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Academic Program Review Procedures and Guidelines

I. Purpose

The overriding purpose of program review is to identify the various strengths and weaknesses of academic programs and identify the degree to which the institution is using its resources effectively and efficiently to ensure the highest level of academic quality consistent with the University's mission.

This document describes a general program review procedure that will be followed by most programs offered at Athens State University. If, however, a program holds a national/professional accreditation, the program at the discretion of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs may substitute the accreditation external review requirements for the procedures described herein.

The two most important goals of program review are:

- 1) to examine the ways that the institution can maximize existing resources and,
- 2) to explore additional ways to increase efficiency while maintaining the highest level of quality in all academic programs.

II. Fundamentals of Program Review

The word "Program" as used in this document refers to a prescribed plan of study, within an academic department, characterized by a set of structured and coherent courses within a recognized field of study under a designated Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) Code. Accordingly, the scope of the program review function includes a thorough examination of all the specific degree options or CIP codes ascribed to each academic department. This is necessary to increase the validity and reliability of the review to accommodate all departments, whether they consist of one (i.e. Liberal Studies) or multiple degree options (i.e. Humanities and Social Sciences). This methodology reduces the risk of over emphasizing weaknesses while failing to recognize important departmental strengths. By focusing the review on the whole department, the practical strengths and weaknesses of the program can be identified and, subsequently, can be used to make constructive recommendations for long-range academic master planning.

The academic program review process is driven by the following guiding questions:

- How well does this program fit with the purpose and goals of the College and the mission of the University?



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- Is the current curriculum relevant and timely?
- Is the program appropriate to job market needs for the graduates of the program?
- What is the competitive environment for this program?
- Are students meeting the program's learning outcomes? Does the program have adequate resources to ensure educational quality through learning and teaching effectiveness?
- What improvements are recommended for continuous quality improvement? What resources are required to implement these recommendations?

III. Program Review Criteria

Academic program review will include the evaluation of the following three types of criteria over the last three academic years:

- Cost-benefit criteria: direct program costs in reference to the estimated revenue generated by the program. Some of the specific quantitative criteria that are used to examine this cost to revenue ratio include: FT and PT faculty and staff salaries, instructional support expenditures, tuition and fees, and the amount (or value) of other resources generated by the program such as grants, gifts, endowments, etc.
- Program Input and Outputs: include the number of courses and classes (sections) scheduled and offered, instructional delivery formats (i.e. DL), program credits, course demand evidenced by enrollment trends, credit hour production, and faculty workloads.
- Organizational Effectiveness: include metrics related to program and student achievement such as program completers, graduates job placement and continuing education, program reputation and recognition, discipline-specific accreditation (national), student chapters of professional organizations, and faculty scholarly contributions.

IV. Procedures for Program Review

The initial step on the Program Review process is to identify the programs to be reviewed during the forthcoming academic year. This decision is made by the Provost/ Vice President of Academic Affairs and the College Dean(s) as appropriate.



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After identifying the programs to be reviewed, the college deans where the program resides will appoint a panel of reviewers composed of program faculty and at least one external reviewer. The panel will be chaired by the respective Department Head.

The general timetable for program review is outlined below:

August: The Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and the College Dean (as appropriate) will determine the programs to be reviewed.

September: The program review evaluators will be appointed.

October: All activities involved in the program review are scheduled and an official data request for program review is submitted to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) .

November: OIRA, in collaboration with the Business Office, will provide the Department Chair a *Data Report for Program Review*, based on the criteria listed in the *Program Review Report*.

December- April: Program data and information is analyzed following the criteria shown in **Appendix A**.

May: The *Program Review Report* is submitted to the college dean.

V. Roles and Responsibilities throughout the Program Review Process

Pursuant to the Program Review Policy, Athens State University requires that all academic programs conduct a comprehensive review of all academic programs every five years. Upon completion of the review, each program is required to have a *Program Review Report* on file in the Office of Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

College Deans

College deans are responsible for identifying the academic programs due for review during an academic year and the long-term program review schedule. College deans appoint faculty to the review panel and upon their approval submit the *Program Review Report* to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.



