Introduction

This final report marks the completion of the Academic Program Review (APR). The APR began in 2010, originating from the University of Regina’s 2009-2014 Strategic Plan. The Plan was the result of a collegial consultation process, and was unanimously approved by Executive of Council, Senate, and the Board of Governors in 2009.

The APR prompted a deeper view of our program offerings. This analysis gave us useful insights, and also revealed many challenges. As a result of the APR, we collegially decided to close some programs and consolidate others. We then created new programs that met evolving student demand in our Province. In doing so, we learned a great deal about our processes.

Strengthened by the knowledge the APR helped us gain, Faculty, Departments and Programs at the University of Regina can now continue to review, renew and revitalize their program array to meet the evolving needs of our students and for the benefit of our Province.

History and Process

In 2009, the University community came together and unanimously adopted a new Strategic Plan, entitled mâmawohkanâmâtowin: Our Work, Our People Our Communities. The strategic plan 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 statements in that document is that in order to succeed, “the University must be selective in the programs it offers”; that to achieve excellence, choices need to be made. The corresponding recommendation 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.

The first phase of the APR began with the process of collecting the evidence needed for implementing that recommendation. This process was designed to help the University focus limited resources in a way that increases our program quality, our reputation, and our long-term institutional sustainability. The evaluation was based on the proven approach developed by Robert Dickeson in Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services. Higher Education Strategy and Associates (HESA), an external consultant, was contracted to support the evaluation process. HESA, in consultation with the Evaluation Steering Committee, customized Dickeson's approach to meet the needs of the University of Regina. In the second phase of the APR, the evaluation results were distributed to academic units to help them identify and implement any necessary changes to meet the Strategic Plan goals.
The first phase of the APR started with HESA conducting a consultation process to collect input on the criteria being proposed for the evaluation and the kinds of evidence to collect. The University of Regina’s academic community and internal and external stakeholders were included in the consultation process. This included faculty and staff members, students, senators, alumni and the general public and is further detailed in the appendix.

The APR then proceeded with a comprehensive evaluation of all credit programs offered at the University of Regina. The impetus for the evaluation came from the Provost’s Office with support from a Steering Committee composed of members of Deans’ Council and an elected Task Force composed of Faculty members. The elected Task Force worked with HESA to score each program according to all the data collected. Data and scores thus flowed into unit-specific reports. Academic units received preliminary copies of the reports in August 2011 and provided additional information and comments as needed. The Task Force then conducted a rescoring process based on the additional information and comments. The result of the rescoring process became available in January 2012, ending this phase.

The second and final phase of the APR consisted of academic units (faculties, departments and programs) examining the adjusted data reports and all other information available to them and generating changes, where appropriate, to meet the University goals of quality, reputation and sustainability articulated in the Strategic Plan. Associate deans and unit heads led and supported this process. All changes originated from the Faculties, Departments and Programs. The standard academic process was followed for the approval and implementation of all changes (Figure 1). Although most of the changes were submitted in early 2013, the process has continued until June 2013 (Figure 2).
In the standard academic approval process, all changes originate at the departmental or faculty level. They are brought forward as motions and discussed collegially in department and faculty meetings. After receiving faculty approval, changes to undergraduate programs are discussed at meetings of the Council Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Studies, whereas changes to graduate programs are discussed at meetings of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Council. Approved changes are then brought to Executive of Council. Membership of Executive of Council includes elected representatives from all faculties and students. Final approval for academic program changes comes from Senate, a committee that includes broad representation of internal and external stakeholders. Please refer to the appendix for additional details on the membership of these committees.

Academic changes that require budgetary allocations also go through the Advisory Group on Planning, Evaluation and Allocation (AGPEA). These changes include new program creation and substantial program modifications. AGPEA is a committee of Council; its members review academic changes in terms of their resource implications and provide feedback to academic units. Often this leads to revisions, which are then resubmitted to AGPEA. The recommendations of AGPEA are sent to Executive of Council. When they have budgetary implications they are also sent to the Budget Committee and ultimately to the Board of Governors, which is the final approval body for budgetary items.

For the duration of the APR, the Provost’s Office collected information on all changes to provide support as requested by academic units. This support included the exchange and communication of information on changes, the publication of regular updates to the academic community via email and the university website, and the organization of open community fora to provide information and receive feedback on the progress of the APR.

