CAL STATE FULLERTON

MEMORANDUM

Academic Programs
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DATE: October 26, 2006

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John Carroll, Geography
JoAnn Carter-Wells, Instructional Design & Technology
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Kurt Kitselman, Human Communication Studies

Cc: Ephraim P. Smith, Vice President, Academic Programs
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Thomas P. Klammer, Dean, Humanities & Social Sciences
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FROM: Robert A. (Ray) Young, Associate Vice President

SUBJECT: 2006-07 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Our records indicate that the following degree programs are scheduled for Program Performance Reviews during the **2006-2007** academic year:

Biology, **BS, MS**   Environmental Studies**, MS**
Geography, **BA, MA**   Instructional Design & Tech, **MS**
Nursing, **BS, MSN**   Psychology, **BA, MA**
Speech Communication, **BA, MA** (excluding Communicative Disorders)

Attached are electronic copies of UPS 410.200, *Program Performance Review Policy*, and a updated set of *Preparation Guidelines*. Of related background is the document *Annual Reports and Program Performance Reviews,* dated March 1998.

Program Performance Reviews must be conducted at least once every seven years for academic departments and programs within the Division of Academic Affairs. The central purpose of these reviews is to serve both as *reflective assessments* and forward-looking *planning tools*, guiding the unit's strategic actions that strengthen our capacity to implement the University's Mission, Goals, and Strategies and to effect program improvements. For more than a decade, the content and tone of the

Program Performance Reviews (PPRs) has transformed from "brag sheets" and massive compendia of individual and collective accomplishments to *concise, action-oriented reviews and plans*. In that spirit, we urge departments and programs to stay within an upper limit of 25 pages for the PPR document.

Limited Option for Substitution

Departments and programs that are submitting discipline-based Accreditation Reports to a national or regional organization during this academic year, or which did so during 2005-06, *may* substitute that accreditation report for a full Program Performance Review, subject to certain conditions. First and foremost, the department or program must *"obtain the consent of the appropriate College Dean and the Academic Vice President [or designee, such as the AVPAP] to make such a substitution."* [UPS 410.200, sec III.A.]. Secondly, the Academic Vice President or designees *"may require that certain questions, unique to the Program Performance Review, be answered and submitted with the Accreditation Report."* [UPS 410.200, sec. III.D.] One example, might be that the discipline-based report does not address the matter of direct assessment of student learning (which may differ considerably from program goals.)

Any department or program that wishes to substitute the Accreditation Report for the standard PPR, must meet with the respective dean and then confer with the Associate Vice President for Academic Programs about the substitution and make the formal request in writing during the fall semester.

Special Focus on Assessment

Because student learning is central to our mission and activities, it is vital that each department or program includes in its self study a report on how it uses assessment to monitor the quality of student learning in its degree program(s) and/or what plans it has to build systematic assessment into its program(s). *Assessment*, in this context, refers to whatever combination of means the department or program employs to provide evidence to answer questions such as these:
- How well are our students learning what our program is designed to teach them?
- How are the outcomes of our program changing over time?
- What modifications should we make in our program to enhance student learning? (And, after having made changes, how have these changes affected student learning and the quality of our department or program as a learning community?)

An obvious requirement for useful assessment is a clear statement of goals for student learning. Most, perhaps all, programs have *student learning goals* on file, something that was provided in the context of our 2000 visit by a WASC visiting team. Programs may appropriately use the goals already established, or may in the process of a program review, freshly address whether the goals themselves should be refined. In any event, assessments should relate in clear ways to goals for student learning within the program.

Frequently used tools to assess student learning in degree programs include:

- Culminating projects, papers, or theses
- Senior recitals and performances
- Portfolio reviews
- Capstone courses
- Comprehensive examinations

- Focus Group meetings with graduating students
- Comprehensive examinations
- Alumni surveys

The self study may include a discussion of assessment in one or more of several places:

- In section III.A. The outcomes of student assessment are clearly among the most important *indicators of quality* that a department might discuss in the self study.
- In section V.A. and C. A department's plans for beginning or expanding assessment activities can be included here.
- In section IV. If assessment is not an integral part of sections III and/or V, it can be included in section IV as a special topic.

