ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Items Proposed for Consideration by APRC (Academic Program Review Committee) as it considers its task, structure and procedures for Megacycle II

I. STRUCTURE

A. Selecting A Committee Chair
   i. Process
      1. The AVP for Academic Affairs will convene and APRC meeting and will discuss the selection of a committee chair for the 2005 – 2006 academic year. The APRC will then bring its recommendation to Faculty Council for confirmation.

B. Review Structure
   i. External Review
      1. Consider, with the input of Faculty Council, designing and implementing a significant portion or dimension of each review to be conducted by relevant experts from outside the university to enable the review to consider the currency and adequacy of the unit’s curriculum/program.
      2. Assure unit participation in selection of possible candidates to serve as external reviewers.
      3. Discuss the creation of a budget with the EVP for Academic Affairs to fund external review.

   ii. Faculty Role
      1. DePaul faculty will retain primary responsibility in the review process regardless of any new element of external review. The quality of academic programs is primarily the responsibility of DePaul faculty and faculty will ensure that distinctive elements of DePaul’s mission and goals that might be missed by external reviewers are given their appropriate weight.

C. Which Units Are Reviewed
   i. Non-traditional Units
      1. Examine whether centers and institutes should be reviewed together in their own cycle or whether they should be reviewed as a sub-unit of an academic unit.
      2. Re-examine the relevance and the type of review done for units considered Academic Affairs units, such as the
library, etc. Determine if an attempt to bring Operations under review is appropriate.

ii. Traditional Academic Programs

1. Include units in the next megacycle that were omitted from the first megacycle.

2. Ensure that all degree granting programs are included in the Mega Cycle II review and that units address all of the degrees that they offer.

3. Examine the level at which program reviews have taken place to ensure that each level of the unit’s programs is appropriately examined and receives sufficient attention from the committee.

iii. Determine Level of Units to Undergo Review

1. Determine how to deal with the challenge presented by units consisting of a number of sub-units that actually do the work of the unit, which were sometimes not reviewed separately in the first mega cycle, resulting in either far too much work of the unit receiving far too little attention, or APRC being unable to give the reports of the subunits the attention and careful response they deserve.

D. APRC Membership

i. Committee Composition

1. Given the time commitment and workload expectations, devise ways to assure that membership of APRC contains a significant portion of senior, tenured faculty with a record of university service and commitment drawn from across the university. [See recommendation 14 of APR Self-Study]

2. Determine if the composition of the committee needs to be expanded to include an ex officio representative from Enrollment Management or any other additional members.

II. GOALS/FOCUS

A. Nature & Inclusiveness of Review

i. Consider whether it is helpful to continue having units attempt a kind of comprehensive review of its operations, or whether comprehensiveness might be profitably sacrificed for the sake of sharper focus on specific challenges facing the unit, and, if the latter is preferred, decide who identifies those challenges and how.

ii. Seek a more adequate way to review various emerging areas/methods/modalities, which depart from dominant patterns of
instruction at DePaul and thus raise significant but different questions. These include: on-line learning; study abroad programs; programs offered on suburban campuses and in various extra-curricular settings; and certificate programs. Such review should raise not only the usual questions of program quality, learning outcomes, etc., but also whether there is adequate university policy to guide such programs and to assure their quality.

B. Academic and Creative Scholarship

i. Along with implementing some external review to assess the currency and adequacy of the unit’s curriculum, APRC should also attend more to the level of the ongoing scholarship, research, and creative work of the unit’s faculty for the same reason.

C. Clarifying And Simplifying The Goals Of APR

i. Clarification

1. Design a way to make clearer to the units that the goal of program review is the real improvement of the unit’s programs and the other ways the unit serves its students and other clientele. Reduce the summarization of existing data and policy in order to better portray the current situation of the unit and stress the need for a serious, well conceived, and appropriately self-critical study of the unit by the unit that yields a fresh and candid picture of the unit’s current challenges and its future possibilities.

2. APRC must continue to seek ways to create a safe, supportive atmosphere in which units will be willing to undertake this potentially risky task. [See recommendation 5 of APR Self-Study]

3. As needed, further clarify the relationship between program review and assessment which still seems to puzzle some units. [See recommendation 4 of APR Self-Study]

ii. Streamlining

1. Streamline the program review guidelines to make the goals of program review clearer and to help units understand better what is expected of them. Include unit participation in making determinations of what is of value. [See recommendation 3 of APR Self-Study]

2. Consider including an examination of the statistical information in the self-study plan, allowing the self-study report to focus more sharply on substantive areas.

