Academic Program Review Process: Policy Statement (v: 22)

I. Background and Rationale

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

Program reviews as described in this document are not intended or expected to provide justification for elimination of programs or departments. These program reviews are entirely separate in function and procedure from those described in section 5.18 of the current Connecticut State University American Association of University Professors-Board of Trustees for Connecticut State University System Collective Bargaining Agreement (hereafter "the contract"). Any effort to eliminate a program must follow procedures described in the contract then in effect.

There are three related and mutually reinforcing purposes for CCSU's formal review process of academic programs:

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

The system for program review relies primarily on currently available 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.). Data also are provided by the Center for International Education (CIE) for the purpose of reporting course abroad numbers. 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.

II. The Review Cycle

The program review process will follow the cycle below, with exceptions determined by the Provost in collaboration with the appropriate Dean(s) and Department.

- Every year – The appropriate Dean will review the annual report and assessment reports (full/ interim).
- Every semester, approximately four departments will be asked to complete a self-study based on the four most recent annual and assessment reports for each of their programs. In preparing the self study, departments will respond to a standardized set of questions, but they may include any additional information that their faculty believe is important for the external review. The initial cycle of program reviews will be based on the four-year cycle established by the Academic Assessment Committee (ACA) such that the departmental self-study will be concurrent with or following their submission of a full assessment report. The cycle will repeat once all non-accredited programs have been reviewed. (Please note: During the year that departments prepare the Program Review, the department will be exempt from submitting both Assessment and Annual Department Reports.)
- In most instances, in the same semester that the self study is due, an external reviewer will receive the department's self-study and all supporting materials. In the following semester, the external reviewer(s)* will conduct a site visit that includes meeting with the faculty, the Dean(s) and Provost.

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

51 Departments will receive feedback from the external reviewer, first through an on-campus exit
52 interview and then through a written report.   Reviewer(s) may recommend improvements to
53 departments through standard faculty procedures and shared governance.

54 The departments will have the opportunity to correct errors of fact and provide clarifications, internally,
55 by paper response to the Dean(s) and Provost. Copies of the final program review report will be filed
56 with the department, the Dean(s), and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. The final
57 review report will serve as a basis for future plans in the department's annual/assessment reports.

58 **Selection of External Reviewers**
59 External reviewers may consist of faculty members at other institutions or may be chosen based on their
60 significant professional qualifications comparable to experience and expertise of university faculty.
61 - Once the department is scheduled to conduct a self-study, the department will submit a list of
62   3-4 possible external reviewers from which the Dean(s), in consultation with the Provost, will
63   select one external reviewer. (In some departments where more than one program exists, a
64   second reviewer may be appointed.)
65 - Funding for the external reviewer(s) to include a small stipend (approximately $500) as well as
66   travel expenses will be provided by the Provost's/Dean's Office.

67 **III. Coordination of the Program Review Process**
68 Coordination of the program review process will be managed by the Associate Vice President for
69 Academic Affairs (the NEASC liaison officer) in conjunction with the Director of the Office of Institutional
70 Research and Assessment (OIRA). The Associate Vice President will coordinate the external review
71 process and, in conjunction with appropriate Deans, ensure that departments have submitted all
72 appropriate materials. The OIRA Director will ensure that a common set of program metrics is provided
73 to departments, archive and distribute reports and review materials, and monitor the effectiveness of
74 the program review process.
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Questions the Department Should Address in the Self-study

The review process will focus on the following questions drawn from existing annual departmental and appended assessment reports:

1. Program Learning Outcomes:
   A. Does the program have clear student learning outcomes?
   B. To what extent do program faculty gather and present data on student learning?
   C. To what extent do program faculty rely on direct measures of student learning that are aligned with program outcomes?
   D. To what extent are students meeting student learning outcomes as set by the program faculty?
   E. To what extent do program faculty use student learning outcome data to inform their curriculum and/or make adjustments?
      - Is this use of information appropriate?

2. Academic Program Profile:
   A. Does the program have sufficient enrollment (e.g. do courses have sufficient enrollment)?
   B. What contribution does the undergraduate program make to the general education program?
   C. If applicable, what contribution does the program make to interdisciplinary programs?
   D. Do a sufficient number of students complete the program?
      - Are they graduating in a timely fashion?

3. Faculty:
   A. In what ways do program faculty engage students in curricular activities and those beyond the classroom that include such things as undergraduate research, graduate research, community engagement, and international education and workforce development?

4. Future Plans:
   A. What future plans does the department report?
   B. Is there a solid rationale for those plans that aligns with the university's mission and strategic plan?
   C. What faculty, space, and financial resources would be needed?

External reviewers will answer these questions:

In a time of limited resources, please focus your comments on how to improve the academic program within the resource constraints the department currently operates. Please provide rationale supporting each of your findings and recommendations.

1. What are the strengths of the academic program?

2. What are the weaknesses of the academic program?

3. What changes could be made to improve the department and academic program?

4. How is the department using data to inform decision making?