

WEST LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BOARD OF GOVERNORS

POLICY 3: PROGRAM REVIEW

Section 1: General.

1.1 Scope - This rule establishes the Board's policy on review of academic programs.

1.2 Authority - West Virginia Code §18B-1-6, 18B-1B-4 and 18B-2A-4

Section 2: Basis of Program Review Process.

2.1 West Virginia Code §18B-2A-4 requires that the Board of Governors "review, at least every five years, all academic programs offered" at West Liberty University. The purpose of this document is to delineate the framework and steps in the program review process for the University.

2.2 The program review process will be consistent with the appropriate policy or policies of the Higher Education Policy Commission (hereinafter, "Commission").

2.3 For the purpose of this document, a "program" is defined as a curriculum or course of study in a discipline specialty that leads to a certificate or degree and is equivalent to a "degree program" as defined by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. A degree program may have more than one major; all majors within the degree program constitute the "program."

Section 3: Assumptions Used in Developing the Review Process.

3.1 Program review is most effective when it is conducted on a regular cycle, and when some indicators are examined on an annual basis.

3.2 Program review is a collaborative process which includes both campus personnel and the Board of Governors.

3.3 A rational and comprehensive program review process requires differentiation among levels of degrees. The process, criteria, and standards for associate degree programs will differ significantly from those applied to baccalaureate programs.

3.4 The review process should be independent of any accreditation procedure, but may build upon accreditation self-studies and evaluations when they are illuminating.

3.5 The program review process must be accomplished within the limits of available staff and resources.

3.6 A continuous auditing process allowing for early identification of programs that need particular scrutiny is required to permit changes to be anticipated, appropriate intervention to take place, and corrective action to be accomplished within normal institutional and governing board planning efforts.

3.7 A readily accessible computerized database should be available to support the program review process.

Section 4: Evaluative Components

4.1. In order to address the elements of viability, adequacy and necessity, the University will develop a reporting format that includes the following core components: mission, faculty, curriculum, resources, student learning outcomes, other learning and service activities, viability, and program improvement. At the discretion of the University, additional components may be added.

4.2. Reporting formats developed by the University will be submitted to the Commission for review.

Section 5: Program Review Procedures and Levels of Review.

5.1. The program review process will provide for a review and evaluation of all programs leading to a certificate or degree at West Liberty University. The procedural elements used by the University shall be submitted to the Commission for review and shall include, at the minimum, the following components:

5.1.1. Delineation of the roles of faculty, administrators, and the governing board;

5.1.2. A process for external review that includes at least one reviewer as an outside evaluator for each program reviewed; and

5.1.3. A five-year schedule

5.2. The University shall submit the results of the program review actions in a common format designed to provide the Commission with essential information. The format elements are:

5.2.1. Name and degree level of program;

5.2.2. Synopses of significant findings, including findings of external reviewer(s);

5.2.3. Plans for program improvement, including timelines;

5.2.4. Identification of weaknesses or deficiencies from the previous review and the status of improvements implemented or accomplished;

5.2.5. Five-year trend data on graduates and majors enrolled;

5.2.6. Summary of assessment model and how results are used for program improvement;

5.2.7. Data on student placement, e.g. number of students employed in positions related to the field of study or pursuing advanced degrees; and

5.2.8. Final recommendations approved by the governing board. For programs with specialized accreditation, the University shall provide a copy of the letter continuing the conferral of accreditation. Accredited programs that meet productivity guidelines will not be subject to further review by the Commission.

5.3. The process will consist of three levels of activity: an annual audit, program review by the Board of Governors (in accordance with a five-year cycle), and special program reviews. The purposes, process, criteria, and possible outcomes of each of these review levels are presented in the following sections and subsections.

5.3.1. Annual Audit - The purpose of the annual audit will be to analyze the data collected on all programs in the system by using the computerized data base and, as needed, additional reports. Programs will be reviewed in terms of productivity in credit hours, course enrollments, numbers of majors, numbers of degrees awarded, cost and related information. The results of the annual audit will provide a continuous monitoring mechanism and will serve to alert both the University and the Board that specific programs may require further review.

5.3.2. Program Review by the Board of Governors - The purpose of the Board's review, conducted on a regular five-year cycle, will be to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the viability, adequacy, and necessity for each academic program, consistent with the mission of West Liberty University. This review process will build on the data of the annual audits and will include additional information about each program. Comprehensive self-studies conducted in compliance with accreditation or other campus processes and completed within the previous sixty months may be used to provide the baseline data for the review, with any necessary updating of factual information or interim reports to the accrediting body.

The criteria, standards, and indicators of viability, adequacy, and necessity will vary among fields and among levels of degree programs. The same criteria and standards do not apply to associate degree programs, baccalaureate degree programs, and graduate programs. The Board of Governors will constitute a Program Review Committee (hereinafter, "Committee") to review appropriate programs during a given year. The program review process is to be carried out objectively using external consultants.

Programs that are accredited by specialized accrediting or approving agencies (for disciplines for which such agencies exist) recognized by the federal government and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation shall be considered to have met the minimum requirements of the review process with respect to adequacy. Programs so accredited or approved shall submit: the comprehensive institutional self-study conducted in compliance with the accreditation or approval process, a copy of the letter containing the conferral of accreditation or approval and a documented statement from the chief academic officer regarding program consistency with mission, viability, and necessity. Preparation of the self-study will involve a collaborative process which includes faculty, students, and administrators.

