

## **Program Changes Review Committee Report** *January 2012 (revised March 2012)*

### **I. Introduction**

From FY 2007 through FY 12, state appropriations to higher educational institutions declined 13.5%. With the backlog of unpaid bills at the state level and soaring pension liabilities that must be paid, the prospect of additional significant reductions in state appropriations is likely. In addition, the University has experienced an enrollment drop of over 5% during that same time frame. Meanwhile costs (including salaries and benefits) have continued to climb. Given the fiscal climate in the state and within the university it is clear there is a need to carefully examine our programs to insure that the University operates in a manner that allows our students to receive the high quality education they expect and deserve. In addition to the financial pressures the university must deal with, the Illinois Legislature mandated new reporting requirements for programs exhibiting low performance in enrollments, degree completions, and high expense per degree.

It was within the context described above that Provost John Nicklow convened The Program Changes Review Committee in the Fall 2011 and gave it two charges. First, the committee was charged with developing a process and a set of metrics to examine programmatic offerings of the campus that might come under scrutiny pursuant to PA 97-0610. The Act requires all public universities to report annually to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) all programs that have been terminated, dissolved, reduced, or consolidated. In addition, the Act requires that each public university report to the Illinois General Assembly all programs that exhibit a trend of low performance in enrollment, degree completions, and/or high expense per degree. Under the second charge, the committee was to develop a means of internally evaluating our academic structure with the goal of balancing fiscal efficiency with program integrity and productivity.

The committee, co-chaired by Todd Winters (Agricultural Sciences) and Allan Karnes (Business), consisted of faculty representatives from each of the Colleges, a representative from Faculty Senate, a representative from the Graduate Council, and four staff from the Provost/Chancellor's offices. Members of the committee and who they represented were: Jim Allen (Associate Provost for Academic Programs), Stephen Ebbs (Faculty Senate), Carol Henry (Budget Office), Frank Houdek (Law), Phil Howze (Library), Scott Ishman (Graduate Council), Jyotsna Kapur (Mass Communications and Media Arts), Gary Kinsel (Science), Judy Marshal (Administration and Finance), David NewMyer (Applied Sciences and Arts), Mark Peterson (Business), Dwight Sanders (Agricultural Sciences), Larry Schilling (Institutional Research and Studies), Jane Swanson (Liberal Arts), Spyros Tragoudas (Engineering), and Keith Waugh (Education and Human Services).

The committee met semi-weekly throughout the Fall 2011 semester to discuss metrics and other parameters to examine program performance and efficiencies. In mid-November, two subcommittees were formed:

***Metrics Committee.*** This committee was charged with drafting a set of metrics and guidelines to identify and evaluate low performing degree programs under the auspices of PA 97-0610, as well as guidelines to allow programs to remediate and improve so they would meet the standards. Members of this subcommittee were: Winters (Chair), Ebbs, Swanson, and Tragoudas. These recommendations begin in § III, below.

***Complementary Practices Committee.*** This committee was charged with drafting a means of internally evaluating our academic structure with the goal of

balancing fiscal efficiency with program integrity and productivity. Members of this committee were: Karnes (Chair), Allen, Howze, and Kapur. These recommendations begin in § VI, below.

Recommendations from the Program Changes Review Committee are contained within this document. Those recommendations were submitted to the Office of the Provost and then circulated through the appropriate constituency groups for review and comment. After review and comment by the constituency groups, in January through March 2012, a committee consisting of Drs. Winters, Karnes, Allen, and Ebbs considered comments and criticisms of the original (January 2012) draft of the report, and revised the document appropriately for final submission to the Provost.

## **Guidelines to Identify and Evaluate Low Performing Degree Programs at SIU**

### **II. Primary Standards for Degree Program Performance**

The legislature, through PA 97-0610, and the IBHE established three principal criteria to determine whether a program must be reported as a low performer: Enrollment, Graduation, and Program Cost. These three criteria or standards will also be used to identify undergraduate or graduate degree programs at Southern Illinois University Carbondale that are not achieving satisfactory performance. Satisfactory performance will be assessed for each individual degree granting major (defined by CIP code) within a department. For example, an undergraduate degree program in a department could meet the standard, yet one or both graduate degree programs in the same major might not, or vice versa. Any program that fails to meet at least one of these standards would be subject to a subsequent internal review that could lead to possible remediation. A description of the proposed metric in each standard based on those prescribed by the IBHE is found below:

**A. Enrollment Standard.** Associate's and Bachelor's degree programs with fewer than 25 majors, Master's degree programs with fewer than 10 majors, and Doctorate programs with fewer than 5 majors as determined from the Day 10 enrollment figures for the fall semester will be considered below the Enrollment Standard. Some programs, because of identical course offerings for Masters and PhD students, may require a combined graduate program majors count.

