DePaul University
Academic Program Review

Memorandum of Agreement -- June 1999

Management of Public Services

As a result of the first cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle I), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once the signatures are in place: for the unit, the chair of the unit's review committee and the department chair/program director; for the college/school, the dean; for the Academic Program Review Committee, the unit subcommittee members; for the university, the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Acknowledgements

The members of the Academic Program Review Committee congratulate and commend the MPS review committee for its thorough and serious self-study process. The committee fully embraced the process in the spirit in which it was intended. The APRC enjoyed a collaborative working relationship with the members of the MPS committee, who have been excellent colleagues, remaining flexible and reflective in ways that helped APRC to invent and implement simultaneously this new review process. The MPS committee used the self-study as an opportunity to review its programs and course offerings, and to continue ongoing discussions about how to improve the program. The MPS review process can serve as a model of how faculty can reflect together on university-level initiatives.

The self-study process and subsequent conversations with the dean and the APRC subcommittee members yielded several recommendations for improvement on the key issues MPS identified in its self-study plan. The program has set a goal for itself to accomplish by June 2000 the "issues and actions agreed upon" as listed below, and to continue discussing the other "issues for further consideration.”

Common Issues and University-level Commitments

During Cycle I, the unit program review self-studies raised several issues generally in common that have important university-wide implications. In subsequent conversations about these major issues, the units, the deans, the Academic Program Review Committee members, and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs all have recognized the need for university-level coordination to support units in the following areas: a) advising activities; b) recruitment and marketing efforts; c) structures that facilitate cross-departmental and cross-college collaboration; d) improvement of the university-level data collection and reporting efforts on academic programs; e) assessment efforts and research on students; and f) efforts to maintain connections with alumni. To follow up on these common issues and determine the appropriate courses of action needed to address them at the university and unit level, the Academic Program Review Committee and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agree to do the following:

1. The Academic Program Review Committee agrees to prepare a summary report on Cycle I to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs which discusses these and other issues that have important connections to other university-wide initiatives, especially to the Strategic Plan. That report will be made public, along with the Memoranda of Agreement.
2. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agrees to direct the appropriate university-level offices to work with the units and their deans on how to effectively address these issues.
3. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will require a progress report in June of 2000 from the appropriate offices that will be shared with the Academic Program Review Committee.
4. The Academic Program Review Committee will invite representatives from the appropriate offices to an Academic Program Review Committee meeting in the fall quarter of 1999-2000 academic year to follow-up on these issues and discuss possible courses of action.

In addition to these university-level commitments, the following are issues and actions agreed upon at the unit level.

**Issues and actions agreed upon**

1. Using the current course offerings, the program will create six new concentrations to provide focus and direction to students' curricular choices without creating numerous new courses and hence more faculty work.
   
   - The MPS curriculum committee has already begun to implement a new course numbering and administrative structure to support these concentrations.
   - These new concentrations will be available to the students entering the program in the fall of 1999.
   - The program is developing its own database which will help track the students as they enroll in these course concentrations.

2. The program will move deliberately toward the elimination or enhancement of ancillary programs in response to evolving departmental priorities. When considering the elimination or enhancement of collaborative programs, the program will consider its own priorities along with those of the College and University in terms of interdisciplinary offerings.
   
   - The program and the dean will consider the joint program with Nursing to be eliminated since it has been inactive and has had no enrollment for the past several years; it is no longer published in the course bulletin.
   - The program and the dean agree that the joint programs with International Studies and with the J.D. Program in the College of Law are both very strong programs which have strong potential to expand.
   - The program wishes to explore ways to strengthen the relationship with the undergraduate public policy program and may explore the possibility of cross-listing courses with Sociology at the Lake County Campus.
   - The program agrees to work with other departments, colleges, and university offices (e.g. Life Long Learning and Suburban Campuses) to identify resources and ownership for these ancillary programs to make sure they have a clear identity and relationship to MPS. [Note: Life Long Learning is participating in Cycle 2 of academic program review.]

3. The program will cultivate the growing number of alumni in ways meaningful to their professional and personal development.
   
   - The program has already developed several initiatives to increase alumni involvement, such as newsletter mailings, professional round-table discussions, and designating two volunteers from the program to help coordinate these projects.
   - The program will meet with the LAS alumni director to discuss other ideas for drawing in alumni and will explore the possibility of working with the university's Alumni/Development office toward this end.
   - The program recognizes that its most active alumni graduated from the program within the last 10 years, and it would like to focus especially on developing relationships with this group.

**Issues and actions on which there is agreement to do further work and continue conversations**

1. Explore alternatives for strengthening admission criteria.
• The program has already analyzed existing data on current students to understand the relationship between admissions criteria and performance in the program (grades in certain courses, GPA, etc.).

2. Establish a more effective mechanism to identify earlier in the program those students needing special assistance (or lacking the skills to successfully finish the program).

• The program is experimenting with a fall series of workshops for students on writing and Excel skills so that students receive assistance early in the program.

3. Explore opportunities to enhance the curriculum to facilitate the learning experiences of strongest students.

• As a trial strategy, the program would like to present opportunities for the strongest students to self-select into challenging courses, such as sections of advanced quantitative methods and special seminar courses.

4. Critically assess student perceptions and other learning issues effecting the success of suburban weekend-oriented degree program.

• MPS would like to consider innovations in Naperville to draw more students into the program.
• The program recognizes that growth in enrollment at the Naperville campus will help the choice of electives and course offerings at that campus.

Areas of discussion in which further work is needed, as yet unspecified

1. Research/data on students

• In the university's databases, there should be a way to code students' concentrations and double majors / dual program affiliation so that the program can better track its students.
• The university has hired this year two national experts on student and institutional research, Tom Angelo, the Director of the SNL Assessment Center, and Gerry McLaughlin, the Director of the Office of Institutional Planning and Research. There is a possibility that they could lend assistance and could give advice to programs who would like to do more in-depth research on their students.
• The program might consider doing expectations research on its incoming students to identify those who might benefit from special assistance and those who could benefit from advanced coursework.

2. Targeted marketing and recruitment for Masters-level programs

• Several niche programs at the graduate level could benefit from targeted marketing and recruitment strategies. The MPS program and dean would be willing to work with Enrollment Management to explore such a targeted marketing and recruitment strategy.
• With the understanding that marketing and recruitment issues are not unique to MPS, the program would like the college and the university to consider ways to offer coordinated support to graduate programs on this matter.

3. Assistance to students on writing skills

• The program and the dean recognize that as enrollments grow, the effort to assist students who need additional help in writing and other skills will be challenging.
• With the understanding that the lack of graduate-level writing skills is not unique to MPS, the program would like the college and the university to consider ways to offer coordinated support to graduate programs on this matter.

4. Foreign study options

• The program is currently exploring the idea of offering a foreign study option in Sao Paolo, Brazil, and/or Europe (Poland, Ireland), especially in relation to International Non-Government Organizations.

***

A hard copy of this document was signed by:

Chair of the Unit Review Committee: Joe Schwieterman

Unit Review Committee members: Susan Bennett and Ann C. Spittle

Program Director: Dean Eitel, for J. Patrick Murphy

APRC Subcommittee members: Elizabeth Murphy and Russ Rogers

Dean of the College: Michael Mezey

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs: Richard Meister

*The hard copy with signatures is on file in the Office of the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs and is available upon request.