

OUS Academic Program Review Policy

At its September 2008 meeting, the Board received a draft report and heard a presentation from the co-chairs of the Provosts' Council regarding the proposed new OUS academic program review policy and process. To implement the policy requires Board approval.

Currently, the Board's Internal Management Directive (IMD) 2.015 addresses academic program review policies, and further guidance is provided in the Board's Policy on Academic Degree Program Planning and Implementation. While there is overlap between the two documents, there are also differences in the characterization of processes that lead to confusion.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board rescind Internal Management Directive (IMD) 2.015 and adopt the new Academic Program Review Policy and Process, described below, as a new Board Policy.

(Board action required.)

OUS ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW POLICY AND PROCESS

Focus

The intention of the Board's policy governing academic program review is to:

- Advance Board and OUS goals through the array of high quality academic programs offered;
- Provide the Board with strong quality assurance regarding academic programs;
- Serve as a mechanism for implementing the Board's portfolio approach to managing OUS universities;
- Connect to other program review functions, such as those involved in regional and specialized accreditation and internal institutional review of existing programs; and
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board, Provosts' Council, and OUS universities with respect to academic program development, review, and approval.

This policy addresses the Board's role with respect to new program approval and five-year follow up approval for previously approved new programs, and provides for regular reports to the Board by the OUS Provosts' Council on actions relating to review of existing programs (both internal campus reviews and accrediting body reviews) and other program-related actions, such as program eliminations and name changes. The policy addresses expectations of the Provosts' Council and OUS universities for maintaining a rigorous academic program review process.

Key Elements for Proposed New Programs

All new program proposals will require information on the following elements:

Program description: Disciplinary foundations and connections; program objectives; programmatic focus; degree, certificate, minor, and concentrations offered; curriculum; instructional delivery, including program location (if offered outside of the main campus), course scheduling, and the use of technology; ways in which the program will seek to assure quality, access, and diversity.

Relationship to mission and goals: Connection to OUS and institution goals for access, student learning, research and/or scholarly work, and service; manner in which the program reflects the institution's strategic priorities and signature areas of focus; how the program meets the needs of Oregon and enhances the state's capacity to respond effectively to social, economic, and environmental challenges and opportunities.

Accreditation: Identification of the relevant accrediting body or professional society with established standards; the program's ability to meet accreditation standards; the institution's goal with respect to accreditation of the program.

Need: Market demand; ways in which the program serves the need for improved educational attainment in the region and state, as well as the civic and cultural demands of citizenship.

Outcomes and quality assessment: Expected learning outcomes, means of assessment, and ways such information will be used to improve curriculum and instruction; program performance indicators, including prospects for success of program graduates, whether employment or graduate school; consideration of licensure, if appropriate.

Program integration and collaboration: Identification of other closely related OUS programs and Oregon private college programs; ways in which the program complements other similar programs at the institution and in other Oregon institutions; potential for collaboration; potential impacts on other programs with regard to budget, enrollment, faculty workload, and facilities use.

Financial sustainability: A business plan that anticipates and provides for the long-term financial viability of the program; information on anticipated expenses and revenues, including external sources of funds; projected faculty resources; student-faculty ratio; resources devoted to student recruitment; graduate assistantships and fellowships; library support; development and maintenance of unique resources (facilities, laboratories, technology) necessary to offer a quality program in this field.

External review: Review by external program faculty and administrators, required for all graduate level program proposals; not required for undergraduate or certificate programs.

Process for New Program Approval

Academic program proposals are initiated and developed at the institution using established campus processes, which normally include review by the department or division, university curriculum committee, faculty senate, dean, and provost. In addition, program administrators seek informal collegial review from faculty in other OUS universities. In most cases, the campus process takes six to eight months to complete.

When the campus is ready to bring the proposal forward for Board approval, the provost submits the proposal to the Provosts' Council, via the Chancellor's Office, for formal interinstitutional review and comment, and for discussion at the next regular Provosts' Council meeting. If the consensus of the Council is to move the program to the next step, the campus prepares a program abstract for submission to the Oregon Office of Degree Authorization (ODA) for consideration of adverse impacts on other postsecondary education sectors. Following ODA concurrence, the proposal is brought to the next regular Board meeting for approval. In the case of graduate-level programs, external review is completed prior to sending the proposal to ODA. The time from submission to the Provosts' Council to Board approval is normally 7 weeks for undergraduate and certificate programs and 16 weeks for graduate level programs.

If consensus to advance the program is not achieved in the initial Provosts' Council discussion, the proposal is returned to the campus for additional information and follow up to resolve the concerns. If the subsequent Provosts' Council discussion does not result in consensus to move the program forward, the proposal is then referred to the appropriate Vice Chancellor, accompanied by additional information related to the areas in dispute. Following discussion at the next Provosts' Council meeting, the Vice Chancellor prepares his/her recommendation either to advance the proposal for Board approval or to rescind the proposal. The time from initial submission to Board approval for program proposals requiring additional information, discussion, or resolution will be one to two months longer than in the normal process.

Five-Year Follow-Up Review of Previously Approved New Programs

New degree programs will be evaluated within five years of implementation. Campuses will submit information to the Provosts' Council that addresses program changes since initial approval, faculty and other resources devoted to the program, enrollment and degree production, accreditation, and student outcomes. The Provosts' Council will review and discuss the information. In cases in which the program did not meet the required criteria, the Provosts' Council will prepare a recommendation to the Board regarding action on that program.

Delivery of an Existing Program to a New Location

While neither the Provosts' Council nor the Board will normally engage in formal review of existing programs (that being the responsibility of the institution), the Provosts' Council will seek information about programs to be offered in new locations. Such information will include a brief description of the program, evidence of need for the program in the proposed location, faculty and other staff delivering the program, other

resources supporting the program in the new location (building, labs, library, and equipment), instructional delivery approaches, and budgetary impact. The proposal will be discussed at a regular meeting of the Provosts' Council to provide other OUS institutions an opportunity to raise concerns and advise on ways to resolve them.

Provosts' Council Annual Report to the Board

Each year, during the fall term, the co-chairs of the Provosts' Council will provide a written report to the Board that includes the following information:

- A summary of institution accreditation reports and recommendations that took place during the preceding academic year;
- Highlights from specialized accreditation reports;
- A summary of the results of all five-year follow up reviews conducted during the preceding academic year;
- Highlights from campus reviews of existing programs during the preceding year; and
- Identification of program additions, eliminations, and name changes.

Access to Program Review Information

In coordination with Chancellor's Office staff, the Provosts' Council will post and maintain on the OUS website the policies, guidelines, forms, and reports related to this policy. In addition, the website will contain links to OUS institutions' academic program review activities and reports, including information on reviews of existing programs.

Note to Board

To effectively implement this policy, the Provosts' Council believes that a more robust organizational structure is needed.