

**Central Connecticut State University**  
UNIVERSITY SENATE ACTION

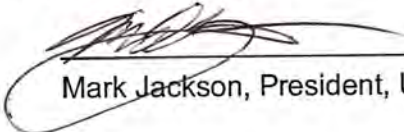
**Senate Motion Number FS 18.19.021B**

TO: President Zulma Toro  
FROM: President of the University Senate

1. The attached motion of the University Senate, dealing with: **Academic Review Policy** is presented to you for your consideration.
2. This motion was adopted by the University Senate on **04/22/2019**.
3. After considering this motion, please indicate your action on this form, and return it together with the original copy to the President of the University Senate.
4. Under the By-Laws of the University Senate, Section 3.7, the following schedule of action is to be observed.
  - a) By **06/10/2019**, Senate action reported to the President of the University. (Within five school days of the session in which they are adopted).
  - b) By **06/24/2019**, the President of the University to return the motion to the President of the Senate. (Within ten school days of its receipt).

**06/10/2019**

Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Jackson, President, University Senate

ENDORSEMENT:

TO: President of the University Senate  
FROM: President Zulma Toro

1. Motion Approved : \_\_\_\_\_ ✓
2. Motion Disapproved: \_\_\_\_\_ (Explanatory statement must be appended).
3. Action "is deferred": \_\_\_\_\_
4. Resolution Noted: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6/17/2019  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President Zulma Toro

# 1 Academic Program Review Process: Policy Statement (v: 26)

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## 2 I. Background and Rationale

3 This process is designed to meet requirements from the New England Commission of Higher Education  
4 (NECHE) and the Connecticut Department of Higher Education to have a formal system for reviewing  
5 academic programs.

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

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

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

17 The system for program review relies primarily on currently available Department reports with  
18 subsections for each of their academic programs that are submitted annually and data that have been  
19 provided by OIRA to facilitate the process (enrollments, completions, faculty load, etc.). Data also are  
20 provided by the Center for International Education (CIE) for the purpose of reporting course abroad  
21 numbers. All academic programs in a department will be reviewed at the same time unless other  
22 arrangements have been agreed upon with the department chair.

## 23 II. The Review Cycle

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

26 The initial cycle of program reviews will be based on the 5-year cycle established by the Academic  
27 Assessment Committee (AAC) such that the departmental self-study will be concurrent with or following  
28 their submission of a full assessment report. The cycle will repeat once all non-reviewed programs have  
29 been reviewed. (Please note: During the year that departments complete the Program Review, the  
30 department will be exempt from submitting both Assessment and Annual Department Reports.)

31 Every year the appropriate Dean will review departmental annual reports and assessment reports (full/  
32 interim).

33 Every semester, approximately four departments will be asked to begin the program review with an  
34 informational meeting between the Chair, Associate Vice-President, and Director of the Office of

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\*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 self-study, even if the accreditation cycle is longer than 5 years.

35 Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). The Department will prepare a self-study based on  
36 annual and assessment reports for each program under review. In preparing the self-study, departments  
37 will respond to a standardized set of questions (see below) and are encouraged to include any additional  
38 information that their faculty believe is important for the external review.

39 The department will submit a list of 2 or 3 possible external reviewers from which the Déan(s), in  
40 consultation with the Provost, will select one external reviewer. (In some departments where more than  
41 one program exists, a second reviewer may be appointed.) External reviewers may consist of faculty  
42 members at other institutions or may be chosen based on their significant professional qualifications  
43 comparable to experience and expertise of university faculty. The Provost's Office provides funding for  
44 the external reviewer(s), including an honorarium (minimum of \$500 per program) and up to \$500 in  
45 travel expenses.

46 The external reviewer(s) will receive the department's self-study and all supporting materials.  
47 Subsequently, they will conduct a site visit that includes meeting with the faculty, the Dean(s) and  
48 Provost. Departments will receive feedback from the external reviewer, first through an on-campus exit  
49 interview and then through a written report. Reviewer(s) may recommend improvements to  
50 departments through standard faculty procedures and shared governance.

51 The departments will have the opportunity to correct errors of fact and provide clarifications, internally,  
52 by paper response to the Dean(s) and Provost. Copies of the final program review report will be filed  
53 with the department, the Dean(s), and OIRA. The final review report will serve as the basis for the  
54 Department, Dean, and Provost to meet in person and discuss findings from the external review. During  
55 the meeting, action items for improving the academic program will be identified and documented.  
56 Procedures for following up on action items will also be discussed and documented.

