Open Pathway

Quality Initiative Institutional Proposal

The enclosed Quality Initiative proposal represents the work that the institution will undertake to fulfill the Improvement Process of the Open Pathway.

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Dennis J. Shields

Date

12/12/13

Printed/Typed Name and Title

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

Name of Institution

Platteville, WI 53818

City and State
Title: Academic Program Planning and Review Process at University of Wisconsin – Platteville

1. Provide a title and brief description of the Quality Initiative.

The proposed Quality Initiative (QI) for UW-Platteville is to implement and assess a new process of academic program planning and review and to provide support and feedback in order to improve this process. The proposed QI achieves a key milestone in the work of longer initiatives to develop a university-wide integrated planning process. This over-arching project began in 2010 when the Academic Planning Council (APC), a faculty governance council, recognized a need to restructure the process they were using for program review; at roughly the same time the administration recognized the need to integrate financial planning with academic planning. Various groups on campus spent the next few years researching ways of integrating planning before developing a proposed new process for academic program review. Figure 1 illustrates the overall timeline for implementing integrated planning.

Figure 1. Overview of the Development of Integrated Planning and Program Review

The new process consists of two parts – an annual program report to be used for resource planning and a six-year program review for quality assurance. The annual reports, Form A, will be completed for every academic program. Ideally Form A will be populated with validated data by Institutional Research, sent to the academic programs for review and discussion, and submitted to the APC. The APC will be able to compare these snapshots of all academic programs at the same time and make meaningful recommendations for resource allocation to the administration. All academic programs will also complete an in-depth report, Form B, every six years. Form B will contain discussions of assessment, continuous improvement, academic standards, technology and financial needs, and program goals. Form B will be circulated through four university committees, Academic Standards Committee (ASC), Assessment

AITC–Academic Information Technology Committee; AOC–Assessment Oversight Committee; APC–Academic Planning Council; ASC–Academic Standards Committee; UABC–University Academic Budget Committee
Oversight Committee (AOC), Academic Information Technology Committee (AITC), and University Academic Budgetary Committee (UABC), before being reviewed by the APC. The APC will consider all of the information in Form B, including the feedback from the other four committees, before making recommendations for improvements to the academic programs. The basic timeline for these processes is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Timeline for proposed Academic Planning and Review Process

| Year 1 | Fall  | • All academic program heads submit Form A  
|        |       | • Select academic program heads submit Form B (Group 1) |
|        | Spring| • APC reviews Form A’s and makes planning recommendations to deans, senates, and administration  
|        |       | • AOC, ASC, UABC, and AITC review Group 1 Form B’s and provide feedback to program heads  
|        |       | • Group 1 program heads respond to AOC, ASC, UABC, and AITC feedback |
| Year 2 | Fall  | • APC reviews Group 1 Form B’s, including committee feedback and program responses  
|        |       | • All academic program heads submit new Form A  
|        |       | • Select academic program heads submit Form B (Group 2) |
|        | Spring| • APC presents recommendations to Group 1 program heads  
|        |       | • APC provides summary of findings from Group 1 Form B’s to deans, senates, and administration  
|        |       | • APC reviews Form A’s and makes planning recommendations to deans, senates, and administration  
|        |       | • AOC, ASC, UABC, and AITC review Group 2 Form B’s and provide feedback to program heads  
|        |       | • Group 2 program heads respond to AOC, ASC, UABC, and AITC feedback |
| All Year |       | • Deans and administration incorporate the recommendations from APC into planned resource allocations |
| Year 3 |       | Cycle continues with modifications as needed based on the evaluations of the process conducted through this Quality Initiative |

The Quality Initiative is not to develop and conduct this new process but rather to assess and support its successful implementation and improvement. The Quality Initiative Team will observe the completion of the first complete cycle of the process, conduct focus groups with participating individuals and committees, work with the APC to make improvements to the process, and help ensure that the process and the reasons for the process are clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

AITC—Academic Information Technology Committee; AOC—Assessment Oversight Committee; APC—Academic Planning Council; ASC—Academic Standards Committee; UABC—University Academic Budget Committee
While the new academic program review process is an important and significant step to move the campus towards integrated planning, it is not the only step. A review and planning process for non-academic programs will also be needed, in addition to a new budget allocation model to allow integrated strategic decisions to be made across the University. Implementation and improvement of the new academic program review process through the Quality Initiative will give the University a strong foundation for these other steps.

