THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW
March 28, 2017

Introduction, Background, and Purpose

Most academic institutions include a program review process in their operational practices. In some cases, especially in professional programs, the expectations for program review are primarily defined by an external accreditation or certification body. In the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Scranton, this is the case for our programs in Chemistry, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering, and Criminal Justice. Even for academic programs without accreditation or certification, program review is often required by another group. In the State of Pennsylvania, program review is required under Code 31.51: *Academic Program Audit.* In addition, the University of Scranton's regional accrediting body, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, clearly states as one of its "Requirements for Affiliation" that "The institution systematically evaluates its educational and other programs and makes public how well and in what ways it is accomplishing its purposes" (3). In addition, the Middles State "Standards for Accreditation" include "periodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities" in its standard for the "design and delivery of the student learning experience" (Standard III) and the assessment of student learning and achievement, including the "periodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes," in its standard for "educational effectiveness assessment" (Standard V). In the College of Arts and Sciences, both of these standards are supported by the Academic Program Review process (see Academic Program Review and Assessment below).

In the past, Academic Program Review in the College of Arts and Sciences followed the format of a "program audit." Except for a few specific cases in which the faculty of a program chose to pursue a special topics review format, the "program audit" consisted primarily of information on enrollment, budget, library holdings, equipment, and faculty teaching hours. The audit provided useful information about a program's viability, but it provided little information about student learning or the program's overall effectiveness.

The role of faculty in evaluating program effectiveness, and in making recommendations on program development, is vital to the integrity and quality of all of our academic programs. As stated in previous Academic Program Review Guidelines, "the ultimate purpose of the review is improvement of the academic program." The College of Arts and Sciences now utilizes Academic Program Review, supported by the ongoing assessment of student learning, as its formal mechanism for evaluating the quality of its academic programs and for planning their improvement. As such, Academic Program Review includes an essential and central role for the program faculty which is appropriate to their responsibility for the program curriculum and the overall program quality.

One central role of the faculty in this process, which is critical to the continuous improvement of academic programs, is the assessment of student learning outcomes. Yet the faculty role also goes well beyond summarizing assessment results. Academic Program Review also provides a clear alignment of

the program goals and objectives, the assessment of student learning outcomes, and the use of assessment results and other information to improve the program. In addition, the Academic Program Review process includes a proposed vision for the program's future, taking into account developments in the relevant academic discipline(s), the program's financial health and sustainability, and the resources needed for proposed improvements.

The Current Academic Program Review Process

The process of Academic Program Review starts with the gathering of meaningful information about the effectiveness and quality of each program. This information will come primarily from the program's ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes. It may also be drawn from other relevant sources. This information serves as the basis for evaluating the program's strengths and shortcomings which, in turn, generates the conversation among the faculty about program quality. The process is designed to focus primarily on curriculum and student learning outcomes, and it is structured and managed in a way that complements the central responsibility of the faculty, which is the teaching and learning process.

Academic Program Review is a routine expectation for every departmentally based program and every larger interdisciplinary program. Similarly, every smaller interdisciplinary program—including interdisciplinary minors and concentrations—is expected to complete periodically an Impact Report, which is a version of a program review modified for the mission and smaller scope of these programs (see "Impact Reports for Smaller Academic Programs" below). Academic Program Reviews and Impact Reports now normally occur in a six-year cycle (See "Program Review Sequence" below). With the agreement of the Dean, exceptions will be made, especially to align a program's review process with the expectations of an external accrediting or certifying agency. The six-year cycle allows programs to review two sets of assessment results for all of their program learning outcomes—In the College of Arts and Sciences, programs submit assessment results on one-third of their outcomes each year—and conforms to the expectations of most of our accrediting agencies (the cycle was changed from five to six years with the March 24, 2017 revision).

The review process also includes a substantial administrative role and feedback process intended to generate conversation and mutual reflection on the effectiveness and the future of the program. This administrative role includes consultation with the Dean, a meeting of the Dean and the program faculty to discuss the program review report, formal recommendations from the Dean based on the report and this consultation, and the submission of the report along with the Dean's recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost. Administrative feedback and ensuing conversations may lead to important revisions of the report.

