

24. Concern B: Program Review

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The institution also needs to demonstrate that it is implementing purposeful, coordinated, and effective program reviews. At the time of the Educational Effectiveness Review, CSUCI will need to formalize its approaches for identifying, obtaining, and evaluating essential student achievement data and demonstrate it is using such outcomes information to formulate action plans to improve learning. The several departments, committees, and centers with responsibilities in this area need to clarify the roles and procedures of each in order to achieve a greater sense of focus in the multiple forms of assessment activities. The institution's Program Review process should include a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of the review process itself. Program reviews should plan to include co-curricular and service units as well.

In 1971, the CSU Board of Trustees adopted a policy requiring that each campus review its academic programs on a regular basis (CO memorandum AP – 71-32), with the expectation that assessment of student learning will be a central feature of reviews. Implementing CSU policy, the CSUCI Academic Senate approved in 2003 its “Policy for Review of Academic Programs.” This policy provides that program reviews will be conducted in five-year cycles and will include a) an academic program self-study and recommendation; b) an external review and recommendation; and c) a University review and action plan.

Since CSUCI opened its initial degrees in 2002, its first program reviews will begin in 2007. In preparation for reviews, the campus has taken the following steps:

Implementing Purposeful and Effective Program Reviews.

Recognizing that it would be conducting programs reviews for its initial majors, the Provost created the Program Assessment and Review Committee (PARC) in December 2005, to oversee assessment and program review activities within Academic Affairs. That committee, composed of the faculty assessment coordinators within each discipline, the Director of Institutional Research, and the AVP for Academic Programs and Planning, is charged with assisting program areas in their assessment efforts and integrating assessment with program review. Recognizing the importance of this work, the Provost's Office has budgeted significant resources in assigned time for the faculty assessment coordinators who serve as members.

In summer 2006, the Office of Academic Programs and Planning developed a 25-page draft handbook for conducting program reviews (Exhibit 24.1), entitled “Guidelines for Program Review.” This draft has been reviewed by program chairs and by PARC members, and is expected to be approved by the Dean of Faculty and Provost in December 2006. These “Guidelines” include a “Program Review Calendar” (Exhibit 24.2) which identifies the date for each degree's program review, and a “Program Review Timeline” (Exhibit 24.3) outlining the steps and sequence in conducting reviews.

Taking these steps, CSUCI has the key institutional processes in place as it begins conducting its first program reviews in fall 2007. The campus has the needed administrative coordination supported through the Office of Academic Programs and Planning. It has active faculty participation supported through PARC, which will be a forum where reviewers will be making regular presentations during the

review process. The campus has external input supported by site reviews conducted by faculty outside the University. And finally, it has critical independent faculty judgment provided by the Academic Program Review Committee (APRC), a five-member faculty committee selected by the Academic Senate, charged with reviewing each self-study and external review. That committee will be constituted in 2007 and begin its work in 2008.

Formalizing its Approaches for Identifying and Evaluating Student Achievement Data

In its historical evolution, CSUCI will be initiating its first program reviews after work has begun on course and program assessment. This has given CSUCI the advantage of being able to tightly integrate its assessment and program review activities.

The Director of Assessment for Academic Affairs, working through the Program Assessment and Review Committee which he co-chairs, oversees the collection of assessment data on program learning outcomes by each discipline. Following the Assessment Blueprints drafted several years ago by each program, assessment data, analyses, and program modifications are conducted each year on one or more learning outcomes. Each discipline, then, is responsible to see that all of its learning outcomes are assessed over the five year period that culminates in the drafting of its comprehensive program review. Annual program reports from each discipline on its assessment activities are collected and critiqued each fall, and through PARC these reports are inventoried and available to the wider university community. As described above, the assessment process works in tandem with program review. As each academic program successfully assesses one or more of its program-level learning outcomes each year, these learning outcomes are collected and reported annually by the Director of Assessment and PARC. As they are collected during the five-year program review cycle, they provide the basis of the program review itself, reported by the discipline in its self study.

To describe this integration in different terms, the program review process can be seen as an example of CSUCI's statement in its 2005 Capacity and Preparatory Report, that "CSUCI has from the start embraced the WASC Handbook of Accreditation as our roadmap for building a new university . . ." Reflecting WASC standards of accreditation, and translating them from the institutional to the program level, the discipline program reviews are framed around the program's *capacity* to deliver its program its ability to demonstrate *educational effectiveness*. Self studies are organized around four elements, with each program showing that it is successfully:

- Defining program purpose and ensuring educational outcomes
- Achieving educational objectives
- Developing and applying resources to ensure sustainability
- Creating an organization committed to learning and improvement

Action Plans to Improve Student Learning

The annual discipline assessment reports conclude with statements on programmatic changes that the discipline will be undertaking in response to their analysis of assessment results. These programmatic changes are essential information in later program self-studies.

Each program review sequence concludes with the formulation of an action plan based on the recommendations generated during the review process (Exhibit 24.4). In the language of the Senate Policy, "after the faculty of the academic program, the Dean, and the Division of Academic Affairs have had an opportunity to study all reports and recommendations, representatives of these three areas will meet to discuss the recommendations and agree on actions to be taken." This action plan as it relates to more effectively attaining goals in student learning may include curriculum revision, resource reallocation, facilities development, or staffing.

Clarifying Roles and Procedures to Achieve Focus in Assessment Activities

A successful assessment strategy must account for who is responsible for what and when. CSUCI has in place a comprehensive assessment plan that outlines how course and class level assessment inform the program level assessment, and how program level and general education assessment integrates with baccalaureate assessment. (Exhibit 24.5) It outlines the role of program faculty in course-level assessment, the role of PARC in program assessment and review, and the role of the four mission-based centers in baccalaureate assessment.

At the University-level the Assessment Council, composed of representatives and assessment officials from each division, is charged with the responsibility for reviewing the divisional assessment reports mandated by the division vice presidents.

Evaluating the Program Review Process Itself

CSUCI expects that it will have much to learn from its experience with the initial program reviews. The “Guidelines for Program Review” reflect this expectation by providing for the assessment of the program review process itself.

This will come from several sources. It will come from members of the external review teams who are asked to evaluate their experience in the review process. It will come from faculty members composing the Academic Program Review Committee (APRC). One of APRC’s assignments is not only to comment on the program but to critically evaluate the effectiveness of review process itself in stimulating program improvement.

Including Co-curricular and Service Units

Co-curricular and service units – the career center, the advising center, the instructionally related activities program, disabilities services – are located both in student affairs and academic affairs. These units have processes in place for reviewing their effectiveness and efficiency. Within the program review process for the major, each program is asked for information regarding its utilization of service units and to include data from these units with respect students achieving program goals for the baccalaureate.

Exhibits:

- 24.1 [Guidelines for Program Review](#)
- 24.2 [Program Review Calendar](#)
- 24.3 [Program Review Timeline Proposal](#)
- 24.4 [Program Review Flow Chart](#)
- 24.5 [Seven Year Assessment Plan](#)