2. Explain why the proposed initiative is relevant and significant for the institution.

The program review process at UW – Platteville is conducted by the Academic Planning Council (APC), a council reporting to the Faculty Senate. Prior to 2010, the APC’s activities included reviewing academic programs and making decisions regarding the creation of new programs, including majors and minors. Academic programs were required to do a self-review and report to the APC every five years. On the basis of this report, the APC made recommendations to the Provost on allocation of resources. There were, however, significant problems with this process. Chief among these was that the information presented in the self-reviews typically included a heavy emphasis on program goals and content, faculty achievements, and student enrollment and requirements for graduation. The final discussion of the reviews often focused on limitations imposed by lack of resources; thus, the almost universal response by the APC was a recommendation to the administration for additional resources. A second major issue was that programs were reviewed on a rotating basis in isolation. In any given academic year, only 6 – 10 programs underwent review, which prevented the APC from placing program needs in the wider institutional context. Senior administrators felt unable to act on these disconnected recommendations. With little to no response to their recommendations by the administration, members of the APC felt that their efforts, and the efforts of the programs, were futile.

Three years ago, the APC requested and was granted a reprieve from the quinquennial reviews. Members of the committee researched best practices at other institutions of higher education and developed a program review procedure that best matches the needs of our campus based on these models. Specifically, the APC ultimately proposed two new processes: an annual planning review, and a comprehensive program review on a six-year cycle. The first process is intended to help the APC make annual recommendations regarding program resource allocations. The second is intended to assure the quality of those academic programs being offered by UW-Platteville.

The proposed QI is relevant and significant because prior to this, our campus had disjointed processes for planning and program review. None of these seemed to serve their intended purposes. Additionally, as state support for the institution has dwindled, it has become imperative that resources be allocated strategically, based on data. These two new processes will make significant changes in the processes of assuring a quality education and on allocating resources.

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3. Explain the intended impact of the initiative on the institution and its academic quality.

The intended impact of this initiative is to unify a fractured approach to meaningful academic program planning and review. It will replace a single ineffective process with two processes that separately address the allocation of institutional resources as well as academic quality.

Form A, the annual report, will serve to provide a snapshot of the resources of all academic programs across the institution at the same time. This will provide the data necessary for APC to give recommendations to the administration for the prioritization of campus resources. This will impact the institution by facilitating resource allocation based on valid and current data in the context of the institution as a whole, rather than on academic programs in isolation. It is also a necessary step to developing an institution-wide integrated planning process.

Form B, the comprehensive six-year review, will integrate the evaluations of five different faculty governance committees that were previously independent from each other. Each academic program will write a comprehensive program report that will be reviewed by four committees (AITC, AOC, ASC, and UABC). Results of these reviews will then be forwarded to the APC for an evaluation of the program as a whole.

This new, integrated process will assure not only that academic programs are providing high quality education and are continuously seeking to improve, but also that they are being reviewed holistically. It is expected that this will impact the academic quality of the institution directly by regularly and thoroughly assuring that each of its academic programs:

- intentionally considers the use of information technology for delivering a high quality education (AITC).
- provides evidence of assessment and how assessment results are used to improve the program (AOC).
- provides evidence of meeting the institution’s academic standards (ASC).
- uses its resources efficiently and solicits additional internal and external support (UABC).

4. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.

