Oklahoma State University Policy and Procedures

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW	**2-0215** **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS** **July 2007**

POLICY

1.01 The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Academic Program Review policy statement follows. Items in brackets [ ] are inserts from the OSU Program Review procedures.

1.02 In carrying out their constitutional responsibilities within the framework of the Oklahoma Statutes (70 O.S. §3208 (2001)), the State Regents recognize the primary role of institutional faculty, administrators, and governing boards in initiating and recommending needed changes in functions and educational programs. It is therefore both desirable and necessary that institutions provide leadership in developing processes and criteria for the review of educational programs and functions at the campus level. The results of institutions' review of educational programs in connection with this policy will be utilized at the campus level to make determinations about the quality and efficiency of instructional programs. Also, the outcomes of such program review will assist the State Regents in decision making at the state level with regard to educational programs and functions.

PURPOSE OF POLICY

2.01 Program review is the method by which the State Regents and the institutions evaluate proposed and existing programs. The primary purposes of program review are:

> A. To maintain and enhance the quality of instruction, research, and public service conducted at state colleges and universities.
>
> B. To respond to existing and emerging social, cultural, scientific, and economic needs (including addressing the needs of business/industry).
>
> C. To provide to citizens a variety of high-quality opportunities for intellectual growth.
>
> D. To make programs commonly accessible to academically qualified citizens of the state.

E. To utilize the state's and the institution's resources effectively and efficiently.

2.02 Informed decisions related to program initiation, expansion, contraction, consolidation and termination as well as reallocation of resources are among those that may result from the program review process.

2.03 The policy that follows strikes a balance between legitimate needs for public accountability and institutional autonomy in matters of internal management. Further, it recognizes the roles as defined by tradition and statute of institutions and their governing boards, and the State Regents.

And, finally, it is knowledge-based rather than opinion- and intuition-based; it requires that conclusions be based on factual information and developed through analysis and assessment.

DEFINITION: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

3.01 For purposes of this policy, an instructional program is a sequentially organized series of educational experiences designed to culminate in an academic degree or certificate. [For purposes of this Policy and Procedures Letter, options and emphasis areas offered by different academic units as one degree should be submitted in one review document and all degree programs offered by one academic unit should be submitted as part of one review document.]

INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY

4.01 The philosophy of the State Regents supports institutional autonomy in matters of internal management. Therefore, each institution should assume primary responsibility for the review of proposed and existing programs consistent with governing board guidelines. This central role of the institutions is based on the concept that self-studies, reviews and evaluations, and subsequent recommendations must provide for institutional participation and be sensitive to institutional needs, e.g., accreditation requirements, internal plans, program improvement decisions, resource allocation patterns, etc. The process of review is also an institutional prerogative within the framework of the components specified in this State Regents' policy and general procedures.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

5.01 At the core of the review process is the selection of criteria to be used in the

evaluation. Both qualitative and quantitative criteria must be included in the review process. Careful collection and analysis of data is essential to the review process. The various criteria may be weighted differently for each program depending upon its objectives; the evaluation should make clear the relative weight given to the criteria by the institution.

5.02 The criteria listed below are designed to facilitate the analytical evaluation of the present goals and objectives, activities, outcomes, strengths and areas of needed improvement for a program.

    A. Centrality of the Program to the Institution's Mission - The purpose of the mission of an institution is to indicate the direction in which the institution is going now and in the future. The mission defines the fundamental reason for the existence of the institution. Together with the planning principles and goal statements, the mission reveals the philosophical stance of the institution with respect to education and learning while at the same time providing a framework for the maintenance of institutional integrity and development. An assessment will be made as to the centrality of the program to the institution's mission.

    B. Vitality of the Program - Vitality of the program refers to the activities and arrangements for ensuring its continuing effectiveness and efficiency. To maintain its vitality and relevance, a program must plan for the continuous evaluation of its goals, clientele served, educational experiences offered, educational methods employed, including the effective incorporation of technology, and the use of its resources. This vital principle or force can best be observed by examining the past and present initiatives to ensure the vitality of the faculty, students, and program.

        1. Quality Indicators - Quality indicators may vary by institutional mission; however, institutions should measure the efforts and quality of their programs by: faculty quality, ability of students, achievements of graduates of the program, curriculum, library, access to information technology to achieve educational objectives and other critical services. As appropriate, institutions should evaluate the program against industry or professional standards for state-of-the-art technology. Institutions must provide specific documentation of student achievement. Such documentation should include programs outcome assessment data consistent with the State Regents'

Assessment Policy.

