ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCEDURES

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I. ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCEDURES

The Academic Program Review (APR) Procedures are designed to provide Stanislaus State faculty, administrators, and other reviewers information to guide and support the APR process. The Procedures provide background on the purpose and guiding principles of the APR cycle and resources for completing the self study. APR components have been aligned to the WSCUC Criteria for Review (CFRs) which are referenced throughout the procedures.

The assessment strategies outlined in the Academic Program Review Procedures adhere to the university's Principles for the Assessment of Student Learning (2004) which define the role of assessment within the institution. The APR focuses on academic quality, program integrity, and student learning. The APR cycle is a well-planned, systematic, continuous improvement process connected to the Stanislaus State Mission, Vision, Values, and Diversity Statement; Strategic Plan Goals; and Program/Unit Goals, Outcomes, and Activities (Figure 1). The five goals of the Stanislaus State Strategic Plan provide guidance for academic programs and support units to improve and assess progress towards achieving our mission.

Mission, Vision, Values, and Diversity Statement

| 1. Be a student-ready university | 2. Provide transformational learning experiences drive by faculty success | 3. Boldly pursue innovation and creativity. | 4. Hone administrative efficacy through thoughtful stewardship of resources. | 5. Forge and strengthen bonds with our communities |

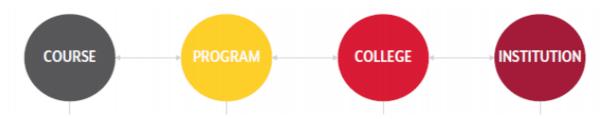## Academic Programs and Support Unit Goals, Outcomes, and Activities

Figure 1 : Aligning with Stanislaus State Mission and Strategic Plan Goals 2017-2025

II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PURPOSE

The purpose of the Academic Program Review (APR) at Stanislaus State is to enhance the quality of academic programs through a focused, in-depth self study completed by faculty.
The APR is intended to be meaningful, manageable, flexible, and collaborative. APRs provide information for curricular and budgetary planning decisions at each administrative level (WSCUC CFRs 4.1- 4.4).

Governance responsibility for the development, implementation, and periodic review of the effectiveness of APR procedures is vested with the University Educational Policies Committee (UEPC) in consultation with other governance committees participating in or affected by the procedures. The APR procedures are dynamic, subject to continual examination and refinement as necessary.   Changes to the procedures may be recommended by and to the UEPC for consideration, consultation with the Graduate Council and Provost's Advisory Council, and recommendation to the Academic Senate (WSCUC CFRs 4.6, 4.7).

III.   ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

 The Academic Program Review (APR) is part of the institutional academic assessment process. An essential element of the APR is the identification and evaluation of program learning outcomes (PLOs). Faculty reflections and conclusions drawn from data derived from program and course learning outcomes are augmented with data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, the Library, and the Office of Information Technology. The process of reflecting upon and using data to inform discussions and actions contributes to decision making and continuous program improvement. The review process strengthens connections between the program, the college, and the University. Varying roles and responsibilities are shared among program faculty, administrators, internal reviewers (college and university committees), and external consultants.

Figure 2: Institutional Assessment Process

The APR generally occurs once every seven years and includes:
- Faculty involvement with the Stanislaus State community of administrators, students, alumni, and employers; institutional and program-level documents (see Fig.1) to guide the APR;
- Assessment of educational effectiveness using learning outcomes that describe what the student will be able to know and do, under what conditions, with identified measurable results or products attained;
- Multiple assessment methods;
- Review and analyses of data to assess progress toward achievement of learning and to inform decision making;
- Informed recommendations and actions based on analyses; and
- Development of an implementation plan that provides the structure for creating annual reporting/planning to continue the cycle of self-inquiry, review, and improvement for the next six years. The Plan provides the structure for updates as necessary for currency and consistency with University changes in structure, institutional data, and academic programs.

IV.   ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCES

The APR process is defined through the responsibilities of program, faculty, college and university committees, and administrators. Leadership for Academic Affairs Assessment is provided by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, with faculty holding the primary responsibility for academic assessment. Resources and support for the Academic Program Review process are provided by the Office of Assessment (Assessment Specialist and Faculty Fellow for Assessment), Assessment of Student Learning Subcommittee, College Assessment Faculty Learning Communities, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics. A variety of resources are available for review and use on the Office of Assessment website.

PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

Accredited Programs

Programs involved in professional, or specialized accreditation will have the APR coordinated with the accreditation or re-accreditation review cycle. The professional or specialized accreditation self study typically includes the APR requirements. The Substitution of Accreditation Self Study for the Academic Program Review Self Study (see Specialized Accreditation Resources) provides an overview of the required APR components. Any elements not covered in the accreditation self study will need to be completed for the APR (CFRs 2.1, 2.2.).

General Education Program

The General Education APR includes the traditional program (both upper and lower division requirements/courses). The APR self study for the General Education program is completed by the Faculty Director for General Education in collaboration with the General Education Subcommittee of the University Educational Policies Committee and under the direction of the AVP (Academic Affairs). The General Education APR adheres to the following path for development and review:

- Faculty Director for General Education
- General Education Subcommittee
- University Educational Policies Committee
- Academic Senate (via Senate Executive Committee)

Graduate Education

Graduate Council reviews all graduate-level APRs. Information is collected from the programs on student achievement on the six graduate learning goals. The purposes of the graduate student learning goals assessment are directly informed by the University's Mission, Core Values, Strategic Plan, and by the needs of graduate programs and faculty.

Interdisciplinary and Honors Programs

The Interdisciplinary and Honors Programs complete a self study, modified as appropriate to meet the needs and unique nature of their programs. Interdisciplinary minors will complete a modified APR depending on availability of data.

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Program faculty participate in the preparation and review of the APR. Also, each academic program has an identified department chair (or equivalent), program faculty, and dean (or appropriate administrator) responsible for overseeing the academic program. Assessment support is provided by the offices of Assessment, Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, and the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. These offices provide assessment resources and workshops as well as offering individual consultations to refine outcomes, develop assessment methods, review programmatic data, and report and store findings. In addition to these offices, faculty leadership and support is provided by the Assessment of Student Learning Subcommittee of the University Educational Policies Committee and department chairs (WSCUC CFRs 1.2, 4.6, 4.7).

Program faculty are responsible for developing and annually assessing student learning outcomes as a means of evaluating program effectiveness via the annual report process. The annual assessment of these outcomes contributes to the seven-year continuous improvement cycle.

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES: INTERNAL REVIEWS

College and university committees provide an internal review component for the APR process. Colleges evaluate APRs using their established processes and criteria consistent with university policy and procedures and accreditation standards. Completed APRs are submitted to the AVP (Academic Affairs). Colleges ensure review committee members receive orientation and training for conducting APRs. Colleges may establish additional requirements for the effectiveness of the APR process. Similarly, the University Educational Policies Committee Subcommittees (Assessment of Student Learning Subcommittee and General Education subcommittee) and the Graduate Council apply criteria to evaluate APRs, consistent with requirements identified in the Constitution of the General Faculty (WSCUC CFRs 4.6, 4.7).

The college review committee, college dean, and university committee (as appropriate) recommend to the Provost one of the following actions as a result of the APR:
- Program approved for continuance with expectation for successful implementation of the seven-year plan.
- Program approved for continuance with specified modifications and under conditions noted, including progress reports and possible review in less than seven years.
- Program recommended for suspension or discontinuance as indicated in the University's Policy for the Suspension and Discontinuance of Academic Programs.

ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The AVP (Academic Affairs), on behalf of the Provost, facilitates the APR process (see APR Timeline) and works closely with the college deans to ensure that a) a meaningful and thorough review is conducted for each degree program, interdisciplinary program, honors program, and general education program; b) self-study reports, recommendations, and implementation plans are completed in a timely manner; c) outcomes of the review are communicated to the campus community and the CSU; and d) outcomes of the review are linked to decision-making processes for academic program development, strategic planning, and budgetary processes (WSCUC CFRs 4.6, 4.7).

The Provost, with delegated authority from the President, makes the final determination for program continuance through issuance of a letter at the completion of the review process.

V.   ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW COMPONENTS

The Academic Program Review (APR) self study, appendices, and supplemental materials are authored by program faculty with contributing support, review, and recommendations from college governance committees, university governance committees (when appropriate), college dean, director of Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics, the AVP (Academic Affairs) and the expert opinion of an external consultant (WSCUC CFR 4.6). Generally, the Department Chair is responsible for coordinating the program review process with faculty.