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Department Chairs

Department Chairs provide leadership to the review panel and are responsible for the timely completion of all activities of the review process. Department Chairs serve as the point person for all matters related to the on-going program review and are responsible for submitting a program review data request to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA).

Review Panel (Faculty)

The review panel is responsible for scheduling and conducting all program review activities. Faculty reviewers will conduct a thorough analysis of the data provided (and any other information deemed relevant to the program) following the program review criteria shown in **Appendix A** and will write the *Program Review Report* on the findings of the review and will submit the report to the College Dean for approval.

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA): OIRA's role is to provide program and institutional data and technical support as needed to facilitate the review process. OIRA, in coordination with the Business Office, also provides the financial information necessary to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the program as described in **Appendix A**.

VI. Program Review Report Format (Template)

Among other sections, the report must include an Executive Summary, a statement of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) facing the program, and a set of recommendations aimed at program improvement. The report will be prepared using the *Program Review Report* template.



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APPENDIX A

PROGRAM REVIEW CRITERIA

For each program reviewed during the year, the Program Review Committee will prepare a written report that summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the academic department, and make recommendations for future improvements. This report will be based upon quantitative, qualitative, and organizational efficiency criteria. Ideally, these conclusions and recommendations will be based upon comparisons with similar departments at other institutions as well as comparisons with other departments at Athens State University. Some of the criteria that will be considered are listed below:

I. Evaluation of Program Resources and Direct Instructional Costs

A. Qualifications of faculty and instructional staff

Are there an adequate number of faculty members who possess the terminal degrees in their field? How well are the individual faculty members qualified to teach the courses they teach? Is there a need for additional faculty with special qualifications?

B. Adequacy of instructional resources

Are there adequate resources for teaching each course? Are the resources in good condition? Is there sufficient equipment for the number of students enrolled in each section?

C. Ratio of direct instructional costs to generated income

To what degree is the department able to cover its direct instructional costs with tuition, fees and other income?

D. Other

What other quantitative and qualitative factors should be considered when evaluating the resources in the department?

II. Evaluation of Individual Courses Offered

A. Mean number of students per section

Is there an adequate number of students enrolled in each course?

B. Importance for majors in the field



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Is this course commonly required at other institutions? Is its content necessary for high scores on nationally standardized exams or for admission to graduate schools? Does this course teach specific skills they are desired by prospective employers?

C. Income generated

How much tuition and fees are generated by the course?

D. Other factors

What other Factors should be considered when evaluating each other?

III. Evaluation of Each Departmental Degree Options (i.e, major and minor CIP codes)

A. Number of graduates per year

Does the degree option have a viable number of graduates per year?

B. Prorated Cost

What is the prorated cost of the degree option? If a department offers two (2) or more degree options that include many of the same courses, the small enrollment option may have a low prorated cost since most of the courses are offered for the other degree options. Thus, some degree options with few graduates could be justified in terms of little additional cost.

C. Need

What job and graduate school opportunities are available and accessible at other nearby institutions?

D. Results from program review measures

How well do our graduates compare with graduates from other institutions?

E. Other

How does the total cost to the student at Athens State University compare with the cost at other institutions? What feedback has been received from employers and graduates schools? What comments have been made on satisfaction surveys completed by our graduates?

IV. Evaluation of Support for Other Degree Options

A. Estimated income generated

For each degree option supported by the department, determine the number of credits a graduate would have taken in departmental courses and then multiply this number by the number of graduates during the past academic year and by the current tuition rate.



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Then add in the amount of income generated to the department by serving the needs of students in other degree options.

B. Prorated cost

Determine the prorated costs of serving these other degree options as described above.

C. Other

What other information is available to evaluate the extent to which the department is serving the needs of the other degree options? Such evidence may include feedback from other department faculty, employers, and students.