## ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS GUIDE
### Pacific Lutheran University
*April 8, 2019*

**Overview/Rationale**

The university reviews all undergraduate and graduate academic programs at least every seven years. The purpose of academic program reviews is to ensure the quality, sustainability, and effectiveness of our academic offerings, and to provide a formal mechanism for articulating program goals, challenges, and opportunities.

Program review is intended to be meaningful. It should reflect continuous, ongoing data collection about program objectives and student outcomes. Program review should result in a clear sense of the unit's:

1. Documentation of student learning, curricular integrity, scholarly and creative accomplishments, and service contributions
2. Alignment with the university's mission
3. Resource utilization
4. Strategic objectives and necessary steps for achieving those objectives

While the annual reports submitted by academic units at the conclusion of each academic year provide yearly summaries of accomplishments, innovations, and limitations, program reviews place the unit's activities in a larger framework. Program reviews prompt academic units to present a coherent and strategic vision, to identify ongoing challenges, and to receive assessment by external peers. The information generated through program review is used to create recommendations for the academic unit and for the various university constituents whose work intersects with the unit's.

**Program Review versus Program Accreditation**

Program review and program accreditation draw on similar materials but serve different purposes. Program accreditation is designed to assess whether the program meets the standards of the discipline in delivering a quality education to students in the context of the particular discipline. Program review, on the other hand, incorporates self-reflection and an articulation of opportunities, challenges, and strategic vision in the context of the university. Given the overlaps between program review and accreditation (and the materials required to support them), where possible university program review will align with external accreditation schedules.

**Guiding Principles**

Program Review is intended to be:

- Manageable and meaningful;
- Flexible, in order to serve the needs of small to large programs within the College of Arts and Sciences and the Professional Schools;
- Collaborative, involving faculty, staff, administrators, and students.

**Elements of Program Review**
Two major components contribute to program review: a *self-study* and an *external review*.

The *self-study* document should reflect the unit's culture, that is, it should capture how the department works together to support shared vision and shared expectations. In preparing the self-study, faculty, students, and staff should participate in generating ideas, analyzing information, creating proposals, and making decisions. An important outcome of the self-study may be the identification of other issues the unit wishes to address and about which they may also wish to seek advice from external reviewers.

*External reviews* incorporate perspectives and insights from someone outside the university community. While external reviewers are typically faculty or administrators from parallel programs at peer institutions, it may also be the case that a particular unit's strategic goals or challenges would best be served with a different set of external lenses (e.g., an employer who recruits, hires, or supervises our graduates); the Provost's Office will work with each academic unit to determine an external review strategy that makes the most sense for them.

In addition to the elements common to all programs, the provost may designate specific areas of focus for the review, either for the self-study or for the external review.

Both the self-study and the external review will be assessed by a Program Review Team (see below). This team is charged with making formal recommendations to the program and the university.

**Program Review Cycle**
In May preceding the beginning of the Program Review, a Program Review Team is assigned to meet with department representatives and dean of each unit to design program review goals, processes, and timelines.

This timeline--spanning between 12 to 18 months--should include the following:
- Completion of self-study
- Plan for external review, including potential reviewers
- Initial interview with Program Review Team to discuss self-study
- External reviewers visit campus
- Final report due from external reviewers
- Unit considers report from external reviewers and prepares written response to Program Review Team.
- Program Review Team assesses self-study, external review, and unit response to make formal recommendations to the program and the university.
- Final interview with Program Review Team to discuss data, results, recommendations, and commendations.

The first set of program reviews will take into consideration Board of Regent requests from their December 2017 course of action. Additional program review schedules are determined with

deans, taking into account outside accreditation cycles and timely distribution of reviews across the Division/School.

**Program Review Team**
The Program Review Team includes the Provost, at least one Associate Provost, Manager of Institutional Enrollment and Budget Planning, Dean of Inclusive Excellence, one academic dean (not overseeing the unit under review), and one or two other members appointed by the Provost.

**Program Review Response**
The Program Review Team will provide a response to the academic unit/dean, including commendations and recommendations. For some units, the recommendation may include a mid-cycle review.

A summary of key findings, structured consistently across reports, will provide data responsive to NWCCU accreditation themes and standards. These findings can also inform specific campus partners, including President's Council, Provost's Academic Council, the Library, the Office of Admission, the Office of Advancement, the Center for Student Success, the Instructional Resources Committee, and the Capital Expenditures Committee.

The Provost will provide an annual report to the Board of Regents, summarizing key initiatives and outlining recommendations and commendations identified in the review process.