Near the completion of the Academic Program Review, the Department's chair and/or faculty members will provide a summary of the program review to the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Conference. The purposes of this presentation are to share information, especially "best practices" related to program development; to encourage deliberation regarding common challenges and initiatives; and to receive feedback in a productive and collegial manner. These presentations will ordinarily take place at the December meeting of the Dean's conference. They will include a review of the assessment plan for

each program and examples of the use of assessment results to improve student learning and educational quality.

Program Review and Assessment

While all academic programs in the College of Arts and Sciences regularly assess and improve their effectiveness, particularly with regard to student learning outcomes, and submit assessment results for all of their Program Learning Outcomes to the Office of Educational Assessment in a three-year cycle, Academic Program Review provides a deliberate opportunity for a more focused and consultative reflection on assessment results. In addition, Academic Program Review provides an opportunity for departments to review and revise their assessment plans to improve the relevance, quality, and usefulness of their assessment results.

Most programs in the College of Arts and Sciences—especially those without external accreditation—developed and implemented assessment plans through the College's first Academic Program Review cycle, which began in the 2007-08 academic year (see "Academic Program Review Cycle" below). Academic Program Review continues to provide a structure for programs to review and revise their assessment plans in light of the following: 1) the missions of the program, the College, and the University; 2) developments in the relevant academic discipline(s); 3) assessment results, including results from the direct assessment of student learning outcomes; and 4) relevant planning documents, including the Strategic Plans of the College and the University. In other words, program faculty develop and revise assessment plans—in Middles States terms, they "conduct assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes"—in ways that are meaningful to them in the context of both their academic expertise and the University's mission and identity.

In addition, Academic Program Review is one of several processes to assure that academic programs meet the expectations for Middle States accreditation, particularly with regard to standards III and V:

Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

[P]eriodic assessment of the effectiveness of programs providing student learning opportunities.

Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

[P]eriodic assessment of the effectiveness of assessment processes utilized by the institution for the improvement of educational effectiveness

For further information about assessment at the University of Scranton, see material provided by the Office of Educational Assessment, particularly the University's Comprehensive Plan for Student Learning Assessment at http://www.scranton.edu/academics/provost/institutional-effectiveness/oea.shtml.

Intended Audiences

The intended audience for the Academic Program Review includes the program faculty, department chairpersons and program directors, relevant deans, members of the College of Arts and Sciences Deans' Conference, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost. The Deans' Conference is provided a briefing on the review and an opportunity to make suggestions which will be communicated to the program faculty for their consideration.

The Middle States Commission on Higher Education is also part of the intended audience, especially for those elements of the review that include assessment results and lead to improvements based on these results. For those programs that are accredited or certified by appropriate professional groups, Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, and Computer Engineering by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), Chemistry by the American Chemical Society (ACS), and Criminal Justice by the American Society for Criminal Justice Sciences, and others that might follow, these professional groups are also included in the intended audience. For these accredited programs, care will be taken to integrate the Academic Program Review with the requirements and expectations of the accrediting agency, assuring that the program meets the relevant professional standards and minimizing duplication of effort.

Responsibilities of the Chairperson and/or Program Director

According to the Faculty Handbook, one role of the department chairperson is "to provide leadership in the development and maintenance of excellence in the department's programs." For some interdisciplinary programs, the program director assumes this responsibility. Therefore, the chairperson or program director is ultimately responsible for completing the review, submitting the final report, and serving as the contact for communication during administrative review. This responsibility may be assigned to another faculty member with the agreement of the Dean.

Faculty who are responsible for the program evaluate its effectiveness. The Academic Program Review process will vary among programs, but collaboration and open discussion about the results of the assessment of student learning outcomes, and the implications of these results for program effectiveness, are essential for the review to be of high quality. Likewise, a collegial and collaborative discussion on how the program will be improved is essential to generate a compelling and achievable vision for the program.

