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Academic Program Review Guidelines

Abstract

Program review is an ongoing process involving the faculty and others concerned with the particular academic program. The guidelines established herewith will ensure that evaluation of the academic programs will occur formally at regular intervals. This document, therefore, describes the guidelines and a timetable for the systematic evaluation of academic programs at Kean University

Keywords

Academic Program Review Guidelines

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ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW GUIDELINES

Overview

Program review is an ongoing process involving the faculty and others concerned with the particular academic program. The guidelines established herewith will ensure that evaluation of the academic programs will occur formally at regular intervals. This document, therefore, describes the guidelines and a timetable for the systematic evaluation of academic programs at Kean University

Purpose of Program Review

Goal 1 of Beyond 2020: Kean University's Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is as follows:

TO POSITION KEAN UNIVERSITY AS AN ACADEMIC FOCAL POINT OF ONGOING AND TRANSFORMATIONAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT PREPARE STUDENTS TO MEET THE CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES OF OUR WORLD (2020, p. 1)

The primary purpose of program review supports this goal of fostering excellence in education. The review process, therefore, provides an opportunity for programs to identify areas of strength and address areas that need improvement. The program review process is also an important source of data for making some resource allocation decisions. Accordingly, at each level of the review process (program and dean), recommendations will be made that the University preserve the strengths of particular programs or address specific weaknesses.

Program Review Outcomes

Through engaging in the program review process, faculty and leadership will:

1. Determine the program's relevance and viability.
2. Identify the program's strengths and weaknesses.
3. Develop recommendations for strengthening the program based on findings and determine the resources to facilitate them.

Overview of Evaluation Procedures for Academic Programs

Scope of the Process

1. Definition of Academic Program

Academic programs shall be defined as programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the following categories:

- A. Degree-granting programs (e.g., B.A. in Psychology, B.S. in Chemistry, Master of Public Administration)
- B. Non-degree-granting programs (e.g., General Education, Learning Assistance Program, Developmental Studies)

2. Guidelines for Program Review

If the self-study report developed by the program faculty does not address such significant requirements of the program review process as outcomes assessment, then the program faculty will be expected to address those program review requirements as an addendum to the self-study report. All other programs shall be evaluated according to guidelines in this document, as approved by the President upon recommendation from the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

3. Frequency of Evaluation

Each academic program that is to be evaluated by the guidelines shall be evaluated every five (5) years. Exceptions to a five-year cycle may occur as needed if required by state or national accrediting requirements, or if the Provost or President identify a specific need that requires a change in the cycle.

The schedule for review has been developed by the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs in consultation with the Dean.

4. Selection of Programs to Be Reviewed

The Dean of each School will consult with the Executive Director, Chairperson, and/or program coordinator to determine the schedule for developing materials.

B. Methods for the Review Process

1. Review of Mission, Goals/Objectives, Curriculum Map, and Student Learning Outcomes

Each program should review the program's mission, goals/objectives, curriculum map and student learning outcomes along with the mission of the college. Every program should have clearly articulated student learning outcomes. Within the review process, the program should determine whether these elements and activities remain consistent with the University's mission statement, as well as academic and professional standards within the discipline. Programs should also review the student learning outcomes as outlined by the School of General Studies. The institution will continually modify and adapt its mission to be responsive to the needs of its constituencies and the mandates of the State. To remain viable, a program also needs to be responsive to these changes.

2. Review of Assessment Data and Use for Improving Teaching and Learning

Each program should review the program's assessment data and how that data can be used to improve teaching and learning. Programs should be collecting summative assessment data in capstones on a regular basis. Capstones should also have rubrics wherever possible. Indirect evidence includes surveys of students. At the conclusion of data gathering from the assessment mechanisms, there should be recommendations on improving student outcomes.

C. The Program Review Document

A. Initiation and Individuals Involved

The evaluation shall be initiated as a self-study by the program faculty, under the leadership of the executive director and coordinator. Provisions shall be made to involve in the program review faculty, students, administrators, alumni, and, where appropriate, employers and relevant professional associations. This process must begin during the second half of September.