**B. Graduation Standard.** Associate's degree programs that fall below 12 degrees conferred, Bachelor's degree programs that fall below 6 degrees conferred, and Master's degree programs that fall below 5 degrees conferred in a given year will be considered to be below the Graduation Standard. These values were calculated assuming a graduation rate corresponding to a minimum of 25% of the corresponding enrollment standard for Bachelor's degree programs and 50% of the enrollment standard for Associate's and Master's degree programs. (In rare cases, some programs may require an adjustment for the graduation standard due to accreditation requirements or other considerations. Before adjustments to graduation standards are considered, however, programs will be asked to make efforts to reduce the number of hours required for the degree.) Doctorate programs will be expected to grant at least one degree per year to meet the Graduation Standard. This number is based on the uniqueness and large variability in Doctorate program expectations.

**C. Program Cost Standard.** Programs (undergraduate or graduate) that have an Instructional Cost Ratio (SIUC Program Cost/Credit Hour : State Normative Program Cost/Credit Hour) above 1.25 per year using the Big-Five as the Normative Model for Illinois will not meet the Program Cost Standard. An average of the *Lower* and *Upper Division Cost Ratios* will be used for Associate/Bachelor's degree programs. For Master's programs the *Grad-I Cost Ratio* will be used, and for Doctorate programs the *Grad-II Cost Ratio* will be used.

No degree program, which is less than five years from its establishment, or re-establishment, will be immediately required to comply with the three standards. Such programs would be evaluated in the sixth year following establishment or re-establishment.

### **III. Review and Remediation of Degree Programs not Meeting Annual Enrollment, Graduation, and Cost Standards.**

All program changes recommended by the following procedure shall be enacted in accordance with any contractual obligations to represented faculty, staff, and students and relevant state or university policies. A program that does not meet at least one of these standards will be notified by the Associate Provost for Academic Programs (APAP) as to which standard(s) has/have not been met. It is expected that any program failing to meet one or more of the three standards will have an updated assessment plan and/or annual assessment report on file in the APAP office (because student learning outcomes are central to program quality, they must not be confused with the IBHE metrics). Within 30 days<sup>1</sup> of notice, a ***Plan for Improvement***, including an updated assessment plan if one does not already exist, for that individual degree program will be submitted by the Department Chair or Director to the College's Dean to allow the Dean an opportunity to review and comment. The Dean must submit the Plan for Improvement and his or her response to the Provost and APAP within seven days from the date he or she received the Plan for Improvement from the Department. The program may with the approval of the APAP be granted a 30-day extension to prepare its plan. The plan should include reasons why a program did not meet these standards and tangible strategies to bring the program into alignment with the relevant standard(s). This plan should also provide an historical overview of the program and include strategies for improvement of recruitment and retention, efficiency measures to lower costs, and an evaluation of the internal and external demands for the degree program. If the Plan for Improvement provides reasonable assurance that the program will return to compliance with all three standards within a year, then the APAP will inform the Department Chair or Director that no further action is needed. If the Plan for Improvement does not provide reasonable assurance of compliance with all three standards within a year, the program will be subject to the following review.

The Provost will forward the Plan for Improvement and the Dean's response to the Review Committee that will conduct the review of that degree program. The Review Committee will be chaired by the APAP and consist of three faculty members, a Department Chair, and a Dean. Two of the faculty members will be appointed by the relevant constituency group for that degree granting major (Faculty Senate or Graduate Council) in a manner similar to the IBHE-mandated program review process. One of the faculty members appointed by the constituency group will be from within the college of the program under review (but not the department under review) and the other from outside that college. The third faculty member will be elected by the program under review following guidelines in the operating paper

---

<sup>1</sup> All days within this document are defined as calendar days.

for that department, program, or unit. The Department Chair representative will be selected by the APAP and approved by the appropriate constituency group. Nominated Department Chairs should not be from a department that also has a program under review in that given cycle. The representative Dean to serve on the committee will be selected by the Provost in consultation with the Dean's Council. Multiple Review Committees will be assembled each year as needed.