57 Ideally, the program review would be completed across two adjacent full semesters.

### 58 **III. Coordination of the Program Review Process**

59 Coordination of the program review process will be managed by the Associate Vice President for  
60 Academic Affairs in conjunction with the Director of OIRA. In conjunction with appropriate Deans, the  
61 Associate Vice President will ensure that departments have submitted all appropriate materials. The  
62 OIRA Director will ensure that a common set of program metrics is available to departments, archive  
63 and distribute reports and review materials, and monitor the effectiveness of the program review  
64 process.

65 **IV. Questions the Department Should Address in the Self-study**

66 The review process is based upon questions drawn from existing annual departmental and appended  
67 assessment reports. Responses should be based on the **previous 5 years or the period of time since**  
68 **most recent self-study.**

- 69 1. Academic Program Profile:
- 70 A. Include a brief description of the academic program (such as in the preface of Assessment  
71 Reports).
- 72 B. What is the program's enrollment? Include number of majors and departmental student  
73 credit hours with full-time equivalent enrollment.
- 74 C. How many students graduate from the program on a yearly basis? What is the average time  
75 to graduation?
- 76 D. What changes has the Department made to the academic program in response to: (1) the  
77 most recent external review; and (2) your assessment process? What other changes has the  
78 Department made to the academic program?
- 79
- 80 2. Learning Outcome Assessment:
- 81 A. What are the program's learning outcomes? Are they clear and measurable?
- 82 B. To what extent do program faculty gather and discuss data on student learning?
- 83 C. What methods are used to measure departmental learning outcomes (e.g., final paper  
84 assessed using rubric; graded assignment)?
- 85 D. To what extent are students meeting the program's learning outcomes?
- 86 E. How do program faculty use student learning outcome data to inform and/or make  
87 adjustments to their curriculum?
- 88
- 89 3. Faculty-Student Engagement:
- 90 A. Describe program faculty's instructional workload (e.g., average class size, student-to-  
91 faculty ratio, the ratio of student credit hours to instructional load credits). Are there  
92 sufficient faculty to meet instructional demand?
- 93 B. Highlight 4 to 8 ways that program faculty engage students in educational activities  
94 designed to promote their students' learning. Such activities can be in or beyond the  
95 traditional classroom.
- 96
- 97 4. Future Plans:
- 98 A. What are the Department's future plans for the academic program?
- 99 B. What is the rationale supporting these plans?
- 100 C. What personnel, space, and financial resources would be needed to implement the  
101 Department's plans?
- 102
- 103 5. Alignment with Strategic Plan<sup>†</sup>:
- 104 A. Do the activities described in 3B align with the current strategic plan? If so, how?
- 105 B. Does the rationale in 4B align with the current strategic plan? If so, how?
- 106

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<sup>†</sup>Faculty are not contractually obligated to provide students with educational experiences that align with the strategic plan. Budget requests (including those that could support current educational activities and/or future plans) made during the annual budget cycle identify how the request aligns with elements of the strategic plan. As such, departments should have the opportunity to convey how they believe their educational activities and future plans align with elements of the strategic plan.

107 **V. External reviewers will answer these questions:**

108 In a time of limited resources, please focus your comments on how to improve the academic program  
109 given the constraints within which the Department currently operates. Please provide rationale  
110 supporting each of your findings and recommendations.

111 1. What are the strengths of the academic program?

112 2. What are the weaknesses of the academic program?

113 3. Given resource constraints, what would produce measurable improvement for the academic  
114 program? Please comment specifically on elements 4A-C in the self-study.

115 4. Discuss how the Department is using data (e.g., learning outcome assessment, enrollment  
116 trends, etc.) to inform programmatic decision making.

# AMENDMENTS

(from the floor)

## **Motion**

To amend Item IV.1.B. (lines 72-73) so that it reads as follows:

- What is the program's enrollment? Include number of majors, *and where appropriate, minors, students served in general education courses and interdisciplinary program courses*, and departmental student credit hours with full-time equivalent enrollment.
- **Motion to amend approved**

## **Motion**

To amend the sentence on lines 53-54 so that it reads as follows:

- The final review report will serve as the basis for the Department (*i.e., chair, program director, faculty*), Dean, and Provost to meet in person and discuss findings from the external review.
- **Motion to amend approved**