3. Consider relocating the unit’s description of itself from the report to the plan of the Self-Study. Consider requiring the
inclusion of analyzed assessment data within the APR process.

III. PROCESS

A. Effectiveness

i. Follow-up with units regarding APR review changes to determine effectiveness.

ii. Refine the survey created for the APR self-review, determine optimum timing to administer survey, and annually survey participants from units.

B. Scheduling

i. Examine Scheduling of Documents

1. Examine scheduling matters in light of past experience. Specifically—the spring kickoff and the December deadline for the Self-Study Report. Determine optimal scheduling, including the possibility of overlapping cycles. [See recommendation 1 in APR Self-Study.]

2. Examine the manner and the timing of administrative input, from deans to EVP/AA, into the process and emphasize involvement at the planning stage. This should have the benefit of ensuring that major concerns are not sprung on the units late in the process and also make certain that such input and concerns by administrators does not dominate the process. [See recommendation 2 in APR Self-Study.]

C. Procedures

i. Orientation

1. Consider the possibility of having separate small group or common discipline beginning-of-the-cycle kickoff/orientation meetings for the units undergoing review to facilitate better initial communication between the unit and the APRC sub-committee working with it. [See recommendation 8 of APR Self-Study]

2. Include discussions of expectations of the unit, APR subcommittee, and APRC and clarify the role of the APRC subcommittees to units undergoing review.

3. Encourage conversations between subcommittee and unit members from the beginning of the process.

4. Streamline kickoff/orientation meetings

5. Initiate regular OIPR orientations for new APRC members and for unit review committees to inform them about the kinds of data currently available and how to access it, and
the kinds of data that OIPR can assist them in obtaining. [See recommendation 9 of APR Self-Study]

ii. Materials

1. Implement a regular process for reviewing and if necessary revising the APR Guidebook including a thorough evaluation during the 2005-2006 academic year. [See recommendation 12 of APR Self-Study]

2. Seek ways to refine and improve the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) process to sharpen focus and create more concrete documents. Consider strengthening agreements by having action items, measurements of effectiveness, and areas for consideration. [See recommendation 13 of APR Self-Study]

iii. Follow-up

1. Consider whether the current mode of follow up on unit Progress Reports is adequate and, if not, how it can be improved to hold units, their administrators, APRC, and the university accountable for the commitments made in the MOA. [See recommendation 13 of APR Self-Study]

2. Consider how to assure that the responses to the units’ Plans and to their Self-Study Reports do indeed represent the view of APRC and seriously take into account the input received from the various sources the committee taps—the draft response from the APRC sub-committee, and the responses solicited from the unit’s dean or other responsible administrator, the EVP/AA and the AVP/AA who serves as APRC’s liaison with the EVP/AA, as well as the chair of APRC, who usually submits his own comments.

D. Committee Orientation

1. Design and initiate a formal orientation process for new APRC members with special attention to the goals of program review, the responsibilities of members, and the importance of data and other evidence in the self-studies, rather than relying primarily on informal mentoring. [See recommendation 7 of APR Self-Study]
IV. SUPPORT

A. Communication

   i. Internet Based

      1. Include a link to the APR web page in the faculty/staff link at www.depaul.edu to make it easier to locate. [See recommendation 12 of APR Self-Study]

      2. Investigate with ITD support the ways in which Blackboard can be used to facilitate exchange of information among the various participants in the review of specific units, and of information about the process as a whole, as well as a means of on-line submission of Plans, Self-Studies and Progress Reports to simplify the paper management process. [See recommendation 8 and 11 of APR Self-Study]

   ii. Workload

      1. Consider having units include an executive summary of their Self-Study Reports to lighten the heavy reading load of APRC members and make it possible to assign more secondary readers. [See recommendation 10 of APR Self-Study]

      2. Consider establishing a greater degree of uniformity in the Self-Study Reports and the Responses from the APRC. Include affected parties in the planning of templates, guidelines, etc.

B. Data Driven

   i. With OIPR and unit input determine an appropriate set of data for reflection and decision-making.

   ii. With OIPR determine what form the data should take and how to provide access to the data.

V. FUTURE ACTIONS

A. Scheduling of Reviews

   i. Re-examine the appropriate relationship between university program review and the external review/accreditation. A number of units are subject to in terms both of optimal timing and of preventing avoidable duplication of work by the unit. [See recommendation six of APR Self-Study Report]

   ii. Establish Mega Cycle II schedule during the 2005-2006 academic year with input from units to undergo review.