

Academic Department and Program Strategic Plan and Periodic Review Procedures

Clarifications for Recently Accredited Programs

The following are excerpted from the **Academic Department and Program Strategic Plan and Periodic Review Procedures** and describe how recently accredited programs should approach the program review process.

- a. Each program should normally be reviewed on a regular five to seven-year cycle. For accredited programs, the scheduling of the review should be coordinated with the timing of professional accreditation visits. To eliminate duplication of efforts, programs should be able to use materials from the accreditation for their review. As the accreditation requirements may be different from those of the review, accredited programs should ensure that all aspects of the review be addressed.
- b. For accredited programs that have external reviews as part of their accreditation process, these external reviews would normally play the role of the external reviews described above and additional external reviews would be unnecessary.

As noted in “a” above, recently accredited programs should use materials prepared for accreditation. However, it is not sufficient to submit actual accreditation reports as prepared for the accrediting organization since the purposes of the periodic review differ significantly from the purposes of accreditation bodies.

The primary purpose of the program review is to address the recommendation by the Middle States Association of Colleges that academic departments and programs enhance their quality through a periodic, faculty-led review of their strategic plan. While the strategic plan will always be evolving, the periodic review provides an opportunity for the department's/program's faculty to step back and undertake a systematic study of the program, its strategic plan, and the key issues that the program will face as it plans for the future. By reevaluating its strategic direction and updating its strategic plan in light of a comprehensive analysis of the department/program's current condition and objectives, the faculty of a department or program can make significant decisions about its future direction.

To achieve the above objective, you should select a Review Committee and a chair for overseeing the review process. The members of the Review Committee will compose an 8-10 page reflective, focused self-study that explains the program's aspirations and enduring goals and how the program's current offerings support their accomplishment. The self-study should include a detailed analysis, informed by feedback from student learning and other program assessments, explaining key issues and challenges facing the program and the program's response(s). Other areas that should be addressed include the program's ongoing assessment plan, future projects and resource reallocation, and any specific questions suggested by the Dean. The program's faculty should also compose an action plan describing any proposed changes to their strategic plan, including details regarding future projects and resource reallocation.

Section V of the **Academic Department and Program Strategic Plan and Periodic Review Procedures** (*Final Version*) located on the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment website, there are suggested questions that faculty may want to consider as they reflect upon their program. The self-study is not expected to answer all or even most of the listed questions. Instead, the self-study should provide a detailed analysis of the program, written after a program's faculty have reflected upon the answers to these questions for their program. In some cases, the Dean and/or the program's faculty may agree that specific questions, which need not be from Section V, may need to be addressed as part of the written self-study.