## **Summary of Changes External Review Policy for Non-accredited Academic Programs**

*Prepared by Dr. Marianne Fallon, Interim AVP—Planning and Resources*

*February 16, 2019 (v23)*

*Revised March 4, 2019 (v24)*

*Revised March 19, 2019 (v24)*

*Revised March 25, 2019 (v25)*

*Revised April 19, 2019 (v26)*

### **Preamble:**

Given the recent NECHE visit, it is a good time to update the external review process for non-accredited academic degree programs. The goals of the external review are twofold: (1) to meet NECHE requirements (Standard 4, and more specifically [Standard 4.6](#)); and (2) to provide Departments, Deans, and the Provost's Office with information to fuel discussion and shape future planning for academic programs. To those ends, the proposed changes from V22 provide additional clarification regarding the process and content of the self-study and reviewer questions. The Director of OIRA, Academic Deans, Academic Assessment Committee, and Council of Chairs have reviewed the proposed changes and have provided feedback. Further feedback from individual faculty members has also been incorporated. Changes from V25 are printed in blue.

### **Summary of proposed changes:**

Lines 3 and 4. Changed NEASC to NECHE and removed upcoming visit date.

Lines 21 and 24. Changed "degree" to "academic" programs to improve consistency of terms.

Line 24. Added "unless other arrangements have been agreed upon with the department chair" to the sentence beginning "All degree programs in a department will be reviewed at the same time." In some departments, there are so many degree programs (e.g., Manufacturing and Construction Management) that reviewing all programs at once becomes overly burdensome. In such cases, Yvonne Kirby has worked with department chairs to create a more tenable review schedule.

Lines 24 to 26. Removed "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." NECHE expects all academic programs to be reviewed.

Line 24. Placed the footnote about accredited programs after "exceptions" to improve coherence.

Lines 28 to 66. Changed order of elements and formatting to better reflect the typical chronology of the external program review cycle.

Lines 32 to 33. Changed to "... to begin the program review with an informational meeting between the Chair, Associate Vice-President, and Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). The Department will prepare a self-study based on annual and assessment reports for each program under review." This change clarifies steps that occur at the start of the external review process. The initial time investment is intended to help clarify questions about the process, identify concerns or potential obstacles for completing the program review, and (if applicable) discuss solutions.

Lines 34 to 36. Changed to "...departments will respond to a standard set of questions (see below) and are encouraged to include any additional information that their faculty believe is important for the external review." This change telegraphs that the standard set of questions is included within this policy document. In addition, the encouragement to include additional information not specifically requested within this standard set of questions reinforces faculty autonomy.

Line 36. Changed "four-year cycle" to "5-year cycle" to accurately reflect the current practice voted upon by Faculty Senate February 13, 2012.

Line 37. Fixed acronym for the Academic Assessment Committee.

Line 40. Changed "prepare" to "complete" to clarify when exemptions from submitting assessment and annual department reports apply.

Lines 42 to 45. Changed to "The external reviewer(s) will receive the department's self-study and all supporting materials. Subsequently, they will conduct a site visit that includes meeting with the faculty, the Dean(s) and Provost" and "Ideally, the program review would be completed across two adjacent full semesters." These changes clarify process and ideal timeline.

Line 48. Changed "10 pp. summary" to "self-study" for clarification and greater flexibility for departments who decide to combine reviews for multiple programs into a single report, or who determine that they need additional space to adequately reflect their academic program. Ten pages of narrative (not including appendices) is recommended to help constrain the workload for faculty and the external reviewer.

Lines 56 to 57. Removed "The final review report will serve as a basis for future plans in the department's annual/assessment reports" and replaced with "The final review report will serve as the basis for the Department, Dean, and Provost to meet in person and discuss findings from the external review. During the meeting, action items for improving the academic program will be identified and documented. Procedures for following up on action items will also be discussed and documented." This change fulfills a commitment the institution made in the recent NECHE report to "close the feedback loop".



Lines 61 to 62. Changed “3-4” possible external reviewers to “2-3” reviewers to streamline process.

Lines 65 to 66. Specified amounts for honorarium (minimum of \$500 per program) and travel expenses (up to \$500 from the Provost’s Office).

Line 69. Removed “(the NEASC liaison officer)”. The AVP does not necessarily have to be the NECHE liaison.

Lines 72 to 73. Replaced “provided” with “available”. Please see the supplemental material for a list of links to institutional data.

Line 78. Added “Responses should be based on the **previous 5 years or the period of time since most recent self-study.**” This information clarifies the time frame that departments should consider while they complete their self-study.

Lines 80 to 89 and lines 91 to 97. Switched order of “1. Program Learning Outcomes” and “2. Academic Program Profile” for better cohesion.

Line 80. Reworded “Program Learning Outcomes” to “Learning Outcome Assessment” to better reflect the information requested in this section.