2. Demand for the Program - An assessment of the demand for a program takes into account the aspirations and expectations of students, faculty, administration, and the various publics served by the program. Demand reflects the desire of people for what the program has to offer and the needs of individuals and society to be served by the program.

3. Effective Use of Program Resources - The resources used for a program determine, in part, the quality of the educational experiences offered and program outcomes. Resources include financial support (State funds, grants and contracts, private funds, student financial aid); library collections; facilities, including laboratory and computer equipment; support services; appropriate use of technology in the instructional design and delivery processes, and the human resources of faculty and staff. The efficiency of resources may be measured by cost per student credit hours; faculty/student ratio; and other measures as appropriate. The effective use of resources should be a major concern in evaluating programs. The resources allocated to the program should reflect the program's priority consistent with the institution's mission statement and academic plan.

C. Uniqueness of the Program - A program can be unique because of the subject matter treated, the students served, the educational methods employed, and the effect of the achievements of the program on other institutions or agencies. Such programs may be maintained at an institution even though high costs and/or low enrollments are experienced if acceptable justifications are made.

PROCEDURES

6.01 These guidelines are designed to provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate the differences which exist among Oklahoma's public institutions while ensuring that their program review processes have certain common characteristics and products.

6.02 All programs in the State system are scheduled for review on a five-year cycle. The review of programs will encompass all levels of certificate and degree programs.

6.03 [Information generated for external certification or accreditation review varies

widely among colleges and would not address each criterion listed for program review, accreditation reviews will not substitute for program review. However, information generated for either process may be used to complement the other. Additionally, if a department is required to undergo an accreditation review every six years (as opposed to five) the department may have the flexibility to conduct the program review every six years to coincide with the accreditation process. Extensions longer than one year will not be permitted.) Administrators with responsibility for a program can call for a study more frequently if needed.]

6.04 [It is important that all programs be evaluated using a core of information that is common across programs. The Office of Institutional Research and Information Management (IRIM) will provide standardized information for each program upon request of the departmental administrator. The department may offer additional data as well as offer interpretations of data provided by IRIM.]

6.05 [Individual academic program evaluations will be initiated by the responsible department head with the dean ultimately responsible for the completion of all evaluations within his/her college. The review team will consist of representatives of departmental faculty to be appointed by the department head as well as other representatives appointed by the department, college or Provost.]

Programs may be triggered for early review based on the following minimum productivity standards (totals per year averaged over five years). Institutions will be notified of programs not meeting either one of the two standards listed below:

A. Degrees	
Associate	5
Baccalaureate	5
Master's	3
Doctoral	2
B. Majors	
Associate	25.0
Baccalaureate	12.5
Master's	6.0
Doctoral	4.5

The service function of the courses supporting the degree program may be used to determine if an early program review is warranted. Criteria for Evaluation (see previous section) may also be considered. Programs triggered for early review must

be reviewed within one year of State Regents' notification of the required review.

Because each institution has a distinct mission, academic expertise and understanding of its own programs, the institution's own review reports will be the foundation of the statewide review process.

CONTENT OF PROGRAM REVIEW REPORTS

7.01 Although the length of a written evaluation can be expected to vary with the complexity of the program under consideration, a comprehensive evaluation should be possible within ten or fewer pages.

7.02 Each program review summary report submitted to the State Regents will include the following:

A. Description of the Institutional Review Process - This section should reference the general process of the review, including a list of those who participated in the review and any unique features of the review, such as the use of outside consultants or the conduct of the review in relation to an accreditation visit.

B. Program Objectives - Objectives should be written so that the need they address is clear; program outcomes can be assessed; and program clientele are specified. Program objectives are extremely important not only because they guide the activities of the program but also because they provide the context for program assessment and planning.

C. Review of Duplicated Programs - Given the fiscal constraints on Oklahoma higher education and the desire to use limited resources wisely, the elimination of unnecessary program duplication is a high priority of the State Regents. In cases where program titles imply duplication, programs should be carefully compared to determine the extent of the duplication and the extent to which that duplication is unnecessary. Not all duplication is undesired or unnecessary. Normally, similar undergraduate programs in the core areas of basic liberal arts and sciences disciplines would not be considered unnecessarily duplicative. Unnecessary duplication is a more specific concern in vocational/technical, occupational, and graduate and professional programs that meet special manpower needs. However, there are cases where student demand or the economic development needs of the state are sufficient to warrant the existence of similar programs at different institutions. There is also a vital synergy between undergraduate and

graduate education and some graduate programs may be needed to help sustain the quality of the related undergraduate programs.