The possibility of changes to Faculty and departmental structure was also raised for discussion. A proposed process for structural changes was brought to Executive of Council at its meeting of 23 January 2013. At that same meeting, Executive of Council called for a meeting of Council to “discuss the academic implications of the current financial situation.” Council was established by the University of Regina Act to make recommendations to Senate on those areas for which Senate decisions are required. Since its delegation of its responsibilities to the Executive of Council in 1976, Council had met rarely. At its meeting of 6 March 2013, Council recommended to the President that the University of Regina halt implementation of any and all structural changes unless reviewed by Council first. Thus, structural changes have become part of a separate Council initiative independent from the APR.

**Results**

The APR generated many results, some flowing directly from the review and others related to the review only indirectly. The following summary outlines these results.

**Program closures and modifications**

The APR led to an increased number of program changes overall. Whereas program changes averaged to about 120 in 2010 and 2011 (i.e., before the review could lead to changes), the number increased to 137 in 2012 and as of the first 6 months of 2013, 128 changes were brought forward to Executive of Council. More importantly, the nature of the changes submitted to Executive of Council differed. Between 2010 and 2011,
23 new programs were added and 9 were closed. Between 2012 and June 2013, 21 new programs were added and 24 were closed, reduced or consolidated with other programs.

Program and Course consolidation

Even in those cases where actual program changes didn't result, the review helped all parties to recognize that programs can be expensive to maintain and that there is value in reflecting in a concerted way about whether the resources devoted to any given program are well-allocated. This recognition will doubtless affect our thinking about new programs and about programs for which there is little demand.

New program creation process

The new program creation process was improved to account for the principles of sustainability and quality stated in the Strategic Plan. A committee of Council: the Advisory Group on Planning, Evaluation and Allocation (AGPEA), was created in October 2011 to advise Executive of Council on the sustainability of new programs. AGPEA ensures all new programs demonstrate student demand and reviews projections and budgets for continued sustainability. Additionally, new program proposals now contain an implementation plan that also addresses how to react to a lack of demand in a program, so that resources in a Department or Faculty can be dynamically reallocated to fulfill the needs of our student population.

Use of institutional data

Through its participation in the APR, the Office of Resource Planning, tasked with the collection and elaboration of many datasets used for the generation of the reports, developed and improved their procedures and methods for academic data collection and aggregation. These methods supported evidence-based program discovery, which resulted in a series of data reports describing our entire array of programs. The process also raised some inconsistencies in the reports, which led to some challenges in the evaluation of programs, only partially alleviated through the use of triangulation to validate the reports. The consequent report validation process generated dialogue which made it possible to identify inaccuracies in the data and correct the datasets for future use while increasing the understanding of the inherent ambiguity in apparently simple measures. In the future, the evidence-based program discovery process can be repeated, resulting in increasingly more accurate datasets.

Integrated planning as part of the budget cycle (Indirect)

The change in new program approval procedures brought forth through the APR has resulted in an increased awareness of budgeting procedures by AGPEA members. Consequently, members of AGPEA have received a great deal of information on the budget and its approval cycle. For example, for the 2013-14 budget cycle, AGPEA members participated in the evaluation of the proposals from Faculties on the use of the reinvestment fund by helping to link academic priorities with the budget process. The Budget Committee then employed the advice from AGPEA in its deliberations. AGPEA also contributed to enhance the transparency of the budget process by including copies of the budget letter and links to the operations forecast and the budget process document.

Increased engagement of campus (Indirect)

The increased awareness generated through the APR resulted in a much higher level of engagement of the academic community. This led to a series of dialogues: five open fora established on campus for faculty, staff
and students; presentations at Faculty meetings; round tables with the President and Provost; and eventually to a full meeting of Council. The process provided an opportunity for an open dialogue on our core values and the future of Universities in a changing social and fiscal landscape.

Lessons Learned

Clarity is fundamental

The APR has been conducted as an evidence-based process. HESA coordinated the collection of stakeholder questionnaires, while the Office of Resource Planning provided institutional measures like enrolment numbers. Much of the data required for the APR had to be defined in a clear and unequivocal way. The Methodology Report provided many such definitions. But in some cases, the data were either not immediately available, or had been defined ambiguously. This generated real challenges. The report validation process underscored the need for clarity in the definition and counting rules, and for the early identification and correction of errors in the datasets.

Communications and collegiality are vital

As part of the consultation process for the APR, HESA contacted a large number of stakeholders, including faculty and staff members, students, senators, alumni and the general public (see appendix). As well, throughout the entire process, regular updates were posted on the University website and brought forth at Faculty Council, Executive of Council, Senate and Board meetings. We learned, however, that the use of representative groups for students and academic members could have been still greater. Later stages of the APR saw more direct communication methods through public roundtables and fora. Earlier continued involvement of stakeholders could have resulted in more clarity on the APR. Projects of the magnitude of the APR require a higher level of engagement and superior clarity in communications.