The APR self study is organized into five sections:
1. **Program Overview**: introduction and historical context, Mission and Strategic Plan, program description, administrative reporting structure, review of changes since the last APR;
2. **Data Review**: student profile, faculty profile, enrollment trends, delivery of instructional program, program comparisons;
3. **Commitment to Student Learning**: advising and mentoring, teaching, RSCA, assessment of student learning;
4. **Resources**: physical facilities and equipment, fiscal resources, technology resources and support, library holdings; and
5. **Implementation Plan**: seven-year plan for Program Learning Outcomes and Program Maintenance Outcomes.

A description of each section, with resources to complete, is available on the Office of Assessment Academic Program Review website. This site includes information on completing the Academic Program Review via the campus Accountability Management System.

In summary, the APR self-study documents academic quality and the extent to which students are achieving learning outcomes; demonstrates educational effectiveness by assessing student learning outcomes; acknowledges program strengths; and seeks ways of improving and enhancing the quality of a program (Implementation Plan).

VI.   ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND RESOURCES

At Stanislaus State, assessment is "defined as a continuous process used by the University for a) evaluating the degree to which all University programs and services contribute to the fulfillment of the University's primary mission, and b) documenting and improving the University's effectiveness." (Assessment Plan, 1997)

Continuous improvement and assessment within the context of Academic Program Reviews:
- Exists in relationship with the University Mission and Strategic Plan.
- Evolves as a systematic ongoing planning and review process consistently used by the College/Schools and programs / departments.
- Contributes to a comprehensive, university-wide approach to assessment. Multiple methods of data collection and analysis of student learning are used to assess progress towards achievement of learning outcomes and to make informed decisions regarding change.
- Provides for regular and ongoing opportunities for engagement and reflection based on gathering of data and data analysis.
- Includes the development of an implementation plan that identifies priorities for the following six years. Progress is reported each year in an annual report.
- Conforms with the guidelines established in the Principles of Assessment of Student Learning.

Resources for developing an assessment plan and strategies are available on the Office of Assessment website – Assessment Planning.

VII.   EXTERNAL CONSULTANT REVIEW

 Internal review processes provide a valuable perspective that is essential for program quality. In addition, an external consultant's perspective may play an important role in the evaluation process (WSCUC CFR 4.4). The purpose of engaging an external consultant in the Academic Program Review (APR) process is to assist faculty in improving program quality by providing a new comparative and broader perspective on the program and student learning. External consultants will be individuals of significant professional reputation in the field.

External consultants provide insight on programs from the perspective of outsiders who have expertise in program content. Their critique, when combined with our own review, lends credibility to the quality and effectiveness of the programs, services, resources, and operations. Consultants study components of a program through a series of specific review objectives or answer questions as prepared by program faculty. The Office of the Provost provides funding and resources for facilitating an external review during the APR process. For more information, see the External Consultant Review resource section on the Office of Assessment website.

VIII.   IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

During the Academic Program Review (APR) process, areas for improvement are identified in the Implementation Plan (see Appendix 7). The implementation plan provides an ongoing map for assessing components of a program over time. Yearly progress on the identified areas for improvement, such as data from student learning outcomes assessment and program maintenance outcomes, is documented in the annual report.

During the APR process, data are reviewed and used to inform program improvement decisions. Planning for continuous improvement is then organized through the implementation plan, which provides a structure beginning with the recommended actions identified from the APR (see Design an Implementation Plan) (CFRs 4.2, 4.3).

A preliminary implementation plan is developed by the program faculty. The implementation plan includes (but is not limited to) the following components:
- Key recommendations of the program faculty resulting from the self study; and
- Action steps to be taken in order to achieve each of the Program Learning Outcomes, such as a study on student achievement of critical thinking skills, and each of the Program Maintenance Outcomes, such as a study of the anticipated student profile over the next six years or schedule of equipment maintenance/equipment replacement.

The preliminary implementation plan is discussed at the Provost's APR Meeting. Participants include the department chair, program coordinator and/or faculty (as determined by department chair or dean), dean, and the AVP (Academic Affairs).

In response to the meeting discussion and recommendations, the department chair completes the final implementation plan and submits to the college dean. The dean submits an electronic copy to the AVP (Academic Affairs) within two weeks following the Provost's meeting.   Following receipt of the final implementation plan, the Provost issues a letter indicating final determination for program continuance. The Implementation Plans and Provost's memos are posted on the Academic Program Review webpage – Closing the Loop.

The Provost's memo then triggers the close of the APR cycle for the submitting program. The Office of Assessment archives the materials via the Accountability Management System a new seven-year cycle begins based on the submitted Implementation Plan.