

REPORT ON ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Action Requested: Receive the report on Academic Program Review.

Background: Board Policy 3.6 requires review of all academic programs on a seven-year cycle. The Office of the Provost at each institution leads this process and annually reports enrollment, completions, placement and planned program changes to the Board office for each reviewed program. Based upon these reviews and any other information available, the Board office can periodically select programs for on-site audits to assess the need for future Board reviews or actions.

Program Review Process: At the University of Iowa, the University of Northern Iowa and Iowa State University, departmental or program reviews occur at a minimum of every seven years. Departmental or program reviews consist of a self-study and an external review. The external review committee of faculty from peer or aspirational institutions will meet with faculty, staff, students and administrators that can provide additional context for the team. The external team provides a report of observations and recommendations for program improvement. At UNI, departments prepare an action plan in response to the self-study and external report. For all Regent universities, after consultation with Provost, the dean prepares a final letter summarizing findings of the review and setting out recommendations and required actions for the department. The chair, faculty in the department/program, and the Provost receive the final letter. In the spirit of continuous improvement, ISU also requires programs to submit a brief status report to the Office of the Provost at the mid-point of the seven-year review cycle. Programs accredited by external bodies can request that the accreditation reviews serve the role of the program review process. In those cases, the accrediting agency conducts the external review.

2022-23 Program Reviews:

The table below lists program reviews conducted at each Regent university in academic year 2022-23. Except where noted, reviews included all levels of degrees in the program. Some reviews note ongoing changes to streamline their curriculum and improve time-to-degree. Impacts on enrollment from the pandemic and declining high school graduates are evident, and several programs identified ways to embed experiential learning or updated curriculum to improve both recruitment and retention. Practice-oriented master's degrees are popular and provide strong industry connections and graduates of research-oriented programs are showing strong employment and post-graduate outcomes.

Iowa State University	University of Iowa	University of Northern Iowa
Bioinformatics and Computational Biology (grad) Environmental Science Environmental Studies (undergrad second major only) Biological/Pre-medical Illustration (undergrad) Biology Genetics Bioinformatics and Computational Biology Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (grad) Genetics and Genomics (grad) Plant Biology (grad) Microbiology (grad) Biochemistry, Biophysics and Molecular Biology Immunobiology (grad) Plant Pathology, Entomology and Microbiology (grad) Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology (grad) Neuroscience (grad) Veterinary Clinical Sciences (grad and professional)	Business Analytics Biomedical Engineering Chemical Engineering Civil Engineering Environmental Engineering Electrical Engineering Computer Science and Engineering Industrial and Systems Engineering Mechanical Engineering Neuroscience (PhD only) Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Sci (grad)	Construction Management (undergrad) Elementary Education Geography Literacy Education (grad) Middle Level Education (undergrad) Physical Education

Key Findings and Improvements at Iowa State University

- Environmental Science has embedded more experiential courses in the first half of the undergraduate program and inquiry-based courses in the second half. This has helped improve retention in the major and led to steady enrollment numbers and improved graduation rates.
- With the success of the Sustainability minor and the Environmental Science major, the second major in Environmental Studies is shrinking. Program faculty will explore evolving it into a certificate or other mode to augment architecture, business, social science or humanities degrees.
- Biological/Pre-medical Illustration plans to change the program name and create an external advisory council to improve visibility. They are adding AI tools and expanded use of the Student Innovation Center to the courses.
- Biology is developing new undergraduate experiential learning and lab courses to enhance the curriculum and support student retention.
- Due to low enrollment, Bioinformatics and Computational Biology will explore if students are better served with concentration areas in other stable STEM majors.
- Veterinary Sciences has a 95% employment rate and is planning to start an equine rehabilitation program.

Key Findings and Improvements at the University of Iowa

- Business Analytics master's level programs have 100% employment rates for the last several years.
- Undergraduate enrollment in most areas of engineering has declined due to decreasing size of high school graduate cohorts and competing programs at other universities. Graduate enrollment and employment outcomes remain strong.
- To address emerging industry needs, Computer Science and Engineering and Electrical Engineering are developing certificates that will be open to residential students as well as working professionals. Similarly, Industrial and Systems Engineering is developing a new graduate program.
- Due to strong external funding success, the neuroscience PhD program has grown enrollment and graduates are attaining top research and academic positions nationally.

Key Findings and Improvements at the University of Northern Iowa

- Construction management will apply for ABET accreditation in 2024. In addition, they are exploring a minor appropriate for real estate majors and adjustments to the math proficiency requirements.
- Teacher education programs are undergoing significant curriculum transformation to reduce redundancies and streamline field experiences, possibly reducing the number of credits required in all teacher education programs at UNI.
- The geography department is developing a 4+1 professional MA to target industry needs in agribusiness and logistics. In addition, they are working with international universities to attract students interested in accelerated programs to prepare them for these industries. Targeted recruitment efforts in Iowa high schools have led to increased students in the BA and BS programs.
- Literacy Education has reduced program time to completion from three years to two years by reducing credits and streamlining courses.