




FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

To: Richard Griffin, President, Academic Senate
From: Michael Harris, Vice President for Academic Affairs 
Subj: Response to APRC Recommendations: November 2006
Date: April 26, 2007

Introduction

Academic Program Review is one of several means by which academic excellence is measured at Ferris. As with all assessment, the collection of data is meaningless if it is not carefully analyzed, reflected upon, and subsequently used to inform decision-making. As in past years, I have carefully reviewed the recommendations of the Academic Program Review Council and have intensified the participation of the academic deans in this process. The following report is offered in response to the recommendations of the Council.

General Recommendations:

- 1. The University Mission Statement needs to be updated and broadened, not only to reflect goals that HLC encourages accredited institutions to aspire to, but also to acknowledge the de facto broadening of the University's mission since 1997.**

A discussion of the University Mission Statement would be most appropriate. Mission and Integrity is the first criterion of the Criteria for Accreditation of the Higher Learning Commission: "*The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff and students.*" Discussion of mission should be ongoing; however, initiation of that discussion cannot be isolated to Academic Affairs. The discussion requires full University input.

- 2. The University needs to develop a strategic plan so that priorities can be identified.**

I agree that a systematic planning process is essential, in fact compulsory for responsible governance. I refer once again to the Criteria for Accreditation as stated by the Higher Learning Commission: "*The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities (Criterion 2).*" A successful strategic planning process should link institutional goals to academic and budgetary planning processes. A key attribute to such a process is inclusiveness, the incorporation of the many voices of the University community, empowering the stakeholders in the shaping of the future of the University. As in the recommendation for discussion of mission, the discussion

of strategic planning process is a University-wide function not restricted to Academic Affairs. Academic Affairs welcomes the opportunity to take part in the development and implementation of such a planning process.

- 3. All units should follow the lead of the best units we have reviewed this year and keep track of their graduates, maintain contact with the industries and survey their students regularly. This will provide needed program assessment data.**

I have asked the deans to encourage all programs to improve upon their data collection in order to enhance our overall assessment efforts. It is essential that our program assessment data not only *include* but *place priority on* student learning outcomes. In *The Report of a Visit to FSU March 26-28, 2001*, the HLC evaluation team noted that the Academic Program Review process relies heavily on satisfaction survey of students and graduates rather than emphasizing student learning outcomes. They state that the effort to assess learning outcomes is not clear. I would ask that the Senate review the process to assure that this issue from the 2001 site visit report has been addressed.

- 4. Many of the programs reviewed this year acknowledge real difficulty, despite persistent efforts, in broadening the “diversity” profile of their student enrollment. These fields are very high paying and require only a two- or a four-year degree to enter professional practice. APRC recommends that Ferris develop an initiative to identify, bring to campus, provide academic support for and nurture students from underrepresented groups with aptitudes in mathematics and science.**

Academic Affairs will work in collaboration with Student Affairs to improve upon the recruitment of underrepresented groups. This is an essential campus-wide initiative that is reflected in the NSSE data as well. I appreciate the Council’s recognition of this issue.

Program Specific Recommendations:

College of Technology

BS in Automotive Engineering Technology

The Council recommended to Continue the Program with Enhancement. Suggestions by the Council included:

Recommendation	Response
Initiate a master plan for optimal use of Automotive Center	Dane Johnson will be teaching the Facility Management project management course next semester and it is anticipated that he will use the Auto Center for their project. This will include the labs and the faculty offices. Auto faculty will be consulted by the students as this project progresses.
Program faculty need offices that provide privacy	See above.

Funds needed for dynamometer	This will be eligible for Perkins funding. The dean will also be working with program faculty to identify external sources for funding or in-kind donations.
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BS in Automotive and Heavy Equipment Management

The Council recommended to Continue the Program. Suggestions by the Council included:

Initiate a master plan for optimal use of Automotive Center	See AET above.
Program faculty need offices that provide privacy	See AET above.

AAS in Automotive Service Technology

The Council recommended to Continue the Program. Suggestions by the Council included:

Recommendation	Response
Initiate a master plan for optimal use of Automotive Center	See AET above.
Program faculty need offices that provide privacy	See AET above.
Program should analyze recent enrollment trends as to their significance for future curricular planning	Matt McNulty conducted a survey of over 400 career/tech center students this past spring to determine how/why they make decisions on post secondary education. The analysis of this data was used to develop recruiting strategies that are currently being implemented. The process will be assessed and modified as needed.

AAS in HVACR Technology and BS in HVACR Engineering Technology

The Council recommended to Continue the Program with enhancement. Suggestions by the Council included:

Restore two faculty lines	The dean has requested that one COT position, Augie Gatt, be moved to HVACR upon his retirement. As other positions become vacant, the dean will request a similar transfer unless the growth model provides that position. In the meantime, funding will be requested from the VPAA to continue the current one-year temp position.
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AAS in Surveying Technology and BS in Surveying Engineering

The Council recommended to Continue the Program.

BS in Product Design Engineering Technology

The Council recommended to Continue the Program. Suggestions by the Council included:

Build contacts with community colleges to increase enrollment	We currently have transfer agreements with 26 Michigan community colleges. We will continue to work with the community colleges to increase visibility and remind them of the ease of transfer. The dean also recently met with Lansing Community College's Dean of the Technical Careers Division to explore the possibility of offering the degree at the LCC University Center.
Develop "visibility" plan	Last spring Pace and Partners were retained to develop a communications plan for the College of Technology. As a result of that, we have a team of faculty working on marketing strategies that will include an updated web presence, print material and DVDs for each program. Print material and DVDs will be designed for students/counselors, and modified for parents and business and industry partners. This will increase visibility of all programs including Product Design.
Consider adding community college representative to Advisory Board	A member of the Mott CC Mechanical Design faculty (J. McIvery) will be added to the advisory board in Spring 07.
Consult with Math dept. regarding content of MATH 216	This will be discussed with the Math department next semester.