Organizational change takes time

The changes introduced through the APR go much deeper than the operational level: they involve cultural changes. The introduction of concepts related to sustainability and the more balanced use of quantitative and qualitative measures as the basis for program evaluation affect academic processes and culture. Universities are also accustomed to thorough discussion of academic issues and for this to be fruitful, time is required. Change also naturally generates resistance, which may delay or even negate its effects. The completion of the APR at the University of Regina required almost three years. A more formal and aligned change management process could have helped reduce concerns while still allowing ample time for thorough discussion and deliberations.

Budget became a confounding issue

When the strategic plan was approved, the University of Regina was in a relatively favorable budgetary situation. As the APR got underway in 2010 and 2011, however, it became confounded with the budget process. This created the false perception that the APR was a cost cutting measure, which led to higher levels of concern. Although clarity on this issue was sought, the initial confusion influenced the review negatively. Clarity in scope and clear and timely communications with key stakeholders would help to answer concerns, address questions and resolve issues in a more timely way.
Way Forward

Faculty, Departments and Programs at the University of Regina will continue to make changes to their program array to meet the needs of our students and for the benefit of Saskatchewan. The Academic Program Review supplied additional information to this renewal process and complemented it with improved procedures and additional data sources. This has already become part of the standard academic approval process. The additional clarity in the budget process will also be extremely useful for the planning of new programs, and to decide how to make the best use of our limited resources.

The results of the APR and the lessons learned in undertaking it will make a useful complement to the continuous program renewal process that forms the fabric of our vibrant University. As we continue to advance in our academic offerings, we will continue to contribute to our community “as one who serves.”
Appendix

This appendix provides information on the membership of APR committees, the committees participating in the standard academic process and the sources of the data employed to compile the unit reports. Where appropriate, this information is provided in the form of hyperlinks to the University of Regina website.

Committee membership

APR Steering Committee

The APR Steering Committee was responsible for supporting the development of the methodology. This included the customization of Dickeson’s method to the University of Regina and the determination of the sources of data for the evaluation. The APR Steering Committee was a sub-committee of Deans' Council including the Dean of Arts, Dean of Science, Dean of Business Administration, Dean of Fine Arts, Dean of Social Work and University Librarian. It included the Associate Vice-President (Resource Planning) for coordination with the Office of Resource planning and was chaired by The Provost and the Associate Vice-President (academic).

Additional information on this committee is available in the updates section of the APR website:

http://www.uregina.ca/president/executive-team/provost-vp-academic/academic-program-review/updates.html

APR Scoring Task Force

The APR Task Force Committee was responsible for the scoring of the data that made the data reports. Its membership was a combination of an elected group of faculty members and members of the APR Steering Committee. The elected component of the Task Force included 5 members from the Faculty of Arts, one each from the Faculties of Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Graduate Studies and Research, Fine Arts, Kinesiology and Health Studies and social work, two faculty members from the Faculty of Science, one faculty member from the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, one faculty member of First Nations University of Canada and one faculty member from the Luther College/Campion College.

Additional information on this committee is available in the updates section of the APR website:

http://www.uregina.ca/president/executive-team/provost-vp-academic/academic-program-review/updates.html

Council Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Studies

The Council Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Studies is responsible for the following:

- To receive for information new, revised, and deleted undergraduate courses. The Committee reserves the right to raise any such course to the table for approval.
- To recommend proposals for new, revised, and deleted undergraduate degree and non-degree programmes to Executive of Council bringing to their attention those areas of concern bearing on academic policy. Such programs if deemed to be “Major” will have first been vetted through a letter of intent to be considered by the AGPEA.
To recommend proposals for new, revised, and deleted academic policies and standards to Executive of Council.

To recommend proposals for new, revised, and deleted standards for undergraduate admission and graduation to Executive of Council.

To advise the Registrar on matters relating to the content of the Undergraduate Calendar bringing to attention those areas of concern bearing on the representation of academic policy.

