

Goal 1: Strategy 1

Review all existing academic programs to ensure relevant and rigorous content, appropriate delivery format, and mode of assessment

A. Introduction and Background



This is a time of change in higher education. Enrollments of traditional age students are declining due to demographic, economic, and cultural factors. Fewer students are graduating from high school and going on to college, and this is particularly true in some parts of the country. Colleges are increasingly looking to address this situation by recruiting adult learners who have not completed college degrees. To attract this audience, institutions need to rethink modes of delivery. In addition, the cost of a college education has risen faster than inflation or family income in recent years. Members of our society, including policymakers, have begun to evaluate colleges in terms of economic outcomes. This has led to increased demand for accountability. Students, parents, and policymakers want to make sure that a college education is worth their investment. According to a recent AAC&U sponsored survey, employers have more faith in colleges and universities than the general public, but there is room for improvement. For example, 87% of hiring managers said it was “very important that recent graduates demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge and skills in real world settings,” but only 39% believed recent graduates were prepared to do this. (*Fulfilling the American Dream*, July 2018, Hart Research Associates).

The Higher Learning Commission criteria for accreditation include currency of programs, and consistent quality. While we are diligent about assessment and program review at East Central University, these processes do not always engage all of our faculty, do not include external review for non-accredited programs, and do not consider program array from a university perspective. Faculty and administrators have expressed concerns about rigor, modes of delivery, and use of best practices for student learning and assessment. Some of these issues emerged at the Town Hall Meetings that were held as part of the strategic planning process. While we know that many programs at the university are very successful in terms of relevant and rigorous content, appropriate delivery format, and assessment, this is not true for all programs.

This strategy will include the following:

- a. Deans and Department Chairs will work with the Provost and the RAC to complete a review of programs during year one
- b. We will identify what is successful at ECU and build on our successes.
- c. We will explore a partnership with The Learning House among options for increasing online offerings.
- d. We will reform General Education based on AAC&U guidelines.
- e. We will create opportunities for professional development for faculty so that they remain current in their disciplines and in teaching and learning strategies.
- f. We will think creatively about interdisciplinary opportunities.
- g. We will create a culture of continuous assessment among faculty by making central to our assessment program faculty assessment of student work to improve assignments, courses and curricula.

B. Contribution to other goals

Goal 2: Enrollment management

Goal 3: An inclusive, dynamic and engaging experience for all stakeholders

C. Specific Actions, Elements, Steps and Timelines

Provost will work with the RAC and the Deans during the 2018-2019 academic year to develop a method for analyzing programs based on mission relevance and success of the program, external and internal demand, quality, size, scope and productivity, revenue, costs, impact and opportunity. During the 2019-2020 academic year we will conduct the review. We will develop a continuous process for this review on campus.

During Fall 2018 Provost and President will negotiate with The Learning House to manage ECU's online programs.

General Education Committee will meet Fall 2018 to begin following AAC&U process for General Education reform. Goal will be implementation by fall 2020. The first year they will establish leadership and ensure that committee represents all stakeholders, agree on major parameters, reaffirm or determine learning goals and outcomes, and attend the AAC&U General Education Institute. In year two they will review and redesign curricular structure, evaluate pedagogy, plan assessment, and implement the new plan. CLASS will send a small team to the AAC&U Conference on General Education in Spring 2019. The General Education Committee will be charged with thinking about ways to bring the knowledge of different disciplines to bear on real world problems as they conduct their work. Deans will be mindful of interdisciplinary opportunities when hiring.

The Provost and Deans will support faculty travel to disciplinary conferences. Beginning in 2019-2020 Program Review will include a visit by an external reviewer.

Deans and the Provost will work with CETL and the NASANTI grant during Fall 2018 to incentivize professional development based on best practices identified by the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. We will send faculty to the Transformative Learning Conference at UCO in Spring 2019 and the NASANTI team will develop a workshop opportunity for interested faculty to implement what they have learned. We will continue these initiatives in future years. We will add a professional development week at ECU in Fall 2019 that includes inviting experts in teaching and learning to campus for workshops and faculty led SoTL book groups.

The Provost will establish a task force in Spring 2019 to review our assessment plans for programs and recommend changes based on best practices. Members of the task force will attend the IUPUI Assessment Institute in Fall 2020 and make recommendations to the Provost.

D. Potential Models and Useful Information

<http://www.uwgb.edu/academics/> (esp. for interdisciplinarity)

<http://www.wou.edu/planning/institutional-priorities-2/>

<http://www.marquette.edu/provost/academic-program-review.php>

<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/office-of-the-provost/oipe/assessment-and-program-review/>

Dickeson, Robert C., *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services* (Jossey-Bass, 1999).

Fulfilling the American Dream: Liberal Education and the Future of Work, July 2018, Hart Research Associates.

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Levels of Assessment from the Student to the Institution, by Ross Miller and Andrea Leskes (AAC&U, 2005).

McGee, Jon. *Breakpoint: The Changing Marketplace for Higher Education* (Johns Hopkins, 2015)