Responsibilities of the Dean and the Assistant Dean for Assessment and Programs

The Faculty Handbook states that the Dean has "primary responsibility for the development and improvement of the programs of study within the school or college. In discharging this responsibility, the dean is to consult the appropriate department(s) and the Dean's Conference." Thus, in the College of Arts and Sciences, Academic Program Review is the formal mechanism that ensures the faculty and the Dean's Conference are involved in academic program development and improvement. The Dean is responsible for maintaining a schedule so that all major academic programs undergo review. The Dean is also responsible for ensuring that consultation occurs with the program faculty and that the administration evaluates the reviews.

In addition to these overall responsibilities, the Dean and the Assistant Dean for Assessment and Programs may assist programs as needed throughout the review process. This assistance may involve the development of assessment plans, coordination of the Academic Program Review with the expectations of external accreditors (when relevant), decisions about special elements to be included in the review, decisions about what data might be needed to pursue the review, prioritizing short-term and longer-term improvements in the academic program, and deciding whether to include an external reviewer from another institution. The Dean and Assistant Dean may also serve as liaisons between the reviewing faculty and other offices on campus. During the review process, the dialogue among the program faculty, the chairperson or program director, and the Dean and Assistant Dean is a critically important part of the process.

The Place of External Reviewers

It is common practice in higher education to employ an external reviewer from another university or from the accrediting agency to conduct a review on behalf of a program. For academic programs with external accreditation, the accrediting agency sets the expectations for site visits and other uses of eternal reviewers. For programs in the College of Arts and Sciences without external accreditation, external reviewers are not required. The Dean and the program faculty may consider this option as they prepare for a program review. If a decision to utilize an external reviewer is made and approved by the Dean, then a timeline and a budget for this element must be developed jointly by the Chairperson/Program Director and the Dean.

Selection of an external reviewer requires the Chairperson/Program Director to propose three to four candidates, with their qualifications, and a rationale for their suitability, to the Dean who will normally select one of the candidates.

Program Review and Comprehensive Resource Review (CRR)

The cost of education continues to grow increasingly important to our students and their families, and the University depends heavily on maintaining sufficient enrollments. Accordingly, an important component of Academic Program Review in the College of Arts and Sciences is a consideration of the cost and the financial sustainability of our programs.

Beginning in the spring semester of 2017, Departments and program will utilize the University's Comprehensive Resource Review and will include, in their Academic Program Review, specific proposals to improve cost efficiency and long-term sustainability. CRR analyses for all of the College's programs are available from the Finance Office for each academic year, beginning with 2013-14. The Department should carefully analyze the CRR for each of its programs and for the Department as a whole. This cost analysis should take into account the CRR for each year beginning with 2013-14. Starting in 2019-20, the cost analysis should include the CRR for at least the previous six years. Strategies to improve cost efficiencies might include increasing program enrollments, increasing course enrollments, eliminating low-enrolled courses, more efficiently sequencing courses (e.g., eliminating multiple sections

when possible, offering low–enrolled course less frequently, replacing low-enrolled courses with readers), and more efficient use of both full-time and adjunct faculty.

Recommendations from Previous Program Reviews

The Academic Program Review should include a specific account of the progress made on each recommendation from the last review (usually six years prior), as well as a plan for further progress where needed. Those Departments or programs with external accreditation or certification should also include their responses to any recommendations or concerns raised by the accrediting or certifying agency.

Contributions to the University and College Strategic Plan

The strategic plan of the College of Arts and Sciences, *2015-2020 Strategic Plan: Mission, Goals, and Objectives* (May, 2016) takes its goals directly from the strategic plan of the University, *The University of Scranton Plan: An Engaged, Integrated, Global Student Experience* (May, 2015). The College strategic plan also derives directly from the College's mission statement:

> As a liberal arts college within a Catholic and Jesuit University, The College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Scranton offers a wide range of academic programs based upon an understanding of transformational education as a means to academic excellence, personal and spiritual fulfillment, and thoughtful service to the human community. The College is a community of learners dedicated to providing a liberal arts education for all of the University's students, to the pursuit of wisdom and the dissemination of knowledge, and to addressing the critical problems of the world.

