

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. 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.

In between reviews and re-accreditations, 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 each year to the IBHE, which in turn reports to the Illinois General Assembly (enrollments, graduation, and costs per credit hour). Program-specific indicators should include qualitative evaluation as well as quantitative measures on teaching, research, and service. Similarly, every four years, program faculty will update their assessment plans and engage in strategic planning to address benchmarks set by the IBHE and the program faculty.

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 (2012). Every effort will be made to make use of digital records to simplify and to facilitate reporting.

In substance, Program review is an examination of the current "state of health" of each department's degrees. The process 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 provides an opportunity to determine whether the programs meet the goals of the institution and then facilitate the establishment of corrective actions necessary to carry out the university's mission. Program review can also provide a 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: 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 the reports – as required by the IBHE and nearly all accrediting bodies, including the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association.

THE REVIEW TEAM

The review team will consist of internal reviewers from SIU Carbondale and external reviewers from off-campus. The appointment of one internal reviewer is made from a list of five faculty nominees furnished by the department or unit in consultation with the collegiate Dean. Units should avoid nominating reviewers having a potential bias or conflict of interest with the program or its faculty. 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 by the Undergraduate Education Policy Committee (UEPC). If one or more of the programs under review in a department or unit under review is post-baccalaureate, a second member of the team is appointed by the Program Review Committee of the Graduate Council.

The internal reviewers then meet with the Associate Provost for Academic Programs for an orientation, then make arrangements to visit with the department faculty, students, Chair/Director, and academic Dean before meeting with the external reviewers during their site visit.

At least two external reviewers, as appropriate, will assume the leading role in writing the review report in close consultation with the internal reviewers. The faculty whose programs are undergoing review should select a minimum of five individuals who are respected members of their disciplines. In selecting these nominees, the faculty should make every effort to ensure that there are no potential biases or conflicts of interest. Current or former collaborators, colleagues, mentors, and students of unit faculty and staff are inappropriate, as are past reviewers of the unit. These names should be 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 as reviewers, the Associate Provost for Academic Programs will submit their names to the Faculty Senate's UEPC for approval.

The consultants are brought to the campus for a two-day visit where they will 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 reviewers 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 that includes matters such as payment 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 (whenever available), and personal interviews with university personnel. After the orientation meeting with the Associate Provost for Academic Programs, the internal reviewers will set up meetings with the appropriate administrators, collegiate Dean/Graduate Dean, department Chairs, faculty, staff, and undergraduate/graduate students from the department's programs. The programs will arrange meetings with departmental representatives for the external reviewers during their site visit.

THE REVIEW REPORT

The internal review team will provide a brief summary of its findings to the program Chair/Director, the appropriate Deans, and the external review team within two weeks of the external consultants' visit, paying particular attention to the assessment reports, the performance indicators, and the assessment and strategic plans. At the conclusion of the site visit, in consultation with the internal reviewers, the external consultants will share an oral summary of their findings with the Provost office. After the site visit, the external consultants will prepare, jointly or individually, a written report reflecting their judgment regarding the status of the degree programs, including its administration, faculty, funding, and quality (based in part on assessment data). The reports may include specific recommendations for changes in any aspect of the unit's structure, operation, or programs. This report is sent to the Associate Provost for Academic Programs for distribution to the Provost, the collegiate Dean, the Graduate Dean, the internal reviewers, the unit/program Chair/Director, and the Program Review Committee of the Graduate Council.

The external consultants are strongly encouraged to submit their report within two weeks of the visit to campus. The Associate Provost for Academic Programs will assist the consultants in any way possible to meet the deadline.

Deans' Reports: The collegiate Dean reviews the review 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 the review findings for submission to the Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Research/Graduate Dean, if a graduate program is under review. If the Dean and the program faculty differ on the reports, the department may send its own response to the Provost.

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

OUTCOME OF THE REVIEWS

Recommendations resulting from the review are implemented by those normally responsible for the delivery of the programs. The faculty of the department 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 department 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 subsequent internal resource allocations and RAMP (Resource Allocation and Management Program) submissions.

If serious problems are identified, the program will be reviewed again in a specified time frame, reasonable for the particular conditions identified in the original review, as specified by the IBHE. 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. The two review processes – mandated by the IBHE described here and the other outlined by the PCRC Report – are 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 and the Campus-Wide Assessment Committee (CWAC) 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, 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 views, 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 Academic 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 include 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 APAP will recommend budgetary and staffing adjustments to the Dean and the Provost.

*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 SIUSOM are reviewed together by the offices of the SIU Carbondale Provost and the SIUSOM Provost. While the names of SIU Carbondale committees are utilized in this document, equivalent SIUSOM 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 SIUSOM Assistant Provost for Institutional Planning manages the medical school's program reviews.