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**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT ON ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS**  
**AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**

**Action Requested:** Receive the annual governance report on academic program reviews at the University of Northern Iowa.

**Executive Summary:** This report represents a quality assurance effort regarding Regent university academic programs. According to the Board of Regents Policy Manual §6.07, the Regent universities “shall conduct a review of all academic programs on a seven-year cycle. Newly initiated programs will need to demonstrate that the program has met the goals and objectives for the program at the time that it was initially proposed.” Information about student outcomes assessments, including program changes resulting from the assessments, should be an integral part of the academic program reviews and reports.

This academic program review report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan objective (1.1) to “offer high-quality programs through ongoing program improvement for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree students and special school students” and priority (4.0) “to demonstrate public accountability and effective stewardship of resources.”

During the 2007-08 academic year, the University of Northern Iowa completed 19 academic program reviews. The results will guide program improvement and student outcomes assessment.

- ◆ School Psychology (Ed.S.)
- ◆ School Psychology with a Context and Techniques of Assessment Emphasis (M.A.E.)
- ◆ Elementary Education (B.A., M.A.E.)
- ◆ English, English Teaching, and TESOL<sup>1</sup> (B.A., M.A.)
- ◆ Middle Level Education (B.A., M.A./M.A.E.)
- ◆ Economics (B.A.)
- ◆ Electrical Information and Engineering Technology (B.S.)
- ◆ Geography (B.A., M.A.)
- ◆ Industrial Technology (M.S., D.I.T.)
- ◆ Graphic Communications (B.A.)
- ◆ Technology Management (B.A.)
- ◆ Construction Management (B.S.)
- ◆ Manufacturing Technology (B.S.)
- ◆ Technology Education and Training (B.A.)

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<sup>1</sup> Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

**Background:**

An academic program review is based on assessment of a program's strengths and weaknesses, and should result in curriculum modifications and teaching and learning improvements. The objective of an academic program review is to go beyond minimum standards and assess the desired level of quality at the institution.

The academic program review process is a well-established practice that assists the Board of Regents and the universities to meet the objectives of the Board's and institutions' strategic plans. This on-going process provides critical information that enables the institutions to strengthen programs through curriculum revisions and budget reallocations; to offer creative ways (including interdisciplinary efforts) to redirect or bolster weaker programs; to determine the need for new programs; and/or to eliminate unnecessary programs. The reviews present a picture of current conditions, along with recommendations that emerge from the self-studies and external reviewers.

The following are typical steps of an academic program review:

- ◆ Self-Study. Using university guidelines, the review begins with the program's or department's faculty conducting a comprehensive self-study that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The self-study also describes the student outcomes assessments that are essential elements of the program.
- ◆ External Peer Review. An external peer(s) from the field or discipline reviews the self-study and makes a campus visit. External reviewers are usually faculty from similar programs that have national reputations and are located outside of Iowa. The external reviewers prepare and submit a report of the findings and recommendations for consideration by the appropriate university entity.
- ◆ Implementation Plan. The dean(s) and provost's office review all documents and, with the program faculty, create an implementation plan for the program that builds on strengths, corrects weaknesses, and establishes strategic goals and objectives for the program. The implementation plan is a critical aspect of strategic planning because it helps assure that concerns and recommendations raised in the reviews are formally addressed. The implementation plan also describes how the results of student outcomes assessment will be used for program improvement.

For each of the programs that underwent an academic program review, the departments developed a self-study which resulted in an in-depth assessment of the program. The self-study was followed by a site visit by a minimum of two non-institutional evaluators who assessed the program and offered recommendations and suggestions which the departments used for program improvement.

Sample Recommendations and Program Improvements and Institutional Responses (italics)

- ◆ School Psychology Program (Ed.S. and M.A.E.)
  - "Prepare students to work with diverse populations, especially English language learners." *Existing courses have expanded English language learners coverage.*

- *“Become a leader in professional development for Iowa school psychologists.” Two faculty and four students are collaborating with AEA 267 to evaluate behavioral assessments and interventions, autism training, and transition plans. The results of these evaluations will inform inservice needs. Two faculty members and two students serve on the board of the Iowa School Psychologists Association and assist with conference planning. Two faculty members are collaborating with the University of Iowa school psychology program and the assistive technology center to conduct research on providing preservice and inservice opportunities to school psychologists.*
  
- ◇ Elementary Education (B.A.)
  - *“Coherence of course content, standards, and assessment.” A project to map the curriculum is underway. Additional standards-based assessments are being developed and attention given to the integration of Student Outcomes Assessment and teacher work sample data. The objective is to articulate the elementary education major from the first semester through the final student teaching experience. A website has been developed as a foundation for articulation of the program and can be found at: <http://www.uni.edu/icss/articulation/index.html>.*
  - *“Recruitment and diversity.” Work continues within the department to meet the goal of the strategic plan for a 25% increase in the diverse population at the undergraduate level, especially males and minorities.*
  
