From Compliance to Quality Enhancement: Reframing Academic Program Review

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Presented by
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Session Objectives

Participants will leave with an understanding of the following:

• importance of shifting annual program review (APR) emphasis from compliance to quality enhancement
• benefit of integrating compliance verifications into the APR process
• need for stakeholders to see the value added by APR
• need for APR to be a safe forum for disclosure of problems
• value of broad stakeholder involvement throughout the process, particularly in development of final recommendations
• importance of closing the loop
UCF Overview

UCF is a complex level six institution located in Orlando, Florida. As of Fall 2011:

• basic Carnegie classification: Research universities (very high research activity)
• 2nd largest in U.S.
• 58,586 students (33,453 students in 2000*)
• 1,415 acres on Orlando campus
• 12 colleges, including a medical college
• 216 degree programs (91 bachelor’s, 92 master’s, 3 specialist, 29 doctoral, 1 professional)

*unfunded students were excluded from enrollment counts until 2003-04
UCF Overview…continued

• 10 regional campuses and numerous instructional sites
• extensive distance learning offerings
• accreditation reaffirmed by SACSCOC in December 2006; no follow-up reports
• notable university-level key processes in place including:
  – institutional effectiveness
  – faculty qualifications
  – planning and budget processes
SACSCOC Accreditation Philosophy

Accreditation is a *process* and *product* involving an assessment of an institution’s:

- effectiveness in the fulfillment of its mission
- compliance with the requirements of its accrediting association
- continuing efforts that enhance the quality of student learning, its programs and services
“The concept of quality enhancement presumes each member institution to be engaged in an ongoing program of improvement and be able to demonstrate how well it fulfills its stated mission.”

Background: Program Reviews in Florida

• 2000 legislatively mandated
• required every seven years - academic programs (*specialized accreditation cycle consideration*)
• internal evaluation with input from external experts
• Florida Board of Governors
  – maintains schedule for reviews
  – approves university APR policies and procedures
  – uses university APR results to inform state-level decision making
Academic Program Review

Process Overview

**Purpose:** examine quality and productivity of academic programs

**Goal:** develop recommendations leading to program improvement
APR Process Overview: 
Program Elements Evaluated

- centrality
- comparative advantage
- cost
- demand
- quality

*Refer to APR Process handout for additional details
APR Process Overview: Sources that Inform Review

- institutional trend data
- program and department self-studies
- department/unit statements of good teaching qualifications practices ("discipline descriptions")
- graduate faculty members and scholars review
- supplemental review materials
- external consultant reports
APR Process Overview: A Collaboration

- provost
- Program Review Committee (PRC)
- college dean
- department chair or school director
- program faculty and staff members and students
- external consultant(s)
- other UCF offices (e.g., graduate and undergraduate studies, institutional knowledge management, distributed learning, international studies, regional campus administration, alumni relations)
- other stakeholders (e.g., alumni, advisory boards)
APR Process Overview: Program Review Committee

PRC Charge:
to advise provost on program strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for improvement

PRC Members
• executive vice provost for academic affairs (chair)
• vice provost and dean for graduate studies
• vice provost and dean for undergraduate studies
• assistant vice president for research and commercialization
• assistant vice president for institutional knowledge management
• associate director of accreditation and program review (ex-officio)
Past Problems with APR

- paranoia - *us versus them*
- *check-the-box* mentality
- duplication of effort within and across the processes
- lack of buy-in; perceived as a waste of time
- no teeth
Recent Process Improvements

Improvements in seven flavors

1. setting the stage
2. ensuring value added
3. integrating compliance verifications (within the context of CQI)
4. integrating other university processes into program review
5. building trust
6. enhancing collaboration
7. closing the loop
Process Improvements...continued

Setting the Stage

- framing the review
- planning meetings with the college
- orientation for programs
- consultant contact
Process Improvements…continued

Ensuring Value Added

Reviewed all components of process

- eliminated redundancy in reporting instruments
- incorporated other university processes within APR
- established and clarified roles and responsibilities
- provided clear instructions to all participants
- removed unnecessary steps, particularly those that inhibited collaboration
- implemented user-friendly APR Web site (SharePoint)
### Process Improvements...*continued*

#### Integrating Compliance Verifications

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<th>Area</th>
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<th>State</th>
<th>SACS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic planning</td>
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<td>Benchmarking</td>
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Process Improvements…\textit{continued}

\textbf{Integrating Other University Processes into Program Review}

- graduate faculty (re-)nomination and approval
- faculty qualifications review
- external validation of discipline descriptions, faculty qualifications, curriculum, and learning outcomes
- instructional sites reporting
- percentage of program offered by distance learning
Process Improvements...continued

Building Trust

• safe forum to disclose problems (e.g., streamlined public reports)
• focus on solving program and college problems and issues (not solely problems identified by the PRC)
• solutions through collaboration
• common goal – quality enhancement
Process Improvements...continued

Enhancing Collaboration

• consultant selection
• SWOT analyses
• final recommendations
Process Improvements...continued

Closing the Loop

Dean gives public status update to Board of Trustees

• ensures accountability – action is taken
• engages board in academic matters and enhances appreciation and understanding
• highlights value of the process
• provides program and college face-time with Board of Trustees
• additional check and balance of process and quality control
Benefits Realized

- reduced frustration and trouble shooting
- streamlined communication through appropriate use of technology
- speedier feedback and quality enhancements in action
- third party validation of compliance matters
- dots get connected
- solutions identified through disclosure of problems
- identification of university-wide opportunities for improvement
- broader *buy-in* facilitates actions and results
- timely closing of the loop highlights value added
- engaged Board of Trustees
UCF APR SharePoint Site
Objectives Revisited

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Questions and Discussion
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For more information on UCF’s APR process, visit our Web site at
http://www.vpaa.ucf.edu/programReview.php