*The purpose of this initiative is to implement, evaluate and improve new procedures for institutional planning and academic program review in order to provide a systemic, comprehensive process that is consistent and transparent.* Many faculty members from across the three colleges of UW – Platteville have invested a great deal of time and effort in this initiative. The administration has made a long-term financial commitment in acquiring an online platform for program review. Initial implementation of the new process is underway. These are significant steps in effecting change, but implementation of these critical processes at an institutional scale must be *sustainable* and *meaningful.*

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Goal 1. Fully implement and evaluate a full cycle of annual and comprehensive program reviews. At the close of the fall semester of 2013, all academic programs will have completed and submitted the Form A annual reports. After reviewing these in the spring of 2014, the APC will forward their recommendations to the Faculty Senate, Deans and senior administration. A sub-set of academic programs selected by the APC have piloted the use of Form B in their comprehensive program reviews in the fall of 2013. The first cycle of comprehensive review will be completed in the spring of 2015. A thorough assessment of the implementation will lead to improvements in the process.

Goal 2. Ensure that Form A is manageable, effective and meaningful for reporting and institutional planning. In addition to complete revision of the annual review process, implementing Form A requires that program heads use a new electronic platform, Compliance Assist, to submit program information. Compliance Assist, by Campus Labs, allows management of institutional planning processes in a web-based repository, but requires additional training in its use. Since all academic programs are now required to submit annual reports, the new process also results in an increased workload for the members of APC in reviewing these reports and submitting their recommendations to the administration. The process must be manageable by everyone involved, as well as effective in providing data that are current and relevant to institutional planning. Recommendations given to the administration by the APC should result in meaningful faculty input to institutional planning.

Goal 3. Ensure that Form B is manageable, effective and meaningful for comprehensive program review and quality assurance. Integration of reviews of four separate faculty committees (AITC, AOC, ASC, and UABC) requires significant effort on the part of program heads in order to address aspects of their programs relevant to each body. Each committee will now be required to review and respond to this integrated report with their individual recommendations. The APC has taken steps to manage their workload by staggering their reviews into different semesters (annual review recommendations in spring, comprehensive review recommendations in the fall), but questions of timeliness remain. Time involved, effort required and coordination of these efforts must be manageable. Acquisition and review of information must be effective and the reviews and recommendations must ultimately be meaningful in order to ensure that UW – Platteville provides a high quality education.

Goal 4. Ensure that all stakeholders understand the importance of institutional planning and academic program review. In order for this new process to be sustainable, it is imperative that everyone involved understands why it is an integral part of our institutional culture.

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5. Describe how the institution will evaluate progress, make adjustments, and determine what has been accomplished.

As the new processes are implemented, the APC will continually review and assess how they are working. During the Quality Initiative, the QI team will consult with the APC to identify parts of the process that need revision. The QI team will then use this as a basis for interviews with program heads, the members of the Academic Planning Council, chairs of the four committees involved in the comprehensive review, and the Deans of the colleges, to be conducted at each point in the cycle. The results of these interviews will be shared with all groups involved in the process to help them improve the process. Facilitating discussion among the stakeholders involved in the process will aid in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the forms (use of the online platform, time required for completion), challenges in the review process (timing and workload), and its effectiveness in accomplishing its stated goals of improved institutional planning and program review.

6. Describe the level of support for the initiative by internal or external stakeholders.

The Quality Initiative is strongly supported by the university’s stakeholders. Three years ago, the members of the APC realized that the current process was flawed and needed substantial changes in order to become an effective tool for improving academic planning and quality. At roughly the same time, the Chancellor charged the campus with developing a new strategic plan. The strategic planning process solicited participation from across the university with over 700 faculty, staff, and students providing input. Two of the four priorities of the new strategic plan are directly related to the new academic planning and review process: Provide an Outstanding Education (deliver an education with global perspective which prepares individuals to seize opportunities and solve the problems of today and tomorrow) and Control Our Own Destiny (create, manage, and invest in our financial, human, and physical resources to support the mission of the university). The strategic plan was approved by the Faculty, Academic Staff, and Student Senates and presented to the UW System Board of Regents last fall.