5.3.3. Campus personnel and external consultants will be involved in establishing the criteria, standards, and process of evaluation and in interpreting the information resulting from the review. To ensure that each program is reviewed at least once every five years, consistent with statutory requirements, the Board of Governors will identify approximately twenty percent of all programs for review each year. For each program identified for review, a self-study statement addressing the following items will be developed:

5.3.3.1 Viability - Viability is tested by an analysis of unit cost factors, sustaining a critical mass, and relative productivity. Based upon past trends in enrollment, patterns of graduates, and the best predictive data available, the program shall assess its past ability and future prospects to attract students and sustain a viable, cost-effective program.

5.3.3.2 Adequacy - The quality of the program shall be assessed. A valuable (but not the sole) criterion for determining the program's adequacy is accreditation by a specialized accrediting or approving agency recognized by the federal government and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. The program shall evaluate the preparation and performance of faculty and students and the adequacy of facilities. The curriculum should be offered in a sequence and frequency that will allow timely progress toward graduation. An objective analysis of the program's curricular strengths and quality should be presented, and plans to correct deficiencies should be described. When describing a program's adequacy, the measures used to assess student performance and program quality shall be indicated. The self-study is expected to indicate the ways in which the effectiveness of the program is evaluated and how the results are used to plan for improvements of the program and effect curricular change. The self-study shall include information on studies of graduates and their employers to determine placement patterns and effectiveness of the educational experience.

5.3.3.3 Necessity - The dimensions of necessity include whether the program is necessary for the University's service region and whether the program is needed by society (as indicated by current employment opportunities, evidence of future need, rate of placement of the program's graduates). Whether the needs of West Virginia justify the duplication of programs in several geographic service regions also shall be addressed.

5.3.3.4 Consistency With Mission - The program shall be a component of, and appropriately contribute to, the fulfillment of the West Liberty University mission and the mission of West Virginia public higher education. The review should indicate the centrality of the program to the institution, explain how the program complements other programs offered, and state how the program draws upon or supports other programs. Both intrainstitutional and interinstitutional aspects of the program should be addressed. The effects (positive or negative) that discontinuance of the program might have upon the University's ability to accomplish its mission should be stated.

5.3.4. Focused Program Review - Either the Higher Education Policy Commission or the Board of Governors may request at any time that focused program reviews be conducted for a given purpose, such as, reviewing all programs within a discipline or concentrating on specific program review components (e.g. assessment). Formal strategies for conducting such reviews will be developed consistent with the purpose of the review.

Section 6. Possible Outcomes.

6.1. Institutional Recommendation - The Board's five-year cycle of program review will result in a recommendation by the Committee for action relative to each program under review. The University is obligated to recommend continuation or discontinuation for each program reviewed. If recommending continuation, the Committee should state what it intends:

6.1.1. Continuation of the program at the current level of activity, with or without specific action;

6.1.2. Continuation of the program at a reduced level of activity (e.g., reducing the range of optional tracks) or other corrective action;

6.1.3. Identification of the program for further development;

6.1.4. Development of a cooperative program with another institution or sharing of courses, facilities, faculty, and the like; or

6.2. If the University recommends discontinuance of the program, then the provisions of the Higher Education Policy Commission's policy on approval and discontinuance of academic programs will apply.

6.3. For each program, the Committee will provide a brief rationale for the observations, evaluation, and recommendation. These should include concerns and achievements of the program. The Committee also will make all supporting documentation available to the Board of Governors and to the Higher Education Policy Commission upon request.

6.4. Committee Recommendation - The appropriate Program Review Committee will develop a recommendation for action and present it to the Board of Governors for action and referral to the Higher Education Policy Commission.

6.4.1. The Committee may make recommendations that go beyond those above. The Committee may request additional information and may recommend continuance on a provisional basis and request progress reports.

6.5. Appeals Committee and the Appeals Process - Any disagreement between a final recommendation of the Program Review Committee and the recommendation of the academic unit may be appealed to a Program Review Appeals Committee.

6.6. The Board of Governors will report, by May 31, to the Chancellor the results of the program reviews conducted each academic year.

Section 7. Productivity Review

7.1. University academic programs must meet at least one of the indicators prescribed by the Higher Education Policy Commission in Title 133, Procedural Rule, Series 10, Section 7 when the Commission conducts its biennial review of programs that have been in operation for at least five years. Said indicators appear in Section 7.4 below.

7.2. Based on Commission recommendation, the Board of Governors shall assign probationary status to programs (other than those exempted by the Commission) that fail to meet both productivity standards. Probationary status shall last for four years during which period the University will be expected to increase program enrollment and degrees awarded. The University will have 60 days from the date of Commission action on initial probationary status to provide the Commission with a plan for meeting degree program productivity standards with the four-year probationary period. At the end of the four-year period, the Board of Governors shall act to terminate or not terminate programs based on the recommendation from the Commission relating to programs' productivity performance.

7.3. The Board of Governors may petition for a program to be exempt from further review by submitting documentation that addresses the reasons for the request including how the program is critical to the mission of the University.

7.4. Annual productivity standards for degrees awarded and enrollments in majors are provided below, Institutional attainment for degree awards and enrollment in majors will be based on the average of degree awards or major enrollments for the five most recent years.

7.4.1. Degree Level	Degree Awards	Major Enrollment
Baccalaureate	5	12.5
Masters/1 st Professional	3	6
Doctoral	2	4.5

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