

Portland State University-School of Extended Studies (PSU-SES)

2011-2012 Review Process

Context

Rapid changes in technology, pedagogy, and the accompanying increase in online learning offerings by non-profit and for-profit institutions have created a much larger array of educational opportunities for students. These changes span the educational spectrum including K-12, postsecondary and continuing education, and raise both opportunities and significant competitive challenges for entities such as the School of Extended Studies (SES) at PSU.

Along with these external forces, there are also many ongoing changes at PSU. In 2008, the move of the Continuing Education (CEED) program from SES to an academic home in the Graduate School of Education was initiated. In the summer of 2011, the SES Online Learning Center (OLC) and online learning support activities in the Center for Academic Excellence were combined in a new Center for Online Learning (COL) within the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA). At a financial level, both of these changes have led to a reduction in the net revenue of SES. In addition, the creation of COL and a growing number of online offerings from academic units at PSU is leading to a continued blurring of the lines with what has become a predominantly online set of courses offered by SES Extended Campus Program (ECP). On the horizon, PSU is looking towards replacing the disparate in-load, self-support, and summer session budget allocation methods with a single budget allocation model. Such a model, which is built upon recommendation of the Financial Futures Task Force (FFTF), would allocate revenues associated with student credit hour generation to the appropriate academic unit and would affect both the ECP and Summer Session Programs within SES. The transfer of Summer Session from SES is notable as the income is used partially to support its other activities, a dependency which is long-standing and was highlighted in a previous 2002 external review.

The combination of these external and internal issues suggests that a thorough review and evaluation of SES in the 2011-12 AY is both timely and necessary.

Objectives

The objectives of this 2011-2012 SES review are 1) to formulate a vision and mission that is congruent with and contributes to the Vision, Mission, and Themes of PSU, 2) to chart a course that adapts to local and national changes in the educational landscape, is practical, and financially sustainable.

Principles

There are four guiding principles for this process: 1) The next iteration of SES must be built upon a unique contribution to the institutional Vision and Mission, and operate in a manner which observes PSU processes and procedures, 2) Maintain and, where appropriate, expand educational opportunities for the diverse groups of Oregonians currently served through SES and the academic units; 3) Enhance the coordination and communication of the offerings and activities in SES and the academic units to leverage the efforts of both and eliminate redundancies; 4) Maintain and, where possible, enhance the quality of individual programs currently within SES, and of the overall PSU reputation and brand.

Specific questions to be addressed in the review:

- 1) What are the key ways in which the SES uniquely can pursue a vision and mission?
- 2) How can each of the existing programs in SES (Professional Development Center, Extended Campus Program and Independent Study), future programs, and their associated support functions (marketing, registration and accounting) be staffed and organized so that they can be most effective and self-sustaining without cross subsidy or dependence upon summer session income? Structural and organizational changes may be necessary to accomplish this goal. The benefits of further centralizing or decentralizing the support functions should be considered. A detailed financial analysis will be provided for the review process.
- 3) What existing programs should remain, and what new programs might be added, to what currently exists in SES?
- 4) Are there any programs that should be discontinued or transferred out of SES? In particular, the process should address the advantages and disadvantages of moving the credit-bearing Extended Campus Programs to their respective academic units.
- 5) Should the SES focus on short term, non-credit certificates and how would it be staffed, organized and named? To what extent should short-term, non-credit classes be transferred to, or developed by, the academic units.

Process and Timeline

September-December

1st Level Review. SES self study with a written report addressing long-term vision and finances. This process will include a detailed financial analysis and a review of best practices of successful programs and entities at comparator institutions.

January-March

2nd Level Review. A committee comprised of faculty (including Presiding Officer of the Faculty Senate, and Chairs of both the Faculty Senate Budget Committee and Educational Policy Committee), deans and administrators will conduct its own independent review and prepare a report. This review would include an analysis of the SES self-study, discussions with or presentations made by SES staff, the results of an external review* to be conducted in February, and potentially consultation with the Educational Advisory Board (EAB).

*A 2-day external review will be conducted by reviewers selected by SES, faculty and administrators. The reviewers will be provided with material from the SES self study and financial analysis in advance of a personal campus visit, and they will be asked to provide a final written report.

April

Proposal. Proposal prepared and processed following the Faculty Senate approved "Process for Creation, Elimination & Alteration of Academic Units."