B. The Scope of the Document

The overall emphasis of the program review report shall be on assessing the ways in which the program is meeting its goal and objectives and the relationship of these goals and objectives to the mission of the University. Specifically, the report shall provide descriptive and evaluative information about the program, incorporating multiple units of data to support its claims.

The report should follow the format outlined below.

1. Mission, Goals/Objectives, Student Learning Outcomes, and Curriculum Map
 - Provide the mission statement of the academic degree.
 - Provide a set of goals/objectives of the academic degree.
 - Provide the explicitly stated student learning outcomes of the degree.
 - Provide the curriculum map for the degree-granting program.
2. Description of the Academic Program and Syllabi
 - Provide a catalog description of the academic program.
 - Provide syllabi for each required course (optional for other courses).
 - Provide all capstone syllabi.

- List all courses in the course catalog that have not been offered in the last three years.

3. Outcomes Assessment Plan

For each stated student learning outcome, provide the following:

- Describe the multiple methods that will be used to assess the SLO.
- Provide data on each SLO (Student Learning Outcomes).
- List the courses in which the SLO is addressed, advanced, and mastered.
- Provide feedback on the results gathered.
- Describe how the data will be used to improve teaching and learning.
- Describe the assessment used in capstone to ensure that the program has met its knowledge, skill, and ability goals as defined in the SLOs.
- Provide any relevant graduating student or alumni data.
- Provide any data from employers (if necessary)
- Provide a representative list of all internships.

4. Rubrics and Other Tools, Final Exams

- Provide copies of all rubrics used in the program.
- If there are any other tools used (e.g., checklists), please either describe them or provide copies.
- Provide a copy of final examination(s) for all mandatory or high-frequency courses.

5. Statistical Data

Provide the following statistical and trend data on the academic program for the last four years. Request such data from Institutional Research.

- Enrollment headcount.
- Graduation headcount.
- Number of transfer and native graduates.
- Time to graduation.
- Number of resident faculty at time of review.
- Number of adjunct faculty and the total number of sections taught during the fall semester before the review.
- List of all sites where courses are held (Union, Ocean, etc.).
- % of core courses that require a paper of seven pages or longer.

6. Discussion of Trends

- Provide a narrative explanation of the significant trends in any of the above.

7. Faculty

- Provide a roster of resident faculty, including their titles and the courses they've taught by semester over the last three years.
- Provide CVs for all resident faculty.

- Provide resumes/CVs for all adjunct faculty teaching longer than ten (10) years.
- Provide a sampling of other adjunct faculty.

8. Students

- Include a description of the academic profile of the students served and consideration of whether or not they reflect the diversity of the student body as a whole.
- Include any other survey data gathered from students, including but not limited to insight from SIR-IIs, etc.
- List any student-related groups that supported the program (e.g., Honors Society in Business).

9. Degree Criteria and Requirements

- Provide a copy of the latest guide sheet.
- Provide a breakout of course distribution (i.e. GE, major requirements, electives).
- List the admissions requirements (if any). Provide a rationale for any admissions requirements if they exist.
- If necessary, discuss any possible changes to any of the above.

10. Review Kean University's Semester Credit Hour Policy¹ (listed below). Provide a brief statement on methods employed to ensure adherence to the policy with respect to courses.

As defined by the New Jersey Administrative Code Title 9A- Higher Education, "Semester credit hour" means 50 minutes of face-to-face class activity each week for 15 weeks (or the equivalent attained by scheduling more minutes of face-to-face class activity per week for fewer weeks in the semester) in one semester complemented by at least 100 minutes each week of laboratory or outside assignments (or the equivalent thereof for semesters of different length). The code further specifies that this hour-for-hour method of calculation is not required for certain types of courses, such as independent study, distance learning or blended (or hybrid) learning.

