

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

In early 2004, the provost approved a new program review process recommended by the Academic Planning Council, which meant most notably that reviews will truly be of programs not departments and a review of academic program quality will include an analysis of whether the program is actually achieving its goals for student learning. Criteria were aligned with the regional accreditation criteria of the Higher Learning Commission so as to facilitate the campus-level self study process, increase consistency in communications about academic program quality and to reduce redundant requests for information. Since that revision, Academic Affairs is interested in better understanding the outcome of the established changes for continuous improvement in the program review process. Academic Affairs also aspires to collect feedback on workshop performance, data selection usefulness, and other various avenues for communication (for example, the website).

## METHOD

A 17 question online survey was administered to all individuals who participated in the cumulating interview with the provost for program reviews scheduled between academic years 2004-05 and 2007-08 using *SurveyMonkey*. Of the 81 invited to participate, 28 responded (35% response rate) between April 18 and May 14, 2008. The purpose of the survey was to collect information that can be used to improve the program review process and to better understand how to encourage more effective self-study processes.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### DEMOGRAPHICS & BACKGROUND

- The role most of our respondents play in program review is Chair/Program Director (70.8%, 17).
- Most of the respondents completed program review in the 2006-2007 academic year (41.7%, 10).
- The majority of respondents assisted with writing the SWOT (23), assisted in writing the self-study (22), or provided analysis (21). Only a few of the respondents worked with the auditor (6).
- Most of the responses indicate their programs are housed in the College of Humanities and Social & Behavioral Sciences (6) or the College of Education and Human Services (6). There were none housed in Academic Affairs.
- Nearly all of our respondents completed the full program review process (77.8%).

### EFFECTIVE ACTIONS RESULTING FROM PROGRAM REVIEW

- Program review was most effective in prompting meaningful conversations about the program future. Respondents feel less strongly that program review effectively leads to supportive actions in program quality and future by individuals in their programs.
- Respondents more strongly agreed that program review assists with identifying strengths and weaknesses in departmental structures and responsibilities than helps in stimulating use of evidence in analyzing criteria.
- Results indicate that the External Reviewer and SWOT components of program review contributed most to the accomplishment of actions important to program review. Respondents were less likely to believe that the Library Resources form was valuable.

### ACADEMIC AFFAIRS ASSISTANCE

- While the majority of respondents did not attend the Academic Affairs workshops (60%, or 15 respondents), all others believed the workshops helped to some extent.
- Nearly half of the respondents (48%, 12) believe the Academic Affairs website is slightly helpful for program review, while another 44% (11) have not visited the site.

## OPEN-ENDED SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

- Revising the components of program review:
  - Simplify, simplify, simplify.
  - For all the time and effort invested by faculty in this process, it would be gratifying if there were better follow-up and more tangible benefits realized from having done all this.
- Adding new/deleting components
  - ...Please do not make it any longer. If anything is added, delete two things. Overall, the process was of some value and is a wholesome exercise. But it was also a substantial burden. There is no "extra" time to do this work, so OTHER THINGS DID NOT GET DONE while this was being done...
- Data needed, not provided
  - Data on Alums; Accurate data on majors and minors (this is now starting to appear on the IR web site but it was not available at the time).
  - Better reporting of off campus SCH generation compared to on campus SCH.
- Workshop Usefulness
  - Procedures and timeline.
  - Explanation and rationale of structure.
- Advice for future workshops
  - Force deadlines in process.
  - Have mentors available who have done this well in the past. Getting a chance to see how others approached would help.
- Website suggestions
  - Samples are good.
  - Perhaps, make the website better known as a resource for everyone who is working with the process.
- Various areas of program review, including faculty involvement
  - Tie this to the by-laws so credit for this work is acknowledged. Service here not valued for tenure.