The APAP and the Review Committee shall determine whether the data for that program for the standard(s) represent an anomaly in that given year, whether the program should not be subject to further action, or whether the program should be subject to a full review as described below. If no action is recommended for the given year, the program would still be subject to future consideration should it fail to meet one or more standards in subsequent years. Alternatively, the APAP, Provost, and the Review Committee may determine that a Program is vital to the mission of the University, despite the likelihood it will fail to meet one or more of the relevant standards in future years, and exempt that Program from consideration for a stated number of years. If a program is to undergo a full review, the Review Committee will solicit an *Evaluation of Program Document* (see Section IV). This Evaluation of Program Document will be due with 30 days of notification of a full review. Programs that are subject to a full review may be recommended for no action, restructuring, consolidation or sunset status. Programs that do not meet one or more standards in a given year may voluntarily request that they be considered for restructuring, consolidation or sunset status.

The Review Committee shall make a written recommendation to the Provost within 30 days of receiving the Evaluation of Program Document from the Department. One thirty-day extension may be requested by the Review Committee if circumstances warrant. The committee may recommend to the Provost that no action be taken, or that the program should be subject to further remediation, restructuring, consolidation, or sunset status. The Provost shall then submit the written recommendation from the Review Committee to the Faculty Senate and/or Graduate Council for review and comment. If any programs are recommended for restructuring, consolidation or sunset status, the Review Committee's recommendation and any resolutions by the Faculty Senate or Graduate Council will be returned to the Provost who will take them under advisement for action.

#### **IV. Evaluation of Degree Programs for Restructuring, Consolidation or Sunset Status**

In making recommendations involving the restructuring, consolidation, or sunset status for a particular program, the Review Committee shall also consider an array of factors relevant to the program under review. The primary factors to be considered are listed below, any or all of which may be addressed in the Evaluation of Program Document submitted by the degree program under review. The Review Committee may also consider additional factors not listed here that are specific to the program under review.

- A. *Additional considerations relevant to IBHE standards, state policies, or university policies.*** To account for possible anomalies in the data, five-year rolling averages for the relevant standard will be considered. In addition to primary majors, secondary majors will be counted to include students who are working on double majors or second degrees. If a program falls below the enrollment and/or graduation standard, students enrolled in minors and/or certificate programs per year within a major will be considered. The need and/or repercussions of potential program changes will be considered in light of state or university policies relevant to that particular program.

- B. Centrality of Mission.** Degree programs that generate a sufficient number of credit hours and have more than 50% of their credit-hour generation from students outside the major would be considered central to the instructional mission of the University. A recommendation could then be made to consider further program remediation, restructuring, consolidation, to improve enrollment, cost, and graduation rates. Sunset status of the specific degree program, with continuation of service courses in that discipline, could also be considered.
- C. Demand.** Internal and external reasons for the decrease in demand will be investigated. Internal explanations for low enrollment and degrees conferred will be studied. The external demand or importance of a specific degree program to workforce needs and other contributions to specific geographic areas or demographic groups will be considered. Uniqueness and/or duplication of this program within the state or region will also be considered. If a program is being considered for sunset status, the committee will explore whether the loss of the program would negatively impact the economy of the state and/or the region. Input from alumni, donors, and other constituency groups will also be considered.
- D. Non-instructional Activity.** The research, outreach, service, scholarly and/or creative activity of a degree program will also be considered. The Review Committee will examine the impact of re-structuring, consolidation, and/or sunset status on the generation of scholarly publications, research grants, performances, exhibitions, works of art and services to specific demographics.
- E. Reputation and accreditation.** National or international reputation of the program will be considered by the Review Committee. Quality of faculty or of the program through peer and/or student evaluation will also be criteria for evaluation. The importance and/or relevance of accreditation of the program by an external organization will also be given due consideration.
- F. Cost or Revenue Generation.** Program cost will be evaluated in terms of student per faculty ratio, infrastructure requirements, and capital needs and investment. Non-tuition revenue generation may also be a consideration in terms of research, services, outreach, consulting, and/or products. Prior capital investments in the program will be taken into account by the Review Committee.
- G. Underrepresented groups.** If a degree program substantially serves one or more underrepresented groups, it should not be considered for sunset status. Such programs would be subject to further remediation, restructuring, or consolidation with another program to continue the benefit to these underrepresented groups.

## **V. Programs Designated for Sunset Status.**

Degree programs that are designated for Sunset Status will undergo a “teach-out” period that balances the needs of the current students in the program with timely administrative closure. During the established period, no new or transfer students will be admitted to the program. Faculty and staff will be

given the opportunity to request to join an academic unit of similar discipline according to established procedures. University administration will make efforts to assist in the reassignment of affected faculty to new academic units. Salary lines, rank, status, and associated infrastructure will follow faculty members to the new academic units.

