What is Program Prioritization?

Examples:
- Anthropology B.A./B.S. (including the minor)
- Religious Studies minor
- Computer Science M.S.
- Social Work and Social Research Ph.D.
- …

(Identification requires discipline-specific insight!)

• “Growth opportunity”
• “Healthy”
• “Experiencing challenges”
Why do we need a process like this?

This is about taking stock, developing a university-wide understanding of who we are and what we do.

Why do we need a process like this?

This is about guiding strategic investments in programs that best support institutional goals.

Without it, we risk:

Decision making in a vacuum

Without it, we risk:

Stagnation, inability to respond & reallocate resources
Why now?

Allow the thoughtful, careful development of a regularized process.
Do not wait for an emergency!

APP in the Context of Shared Governance

Academic Program Prioritization (APP) does not introduce any new, special powers:
- Any recommendations that APP generates are subject to all of the usual oversight and procedures

Challenges

(1) What if a program that I care about …
receives new investment?
continues as is?
is targeted for reorganization or cuts?

(2) There are no intrinsically “protected” disciplines

Issues of Trust

• Why now? What is the hidden agenda?
  • APP does not bypass existing shared governance procedures
  • Emphasis on information gathering
  • We are not doing this in the context of an immediate fiscal crisis
  • We must be prepared to suspend the process if there is inadequate data to support the necessary comparative analysis

• This will take a lot of time and effort, but it won’t matter: nothing will change
  • Design process to minimize impact/cost, but acknowledge that it will take resources
  • Two phase triage process
  • Requires a commitment from administration to follow-through, and to continuing use and refinement of APP on an ongoing basis
Issues of Trust
• Concerns about fairness, bias, qualification of reviewers:
  • Commitment to openness and transparency
  • Commitment to communication with the campus community
  • Frequent interaction with program representatives throughout the APP process
  • Willingness to capture & share responses and “second opinions”

Issues of Trust
• Why are we only looking at academic programs?
  • Faculty are qualified to make assessments on academic programs
  • Challenging to identify criteria that can be meaningfully applied to both academic and non-academic programs
  • Earlier APPC recommendation: APP should be pursued as part of a broader review that includes all parts of the University

Issues of Trust
• There is a strong association between APP and Dickeson’s book, viewed by some critics as “intellectually bankrupt”, an “attack on tenure”, and an “administrator’s revenge on faculty”
  • Learn from experience elsewhere, but be willing to adapt to address needs of PSU
  • Recognize and attempt to avoid documented pitfalls and problems

Workload Issues
• A dense schedule of work for the coming year:
  • Academic program prioritization
  • Academic program review
  • Academic quality task force
  • Family friendly task force
  • Strategic planning
  • Post-tenure review
  • Conversations about CLAS structure
  • Strategic enrollment management
  • Budget process
  • …

The Road Ahead
• A dense schedule of work for the coming year!
• How can we expect all of these activities to be appropriately staffed?
• How can we minimize overlap and redundancy, avoid burnout, etc.?
• Need to set reasonable expectations
Developing a Useful Process

Useless

No faculty-driven, university-wide, systematized process

Perfect

Unattainable: there is no “pause” button

The process must be based on data and methods that we trust
The process must be open and transparent
The process must engage the PSU community

Developing a Useful Process

Useless

Perfect

Iterate

• Start with a good design
• Solicit user feedback
• Refine and improve

A long-term commitment to build an effective and useful tool for PSU

Developing a Useful Process

Fall 2014

• Outreach to campus community
  • Web site and mailing list
  • In person visits to schools/departments
  • Regular reporting to Faculty Senate
  • …?
• Finalize process details (programs, criteria, categories, communication) with community input
• Distribute questionnaires to programs

What can I do to get involved?

• Tell your colleagues about APP
  • Let us know if you’d like to host a visit from members of APPC in your unit or department

• Review the materials we produce
  • And share your feedback, questions, concerns, and suggestions (and those of colleagues too!)

• Provide discipline and unit-specific guidance:
  • For example, this group will play a key role in helping to identify the collection of “academic programs” that will be considered

Thank You!

Contact address for comments and feedback:

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website coming soon …