Guiding Principles

The University of Regina’s strategic plan, mâmawohkamâtowin: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities, approved in 2009 by the Board of Governors, contained a number of recommendations aimed at fostering excellence in the institution’s mandated activities of teaching, research and public service. One of the key recommendations was for the University to conduct a comprehensive review of its academic programs:

A3 - Align our array of program offerings to respond to the needs and interests of current and prospective students.

Under the leadership of the Faculty Councils and Deans’ Council, we will collegially discuss and develop terms of reference by which our academic programs are evaluated. We will then review all academic programs, undergraduate and graduate. Consulting with the appropriate academic bodies, we will together determine how our array of program offerings should be altered to respond to the needs and interests of current and prospective students. We will act expeditiously on those determinations.

The Vice-President (Academic) has assumed leadership of this program evaluation initiative, which is being launched in the Fall 2010, with a view to having an approved report by the end of the Winter 2011 academic term.

This review provides an opportunity for the University’s academic community to reflect on its current program offerings, and to think strategically about the future of academic programming at the institution. The process will form the basis for evidence-based decision-making around academic planning and resource allocation.

The administrative review, also recommended in the Strategic Plan, will be conducted in a parallel process, under the direction of Dr. Harvey King and Brian Christie. Whenever possible, these two processes will be treated as complementary, with the shared aim of supporting the University’s mission.

For the academic program review, data, both quantitative and qualitative, will be collected from a number of sources. While the data collection will be assisted by consultants from Higher Education Strategy Associates, the review process in all its stages will be directed by the University’s academic community and leadership.

A number of key principles will guide and underlie the evaluation process:
The review will be comprehensive, looking at programs from all faculties and disciplines. The review criteria and measures will take into account differences in disciplinary approaches and will be built around the many different academic priorities articulated in the University's strategic plan, including our institution's historic commitment to the liberal arts and sciences.

The review will be focused at the level of individual programs, with a view to determining which of our current programs meet the needs and interests of our students and of the communities that we serve, as well as which programs seem not to be meeting that objective, and why. The review will provide evidence that will help the University to determine which programs should be continued, which should expanded or streamlined, and which should be revised or discontinued. The review will also help to identify new programs the University might consider developing in the near future.

The review will be conducted with a high degree of transparency, accountability, collegiality and open consultation.

The next stage of the review will be a prioritization process that will take place over the course of the Winter 2012 academic term:

- The prioritization process will be conducted in a collegial manner, engaging members of the academic community in the form of a task force with elected membership.
- Academic units will be given an opportunity to respond to the evaluation of their programs prior to the prioritization process.
- The recommendations of the prioritization process will receive further collegial discussion through committees such as Deans' Council, the Planning and Priorities Committee and Executive of Council, before being submitted in the form of recommendations to the Vice-President (Academic).
- The recommendations arising from the prioritization process will guide the Vice-President (Academic) in making future resource-allocation decisions.
- Any and all changes in academic programs that may arise from the review and subsequent prioritization and decision-making processes will be implemented in accordance with the University's labour contracts, and in keeping with best-practice principles of change management.
- The ultimate goal of both the review and subsequent decision-making process is to maximize program vitality and to enhance the University's profile as a preferred place to teach, learn and generate knowledge through research.
- An outline of the process and its timeline can be found here.

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