## **Internal Evaluation of Academic Structures**

### **VI. Complementary Practices and Academic Efficiencies**

The preceding sections of this report describe a transparent systematic method of responding to a legislative mandate that will affect a limited number of academic programs. The balance of the Committee's report consists of recommendations that apply to all programs. The recommendations are designed to free up resources that can be reinvested in the academic enterprise. Consequently, these recommendations are not meant to be confused with the process addressing the IBHE's metrics discussed in the preceding sections.

As a result of a decade of declining state support and the resulting budgetary reductions absorbed by colleges and academic programs, there are many high quality and/or high demand programs that are struggling to maintain or enhance their quality without additional budget allocations. The prospect of achieving significant funding increases from the state that can be allocated for enhancement is slight. In order to determine if significant funds for reinvestment in high quality programs or programs that offer the promise of significant growth can be identified, the Program Changes Review Committee recommends that all programs be subject to the following four inquiries to determine if there are opportunities for administrative efficiencies that might produce additional funds for reinvestment in the academic enterprise.

All of these inquiries might be initially viewed as just another means to reduce departmental operating costs. In taking charge of the process at the program level, however, faculty, departments and colleges should give primacy to academic considerations. The process should be seen as an opportunity to make our programs more current and vibrant, and enhance our teaching, research and service missions. "Turf" issues need to be overcome for the benefit of freeing up resources that can be used to increase the quality and size of the university's offerings. In addition, programs that are able to free up resources under the four inquiries below may be able to retain those resources with a showing of how they plan to use those resources to enhance program quality or growth in a manner consistent with goals, objectives and strategies identified in the campus strategic planning process.

Each of the four inquiries below is stated generically. It is expected that more specificity will be added by the Complementary Practices and Academic Efficiencies Taskforce (see § VII below) as the group works through the task. Likewise, examples and suggested procedures within the four inquiries are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to be an inclusive listing of possibilities considered by the Taskforce. The examples and suggested procedures within the four inquiries are also not intended to be specific suggestions for the Taskforce to investigate or to follow.

- A. Are there programs that could be combined administratively to eliminate redundancies?*** The goal here is not necessarily to combine the degree programs, but

to place them in one administrative unit to take advantage of similar components of the programs. For example, assume there are two programs in a college that require courses in Public Administration and Human Resources. Since the programs are in different departments, both programs have a Public Administration and Human Resources faculty member. By locating both programs in the same department, it might be possible to eventually have two faculty members instead of four, service the requirements for both programs. In addition, immediate administrative savings could be generated by eliminating one chair position, some support positions and OTS (copying contractual costs and the like). Another option would be the consolidation of the two programs into one with a new name (with the possibility of specializations to preserve the identity of the original programs for the purposes of recruitment and branding). Future savings -- and programmatic quality -- would then follow in subsequent years as the new unit selectively hires faculty who are better suited to the synergistic strengths of the reconfigured department. Such changes may not require that the degree programs in the affected departments also be altered as the goal for reorganization in this case is principally administrative in nature, not academic. Affected departments/colleges would be allowed to elect a representative to present the view of the department or the college faculty to the Taskforce for consideration in its final report. Any votes by affected Colleges and/or Departments must be considered by the Taskforce.

***B. Are there programs that would be better suited in another college?*** College location for the majority of programs is purposeful. A college sees demand for a specific degree that is related to its discipline(s) and it pursues and implements the program. There are a small number of other programs whose college locus might have been the result of negotiation or even happenstance. In addition, there may be a few programs that have over time evolved to meet the change in skills needed in the workplace the degree serves, and as a result of that evolution, might be better located within another college. A periodic examination of program location can lead to better program quality, research collaboration, growth and development. In addition there may be opportunities for administrative and instructional cost reductions through administrative combinations and/or cooperative use of faculty expertise.

A change in administrative locus should be recommended only if:

1. The program in question is dissimilar to most of the offerings in its current college--both in the educational and vocational objectives of its graduates;
2. The program in question is similar to most (or a significant sector) of the offerings in the destination college--both in terms of educational and vocational objectives of its graduates;
3. It is likely the program in question would be strengthened through synergistic relationships that would develop within the destination college and through relationships with employers and alumni maintained by the destination college.

Affected Departments/Colleges would be allowed to elect a representative to present the view of the department/college's Faculty to the Taskforce for its consideration in its final report. Any votes by affected Colleges and/or Departments must be considered by the Taskforce.

