1. Introduction

A. Purpose and Definition

The purpose of this regulation is to ensure that all academic programs, including undergraduate major and minor programs and graduate certificate and degree programs, are reviewed on a regular basis.

A program review is a cyclical and collaborative process for evaluating and enhancing the quality and currency of academic programs at Winona State University. The review is conducted through a combination of internal and external evaluations with the goal of identifying pedagogical strengths and weakness of programs for our students, our accrediting agencies, and the various communities that we serve.

B. Objectives of Program Review

The program review addresses three categories of objectives.

1. Internal to the program:
   a. To maintain high quality academic programs
   b. To promote excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and service
   c. To provide accountability
   d. To promote professional growth and development
   e. To promote excellence in the support of student growth
   f. To improve the quality of the learning experience
   g. To assist the program in decision making and planning

2. Internal to the university:
   a. To provide accountability
   b. To assist University decision making and planning
   c. To inform students about program quality

3. External to the university:
   a. To inform prospective students, parents, prospective employees, and employers about program quality
   b. To benchmark performance measures and standards in all areas of academic activity against appropriate external bodies
   c. To provide external accountability to accrediting bodies, the Minnesota State College & Universities system, and the State of Minnesota

2. Process and Procedures of a Program Review

A. Overview of Process
The Office of Academic Affairs develops a five-year review schedule for all academic programs. The schedule is updated annually and distributed to all academic programs and the Faculty Senate.

The program review has the following five components.

1. Evidence Portfolio
   The evidence portfolio includes a common data set that will be defined by the administration and supplied by the Office of Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research (IPAR). The program augments this data set with other data and information that is relevant to understanding the past and projected performance of the program.

2. Self-Study Report
   The program self-study report is a structured, evidence-based, comprehensive analysis of a program accompanied by a strategic plan. The details are found in Section 3 of this regulation.

3. External Review
   The goal of the external review is to offer the University with independent perspectives on the quality of the program. The process and procedure of external review is discussed in detail in Section 4 of this regulation.

4. Program Response to the External Review
   The purpose of the program response is to ensure that the program "closes the review loop" by responding to the external program review. The program faculty submit a written response to the external reviewer’s report. This may include a revised strategic plan.

5. Administrative Response to the Review Process and Strategic Plan
   The purpose of the administrative response is to provide feedback to the program in a timely manner. This process is discussed in detail in Section 5 of this regulation.

B. Timeline

The following timeline dates can be changed by prior written agreement between the Dean and the program to consider external accreditation issues, to assure a balanced workload, and to ensure the timely completion of the program review.
C. Accredited Programs

For accredited programs, the program review is conducted concurrently with accreditation reviews. The dean will meet with accredited programs to specify how the accreditation process will be coordinated with internal program review requirements to ensure that the objectives of both are met. The self-study and external review processes and timelines are typically defined by the accreditation body. Nonetheless, the purpose of the internal review is not limited to obtaining accreditation. The internal review is intended to provide the program and administration with information pertaining to the future of the program. For that reason, the program review must include steps that guide the response of the program and administration to the information generated by the internal review.

1. An Overview of the Program Self-Study Report

The program self-study report is a structured, evidence-based, comprehensive analysis of a program. To inform the program self-study, IPAR provides each program with a common data set. Additional data, as determined by the program, can also be made available from IPAR upon request and can be used as further evidence to the self-study report. All data used should be appended to the self-study report under the title “Evidence Portfolio.”

The self-study includes the following components.
A. A general description of the program. Include a brief history of the program, the program’s mission and goals, and the program content and organization

B. A discussion of student success. Include general characteristics of the program’s student body, recruitment practices, retention and completion rates, assessment of student learning outcomes, distinguished student achievements, and post-graduate activities

C. A discussion of faculty qualifications, contributions, and achievements. Include general characteristics of the program’s faculty, evidence of effective governance, evidence of effective teaching and other activities involving students, service to the University, and scholarly and other professional achievements

D. A discussion of program resources. Include instructional technologies, equipment, supplies, building space, library services, and cost-revenue balance.

E. Strategic plan for improvement. Identify areas for improvement, a plan of action, and a discussion of the budgetary implications for the next two years.

4. External Review

The goal of the external review is to offer the University with independent perspectives on the quality of the program. The following procedure applies to programs that are not accredited. Programs with accreditation may seek the dean’s agreement to substitute the external review process specified by accreditation agencies.

A. Selection of an External Reviewer

The person chosen to review the program shall have sufficient professional experiences or backgrounds to review the program. If available, consult the list of reviewers provided by professional organizations and societies. The chosen reviewer shall have no conflict of interests or other direct links either to the program or to the faculty being reviewed.

Program faculty will compile a list of three potential reviewers and forward those names to the appropriate dean along with a current curriculum vita for each potential reviewer. The list should identify any relationships to the program or to the program faculty. The dean will rank the reviewers in order of preference and forward the recommendation to the Provost/VPAA. The Provost/VPAA will determine the external reviewer; the Provost/VPAA may select an external reviewer other than those on the submitted list.

The dean and chair will coordinate the hiring and scheduling of the external reviewer.

B. The External Review Report

The external reviewer should conduct interviews with the following individuals or groups, as appropriate:

1. department chair/program director;
2. faculty members of the program;
3. present and former undergraduate and graduate students of the program (if appropriate);
4. dean of the college;
5. members of the program’s advisory board (if applicable) and representatives of community organizations that interact with the program (where appropriate);
6. program staff;
7. others from the University community who have some association with the program;
8. Provost/VPAA;
9. President.

The external reviewer will provide written recommendations to improve the quality of the program, being mindful of the criteria described in Section 3 and requirements of accrediting agencies. Items to be addressed include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Current state of program
2. Program effectiveness
3. Assessment of student learning outcomes
4. Strengths, areas that need improvement, and areas that meet expectations of the program
5. Recommendations for program improvement
6. Quality and quantity of the resources of the program
7. Additional comments

The reviewer submits a final report to the dean, who distributes copies to: (1) each of the program’s faculty and staff, (2) the Provost/VPAA, and (3) the President.

5. Program Response and Administrative Response

The purpose of the program response and administrative response is to ensure that: (a) the program "closes the review loop" by responding to the external program review; and (b) the dean and the Provost/VPAA provide feedback to the program in a timely manner.

A. By April 1, the program submits to the dean a written response by the program faculty to the external review and, if appropriate, a revised program strategic plan.

B. By May 1, the dean meets the program faculty for the following purposes.
   1. To identify and prioritize issues that the program has identified as requiring action and to identify steps to address those issues
   2. For the program to explain differences that may exist between the external review and the program faculty’s perspective

C. By June 1, the dean submits a written recommendation to the Provost/VPAA, along with the program self-study report, the external review report, and the program faculty’s response.

D. By October 1, the Provost/VPAA takes one of the following actions:
   1. Meet with the dean, the department chair, and the appropriate program faculty to discuss the overall outcome of the internal and external program review with the objective of identifying a jointly agreed strategy that addresses issues raised by the review and improves the program. After this meeting, the Provost/VPAA provides a written response to the external review.
2. Approve outright (without detailed discussion) the dean's recommendations.
3. Require the program faculty and the dean to reconsider the recommendations proposed and to submit a new response to the External Review within 30 days of notification by the Provost/VPAA. Upon receipt of the new response, the Provost/VPAA responds with one of the 3 steps in this sub-section.