DePaul University Academic Program Review

Cycle 5: Spring 2002–Spring 2003

Memorandum of Agreement -- December 2003

School of Computer Science, Telecommunications, and Information Systems

As a result of the fifth cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle 5), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once all the signatures are in place.

University Commitments to Cycle Five Units:

1. Academic and Career Advising:
   a. The University will look into providing institutional assistance for graduate/professional school preparation in terms of publicizing and making certain that standardized test preparation programs are available.
   b. The University will look into implementing advising alerts through Campus Connect that encourage students to contact their advisors prior to enrolling in courses.

2. Diversity:

   Consistent with the University’s mission, DePaul University remains strongly committed to promoting the diversity of faculty, students, and staff. Academic Affairs will support a variety of strategies developed by departments and programs to enhance such diversity.

School of CTI Commitments:

SPECIAL NOTE: Because the inclusion of all the individual items proposed by the various CTI program areas created a document that seemed too long and unwieldy, most of them have been dropped from this document since they seem to fit under the CTI items listed below, and would seem naturally to arise as CTI pursues its initiatives throughout the college. APRC urges the specific program groups to retain those proposed items to pursue them as their part of the larger CTI initiatives. However, some items from the program areas seem sufficiently focused and/or specific to the program area suggesting them, that it was thought appropriate to retain them here as examples of what the CTI initiatives might mean for specific program areas, and to make certain that the program areas proposing them did not lose sight of them in light of the broader CTI initiatives. These have been written in italics with the initials of the program from which they have come. A third category of items from the programs did not seem to fit under the general CTI initiatives and so have been retained at the end of this document as “Other Program Area Items.”

1. Analyzing and Improving Advising
   a. Create a detailed FAQ for each program. Create centralized web pages with all academic and career advising resources. *HCI: Identify those HCI courses that would be appropriate for course guides.*
   b. Appoint an advising liaison for each program committee that will report changes in program requirements to advisors.
   c. Gather students’ feedback on their advising experiences using a survey process similar to the existing system for gathering students’ feedback on their course experiences.
   d. Ensure student access to faculty within their programs by diversifying advising through videoconferencing, phone, in person etc. in lieu of attempting to assign each student an advisor specializing in the student’s major, which is difficult given the fluid nature of the school’s structure.
e. Take a more proactive approach to advising with the purpose of improving retention. Several Programs: Track students more carefully, whether quarterly or annually, to enhance advising and support and, to improve retention.

2. Maintain Excellence and Currency in the Curriculum
   a. Continue to oversee curricula with particular attention to eliminating overlap of material across courses in both existing and new programs.
   b. Simplify program requirements if possible.
   c. Survey alumni to obtain information regarding which skills CTI graduates feel they need and to see which skills they received from CTI that they are actually using in their work. Develop workshops, new courses, degrees, etc. to develop additional skills if necessary.
   d. Adapt program curricula to respond to emerging technologies, possibly in areas such as biometrics and nanotechnology.
   e. Investigate if additional lab components can be integrated into existing courses to increase hands-on experience.
   f. Explore ways to increase experiential learning that link the experience and the students’ programs together. Ways that will be explored include, but are not limited to internships, final projects, and cooperative projects with the University’s Centers & Institutes.
   g. Investigate if the decline since 1988 in CTI students’ perceptions of academic rigor is an indicator of rigor problems that should be addressed. Look into the numbers/percentages of students who believe that courses are too easy and the amount of time students spend on task.
   h. CS: Review the introductory programming languages sequence to see if adjustments will affect retention.
   i. CS: Correct the unintended effects of the graduate prerequisite phase on the undergraduate curriculum, as discussed in detail in section C.2. on curriculum structure in our self-study.
   j. ECT: Restructure the graduate curriculum to provide dual emphasis on technology and technology management
   k. Make the Graduate ECT program more accessible for students with an inadequate technical background by revising the prerequisite phase and making it more rigorous.

3. Retention and Diversity of Students
   a. Contact and work with OIPR to investigate CTI’s retention rate (one CTI sub-unit reported its “inactive passing” rate as 44%), including its possible relation to the “cast a wide net” enrollment policy, develop criteria by which to assess the implication of that rate, and, as needed, develop strategies for addressing it.
   b. Investigate gender and ethnicity imbalance in retention and graduation of CTI students. Work with OIPR to compile a list of appropriate programs to benchmark against. Determine if interventions can be implemented to improve retention and graduation.
   c. Continue to find ways to improve CTI’s sense of community. Continue and enhance student academic groups, clubs, and organizations designed for women and other minority groups.
   d. Create orientation sessions for CTI majors.

4. Assessment
   a. Investigate and report on both best practices and current actions regarding the assessment of the effectiveness of distance learning, that goes beyond faculty impressions and student perceptions to include actual learning outcomes and a comparison of distance learners and non-distance learners.
   b. Continue the development of school wide and program specific (learning) goals and assess the achievement of one goal each year.

5. Faculty
   a. Expand efforts to enhance gender and ethnic diversity of CTI faculty.
b. Continue efforts to better integrate the large number of non-tenure track and adjunct faculty, including the course mentoring program which pairs adjunct faculty with full time faculty.

C. Improve and formalize the process for reviewing and providing feedback to faculty including non tenure-track/adjunct faculty.

Other Program Area Items

PROGRAM CORE FACULTY

Several units: Investigate the nature and depth of and the possible remedies for the need felt by several programs for a core faculty or “administrative unit” to take on-going responsibility for specific programs including curricular matters and strategic planning.

LAB ISSUES

ECT: Continue upgrading lab and software support for the ECT curriculum based on instructor, course and student demands.

HCI: Investigate need, space and appropriate equipment for usability lab.

COL (COURSE ON LINE) ISSUES

HCI: Investigate extending access to all HCI COL (course-on-line) courses to all faculty teaching in HCI. Propose to the Dean of CTI that all faculty who teach in HCI be permitted to teach on-line/distance learning. The unit will be open to working with the Dean to ensure that all faculty receive proper training.

CONTACT WITH INDUSTRY LEADERS

IS: Form a student group dedicated to networking with both students and alumni who are interested in Information Systems and sponsoring events where students and alumni can meet with local IS industry leaders.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

TDC: Develop a strategic plan over the course of the next year. This includes exploring all aspects of the Telecommunications program, including programs, courses, labs, research, industry trends, comparison with similar programs at other educational institutions, participation in external forums (symposiums, standards, etc.), and joint activities with industry and academia.

RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

PhD: Increase the visibility of research and scholarly activity at CTI through the web site.
Signed:

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