The Academic Program Review should provide a direct and realistic account of how the Department and each of its programs support this mission, with reference to specific initiatives aligned with the College strategic plan.

Program Development and Resources

Program faculty should present their plans for developing the program for the six-year period following the review. These plans might involve significant changes or more modest adjustments. Regardless, the plan should be based on results from the program's assessment of student learning outcomes and should be informed by the mission of the program, the mission of the College, and the mission and strategic plan of the University. The plan should also be based upon current trends in the discipline(s) of the program faculty, and in this respect should also include information specifically relevant to the discipline(s) from external sources, including professional associations.

The Academic Program Review should also include an estimate of the resources required to pursue the plan for developing the program. Ideally this should not be presented as an "all-or-nothing" proposal but as a series of developmental steps each requiring some resources to advance the plan.

Additional Elements in the Academic Program Review

The Dean and the program faculty may decide to include additional elements in the Academic Program Review as dictated by particular circumstances and situations. Additional elements should be included only for significant reasons and only after careful discussion about their relevance to the overall program review.

The Academic Program Review Report

The following structure is recommended for the Program Review Final Report:

1. Executive summary
2. Current program goals and objectives (Existing Documents)
3. Current program assessment plans (Existing Documents)
4. Program description and curriculum (University Undergraduate Catalog)
5. Assessment methods and results during the previous six years (Compile existing information)
6. Changes to the academic program during the previous six years (Compile existing information), including plan for further progress where needed
7. Analysis of the Comprehensive Resource Review (CRR) for Department and each of its programs, including strategies to improve cost efficiency
8. Account of the progress made on each recommendation from the last program review as well as a plan for further progress where needed. Those Departments or programs with external accreditation or certification should also include their responses to any recommendations or concerns from the accrediting or certifying agency.
9. Account of how each Department and program supports the College's mission, with reference to specific objectives stated in the strategic plan and specific initiatives aligned with these objectives
10. Plans for program development during the next six years
11. Resources required to support the development plan
12. Additional elements

Appendices
   A. Assessment Plans, Curriculum Maps including program-level student learning outcomes, and assessment reports (as submitted to the Office of Educational Assessment)
   B. Program Faculty Curriculum Vita
   C. Comprehensive Resource Review data for each year under consideration (see above)

Impact Reports for Smaller Interdisciplinary Programs

In the College of Arts and Sciences, the Impact Report is a critical element in the evaluation and development of smaller interdisciplinary programs, particularly those not included in any department's Academic Program Review. The purposes of the Impact Report are to clarify the program's mission, to assess its effectiveness and sustainability, to articulate a vision for its future, and to assure its continuous improvement. Like the Academic Program Review for department-based programs, the impact report is intended be part of a deliberative process—involving the program's director (if the program has a

director), the program's faculty, and the Dean and/or the Dean's designate—leading to informed and thoughtful decisions regarding the future of the program.

For these programs, the impact report takes the place of the more comprehensive program reviews undertaken by academic departments. Suggested elements are as follows:

- Program mission statement (noting connections to the mission statements of the University and the College)
- Program goals, student learning outcomes, and assessment plan based on the student learning outcomes (some of these outcomes must be embedded in courses)
- Program and course enrollment data for the last six years, distinguishing between required and elective courses
- Program graduation/completion data (including the last six years)
- Post-graduate data
- Syllabi for courses included in the program, including student learning outcomes
- External funding
- Partnerships within the University and outside the University
- Events associated with the program (guest speakers, student presentations, faculty presentations, performances, cultural activities, etc.)
- Data reflecting student engagement
- Account of the progress made on each recommendation from the last Impact Report as well as a plan for further progress where needed.
- Account of how program supports the College's mission, with reference to specific objectives stated in the strategic plan and specific initiatives aligned with these objectives

With the approval of the Dean, the director or faculty of an interdisciplinary program may choose to substitute a fuller program review for the impact report.

