

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REVIEW OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCEDURE CHANGES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

Action Requested: Receive the report on academic program review procedure changes resulting from the academic program review audit at the University of Northern Iowa.

Executive Summary: This report includes the University of Northern Iowa's follow-up report on the comments, suggestions, and recommendations that resulted from the audit of academic program review and student outcomes assessment procedures conducted by the Board Office in September 2004. Some of the changes implemented by UNI following the audit include the following:

1. The UNI Committee on Academic Program Review (CAPR) revised the academic program review procedures to place greater emphasis on reporting student outcomes and assessment measures, as well as program improvements stemming from assessment results.
2. The Provost's Office established a new Office of Academic Assessment to provide leadership for planning and implementing student outcomes assessment processes, program review and other procedures that support academic program improvement, student learning, and accreditation. The role of the new Office is also to enhance knowledge about best practices in student outcomes assessment as well as provide appropriate in-service training for faculty on student outcomes assessment.
3. The scheduling of academic program reviews of interdisciplinary programs was reviewed and CAPR was asked to pay particular attention to clear communication regarding such reviews.
4. Procedures for contacting prospective external reviewers were improved to ensure that the best possible reviewers are available for campus visits.
5. The Provost's Office requested that deans work with department heads to ensure significant faculty participation in each academic program review.

The University of Northern Iowa responded to the individual recommendations and the suggestions contained in the September 2004 audit report. At the University of Northern Iowa, academic program reviews provide an opportunity for ongoing dialogue regarding program strengths, areas of improvement, student feedback, and strategic planning and initiatives.

Background:

UNI's academic program review and student outcomes assessment processes focus on furthering the University's mission by enhancing undergraduate and graduate education. The primary purpose of academic program review is to assess student learning outcomes and identify strengths and weaknesses of the reviewed program, as well as its centrality to the University's mission. UNI responded to all of the audit recommendations:

1. The university should consider requiring that the Committee on Academic Program Review (CAPR) periodically review its own processes with input from departments.

In consultation with the deans, CAPR reviews academic program review procedures annually and revises procedures accordingly.

2. The university should consider providing additional support for faculty members regarding the use and presentation of institutional data. Higher level analysis of data would be useful to inform judgments at different administrative levels.

The newly created Office of Academic Assessment, in concert with the Office of Institutional Research and the Registrar's Office, will support the academic program review process by providing and analyzing institutional data which contribute to effective program reviews.

3. The university should consider ways to make the external team selection process more consistently objective. The university's existing standards should more consistently guide the external evaluator selection process, including the timing of the external team selection, to ensure that the best reviewers are selected.

Revisions in the procedures allow deans to finalize invitations for external reviewers before the end of the fall semester.

4. The university should consider updating written policies to be more consistent with existing practice to indicate that deans' exit interviews with external evaluators should not be optional.

Each dean determines an appropriate schedule for external reviewer visits.

5. The university should consider communication improvements in the academic program review/student outcomes assessment processes for interdisciplinary programs.

CAPR has been asked to pay particular attention to clear communication regarding the review of interdisciplinary programs.

6. The university should consider in-service training for faculty on the value and practice of student outcomes assessment.

The newly created Office of Academic Assessment has been charged to assess the need for and provide appropriate in-service training for faculty regarding student outcomes assessment.

7. The university should consider ways to involve all faculty members in the review of their program area.

The Provost's Office has requested that deans work with department heads to ensure the highest possible faculty participation in each academic program review.

A copy of the September 2004 audit report is available on the Board of Regents website. Details about UNI's responses to the audit of academic program review and student outcomes assessment procedures are available in the Board Office.