**C. *Are there course redundancies that could be eliminated by requiring that course offerings be offered by the discipline department?*** For various reasons, courses are offered by departments and colleges that are outside of their disciplines. In light of the current administrative practice of examining the generation of credit hours as one of the components of budget adjustments, there will be a temptation for departments and colleges to offer more out-of-discipline courses to capture additional credit hours. For example, nearly all colleges on campus offer statistics courses as part of their required courses. It is likely the math department alone, or in combination with one or two other departments, could deliver these courses in a more efficient manner. This is just one example of many. In most cases, it is possible that the discipline department(s) could teach the additional students with the addition of one (or even with no additional sections) section of an existing course, resulting in substantial savings over the course of a five-year period.

Following is a procedure for identifying and eliminating course redundancies:

1. Identify all out-of-discipline courses in a college or department;
2. Determine if there is a course being taught by the discipline department(s) that would satisfy the educational objectives of the out-of-discipline course, or if the discipline department(s) is/are willing to tailor a course or sections of that course to meet the educational objectives of the out-of-discipline program; and
3. Require the out-of-discipline program to modify its curriculum to accept the discipline-based course as fulfilling its program requirements.

The above would not be applicable in the following circumstances:

1. The out-of-discipline program is able to demonstrate that the course is significantly different from the discipline department's/ departments' course(s);
2. The discipline department(s) is/are not willing to accept the additional out-of-discipline students or is/are unable to meet the additional demand without immediate additional resources; or
3. Continued accreditation of the out-of-discipline program is dependent upon the specific course that might otherwise be eliminated.

**D. *Does the degree program require more than 120 credit hours?*** Recent data show that 25% of the university's degree programs require more than 120 credit hours for an undergraduate



degree, and close to 11% require more than 126 hours. For the FYs 2007-2009, 22.5% of programs had 150 or more actual average credit hours for its graduates in at least two of those three years. Of those programs averaging 150 actual credit hours per degree, 74% require more than 120 hours for the undergraduate degree. It is likely that one of the new Performance Funding metrics will be the number of degrees earned with less than 144 actual credit hours. Not all excess hours can be attributed to hours earned at the university. In some cases, students transfer in with many excess hours.

The university can take certain steps to cut down on excess hours. First, better academic and career advising early in a student's time at the university can help students earn degrees with fewer credit hours by limiting the number of changes in major or taking courses that are not required for the career track. Second, programs can enter into more capstone agreements with community colleges – better known as programmatic articulations -- that allow the receiving department to indicate which courses at the community college will be accepted for transfer credit and make it clear to students what prerequisite courses should be taken at the community college level. Third, the university default position can be that no more than 120 credit hours should be required for an undergraduate degree. Options one and three are within control of the university, subject to accreditation and certification requirements.

Following is a procedure for re-examining course requirements for all degree programs that require more than 120 credit hours:

1. Ask all colleges with undergraduate programs that require more than 120 credit hours to re-examine those programs with a goal of reducing the required credit hours to 120.
2. Require all programs that do not reduce their degree requirements to 120 credit hours to justify maintaining their requirements beyond 120 credit hours.
3. The Provost should meet with the Undergraduate Education Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate about a policy that all new program requests and RME's should come in at 120 credit hours unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as accreditation requirements, requiring more than 120 credit hours.

## **VII. Implementation of Complementary Practices and Academic Efficiencies**

A Complementary Practices and Academic Efficiencies Taskforce will be formed by the Provost's Office to explore and make recommendations on the efficiencies and/or complementary practices described in Section VI. The Taskforce will consist of a faculty representative from each College, and a faculty representative from the Faculty Senate and Graduate Council. The Taskforce will also include a representative from Institutional Research and Studies and the Budget Office. The Taskforce will be chaired by the APAP or his/her designate(s). The Taskforce will be staffed in a manner similar to the IBHE-mandated program review process. The Taskforce will be charged with exploring the four inquiries discussed in Section VI, as well as making suggestions on additional academic efficiencies and practices. In completing its charge, the Taskforce may use subgroups and draw upon the expertise of additional staff and faculty as needed. Recommendations from the Taskforce will be submitted to the Provost. It is expected the Taskforce shall complete its report to the Provost within one semester of receiving its charge from the Provost. The Provost shall then submit the recommendation for review by

the Dean's Council, Faculty Senate and/or Graduate Council. The Taskforce's recommendation and any resolutions by the Dean's Council, Faculty Senate or Graduate Council will be returned to the Provost who will take them into advisement for action.