Consistent with the *Academic Program Approval Policy* and the historical place of the program in the institution's mission, the following criteria will be used to evaluate the degree to which similar programs are unnecessarily duplicative:

1. Demand for the Program - The demand for the program should be evaluated in the following categories:

a. Demand from students, taking into account the profiles of applicants, enrollment, completion data, and occupational data.

b. Demand for students produced by the program, taking into account employer demands, demands for skills of graduates, and job placement data.

c. Demand for services or intellectual property of the program, including demands in the form of grants, contracts, or consulting.

d. Indirect demands in the form of faculty and student contributions to the cultural life and well-being of the community.

2. Alternative Forms of Delivery - The process of program review should address meeting demands for the program through alternative forms of delivery including electronic and on-site delivery of the program or portions of the program by other institutions.

D. Analysis and Assessment - This section should be developed from an institution-wide perspective and may address part or all of the criteria for evaluation listed in Section, Criteria for Evaluation.

1. Conclusions should be supported by the factual information considered in the review, specifically including:

a. Program quality as reflected by its regional or national reputation, faculty qualifications, and [scholarly activities of faculty and graduate students];

b. The appropriateness of the program to the institution's mission; Quantitative data: (may be

included as an appendix to the report though the assessment of the data should be documented in this section.)

c. The number of majors (head count and FTE) in the instructional program for the last five years;

d. Courses taught specifically for this program for each of the last five years, and the size of classes (sections) in these courses for the five-year period;

e. Direct instruction cost of the above courses for the review period;

f. Roster of faculty members;

g. The number of graduates from the program in each of the last five years; and

h. Student credit hours by level generated in all courses taught by the department with primary responsibility for the program for all available years up to 5.

1. Student achievement of student learning outcomes]

2. [Recommendations:
   a. The recommendations of the review team will be submitted to the dean of the college. Recommendation options would include initiating new programs (see Policy and Procedures Letter 2-0211); expanding the existing program; maintaining the program at the current level; reducing the program size and/or scope; merging programs; reorganizing and/or consolidating programs including management functions; or discontinuing the program (see Policy and Procedures Letter 2-0211).

   b. The dean will review the report with recommendations and submit it to the Vice President for Academic Affairs with his/her endorsement or; if

there is a disagreement with the report and/or recommendations, the dean will outline the areas of disagreement and submit all related materials to the Office of Academic Affairs. If initiation or discontinuance of a program is recommended, review should include the impact and relationships with other related curricula and departments within the University community (see Policy and Procedures Letter 2-0211).

c. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will ask the Office of University Assessment and the Graduate College to review the materials. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will submit all related materials with his/her recommendations to the President for final (internal) action.]

E. Institutional Program Recommendations - This section should start with a description of recommendations that have been made as a result of the review and of actions that are planned to implement these recommendations; for example, expand program, maintain program at current level, reduce program in size or scope, merge or consolidate program, reorganize program or terminate program. A program may be placed on suspension. Consistent with its inactive status, no students will be recruited or admitted to the program, and the program will not be listed in the college/university catalog. The program will be reinstated or deleted within three years or other specified period designated when placed on suspension.

Recommendations should be clearly linked and supported by the information and analyses that were articulated in the previous sections and should contain a realistic strategy for implementation of any changes. For example, if the program is recommended for expansion and will require additional resources, a plan for the acquisition or allocation of such resources should be included. If the program is recommended for termination: What are the strategies for dealing with personnel matters, with students, with physical resources that will now be free for reallocation to other programs. This section of the report also should include, where appropriate, a discussion of such items as anticipated changes in program objectives, organizational realignments, faculty turnover and renewal, changes in

curriculum, changes in clientele, changes in support, and possible requests for changes of role and mission statements.

F. Review by the State Regents' Staff - The State Regents' staff will review the respective institutions' program reviews. The staff may request additional information or evidence at this time from the home institution. Following the completion of the State Regents' staff review, the staff will provide an informational report to the State Regents. An appropriate response will be made in writing to the institution's president.

G. Monitoring the Review Process - Each institution will monitor the program review process and modify internal procedures to improve its effectiveness. The State Regents' staff will monitor the overall process and suggest improvements as appropriate.

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Faculty Council, December 10, 1985
President Boger, January 28, 1986

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