DRAFT Academic Program Review Process: Policy Statement

The purpose of CCSU's formal review process for academic programs is threefold, all of which are related and mutually reinforcing:

- To enhance student learning and student success
- To improve the quality and effectiveness of curricula and instruction
- To assist in the allocation of resources

This process is also designed to meet requirements from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC, due fall 2013) and the Connecticut Department of Higher Education to have a formal system for reviewing programs.

The system for program review relies primarily on Department reports with subsections for each of their degree programs that are submitted annually and data that have been provided by OIRA to facilitate the process (enrollments, completions, faculty load, etc.). All degree programs in a department will be reviewed at the same time. Degree programs include bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, sixth-year certificates, and doctoral degrees; programs leading to other credentials are exempt from this process.

The Review Cycle

The review process occurs at three levels. The three methods for providing feedback to departments following their submission of their annual reports and review of their academic programs include a review by the Dean, the Provost's Council and an external reviewer.*

The program review process will follow the cycle below, with exceptions determined by the Provost.

- Every year – The appropriate <u>Dean</u> will review the annual report and appended assessment reports.
- Every five years – The <u>Provost's Council</u> will review the most recent annual report and appended assessment reports. In most instances the Provost's Council will review a department's annual report and appended assessment reports <u>two years</u> before an external reviewer is sent the program review.
- Every five years – An <u>external reviewer</u>* is provided a program review that includes a 10 pp. summary for each program, accompanied by the five most recent annual reports and appended assessment reports.

Departments will receive feedback following each review and then have the opportunity to correct errors of fact and provide clarifications. The Departments will be asked to submit a plan for addressing areas for improvements and concerns.

External Reviewers*

External reviewers may consist of faculty members at other institutions or may be chosen based on their significant professional qualifications comparable to experience and expertise of university faculty.

- The selection of the external reviewer(s) will be made in collaboration among the Department, appropriate Dean(s) and the Provost.
- Funding for the external reviewer(s) will be provided by the Provost's Office.

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* For programs accredited by a nationally recognized accreditor, the periodic accreditation review of the program(s) may substitute for external review and preparation of the 10 pp. summary, even if the accreditation cycle is longer than 5 years.

Coordination of the Program Review Process

Coordination of the program review process will be managed by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (the NEASC liaison officer) in conjunction with the Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). The Associate Vice President will coordinate the external review process and, in conjunction with appropriate Deans, ensure that Departments have submitted all appropriate materials. The OIRA Director will ensure that a common set of program metrics is provided to departments, archive and distribute reports and review materials, and evaluate the effectiveness of the program review process.

Reviewer Questions

The following questions will be answered by Provost's Council and external reviewers for <u>each program</u> in the department:

1. To what extent are students meeting goals for student learning outcomes set by the faculty? To what extent do characterizations about student learning rely upon a research-based evaluation of student competencies?
2. To what extent does the department use information about student learning to inform their curriculum and/or make adjustments? Is this use of information appropriate?
3. Do a sufficient number of students complete the program? Does the program have sufficient enrollment?
4. In what ways do program faculty engage students in activities beyond the classroom, for example: undergraduate research, graduate research, community engagement, international education, etc.?
5. Is the allocation of resources appropriate for each of the department's programs, i.e. sufficient number of faculty, revenue generated by number of credit hours, direct instructional expenditures, etc.?

External reviewers only will answer this question:

6. To what extent does overall faculty creative activity make a significant contribution to the discipline?

Use of Findings

Findings from the program review process will be used to inform decisions about how to:

- Provide support for program improvement, development and other changes
- Manage enrollment to deliver a high quality program
- Allocate future resources for the program (faculty, monetary, space, etc.)