Academic Program Health Assessment Process

Academic Program Health Assessment is an annual administrative review of all UCM academic programs. This process sets the minimum levels of viability for all academic programs across a series of metrics. These metrics have been developed and agreed upon by UCM's academic leadership to be common health measures across all programs regardless of discipline. All metrics are considered in this process. Metric thresholds will be set by the Provost/VPAA. Programs meeting or exceeding thresholds on a simple majority of metrics shall be in good standing and require no further discussion. Programs that do not meet metric thresholds for a simple majority of metrics will be flagged for improvement, and discussion with the department chair and program coordinator to develop a program improvement plan not to exceed two academic years.

The program improvement plan will be considered by the Provost Council. Upon approval, the program improvement plan will be implemented. The program improvement plan must identify enough metrics to achieve a simple majority and set a realistic internal target for continuous quality improvement. Consequences for not meeting the target(s) of the program improvement plan will be outlined within the plan. The ideal outcome for this process is to become a high-performing institution composed of healthy and viable academic programs across its inventory. In some cases, that may mean program resource allocations are altered. For example, programs that may have been historically resourced at one level may find better alignment with current enrollment levels resourced at a lower level. This ensures the vitality of the institution and the best use of limited resources.

How does this differ from academic program review?

Academic program review occurs on a five-year cycle. While some criteria may be similar, the intent will be to modify our academic program review process to a formative review by faculty peers to be an evaluation of program quality as evidenced by factors such as faculty quality and scholarship, curricular structure, student learning outcomes, student progression, marketing and recruitment, and engagement factors. Academic program health assessment is designed as an annual process based on metrics associated with economic health performed by administrators to identify and assist programs that may be struggling before it becomes no longer viable to offer the program.

Why are we doing this?

UCM has lost almost 3000 undergraduate students over the past decade. It is no longer the institution it was in the decade of 2010-2020. Our inventory of programs and the curricula that comprise it have not been updated to reflect this reality. We have programs in poor academic health, which require analysis and interventions for continuous quality improvement. There are many emerging threats on the horizon that force our inventory of academic programs to be more focused and aligned with external constituencies.

Is this program prioritization?

No, program prioritization was done during the retrenchment period as a rapid approach to rightsizing the university, resulting in many programs being placed in abeyance and a consequent reduction in budgeted faculty and staff positions. There is neither the intent nor the desire to repeat that experience. In the academic program health assessment, all programs are equally important, and the intent is to better align with our market realities for the future.

With more resources and better marketing, our program will come back to its enrollment levels of the last decade.

While this is a desirable outcome for all, it is unlikely to occur, and UCM cannot afford to wait for it. Continuing to approach one's program in the same manner as in the last decade is not a wise strategic decision. Academic program health assessment provides programs with a mechanism to adjust to new realities of our current enrollment landscape. Academia has always been subject to market forces; a program improvement plan agreeable to the department is a tool we can use to continuously improve our organization.

What role does the Faculty Senate play in this review?

In cases where the provost recommends to the President that the program be placed in abeyance, the Academic Program Review Committee will independently evaluate the recommendation and all data informing it and write a separate recommendation to be included in the briefing paper as background for the President.

Annual Timeline

Deadline	**Expected Action(s)**
January 1	Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Graduate Studies (VPAGS) queries data for all programs based on approved metrics and assembles a master review sheet.
January 15	VPAGS identifies programs for program improvement plans and provides them to the college deans.
February 15	Dean and chair review programs identified for program improvement plans.
June 1	Chair submits proposed program improvement plan to dean and vice provost.
June 15	The Provost Council reviews program improvement plans. Approved plans are communicated to the chair and dean with assigned deadlines. In-progress plans are reviewed for continuation or revision. Expiring plans are reviewed and evaluated. Programs that have made adequate progress are approved and notified. Programs that have not made adequate progress are referred to the college dean and provost for further evaluation.
September 15	The Academic Program Review Committee reviews any programs that are moved into abeyance. APRC's recommendations are added to the recommendations of the Provost. The UCM President will make the final decision regarding abeyance.