- ◇ Elementary Education (M.A.E.)
  - *“Standards based assessment.” The program faculty have determined that the teacher work sample is not the best instrument for Student Outcomes Assessment in the program. Instead, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards have been adopted department-wide as the basis for the graduate program. As part of the articulation plan for the program, the faculty have identified ‘Critical Performances’ which will include a description of the research paper requirement and a rubric which identifies standards for this critical performance.*
  - *“Require a course in ‘Research Writing’ and ‘Statistics’.” The faculty determined that the program already includes adequate coursework in ‘Research and Writing’ and that the purposes of the program do not dictate an additional course focusing on statistics. Therefore, no new courses are being planned.*
  
- ◇ English, English Teaching, and TESOL (B.A. and M.A.)
  - *“Discuss/consider complete renovation of Baker Hall.” There are ongoing discussions regarding University plans to renovate or replace Baker Hall.*
  - *“Add student outcome assessment procedures that either work with existing courses or establish new ‘capstone’ type experiences for students.” In Fall 2008, implemented short-term SOA plans. In Fall 2008 and Spring 2009, continued development of long-term SOA plans for major programs, including design of requisite capstone course(s), where needed, and restatement of major requirements.*
  
- ◇ Middle Level Education (B.A.)
  - *“Curriculum and assessment.” In Fall 2009, will incorporate the Portfolio Performance Assessment in the SOA Plan and will continue to work on developing quality of students’ reflective writing.*

- “Program assessment.” *The SOA Plan will focus on Standard #1 of the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support Consortium – The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.*
  
- ◇ Middle Level Education (M.A.E.)
  - “Student Outcomes Assessment systems.” *Revised program with content area specialization.*
  - “Revise program to align with new Iowa Middle School Endorsement.” *Revised program will be included in the 2010-2012 Catalog.*
  
- ◇ Economics (B.A.)
  - “Improve recruitment of majors.” *The number of majors has increased by 25%.*
  - “Create joint program with mathematics department.” *The joint program was created and approved by the College of Business Administration Senate and is awaiting approval by the University Curriculum Committee.*
  
- ◇ Electrical Information and Engineering Technology (B.S.)
  - “ABET<sup>2</sup> accreditation.” *The department has initiated the preliminary stages to be evaluated for ABET accreditation. One important step in the process was the renaming of the program to become Electrical Engineering Technology. The name change was approved by the Board of Regents in April 2009.*
  - “Surveys for curriculum improvement.” *Surveys are needed to assist in improving the curriculum. The department will use web-based surveys to seek feedback from current students and alumni.*
  
- ◇ Geography (B.A.)
  - “Lack of coherency in the human and environmental geography programs.” *The department developed an applied emphasis within the program that provides the structure needed to prepare students for careers in regional economic development planning.*
  - “College-wide professional advisors should be brought into conversation with departmental advisors to further improve advising and recruitment.” *The department has joined the freshman-advising program with UNI Academic Advising. The department has provided updated materials to university advisors and will pursue innovative outreach options, such as podcasts, to inform existing majors and attract new students.*
  
- ◇ Geography (M.A.)
  - “The department should develop a clear set of written guidelines for incoming graduate students that outline expectations for students and provide them with critical dates and tasks for matriculating through the program.” *The department’s new graduate coordinator has been charged with this task which should be available in hard copy and as a downloadable document from the web page in Fall 2009.*

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<sup>2</sup> Formerly Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.  
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- “The department should increase recruitment efforts to retain students from the region, including Iowa, to make the program less reliant on international students.” *The department will update and create new media material for student recruitment.*
  
- ◇ Industrial Technology (M.S. and D.I.T.)
  - “Student outcomes assessment.” *The department is in the process of conducting additional student outcomes assessment for the graduate programs, which will include web-based responses to relevant questions and participation of graduate students during the past 10 years in the Master’s program and 15 years in the doctoral program.*
  - “Updating core curriculum for the doctoral program to include more pedagogy and research experiences.” *A research class was added yielding a total of three research classes.*
  
- ◇ Graphic Communications (B.A.); Technology Management (B.A.); Construction Management (B.S.); Manufacturing Technology (B.S.)
  - “Program publicity regarding assessment measures used to advance students through the program(s) and educational achievement rates of graduates.” *The department has done outcomes assessments which are used in advising students of backgrounds related to job opportunities. The department has a dedicated office/person for student advising and assistance. The office is in the process of updating the website to include assessment measures.*
  - “Placement of graduates.” *There is a need to provide statistics related to placement rates and salary levels to prospective students. Broad information on placement and salaries is made available through the UNI placement office and on the internet. The department is in the process of developing an internet-based survey of graduates that will provide examples of key businesses that hire graduates and the generic salary levels received by graduates.*
  
- ◇ Technology Education and Training (B.A.)
  - “Student recruitment from public schools and community colleges.” *During the summer, the Technology Education Program Coordinator is working with the Student Advisor Recruiter and office staff to prepare recruiting packet for Fall 2009. Additional recruitment is also planned for the next Industrial Technology and Training Education conference.*
  - “Need for elementary technology education emphasis.” *There are no elementary technology education classes in Iowa, but there are plans to discuss this issue with the director of science education.*