Faculty governance groups, under the sponsorship of Faculty Senate, have taken the lead in shaping the new process. In fact, the process was fully developed by the faculty members of the APC. Faculty Senate, Academic Staff Senate, and Student Senate are all aware of and in support of the work being done. The University administration, including the Chancellor, Provost, and Vice Chancellor for Administrative Services, are in support of the work as well.

7. Identify the groups and individuals that will lead or be directly involved in implementing the initiative.

The Academic Planning Council is directly in charge of implementing this initiative. The AITC, AOC, ASC, and UABC have supporting roles in these efforts. Faculty Senate has a governance role in overseeing the work of these committees. The heads of all academic programs will

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complete Form A yearly and complete Form B on a six-year cycle. The APC will meet with the Deans twice a year to review the conclusions and recommendations made by the various committees through this process. The APC will present yearly final reports and recommendations to the Provost and Chancellor.

The Higher Learning Commission Steering Committee has appointed a Quality Initiative (QI) team of Sharon Klavins (associate professor, Biology), Christina Curras (professor, Civil Engineering), and Dominic Barraclough (Director of Graduate Studies and Academic Projects) to review the progress of the APC and ensure the completion of the QI.

8. List the human, financial, technological and other resources that the institution has committed to this initiative.

The APC was granted a break from its previous program review activities to develop and implement these new processes. Many areas on campus, including Financial Services, Human Resources, and Institutional Research, will provide data and support to the APC. The University has been concurrently implementing a Business Intelligence system that will eventually provide the needed information and data to programs and committees in a much more automated process than currently exists.

The University purchased Campus Lab’s Compliance Assist program to use for handling and storing the data and forms for the Form A process. Eventually Compliance Assist may also be used for storing and routing Form B.

Finally, as part of the work in developing this new process, the committees and administrators of the University identified a need for more centralized assistance in program assessment and evaluations. Therefore, the University is establishing an Office for Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, and is currently searching for a Director for this office. As this office becomes functional it will be able to assist the APC in its execution of the new academic program planning and review process.
9. Describe the primary activities of the initiative and timeline for implementing them (CC)

For the Quality Initiative, the QI team will observe the implementation of the first cycle of the new APC process, interview those impacted, document changes made to the process, and observe the beginning of the second cycle of the process. The QI team also will work with the APC to ensure that the process is clearly documented and communicated across campus. Table 2 shows the major steps in the first two cycles of the new process along with the activities of the QI team (italicized).

Table 2. General Quality Initiative Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Cycle 1 starts – Form A (all programs) and Form B (9 programs) submitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QI Team tasks:</td>
<td>• Develop, write, and submit QI proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>Cycle 1 APC reviews Form A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cycle 1 AOC, ASC, AITC, and UABC review Form B; departments respond to reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APC, AOC, ASC, AITC, UABC recommend changes to Forms A and B</td>
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<tr>
<td>QI Team tasks:</td>
<td>• Interview members of APC</td>
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<td>• Focus group with chairs of APC, UABC, AITC, ASC, and AOC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Focus group with program heads</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Interview deans and administrators</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2014</td>
<td><strong>Cycle 2 Revised forms are released to and completed by departments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QI Team tasks:</td>
<td>• Work with APC to ensure processes and documents are clear and transparent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Summarize results of focus group discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>Cycle 1 APC reviews Form B reports; <strong>Cycle 2 of Forms A and B submitted</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>APC reports on Cycle 1 Form B to Faculty Senate, Deans, Chancellor, etc. End of Cycle 1. <strong>Cycle 2 APC reviews Form A</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle 2 AOC, ASC, AITC, and UABC review Form B; departments respond to reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Write and submit QI Final Report</td>
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Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

Include the name(s) of the primary contact(s) for the Quality Initiative.

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