Iona College

Comprehensive Academic Program Review

I.   Introduction

The Comprehensive Academic Program Review Project Team was charged to:
- "Finalize the five-year program review policy; establish the cycle for reviews; identify triggers for accelerated review; recommend policy…
- Identify acceptable and fair ranges among departments for SCH production, class size, SCH costs…
- ...Identify qualitative and quantitative measures that would lead to automatic review, including a minimum average degree production over a three year period."

In addition, the Board of Trustees asked the President to respond to these somewhat related questions:

"Are we offering majors that respond to student demands? Do we offer majors in emerging areas?...Why are our Arts and Sciences graduate programs struggling with enrollment?"

II.   Process

The Project Team took the following steps:
- Reviewed extensive internal data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning (OIEP), including:
  - Undergraduate and Graduate Student Credit Hours, 2009-2013
  - Graduate Annual Student Credit Hours & Full-time Equivalent Students
  - Undergraduate Lower (Core Proxy) & Upper Division Credit Hours, 2009-2013
  - Organized Credit-Bearing Sections and Zero-Credit Sections
  - Undergraduate Independent Studies Enrollments and Honors Sections
  - IS, Internships, and Research and Declared Students per FT Faculty
  - Bachelor Degree Completion
  - Undergraduate GPA at Time of Declaration and Time to Degree
  - Graduate Declared Majors and Declared per Full-time Faculty
  - Undergraduate Declared Majors and Declared Minors
  - Undergraduate and Graduate Student-to-Faculty Ratios
  - Lower Division Student Credit Hours Taught by Full-time Faculty and Adjunct Faculty

- o Upper Division Student Credit Hours Taught by Full-time Faculty and Adjunct Faculty
- o Graduate Student Credit Hours Taught by Full-time Faculty and Adjunct Faculty
- o Undergraduate Class Sizes for 2013 and 2012
- o Graduate Class Sizes for 2013 and 2012
- o Undergraduate and Graduate Unit Costs in 2009-2013
- o Academic Year Faculty Instructional Loads by Department
- o Student Credit Hour per FTE by College, School, and Department
- o Unit Cost by College, School, and Department
- o Faculty Instructional Loads by Department
- o Department Unit Cost as Percent of School Average: Five-Year Trends Undergraduate and Graduate
- o Department Unit Cost as Percent of Institutional Average: Five-Year Trends Undergraduate and Graduate
- o Department Student Credit Hours per Faculty FTE as Percent of School Average: Five-Year Trends Undergraduate and Graduate
- o Department Student Credit Hours per FTE as Percent of Institutional Average: Five-Year Trends Undergraduate and Graduate
- o Three-Year Departmental Average SCH per FTE Faculty Member at the Undergraduate Level; School; Three Year Averages; Percent Variance from Average by Department
- o Three-Year Departmental Average Cost per SCH at the Undergraduate Level; Percent Variance from Average by Department
- o Five-Year Departmental Average Cost per SCH at the Graduate Level; Percent Variance from Average by Department
- Reviewed the annual and five-year program review processes at Iona.
- Solicited feedback from the Deans, department chairs, and the academic community at large.
- Examined and discussed multiple drafts.

The project team determined that its proposals for annual, five-year, and accelerated program reviews would be integrated into a single comprehensive policy.

III. Findings:

- The Iona College Average for SCH per FTE faculty member was 411 SCH. The School of Arts and Science average was 415 SCH; Hagan's average was 400 SCH.
- The range of departmental SCH per FTE faculty member in the School of Arts and Science was from 129 SCH to 781 SCH.
- The range of departmental SCH per FTE faculty member in Hagan was from 356 SCH to 423 SCH.
- The Iona College average cost per SCH was $174. The School of Arts and Science average was $158; Hagan's average was $220.
- The range of departmental average cost per SCH in the School of Arts and Science was from $48 to $561.
- The range of departmental average cost per SCH in Hagan was from $356 to $423.

- The range of undergraduate unit cost in the School of Arts and Science is from $53 to $397. In Hagan, the variation is from $127 to $225.
- Unit costs at the graduate level also show considerable variation, ranging from a low of $211 to a high of $1,085 in the School of Arts and Science. In Hagan, the variation is less, from $240 to $322.

Note: the data above were for the 2012-2013 academic year, as provided by OIEP. They are intended for illustrative purposes. Data used for future decision making will be shared in advance with department chairs for review and verification.

IV. Summary of Recommendations:
    A. That the Annual Program Review process be significantly simplified and that most departmental commentary on quantitative and qualitative measures be made optional.
    B. That the Quinquennial Review process be renamed the Five-Year Program Review process.
    C. That the Five-Year Program Review process be strengthened, including some of the elements eliminated from (or made optional in) the Annual Program Review process.
    D. That, whenever possible, the Five-Year Program Review process (including Academic Program Accelerated Review) will run synchronously with department accreditation self-studies.
    E. That an Academic Program Accelerated Review Policy be adopted, which would call for an early Five-Year Program Review for programs that are 33% or more outside school averages on both of two measures (average SCH per FTE faculty and average cost per SCH produced), using three year rolling averages for undergraduate programs and five year rolling averages for graduate programs.
    F. That all reviews (Annual, Five-Year, and Accelerated) would utilize standard quantitative measures (supplied by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning) and qualitative measures, as recommended by the project team.
    G. Iona should regularly participate in the Delaware Cost Study, beginning in 2014-2015 when Iona's data will be comprehensive enough for reliable comparisons.
    H. That all reviews would result in written responses from the Dean and the Provost, normally within 45 days of receipt of the report.
    I. That any policy revisions or additions recommended would be subject to the governance process, including Board of Trustee approval.

