ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW POLICY AND PROCEDURES

California State University, Bakersfield
Fall 2020

As a university dedicated to meeting the needs of its region and to providing leadership and expertise for students and the community, California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) must actively plan for the future. A program review is an essential component of the active planning process. The program review process is a meaningful way to assess and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of an academic program and allows the members of the program to document successes, needs, and goals for maintaining and/or improving their academic offerings. It involves a program's commitment and willingness to candidly evaluate goals, objectives, and activities through outcomes-based assessment of student learning and to use program review results to improve curricular and budgetary decision-making processes. The required elements of a program review include an evidence-based self-examination, assessment of student learning outcomes, evaluation of resources necessary to ensure quality, and alignment of a program's vision and mission with those of the university.

The program review process is primarily a faculty-driven process. Transparency and accountability are enhanced by tying together the recommendations for program improvement with resource allocation through a Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan (MOUAP). Consequently, program review is a faculty-led peer review process by which evidence-based findings, conclusions, and decision-making can be used for planning and budgeting. The program review establishes intermediate benchmarks and follow-up plans that track program progress toward achieving and ensuring alignment of student, programmatic and university-wide academic goals and objectives.

PURPOSES OF PROGRAM REVIEW

Program review aims to maintain and strengthen the quality of the university's curriculum and its ability to meet the challenges of the future. Program review should be centered on the commitment to providing quality programs balanced with respect for the needs of society in general and the region in particular, student abilities, interests, and career needs. Most importantly, program review must determine whether students are accomplishing the program's learning objectives through outcomes-based assessment of student learning and development. In this way, the results of program review provide the evidentiary basis for informed, transparent, and accountable decisions about program, faculty and student needs, curricular planning, and resource allocation and management. Through this faculty-driven program review process, the university administration, working collaboratively with the faculty at multiple steps in the process, is better prepared to allocate available resources and to plan for change.

To achieve these purposes, faculty are required to evaluate the program's student learning outcomes, and to use annual assessment findings for continuous program improvement. Such assessment demands that well-qualified internal and external reviewers evaluate the program's learning outcomes, assessment plan, evidence, benchmarking results, assessment impact, and provide feedback for improvement. Program faculty are to prepare a retrospective Self-Study and a forward-looking Program Plan in advance of the next cycle of review. At the end of the process, the campus will systematically integrate program reviews into planning and budgeting processes, through negotiation of formal action plans with mutually agreed-upon commitments.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE FOR THE REVIEW PROCESS

PROGRAM SELF-STUDY COMMITTEE

All faculty teaching in the program should have the opportunity to provide input to the program review. Each program conducting a review shall select a Self-Study Committee of at least three faculty members. In consultation with program faculty and representative students, the committee is responsible for the preparation of a Self-Study and a Program Plan document. The committee receives access to the review guidelines and deadlines, a list of model self-studies, and other material. The chair of the department or interdisciplinary program is responsible for ensuring the timely and thoughtful completion of the program review. The title page of the program review document shall state that by a majority vote the program faculty has approved the Self-Study and the Program Plan document and include the date on which the approval was made. If students and/or staff are involved in the self-study preparation process, their involvement should be limited to a support role such as data collection and creation of graphs. The writing, analysis, and recommendations must be completed by faculty.

EXTERNAL REVIEW

Programs that are not accredited by external bodies shall have an external review performed as part of the program review process. The program, in consultation with the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Academic Programs (AVPAA) and the school dean, proposes an external reviewer who does not have any conflicts of interest and has the experience to provide an effective review. The external reviewer must be approved by the UPRC. The Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA)maintains a fund to pay for the external reviewer.

The purpose for the external review is to assist faculty in improving program quality by providing a comparative perspective on the program, a reflection on the last seven years of operation, and plans for the next seven years. The external reviewer will conduct an exit interview with the program faculty, the chair of the UPRC (or designee), the appropriate school dean, the AVPAA (or designee), and the Provost and VPAA. Within two weeks of the completion of the visit, the external reviewer will provide a draft of the external report to the program faculty and the Office of Academic Programs that provides comments and recommendations regarding the program. The program faculty has up to two weeks to submit any corrections of

factual inaccuracies and misunderstandings. The external reviewer shall submit the final report to the Office of Academic Programs to become part of the package of documents subsequently reviewed by the appropriate school dean, the UPRC, and the Provost and VPAA.

SCHOOL DEAN REVIEW

School deans oversee assessment processes, management of resources and strategic planning activities. Thus, it is imperative that they review and respond to the self-study, program plan, and related documents. The school dean shall add another review within a month of receiving the external reviewer's report reflecting upon the comments and recommendations of the external reviewer. In the case of interschool programs, all relevant deans shall add their comments and recommendations.