College of Allied Health Sciences

AAS in Diagnostic Medical Sonography

The Council recommended to Continue the Program with Reporting. Suggestions by the Council included:

Recommendation	Response
Hire medical director for the program	This is a necessity and an accreditation requirement. The director is not another FTE. The medical directors in the other programs are not paid a salary. CAHS generally pays their mileage to come to one meeting per year and for a meal. The dean will cover from CAHS funds.
Achieve accredited status	An absolute necessity--although students can sit for a credentialing exam without the program becoming accredited, accreditation lends prestige to the program. The program is in the process of writing the self study document. The medical director is one of the areas that needs to be addressed before a self study document can be submitted because it requires that the name be included in the document.

BS in Medical Record Administration and AAS in Medical Record Technology

The Council recommended to Continue the Program with Enhancement. Suggestions by the Council included:

Recommendation	Response
Resources in the form of time release be allocated to give program faculty the opportunity to develop and launch this as online degree program	The dean supports this recommendation. All of the faculty are at full load or on overload. As the only accredited 4-year medical record administration program in the state, we need to get into the on-line arena before someone else does. There is faculty ability and knowledge to accomplish this project, they just need the time.

College of Business

BS in Business Administration and BS in Small Business Entrepreneurship

The Council recommended to Continue the Program with Reporting. Suggestions by the Council included:

Recommendation	Response
Integrate SBE into Business Administration	A 12 hour concentration and 18 minor to replace the degree is being developed. The goal is for faculty review during this spring semester and, depending on outcome to curriculum approval process, perhaps for UCC action summer 2007.
Develop plans to improve graduation rates, track the progress of transfer students and improve system of advising	Improving the system of advising will be added for departmental discussion spring semester 2007. The other item is bit more complicated. The dean will put together a small focus group Spring semester 2007 to identify appropriate information and analysis reporting format. We will pass our request to our IT and Banner techs to develop an IT solution.
Develop a follow-up plan to track careers of graduates	This gives rise to a host of questions, like for how long, information expected, include on and off-campus bus ad grads, interface with alumni affairs systems, institutional, COB, Dept use of the information, what other programs are doing, etc.? Will present to faculty who will most certainly have other questions. We'll have a better feel for possible solutions after analysis of information needs and the use of that information.
Develop plans to get better survey data so as to improve program assessment measures	This is not unique to bus ad; we will work on this for all future APRs.

BS in Music Industry Management

The Council recommended to Continue the Program with Enhancement. Suggestions by the Council included:

Recommendation	Response
Hire full time staff person to coordinate internships and provide administrative support	Awaiting approval for hire from university administration.

BS in Operations and Supply Management

The Council recommended to Continue the Program with Reporting. Suggestions by the Council included:

Recommendation	Response
Develop plan to increase visibility and enrollment	We have not moved on this recommendation. Our focus has been on product.
Develop plan to offer upper division courses more predictably	With majors numbering less than 10 students, we cannot achieve regular predicted enrollment without building enrollment.
Program should consider increasing offerings in GR	We have been in communications with the ATC's program coordinator. They seem to have the right focus and sustainable enrollment. We are exploring the option of just a GR major or offering the ATC program at BR. We have also met with the College of Technology to explore possible partnering with their program and courses.
The college and department need to think through the options available in the event that program enrollment does not increase	If we cannot substantively change the look and feel of the program there seems little hope or reason to retain the degree option.
The college and department should study all four-year programs offered by the department with an eye toward creating a small number of larger, stronger and more visible programs	We are exploring a certificate/minor with a College of Technology partnership as a College of Business option and recommending discontinuation of the BS degree.

College of Arts and Sciences

BA in English

The Council recommended to Continue the Program. Suggestions by the Council included:

Recommendation	Response
Develop recruitment plan	The Department of Languages and Literature has developed recruiting brochure that covers all of the programs in the department. The brochure was mailed to counselors and English department chairs at the top 100 feeder high schools in Michigan. A full plan is under development.
Strengthen advisory board	The department has added an additional member to the advisory board and will follow up with faculty for nominations/recommendations.
Find ways of offer upper level courses more predictably	The department has discussed a plan for regular course offerings. Once the plan is finalized, it will be shared with students so that they will understand when to expect course offerings.
Improve advising of entering students to learn about career and employment opportunities	The department has scheduled and held employment evening events. The department will continue to hold such events.
Improve advising of graduates about graduate school	The department has scheduled and held graduate school evening events. The department will continue to hold such events.

BA in Sociology

The Council recommended to Continue the Program with Reporting. Suggestions by the Council included:

Recommendation	Response
Fill two vacant positions	A search for one position is in progress. The other will begin next year.
Plan to offer upper level courses more predictably	The program faculty are developing a plan for upper-division course offerings.
Develop a marketing plan	The new department head for social sciences will work with admissions and university advancement and marketing to develop a marketing plan for sociology.
Internships would enhance the visibility of	The program has a course, SOCY 411,

the program	which serves the same purposes as an internship but which allows more flexibility than traditional internship courses do about the kind of participatory activity may be awarded credit. Internships can also be conducted under this course number, so a specific internship course is not needed.
Develop a follow-up plan to track careers of graduates	The new department head for social sciences will work on an exit interview and follow-up plan.