Please note that the ***CSU Trustees have mandated that all bachelor's programs have in place formal statements of goals, formal assessments of student learning*** in terms of those goals, and appropriate means for providing faculty with the information gained from assessments, as a basis for taking any needed action vis-à-vis program curricula. The University seeks to be able to report to Trustees that programs indeed have adopted goals, assessments, and means for using the information for improving student learning. The program review in these terms is not a means for criticizing or second-guessing faculty work on goals and assessments, but rather is a means for assuring that good processes are in place.

Additional Special Focus on Graduate Programs

We anticipate that President Gordon will approve the Senate's recommended changes to UPS 410.106, the key policy governing graduate programs. A feature of that proposed policy is a request that those graduate programs that now require only half of study plan course work to be at the 500-level review that issue. The appropriate time for this review, as contemplated in the new UPS, is at the time of a program review.

The system norm for about a decade has been to require 70% of graduate course work at the 500-level. Possible responses from graduate programs could range from a thoughtful curricular justification for retaining 50% of graduate course work at the 400-level, to a plan for moving program requirements to the 70% minimum. You will note that for a thirty-unit master's program, this is a difference of six units.
In the case of graduate programs, deans are also encouraged to request that departments review culminating experience requirements. Programs have different options, of course, including thesis, project, and/or comprehensive exams. Programs might suitably take up the question of whether faculty are well able to assess student achievement of program objectives via current culminating experience requirements; whether student performances meet appropriate standards in the eyes of both CSUF faculty and external reviewers; and whether patterns of student performance on culminating experiences may appear to suggest revisions to current curriculum.

Reminders

Programs are reminded that various UPS documents and CSU policies require particular actions as a part of program reviews. Programs should examine the following themes in the course of developing their reviews.

Review of standards for faculty performance. See UPS 210.000, at page 23 in the current version. Find this at http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/PDF/200UPS210-000.pdf.
This is not a requirement that guidelines and standards must be changed, but rather it is a mandate that the issue be raised. If changes are recommended, they are to come forward in the usual process, via the dean to the Faculty Personnel Committee. Whether or not there are recommendations for change, a memo is requested to Faculty Affairs & Records when the process of review is completed.

Adoption / review of standards for faculty qualifications to teach 500-level courses. See UPS 270.103.   Find this at http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/PDF/200/UPS270-103.pdf.
Departments are asked either to initially adopt, or if standards are already in place, to review, their policies in this regard. This is not a mandate for changes, but a requirement that the topic be part of the department's review.

Adoption / review of departmental structures for graduate committee and advisors. See UPS 270.102. Find this at http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/PDF/200/UPS270-102.pdf.
Departments are asked either to initially adopt, or if standards are already in place, to review, these structures, or if are already in place, to review their rules in this regard. Again, this is not a mandate for changes, but a requirement that the topic be part of the department's review.

Review of high-unit majors. System-wide policy mandates that departments which have bachelor's programs requiring more than 120 units review such programs, and either show actions to reduce the unit requirements (with the goal of not more than 120), or to provide a justification for maintaining higher unit requirements. Academic Programs on behalf of the campus is required to report the results of these reviews to the Trustees.

Deadline

The deadline for submission of the PPR self study to the Associate Vice President, Academic Programs, is **Friday, April 20, 2007.** The following components are required:

1. Self study prepared by the department or program faculty (see PPR outline in *Annual Reports and Program Performance Reviews,* pp. 6-7);
2. Report of internal/external review team and written response to it by the department or program (see *Annual Reports and Program Performance Reviews*, p. 3, #6);
3. **Dean's summary, comments, and recommendations**;
4. A brief summary of the results of the assessment of student learning outcomes, the significance of the results, and the implications of the results for modification of program requirements, standards, or operations.
5. A brief summary of changes in program requirements enacted or recommended.

If I can be of assistance in any way as departments plan for and conduct their self-studies, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Thank you.