

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**FOLLOW-UP REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW
PROCEDURE CHANGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

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

Executive Summary: In March 2006, the Board of Regents requested that the University of Iowa prepare a follow-up report on the implementation of academic program review procedure changes. The University was asked to include details about the adoption of the new university-wide policy on review of academic programs. The University submitted the following responses to the audit recommendations.

- ◇ The university should consider improvements in its policy that academic program reviews should address how a program fits within the overall university mission and goals (centrality) to make the concept better understood by those doing the reviews.

SUI's Operations Manual for academic program review identifies quality and centrality as the two primary criteria for review. The Operations Manual now requires similar and specific assessment data for each academic program reviewed, whether the review is initiated by the provost or a dean. The program review is listed as a separate component in departmental and collegiate reviews and a minimum of nine criteria must be addressed as part of the program review, including identification of the learning outcomes and assessment.

- ◇ The university should consider ways to provide more emphasis on the fact that the focus of recommendations should be on program improvement within the context of existing resources to avoid unrealistic recommendations.

The focus on program improvement within existing resources is communicated to both the self-study and the review committees. A review of collegiate self-studies was conducted by the vice provost to ensure that the reviews do not focus too heavily on requests for additional faculty or space, when there are insufficient funds to accommodate those requests. Instructions, especially from deans, to review committees now emphasize this consideration.

- ◇ The university should consider a review of its overall academic program review policies and how they relate to the individual college policies and, where necessary, articulate the need for college-specific differences. This should result in making the purposes and procedures clearer and more consistent and eliminate misunderstanding. The university should also consider procedures for periodically updating policies.

All policies were reviewed in Summer 2005 by a Program Review Committee appointed by the vice provost. The changes in the Operations Manual take into account differences between colleges. All collegiate policies are now consistent with the provisions of the Operations Manual. Procedures will be reviewed periodically by the vice provost and the Program Review Committee.

- ◇ The university should consider policies and procedures to develop follow-up action plans that facilitate using the results of the academic program reviews for decision-making and program improvement.

The provost's office now obtains an action plan from the dean at the conclusion of the unit review. A progress report is obtained at the end of the first and third years.

- ◇ The university should consider ways to ensure all programs assess student outcomes and that the results are used to improve student learning and teaching.

As part of the accreditation process, all programs must identify desirable student outcomes and procedures for student outcomes assessment. The Operations Manual provides procedures that ensure more focus on student outcomes in program reviews.

- ◇ The university should consider a university-level policy that describes critical and/or minimum parameters to be covered in the academic program review.

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- ◇ The university should re-consider its use of external evaluators. Unique to the Regent universities, SUI's procedures call for a team of non-unit campus reviews with one external reviewer in an advisory or consultant role. The university should consider reversing these relative roles where possible, i.e., the external review would be conducted by at least two external evaluators, with assistance from one or more non-unit campus faculty acting as advisors. At a minimum, it would seem that the external evaluators should be more active participants in the external review process.

The new provisions in the Operations Manual explain the central role of external evaluators and remove the language suggesting that they are merely advisors.

The procedures in the revised Operations Manual have been applied in the review of the College of Dentistry, including the DDS and BS in Oral Hygiene programs, and the Colleges of Education and Law.

The Operations Manual specifies that instructional programs must be assessed with respect to the learning objectives of the program; curriculum content in relation to the learning objectives of the program; student achievement of learning objectives of the program; program changes since last review and success of changes in relation to program learning objectives; recommendations for program changes based on recent assessments and other pertinent data; relation of the program to the goals of the college; continuing need of the program; overall quality of the program; and interaction of faculty and students with other parts of the university (e.g., development and participation in interdisciplinary programs).