Line 81. Reworded for clarification and to align with assessment report dimensions: “What are the program’s learning outcomes? Are they clear and measurable? “

Line 82: Changed “present” to “discuss” for clarification.

Line 83. Reworded for clarification and to align with assessment report dimensions: “What methods are used to measure departmental learning outcomes (e.g., final paper assessed using rubric; graded assignment)?”

Lines 85 to 86. Removed “as set by the program faculty”. All learning outcomes for non-accredited programs are set by program faculty; that clause implies that some learning outcomes are not, which is decidedly not the case.

Lines 87 to 88. Reworded for clarification: “How do program faculty use student learning outcome data to inform and/or make adjustments to their curriculum?”

Line 89. Removed “Is this use of information appropriate?”. It is the external reviewer’s charge to reflect on whether the use of information is appropriate.

Line 91. Added “Include a brief description of the academic program (such as in the preface of Assessment Reports).” This information saves the external reviewer from going to the program website to infer general information about an academic program.

Line 92. Reworded for clarification: “What is the program’s enrollment? Include number of majors and departmental student credit hours with full-time equivalent enrollment.” Links to the data for program enrollment are included in supplemental information.

Lines 93 to 95. Removed questions about contributions to general education and interdisciplinary programs. These questions do not apply to all programs and the term “contribution” is unclear. This is not to say that a department’s contribution to general education and interdisciplinary programs is unimportant—it simply falls beyond the scope of reviewing a specific academic program. If departments are concerned that external reviewers understand instructional load issues that extend beyond students within their degree program (e.g., minors, contributions to general education, and contribution to interdisciplinary programs), the requested information about student credit hours in 1B provides the external reviewer with that information. In addition, departments are encouraged to include in their self-study information that they believe is important to their academic program, even when those questions do not explicitly appear in the standard questions.

Lines 96 to 97. Reworded for clarification: “How many students graduate from the program on a yearly basis? What is the average time to graduation?”

Line 98. Added “What changes has the Department made to the academic program in response to: (1) the most recent external review; and (2) your assessment process? What other changes has the Department made to the academic program?” Responses to the first question produce information required by NECHE. The second question provide departments with an opportunity to discuss programmatic decisions that would not otherwise be captured in their response to the first question.

Line 99. Reworded heading to “Faculty-Student Engagement” to better reflect the content of this section.

Line 99. Added question “Describe program faculty’s instructional workload (e.g., average class size, student-to-faculty ratio, the ratio of student credit hours to instructional load credits). Are there sufficient faculty to meet instructional demand?” Links to relevant institutional data are provided in the supplemental material. This question provides a foundation for productive discussions about workload.

Lines 100 to 102. Reworded to “Highlight 4 to 8 ways that program faculty engage students in educational activities designed to promote their students’ learning. Such activities can be in or beyond the traditional classroom.” This question is worded broadly to provide departments with the flexibility to describe educational activities what they consider to be important facets of their academic program. The rewording provides suggested bounds to this question to help constrain workload. Because of the provision that departments are encouraged to include additional information that they deem important, departments can exceed this range. A list of potential—not necessary—activities is provided in supplemental information.

Line 105. Reworded for clarification and to encourage responses focused squarely on the academic program: "What are the Department's future plans for the academic program?"

Lines 106 to 107. Reworded for clarification: "What is the rationale supporting these plans?" Clause about connection to the University's mission and strategic plan are addressed in Line 109 addition.

Line 108. Reworded for clarification: "What personnel, space, and financial resources would be needed to implement the Department's plans?"

Line 109. Included new section ("Alignment with Strategic Plan") with two parts: "(A) Do the activities described in 3A align with the current strategic plan? If so, how? (B) Does the rationale in 4B align with the current strategic plan? If so, how?". The rationale for this change is explained in a footnote: "Faculty are not contractually obligated to provide students with educational experiences that align with the strategic plan. Budget requests (including those that could support current educational activities and/or future plans) made during the annual budget cycle identify how the request aligns with elements of the strategic plan. As such, departments should have the opportunity to convey how they believe their educational activities and future plans align with elements of the strategic plan."

Line 117. Reworded for clarification: "Given resource constraints, what recommendations would produce measurable improvement for the academic program? Please comment specifically on elements 4A-C in the self-study." Language about improving "the department" was removed because this is not a departmental review; it is an academic program review.

Line 118. Reworded for clarification: "Discuss how the Department is using data (e.g., learning outcome assessment, enrollment trends, etc.) to inform programmatic decision making."