have enough faculty to cover the teaching load adequately. Such programs actively seek to recruit a faculty that represents diversity in many areas. Adjunct faculty members, if needed, are well qualified, uphold the standards set by the program, and maintain the credentials expected by SACS.*

*Faculty members must be active in the field if they are to design and teach a relevant and vital curriculum. They must be well qualified initially, and they must maintain an active regimen of scholarship. Some will be researchers or creative artists. Others may focus on interpretive, expository, or teaching and learning issues. All, however, must belong to the community of scholars: learning, exploring issues within a collegial community, and sharing new understandings with students.*

*Any program's faculty members will be committed to a diverse set of activities including teaching, scholarship, course and curriculum development, advising, evaluation, and assessment. The quality of the program depends on strength in all of these areas. This does not mean that every faculty member in the program must be personally committed to excellence in each of these areas. It does mean, however, that all faculty members must acknowledge the importance of each of these areas; that for each area there are faculty members in the program who devote significant time and energy to the area; and that excellence is recognized, appreciated, and rewarded.*

*Just as program quality should be reviewed periodically, so should each faculty member's teaching, scholarly and creative work, and service, with a goal toward measurement, accomplishment, and improvement.*

***4.1 All faculty, full time and part-time, meet the high standards set by the program and expected SACSCOC guidelines for credentials.***

In support of your narrative for this and the subsequent criteria under this standard, provide resumes for all regular and part-time faculty in an appendix. (Use the standard UTM format.) Refer the reader to the appendix which contains faculty resumes for part-time as well as full-time faculty.

Identify the number and percent that do not have a terminal degree. For those who do not, explain why, for example, exceptional expertise or a special situation.

***4.2 The faculty are adequate in number to meet the needs of the program with appropriate teaching loads.***

Describe the teaching load of your faculty in the past 10 years using the teaching workload analysis established in fall of 1992. Check with the Academic Affairs office to verify the accuracy of your data. Provide data regarding the average workload of your regular faculty and the credit hour production per FTE faculty. Utilize any THEC data available to determine if the department's staffing is consistent with formula generation. Also include a discussion of the faculty advising load over the past five years (numbers of advisees assigned to faculty members). Tables will be helpful.

***4.3 The faculty strives to cultivate diversity with respect to gender, ethnicity, and academic background, as appropriate to the demographics of the discipline.***

Describe the diversity of your faculty. Is this degree of diversity appropriate given the availability of faculty members from underrepresented groups? Use national and regional data to justify your position. If not sufficiently diverse, what have you done to review and address any hindrances to achieving an appropriate diversity? Meanwhile, what are you doing to compensate for the lack of diversity via student contacts with professionals in the field, alliances with other academic units, guest speakers, etc.?

***4.4 The program uses an appropriate process to incorporate the faculty evaluation system to improve teaching, scholarly and creative activities, and service.***

Provide a copy of the current evaluation system. What measures are used to evaluate teaching quality (student evaluations, peer evaluations, teaching dossiers, reviews of syllabi, etc.), scholarly and creative activities (types of activities included, how counted), and service? Describe the weighing for each category, the types of data collected and how it is all evaluated.Finally, show how it is tied in with the annual evaluation system to facilitate improvement and how it is used in combination to make judgments—particularly regarding promotion and tenure.

***4.5 The faculty engages in regular professional development that enhances their teaching, scholarship and practice.***

Refer the reader to the faculty resumes and summarize in the narrative the number of faculty involved in the above categories and the diversity of their activities.

***4.6 The faculty is actively engaged in planning, evaluation and improvement processes that measure and advance student success.***

Describe the processes by which faculty engage in program planning, evaluation, and curricular improvement. How often is the curriculum of the program reviewed? How do you use assessment data to “close the loop” to enhance student success?

1. ***Support***

*Strong programs are well-supported in carrying out their mission. Facilities are adequate, equipment meets the needs of the program, and the operating budget is large enough to cover the requirements of the department. A process is in place to evaluate these needs.*

*Enrollment trends and graduation numbers are sufficient to sustain the high quality and cost-effectiveness of the program.*

***5.1 The unit regularly evaluates its equipment and facilities, encouraging necessary improvements within the context of overall university resources.***

Explain how your department regularly evaluates its existing equipment (including computers) and facilities to judge their continued usefulness and to identify any new needs. Is the existing equipment modern and in good repair? What are the department's equipment and capital needs for the support of instruction? Does it have a plan and budgeting method for systematic replacement of equipment where demanded by wear or obsolescence? How do you prioritize your needs and determine their importance within the needs and resources of the school and university?

***5.2 The program has access to learning and information resources that are appropriate to support teaching and learning.***

Describe the learning and information resources you use to support teaching and learning. Describe any resources that you are currently lacking. Provide cost analysis for any additional resources.

1. ***Support***

***6.1 The program’s operating budget is consistent with the needs of the department.***

Provide summary data about the operating budget (excluding equipment) for the last five years. What actions have you taken to ensure the best use of limited resources? Show how special projects within the mission of the department are funded from resources provided to the department. From THEC or other available data for comparable programs, judge the appropriateness of the resources for your program(s).

***6.2 The program has a history of enrollment and graduation rates sufficient to sustain high quality and cost-effectiveness.***

Provide data showing enrollment for the past 5 years in your program. Describe the department's plan for actively recruiting prospective students. Use ACTs, high school GPAs, and other measures important to the department to demonstrate that the program is attractive to well-qualified students. Describe any special efforts to recruit African-Americans and other under-represented groups as majors.

Provide data showing number of graduates and graduation rates for your program.Provide evidence of the post-graduate success of your majors in areas such as employment and professional or graduate school. This should be based on systematic data rather than hearsay evidence of isolated individuals. As appropriate, include information also mentioned under 1.3.***,*** particularly opinion survey data regarding satisfaction with the department's program.

***6.3 The program is responsive to local, state, regional, and national needs.***

Describe how your major or program assesses currently local, state, regional, and national needs related to your program. Also describe how your program provides graduates who are prepared to fulfill those needs.

**Improvement Measures Plan**

In your last Program Review, strengths and weaknesses were identified and you developed an Improvement Measures Plan. Based on your Improvement Measures Plan, what actions did you take and what were the results of those actions. If no actions were taken, please explain why.

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