

ON-GOING PROGRAM REVIEW AT UC MERCED—November 2005

Purpose: On-going academic degree program review is a key process by which the faculty and academic administration support program quality and improvement. There are four principal stages:

The academic degree program/Graduate Group faculty complete a self-study and critique of the academic degree program, using multiple sources of evidence that demonstrate how well the program is meeting short and long-term quality goals set by the faculty; and how well students are meeting program expectations for learning outcomes;

An external team of distinguished faculty in the field evaluate the quality of the academic degree program, based on multiple sources of evidence presented in the program self-study and on a site visit;

Campus Senate and academic administrative reviewers complete a comprehensive review of academic degree program/Graduate Group faculty and external team reports, with full engagement of the program faculty in responding to issues raised in the course of the review, leading to a set of final recommendations for program improvement; and

Academic degree program/Graduate Group faculty develop a plan, including timetable, for making improvements, with campus review bodies following up to gauge progress in fulfilling the plan. These plans should be consistent with the strategic plans of the Schools, Institutes and Graduate Groups.

UC Merced Review Participants:

Oversight of Program Review: a specially designated Senate/Administration Program Review Committee, co-appointed by the Senate Committee on Committees and the Provost

Faculty: faculty or Graduate Group; Undergraduate Council; Graduate Council; when improvement plans include a reallocation of resources or request for additional resources, CAPRA

Academic Administration: cognizant Deans, Provost/Provost designee

Staffing: Overall management of the process: Provost designee (Program Review Administrator). The Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis will supply dedicated analyst and administrative assistant staff.

Timetable:

All academic degree programs will be reviewed on a 5-6 year cycle. Reviews for related academic degree programs, both undergraduate and graduate, should be scheduled during the same review periods.

1. Preparation for Review: Preliminary Steps (at least one year before review begins)

Program Review Administrator informs School/academic degree program faculty/Graduate Division/Graduate Group of programs to be reviewed and schedule for completing each step of the review. If multiple undergraduate and graduate academic degree program reviews are being conducted together, owing to significant overlap in faculty involvement and field of study, cognizant faculty and administrators will be notified.

2. Academic Degree Program/Graduate Group Self Study (nine to twelve months)

Academic degree program/Graduate Group faculty should prepare the following, as pertinent to the undergraduate or graduate academic degree program:

- Description of academic degree program, including information on subprogram tracks, expected educational outcomes (including skills and knowledge to be developed during the program), requirements for completion, and sample student programs (current catalog information should be appended). How are program requirements expected to contribute to student achievement of educational outcomes? How does the program contribute to campus General Education goals and expectations? Include the current strategic plan for future program development and analyze the role of the program in contributing to School/Division and campus strategic academic plans.
- How well does the current administrative structure for the program support the program?
- List of academic degree program faculty and associated staff, including two-page summary vitae with most recent publications, grants and honors for each faculty member.
- Data on educational resources in support of the academic degree program, including laboratories and/or other specialized facilities, library resources, instructional technology resources, student support services, etc. What is the faculty assessment of strengths and needs for improvement in program resources? Identification of the extent to which these issues are addressed in the strategic plans of the Schools, Institutes and Graduate Groups.

Academic degree program data (consult with Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis), to include:

- Numbers of majors/graduate students by year, since previous review, including demographic data on students—gender, ethnicity, GPA's and test scores at

admission, undergraduate baccalaureate [and master's, where applicable] institution [for graduate students].

- Numbers of academic degree program graduates, by year, since previous review, retention data, time to degree data.
- Detailed data on job placement, entry into advanced degree program or other information about student plans after graduation.
- How is student progress in achieving educational outcomes for the academic degree program assessed? Include detailed information about the forms of assessment, including capstone exams, research papers, dissertations, projects, or other cumulative evidence of achievement; current student and alumni surveys; evaluation of student performance on entry exams for advanced degree programs; employer evaluations; and/or other data.
- What do data from these various assessment approaches show? Analysis of the data should highlight both program strengths and needs for improvement. Include preliminary plans for strengthening the program.

3. External Assessment (three to four months)

In consultation with the cognizant Deans, academic degree program/Graduate Group faculty, and Program Review and Senate committees, the Program Review Administrator empanels a three-member External Review Committee (ERC) and designates a chair, in consultation with the ERC members. Note: "External" indicates that members are external to UC Merced.

The External Review Committee receives the self-study for review, then schedules a campus visit of two to three days. The schedule should include time for ERC-only meetings at the beginning and end of the visit, and separate meetings with the cognizant Dean(s), academic degree program faculty, and program students; other meetings as requested by ERC; and exit meetings with the Program Review Committee and Program Review Administrator. The ERC may request additional information (for example, samples of senior theses or doctoral dissertations) and meetings with specific individuals or groups not included on the initial meeting list.

With contributions from the ERC members, the ERC chair prepares a candid and objective evaluation of the academic degree program, including strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations for areas of improvement. The report should be sent to the Program Review Administrator no more than six weeks after the site visit.

4. Final Review and Plan for Action (three months)

The External Review is submitted to the Academic degree program/Graduate Group faculty for initial review and response. The Program Self-Study, External Review and

initial faculty response are submitted to the Program Review Committee and cognizant academic administrators, all of whom are invited to submit comments to the Program Review Administrator and Program Review Committee. The Program Review Administrator works with the Program Review Committee to develop a final evaluation with recommendations for action.

The academic degree program/Graduate Group faculty prepare a plan for program improvement, which is submitted to the Program Review Committee, cognizant academic administrators, and, if additional resources are requested, to CAPRA. The plan should include specific steps to be undertaken and a timetable for completing them.

5. Follow-up Review

The academic degree program/Graduate Group faculty submit a follow-up report to the Program Review Administrator and Program Review Committee no less than 18 months after the submission of the plan for improvement, in order to demonstrate that appropriate progress has been made in program improvement. Depending on the progress reported, the Review entities may recommend additional actions.

Note 1: Review of Organized Research Units

Organized Research Units (ORU) play a role in fostering graduate education and are reviewed periodically. System guidelines governing ORU's and ORU reviews can be found at the following website:

<http://www.ucop.edu/research/policies/orupolicy.html>

Note 2: Initial Review:

Graduate Programs: intermediate review to be scheduled 3-5 years after initiation of the academic degree program; full review 5-6 years after initiation of the program. For Graduate Group programs offered at UC Merced opening, intermediate reviews will be scheduled beginning in 2007-08. Full reviews will be scheduled beginning in 2010-11.

Undergraduate Academic Degree Programs: 5 years after initiation. For undergraduate academic degree programs offered at UC Merced opening, reviews will be scheduled beginning in 2009-10.