The Academic Program Review Schedule

January-February	Dean's office notifies the chair or director of the program which is scheduled for review. The Dean and the Assistant Dean for Assessment and Programs meets with the chair or program director to discuss the review process.
February-May	Program faculty review recommendations from previous Academic program Review and progress on these recommendations, information from current and past program assessment, data from Comprehensive Resource Review, and other relevant information, then prepare a summary of how the results have been used to improve the program. Ordinarily, this process will primarily involve summarizing previous reports.
May – October	Using information drawn from assessment activities, and other information relevant to the academic program, the program faculty engages in deliberations about the status and future direction of the program. These

deliberations should lead to specific plans for developing the
program during the next six years. Meetings with the Dean, the Assistant
Dean for Assessment and Programs, the Finance Office, and the Office of
Educational Assessment may be scheduled as needed.

November-December   Program faculty complete the Academic Program Review Report and submit it to
the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

December   A summary of the Academic Program Review Report, including progress on the
assessment of student learning, is presented to the Deans' Conference.
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February-March   The Dean meets with the program faculty to discuss the report. This discussion
will normally focus on an initial draft of the Dean's recommendations.

April-May: The Dean provides written recommendations to the program faculty and submits
the final Program Review Report and written recommendations to the
VPAA/Provost.

Program Review Sequence:

Dates refer to the academic year in which the review begins: i.e., a program scheduled for review in 2017-
18 will begin the process, as described above, in January-February of 2018.

Group 1 (2007-8, 2014-15)

History

History (BA)
International Studies (BA)

Physics and Electrical Engineering

Physics (BS)
Biophysics (BS)
Computer Engineering (BS)
Electrical Engineering (BS)
Engineering Management (formerly Electronics and Business (BS)

Sociology, Criminal Justice, and Criminology

Criminal Justice (BS)
Sociology (BS)

World Languages and Cultures

Classical Languages (BA)
International Languages—Business (BA)
Modern Languages (BA)

Group 2 (2011-12, 2016-17)

Neuroscience (interdisciplinary program)

Neuroscience (BS)

Computing Sciences

Computer Information Systems (BS)
Computer Science (BS)
Software Engineering (MS)

Theology/Religious Studies

Theology/Religious Studies (BA)
Theology (MA)

Group 3 (2010-11, 2017-18)

Chemistry (date has been adjusted according to guidelines of the American Chemical
Society)

Biochemistry (BS, MS, MA)
Chemistry (BS, MS, MA)
Chemistry-Business (BS)
Chemistry-Computers (BS)
Clinical Chemistry (MS)
Forensic Chemistry (BS)
Medical Technology (BS)

Group 4 (2011-12, 2017-18)

Biology

Biology (BS)

Group 5 (2012-13, 2018-19)

Communication

Communication (BA)
Journalism and Electronic Media (BA, new program, 2014-15)
Strategic Communication (BA, new program, 2014-15)

English and Theatre

English (BA)
Theatre (BA)

Mathematics (BA, BS)

Applied Mathematics (BS, new program, 2014-15)
Mathematics (BS)
Mathematics (BA, new program, 2014-15)

Philosophy

Philosophy (BA)

Political Science

Political Science (BS)

Psychology

Psychology (BS)

Group 6 (2013-14, 2019-20)

Program Review

Biomathematics (BS)
Special Jesuit Liberal Arts Program

Impact Reports

Art History
Asian Studies
Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology (BS)
Catholic Studies
Environmental Sciences (BS)
Honors Program

Latin American Studies (BA)
Peace and Justice Studies
Media and Information Technology (BS)
Women's Studies (BA)

Resources

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation.* 13th Edition. 2015.
https://www.msche.org/publications/RevisedStandardsFINAL.pdf

University of Scranton. Office of Institutional Effectiveness. *Assessment Documents & Resources.*
http://www.scranton.edu/academics/provost/institutional-effectiveness/assessment-documents.shtml

University of Scranton. Comprehensive Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning
file:///C:/Users/R93979208/Downloads/ComprehensiveAssessmentPlan_with%20appendices2016%20(3).pdf

University of Scranton, Office of Educational Assessment.
http://www.scranton.edu/academics/provost/institutional-effectiveness/oea.shtml