V. Annual Program Reviews

The Annual Program Reviews will follow the instructions from the Office of the Provost. They will include the following:
1. Departments may select from the approved qualitative indicators of program strength to record significant qualitative achievements or challenges.
2. Departments may report on progress towards qualitative goals set at the last five-year program review.
3. Departments should review the approved quantitative measures and report on successes and/or challenges related to:
   - Student course demand

- Academic standards
- Instructional delivery
- Instructional resource utilization

4. Departments should review the approved quantitative measures and report on progress towards goals set at the last five-year review related to:
   - Program demand
   - Student progress to degree
   - Faculty quality and utilization
5. Departments should make a qualitative assessment of overall strength and/or challenges and/or progress towards approved goals.
6. Departments should identify resource needs or resource reductions.
7. Departments may request an Academic Program Accelerated Review should they believe the quantitative and/or qualitative trends warrant such a request.
8. The Dean and Provost will provide a written response, normally within 45 days, to the departmental annual program review report.

VI.   Five-Year Academic Program Review

The Five-Year Program Reviews will follow the instructions from the Office of the Provost. Each department should conduct a Five-Year Program Review every five years, unless the Provost adjusts the cycle to coincide with a discipline accreditation review. The Five-Year Program Reviews will have the following elements:

1. Departments should utilize the approved qualitative and quantitative measures to assess:
   - Program excellence and relationship to Mission.
   - Curricular effectiveness and currency.
   - Faculty, adjunct, and staff quality and effectiveness.
   - Student profiles and progress; degree demand.
   - Resources and productivity.
   - Student learning outcomes.
2. Departments should assess departmental strengths, weaknesses, challenges, opportunities, and resource levels.
3. Departments should develop a five-year strategic plan that is consistent with the institution's strategic plan. The plan must include: Mission, Vision, Goals, and Measures.
4. Departments should engage, according to guidelines from the Provost's Office, two consultants with sufficient expertise to provide an objective evaluation of the department. The consultants' reports should address, at a minimum, the following items:
   - Unit Mission appropriateness.
   - Curriculum quality.
   - Faculty quality.
   - Resource level sufficiency.
   - Student performance and progress.
   - Learning outcomes and program assessment and methods.

- Any institutional barriers impacting the department.

  Prior to the consultants' visit, the Provost, in consultation with the Dean and department chair, may request additional areas for the consultants to assess.

5. The Dean and Provost will provide a written response, normally within 45 days, to the departmental Five-Year Program Review.

VII. Academic Program Accelerated Review Policy

The Office of the Provost will request that the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning monitor key data for academic programs.

1. The two data points to be utilized for the "threshold" mechanism are:
   - ✓ Average SCH per FTE faculty member
   - ✓ Average cost per SCH

     Departments with graduate programs will have the data disaggregated by undergraduate and graduate. At the undergraduate level, a three year rolling average will be utilized. At the graduate level, a five-year rolling average will be utilized.

2. Departments/programs that are 33% or more above or below the average for the school in both average SCH per FTE faculty member and average cost per SCH will be considered for an academic program accelerated review. The Provost, in consultation with the Committee on Academic Affairs, will make the final decision on whether to implement the academic program accelerated review having consulted with the Dean and department chair, considered both quantitative trend data and qualitative information, and any special circumstances. The Provost will review unit costs for that discipline from the Delaware Cost Study prior to making any decision. This decision will be shared in writing, normally within 30 days. New undergraduate programs will have a three year grace period and new graduate programs will have a five year grace period before being eligible for accelerated review to allow sufficient time for program development.

3. Normally, the review will take the form of the five-year review, and follow the normal timeframe for a five-year review, with a special set of additional questions and considerations. A department/program undergoing an academic program accelerated review with a satisfactory outcome will not normally be required to undergo a five-year review for another five years.

4. For departments/programs for which the data indicate they are above the 33% school average threshold for SCH per FTE faculty member and below the 33% school average for cost per SCH, the following questions should be addressed:
   - ✓ Are these trends likely to continue, increase, or decrease? What data support these conclusions?
   - ✓ Does the department have a sufficient number of faculty lines to service adequately the demands?
   - ✓ If not, what staffing plan can be developed and implemented?
   - ✓ Are there any curricular changes that could impact the relevant data?
   - ✓ Are there any enrollment limitations that are necessary?

5. For departments/programs for which the data indicate they are <u>below</u> the 33% school average threshold for SCH per FTE faculty member <u>and</u> <u>above</u> the 33% school average threshold for cost per SCH, the following questions should be addressed:
   - ✓ Are these trends likely to continue, increase, or decrease? What data support these conclusions?
   - ✓ Does the department have too many instructional personnel (faculty/adjuncts) for the number of SCH?
   - ✓ If so, what staffing plan can be developed and implemented?
   - ✓ Are there recruitment strategies and/or curricular changes that could positively impact the relevant data?

6. If the answers to the above questions do not appear likely to impact the data sufficiently, a number of options should be considered:

   (i) An appropriate probationary period to remedy the situation based on a specific action plan.
   (ii) Either after (1) above or immediately consider:
      a. Changing a major to a minor, or
      b. Implementing a phase out of the program, or
      c. Placing the program in "suspension." (Programs in "suspension" would not need to go through the new program approval process to come out of "suspension.")

7. Any substantial changes to a department/program would be based on a recommendation from the appropriate Dean to the Provost and would be subject to the governance process, including a review by the College's Committee on Academic Affairs and by the Board of Trustees. If the substantial change recommended is the termination of the program, the governance process would include consideration by, and recommendations from, the Faculty Senate.

8. The Deans and Provost will provide a written response, normally within 45 days, to the Academic Program Accelerated Review. This response will include any specific recommendations or actions.