Introduction

The Building on Strengths Strategic Plan calls for a “culture of assessment-based decision making and strategic planning.” Task 6.5 specifically addresses this strategic objective:

September 1, 2008, the president will charge the Cabinet with developing, by June 30, 2010, a set of procedures to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of all administrative units and functions at the College. The Cabinet will oversee implementation of the process, possibly engage the services of consultants with special expertise in the department being reviewed, and appoint a Cabinet member or members to lead each review. The Cabinet also will return a recommended sequence in which the reviews should take place, beginning in the academic year 2010-2011.

These guidelines attempt to assess the College’s administrative departments (referred to hereafter as “departments”) that are not covered by the program review process applied to academic programs. The goal of this process is to assess the department’s strengths and weaknesses, formulate action plans for improvement, and enhance a department’s contribution to the mission and strategic direction of the College. This review process should result in improved performance and enhanced quality of service, better coordination with other departments, improved budget planning, and optimal allocation of resources.

Process

The administrative department review process will be administered by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee. The IEC will establish a 5 year cycle for reviews, and the reviews will be staggered so that there is roughly an equal number each year. The chair of the IEC will appoint an Administrative Department Review Board (ADRB), which will be assigned for a single departmental review. The ADRB will consist of at least one faculty and two staff members.

1. By March 1, 2011 the Chairs of the IEC will consult with the area Vice President in order to determine the responsible party (hereafter referred to as the “department head”) as well as a specific target date for the departments review board.
2. External review is generally expected. By March 1, the Chairs of the IEC, in consultation with the Vice President, determine whether external review of the department is appropriate in this case. If so, an external review is conducted and appended to the self study on its due date.
3. By April 1 the department head receives instructions for the self-study from the Chairs of the IEC by April 1, 2011.
4. By May 1 the Chairs of the IEC appoint the individual Administrative Department Review Boards.
5. The Vice President responsible for the department is in charge of working the Office of Institutional Research in order to provide appropriate internal feedback on the department’s work and performance. Any reporting done by the OIR is delivered to the department head two months before the review meeting.
6. The department head provides a complete draft of its self-study to the Vice President or Vice Provost to whom the department reports and to the Chairs of the IEC, appending the report delivered by the OIR, one month before the review date.
7. Four copies of the complete report are delivered at the pre-arranged deadline by the department head to the Chairs of the IEC.
8. The department head and Vice President or Vice Provost responsible for the department is invited to the ADRB discussion of the unit. Following this discussion, the ADRB drafts a preliminary report. The department, with input from the Vice President, is given a chance to respond in writing. This step may be repeated as needed.
9. The ADRB sends a final copy of its report to the Chairs of the IEC, the department head, and the Vice President, who must respond with a formal action plan for the department. At that time, all documents related to the review, including the action plan, are forwarded to the President.
10. All documents related to the review are kept, both in hard copy and electronic form, on file by the IEC and the Vice President or Vice Provost responsible for the department.

Instructions and Format for Self-Study

The department head is responsible for the self study, and the process is intended to be an open one including the participation of all members of the department through meetings, retreats, formal surveys, and other means of gathering information.

A. Statement of departmental relationship to the College’s mission and strategic goals.
   a. How does the department’s work help to fulfill the mission of the College?
   b. How does the department enhance student learning?
   c. How does the department engage with diversity initiatives on campus?
   d. How does the department support the strategic directions of the College as outlined in the Strategic Plan and Academic Plan?

B. Response to previous Program Review recommendations (applies only to programs in their 2nd cycle or beyond): Please summarize your progress toward meeting the goals specified in your last review and action plan.

C. Departmental Self-Appraisal
   a. What is the department’s mission?
   b. Describe the department’s primary functions.
   c. Describe the organization of staff, especially how primary functions are carried out.
   d. Describe how the work of this department compares in organization and function to at least two peer institutions, selected in consultation with the appropriate Vice President.
   e. Outline how the department defines quality and success (including metrics).
   f. Describe with evidence how well these quality metrics are met.
   g. Discuss budget issues in the department, such as resource allocation and opportunities for increased efficiency.
   h. Describe professional development plans and activities of the department.

D. Reflection
   a. Identify goals that seem to be met well, and what specifically, led to this success.
   b. Identify goals needing improvement, and what actions, specifically, will be done to improve, including a timetable for changes, costs, and proposed evidence to be used to evaluate results.

Guidelines for Administrative Department Review Board
The ADRB should complete these tasks along with an evaluation of the department using “Rubric for Assessing Administrative Departments”

Goals of Review
1) Provide feedback into the substance and process of review.
2) Provide commendations on the areas noted in the rubric, using items below.
3) Provide recommendations on the areas noted in the rubric, using items below.

I. Evaluation of department mission and purpose. Is it:
   a. Aligned with the mission of the College?
   b. Developed through process that was transparent, inclusive, and completed with integrity

II. Evaluation of Program goals, outcomes and benchmarks. Are they:
   a. Comprehensive
   b. Assessable (and with an existing assessment plan)
   c. Aligned
   d. Widely known on campus

III. Evaluation of Program self-study. Does it:
   a. Address departmental self-appraisal
   b. Address departmental action plan
   c. Address planning and budgeting, resources and capacity
   d. Include internal and external input

Approved by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and SMC Cabinet, March 3, 2011