Central Connecticut State University
UNIVERSITY SENATE ACTION

Senate Motion Number FS 19.20.004B

TO: President Zulma Toro

FROM: President of the University Senate

1. The attached motion of the University Senate, dealing with: **Minor Update to External Review Policy** is presented to you for your consideration.

2. This motion was adopted by the University Senate on **09/23/2019**.

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 **09/30/2019**, Senate action reported to the President of the University. (Within five school days of the session in which they are adopted).

    b) By **10/14/2019**, the President of the University to return the motion to the President of the Senate. (Within ten school days of its receipt).

09/30/2019
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:_____

_10/9/2019_____
Date

_____
President Zulma Toro

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

I. Background and Rationale

This process is designed to meet requirements from the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) and the Connecticut Department of Higher Education to have a formal system for reviewing academic 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 academic programs that are submitted annually and data that have been provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (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 academic programs in a department will be reviewed at the same time unless other arrangements have been agreed upon with the department chair.

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.

The initial cycle of program reviews will be based on the 5-year cycle established by the Academic Assessment Committee (AAC) 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-reviewed programs have been reviewed. (Please note: During the year that departments complete the Program Review, the department will be exempt from submitting both Assessment and Annual Department Reports.)

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

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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.

Every semester, approximately four departments will be asked to begin the program review with an informational meeting between the Chair, Associate Vice-President, and OIRA. The Department will prepare a self-study based on annual and assessment reports for each program under review.
In preparing the self-study, departments will respond to a standardized set of questions (see below) and are encouraged to include any additional information that their faculty believe is important for the external review.

The department will submit a list of 2 or 3 possible external reviewers from which the Dean(s), in consultation with the Provost, will select one external reviewer. (In some departments where more than one program exists, a second reviewer may be appointed.) 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 Provost's Office provides funding for the external reviewer(s), including an honorarium (minimum of $500 per program) and up to $500 in travel expenses.

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

The departments will have the opportunity to correct errors of fact and provide clarifications, internally, by paper response to the Dean(s) and Provost. Copies of the final program review report will be filed with the department, the Dean(s), and OIRA. 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. 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.

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

III. Coordination of the Program Review Process

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

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

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

1. Academic Program Profile:
   A. Include a brief description of the academic program (such as in the preface of Assessment Reports).
   B. 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.
   C. How many students graduate from the program on a yearly basis? What is the average time to graduation?
   D. 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?

2. Learning Outcome Assessment:
   A. What are the program's learning outcomes? Are they clear and measurable?
   B. To what extent do program faculty gather and discuss data on student learning?
   C. What methods are used to measure departmental learning outcomes (e.g., final paper assessed using rubric; graded assignment)?
   D. To what extent are students meeting the program's learning outcomes?
   E. How do program faculty use student learning outcome data to inform and/or make adjustments to their curriculum?

3. Faculty-Student Engagement:
   A. 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?
   B. 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.

4. Future Plans:
   A. What are the Department's future plans for the academic program?
   B. What is the rationale supporting these plans?
   C. What personnel, space, and financial resources would be needed to implement the Department's plans?

5. Alignment with Strategic Plan[†]:
   A. Do the activities described in 3B align with the current strategic plan? If so, how?
   B. Does the rationale in 4B align with the current strategic plan? If so, how?

[†] 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.

V. External reviewers will answer these questions:

In a time of limited resources, please focus your comments on how to improve the academic program given the constraints within which 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. Given resource constraints, what would produce measurable improvement for the academic program? Please comment specifically on elements 4A-C in the self-study.

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

Approved by the Faculty Senate, April 22, 2019.