UNIVERSITY REVIEW

Upon receiving the documents written by the Program Self-Study Committee, the external reviewer(s), and the school dean, the UPRC engages in a review of the program. The UPRC consists of one faculty member elected by each of the schools, two at-large faculty, one faculty appointed by the Academic Senate Executive Committee, and a non-voting member, the AVPAA or designee (*ex officio*). To ensure continuity in UPRC operation, the members shall serve two-year staggered terms. Each member is given three WTUs of assigned time per year for the two-year service.

The UPRC will examine all documents submitted during the review and prepare its comments and recommendations. These are forwarded to the Office of Academic Programs. The UPRC shall also monitor the overall program review process, recommend changes in the program review policy and procedures, and ensure that program review findings are incorporated into university-wide curricular and budgetary planning processes. Finally, at the end of the academic year, the chair of the UPRC shall submit to the Academic Senate a summary of the major findings and recommendations for all programs reviewed that year.

PROVOST REVIEW

Within three months after receiving the program review documents, the Provost shall meet with the program faculty, the chair of the UPRC (or designee) and school dean(s) to discuss the program review and all recommendations. Within a month of the meeting, the Provost and VPAA (or designee), through active negotiation with the program faculty and appropriate school dean, shall prepare a MOUAP that identifies the agreed-upon recommendations to be implemented, as well as the resources that will be provided to support those recommendations, during the next seven years. The MOUAP will be signed by the department chair or program director, the school dean, and the Provost and VPAA, kept on file in the department, the school, and the Office of Academic Affairs, and remain in effect for the duration of the review cycle. The program faculty and the school dean shall be responsible for implementing the recommendations.

ANNUAL REPORTS

The annual report is an important component of the program review process that provides an opportunity for the program faculty to reflect upon and document their continuous improvement efforts. The content of the annual report includes updates on the progress made toward accomplishing the actions stated in the MOUAP and relevant changes since the last program review and/or annual report in response to emerging student needs, resource pressures, and data points. Annual reports are normally due on October 1 of each academic year and are submitted to the school dean for review.

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment (IRPA) prepares data annually for each program, including the number of students, faculty, degrees granted, and instructional cost. The program faculty shall update additional tables indicating the work that has been done over the last year on assessment of student learning outcomes, faculty activity, and funding plans, and prepare a narrative clarifying and explaining the data and discussing any emerging trends. If the program has a MOUAP, the program faculty shall evaluate the extent to which the program goals or benchmarks have been met and report the status of agreed-upon resource allocations. The cumulative data and narratives will provide the foundation for the next program review.

REPOSITORY AND REPORTING

Copies of all program review documents shall be maintained in the Office of Academic Affairs.

PROCEDURES FOR ALL PROGRAMS WITH
EXTERNAL ACCREDITATION

All programs at CSUB undergo periodic academic program review. Programs that are externally accredited may conduct a modified program review, in which they meet the requirements for campus program review in an alternate fashion. In the year following the external accreditation, accredited programs will submit to the UPRC their accreditation documents, which include the accreditation self-study reports, letters and correspondence from the accrediting body, review team reports, responses to accreditation correspondence, accreditation action/decision letter, and other relevant material. In addition, programs should indicate to the UPRC where the required information for campus program review is located in the accreditation reports. For any items of the program review that are not addressed in the external accreditation reports, programs will need to provide the information in a separate response and submit it to the UPRC. Additionally, the school dean must submit a review if not involved in the accreditation process. Once these documents are received, the UPRC will review the material and produce a report, followed by the Provost and VPAA review that culminates in a MOUAP.

MID-CYCLE REPORTS

In some cases, the UPRC may request that a program submit a mid-cycle report to provide an update on any specific recommendations made in the last program review. Mid-cycle reports are typically submitted to the UPRC in the third year after completion of the program review.

PROCEDURES FOR PROGRAM REVIEW EXTENSIONS

Under extenuating circumstances, a program may request an extension, not to exceed one year in length of its program review. The request must include a justification for the extension, and an acknowledgement of the school dean. Upon receiving the request, the UPRC will discuss and vote on it, and the UPRC Chair will notify the program if the request is approved.

When programs have not submitted a self-study after one year of their initial deadline, the UPRC shall meet with the Provost and VPAA, the program director or department chair, and appropriate school dean(s) to decide how to proceed. An additional extension may be granted if appropriate, or, *the UPRC would make a recommendation to the Provost on how to proceed, which may include a UPRC-initiated review.*

REVISED BY THE UPRC March 24, 2022
Amended by the Academic Senate April 28, 2022
APPROVED BY ACADEMIC SENATE April 28, 2022
APPROVED BY PRESIDENT May 12, 2022