11. Nontraditional Course Delivery/Weekend College

- List any courses using nontraditional methods of instructional delivery (online, hybrid).
- List any courses under consideration for online and hybrid.
- List assessment procedures used to monitor the quality of instruction in these courses.

12. Accreditation Organizations

- Specify professional accreditation organizations to which the program may be subject (e.g., NCATE, CSWE, etc). For each accreditation organization, list the last date(s) of their visit.

¹Under Section 8 of the Verification of Compliance requirements, Middle States (2015) requires "evidence that the institution's credit hour policies and procedures are applied consistently across the full range of institutional offerings...evidence must include: Documentation from recent academic program reviews" (p. 12).

- Specify any professional accreditation organization with which the department may seek affiliation. If any, please describe the process needed for joining.

13. Summary and Recommendations

- Summarize the main elements included in the current review and curricular (and other related) changes proposed as a consequence of this review.

14. Additional Resources Requested

Indicate what new resources are needed over the next five years to:

- Enhance the current program.
- Preserve the strengths of the current program.
- Address the weaknesses in the program identified by the review.
- Address any technological impacts on the discipline.
- Address any material needs for the program.

Program review is a university requirement.

Program Review Procedures

A. Role of the Chair/Program Coordinator

In accordance with the schedule of program review, when a program is scheduled to begin its review, the Dean of the College notifies the Executive Director, Chair, and/or coordinator. In the case of graduate programs, the Graduate Dean is also notified. In consultation with the relevant program coordinators, the Executive Director selects one (or more, depending on the number of programs to be reviewed within the school) individual to assume responsibility for the review. This individual is referred to as the *Program Review Coordinator* in this document. A program review committee shall be formed within the School to provide support for the review effort, and the Program Review Coordinator shall periodically describe the status of the effort at program meetings. At the conclusion of the review, the final document shall be reviewed by program faculty and submitted to the Executive Director who will forward to the Dean. This report must be forwarded to the Dean and the Office of Accreditation and Assessment on, or before, June 30.

B. Role of the Dean

The program review document will be submitted to the Dean of the College. The College Dean will forward copies of graduate program review documents to the Graduate Dean. The College Dean (and Graduate Dean, in the case of graduate programs) group, serving as the Chair of the program review committee, reviews the program review documents and makes recommendations for improvement, data collection and resource requirements, if any. It is the responsibility of the Dean to recommend program or course elimination if necessary. The college-level committee to review the program shall comprise all Executive Directors and two faculty members and one student appointed by the Dean. College level review must be completed on, or before, July 31 and the report presented to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Based on this review and discussion, the College Dean will prepare a brief report. This report will include:

- (1) An evaluation of the findings and recommendations of the program review report.
- (2) A discussion of how the recommendations will be addressed within the framework of the college strategic plan and budget requests for ensuing years.

The Graduate Dean will provide a written response to the recommendations, in the case of graduate programs. The Graduate Dean's response will be appended to the College Dean's report.

C. University Planning Council in Program Review

In general, the group of documents generated in the program review process will serve as a source of input into the planning process for the academic area and for the University as a whole. The program review process will also provide an opportunity for faculty in the academic disciplines to receive feedback about the quality of their own academic programs and the quality of academic programs in general. The VPAA Office, in consultation with the deans and appropriate department chairs, will conduct an annual institute or forum to review and discuss outcomes and trends. The University Planning Council must assess all program review documents and make recommendations to the President and program faculty. If needed, UPC must also make recommendations for resources at the University level and revisions to the mission.

UPC will serve as the University's internal program review committee. Its recommendations must be submitted to the President by November 15 of each year.

D. Program Review Time-lines

1. Program review process initiated by the Dean and Executive Director and program review task-force is charged during the first two weeks in September.
2. Program level review is completed and results and reports submitted by June 30 to the Dean.
3. College level review is completed and report submitted to the VPAA (who forwards material to the UPC) on, or before, July 31.
4. The UPC must submit its report and recommendations to the President by November 15.

(Revised 3.6.17 and updated 9.23.2020)