Its membership is defined as follows:

**Ex Officio**
- Associate Vice-President (Student Affairs)
- University Secretary
- Registrar
- Director, Enrolment Services

**Standing:**
- the appropriate Associate or Assistant Dean (or designate) from each undergraduate Faculty including: Arts, Business Administration Education, Engineering and Applied Science, Fine Arts, Kinesiology and Health Studies, Nursing, Science, and Social Work
- the Head of the Credit Studies Division or the Head of the Flexible Learning Division from the Centre for Continuing Education (or designate)
- 1 designate from each Federated College named by the Federated College
- 2 students selected by the Students’ Union from the student members of Council
- 3 elected members of Council recommended by the Nominating Committee of Council and approved by Executive of Council (One member will replaced each year and the member serving their third year of office will act as Chair). This member will also be a member of the Council Committee on Student Affairs

**Observer:**
- Representative from UR International

Additional information on this committee is available in the updates section of the following website:


**Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research Council**

This committee has responsibilities similar to the Council Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and studies. Its membership is defined as follows:

- The Dean and Associate Dean(s), FGSR
- The Vice President (Research and International)
- The Provost & Vice President (Academic)
- The Director, Graduate Student Services, FGSR
- The Manager, Scholarships and Awards, FGSR
• The Chairs, Standing Committees of FGSR
• Assistant/Associate Deans of Graduate Studies in all faculties
• The University Librarian or designee
• The University Secretary
• The Registrar or designee
• The President, Graduate Students’ Association
• Federated College Representatives (one accredited faculty member from each)

A base of two accredited faculty members from each Faculty (staggered by one year re termination date) and for Faculties with more than 100 graduate students, 3 members. Note: Suggested that representatives are to be selected from among the Graduate Program Coordinators and that Faculties are to establish their own selection process

Four students who should be broadly representative of thesis and professional programs at the master’s and doctoral levels. The GSA to establish a selection process

Three non-academic members of the Senate as voting representatives

Additional information on this committee is available in the updates section of the following website:

http://www.uregina.ca/gradstudies/grad-calendar/policy-fgsr.html

Executive of Council

Since 1976, Council has delegated its responsibilities to the Executive of Council.

The Council Rules and Regulations indicate that membership on Executive of Council reflects the academic composition of the University.

Additional information on this committee is available in the updates section of the following website:

http://www.uregina.ca/president/governance/council/executive-council.html

Council

Responsibilities of Council include the following:

• make rules for governing its meetings and proceedings including the determining of the number of members that shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and establish committees as required;
• appoint the examiners for and conduct the examination of all courses and determine the results of the examinations;
• appoint a committee to hear and decide upon, subject to an appeal to the senate, all applications and memorials by students or others in connection with any faculty of the university;
• consider and report to the senate upon the courses of study to be provided for the several faculties and departments and upon such matters affecting the educational interests and well-being of the university;
The membership of the Senate includes the following persons by virtue of their offices:

- The ultimate court in academic affairs.
- Issues of academic policy within the University are reserved for its approval. In another role, it acts as an ultimate court in academic affairs.
- The Senate has been described as the University's “window on the world.” Its functions in this respect are of utmost importance. Its general area of concern is the academic welfare of the institution and, within this area, it has a variety of duties and powers. Most of the broader issues of academic policy within the University are reserved for its approval. In another role, it acts as an ultimate court in academic affairs.

The membership of the Senate includes the following persons by virtue of their offices:

- Presidents, Academic, Student Affairs, and Research, University
- Deans, Presidents and Deans of Federated Colleges, University Librarian, the Directors of the Centre for Continuing Education, Institut francais, Centre for Teaching and Learning, UR International, Enrolment Management and Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School (Regina Campus) and the Registrar.

Additional information on this committee is available in the updates section of the following website:

http://www.uregina.ca/president/governance/council/index.html

Senate

Because of its broad public representation, the Senate has been described as the University's “window on the world.” Its functions in this respect are of utmost importance. Its general area of concern is the academic welfare of the institution and, within this area, it has a variety of duties and powers. Most of the broader issues of academic policy within the University are reserved for its approval. In another role, it acts as an ultimate court in academic affairs.

The membership of the Senate includes the following persons by virtue of their offices:
• the present and past chancellors of the University
• the president of the University
• the vice-presidents of the University
• the Deputy Minister of Education
• the chair of the Council
• the heads of federated or affiliated colleges of the University
• the deans or acting deans of faculties that are now or may hereafter be established by the University
• such other deans of academic and student affairs
• such directors as are nominated by the president and approved by the Senate
• 14 members of Convocation representing 12 electoral districts are elected to the Senate by Convocation
• Minister of Education is a member ex officio
• six students of the University are elected to Senate by the students registered in the University
• Any professional society, group or organization in the Province that, in the opinion of the Senate, contributes in a significant way to the social, economic and cultural welfare of the Province may, with the consent of the Senate, be represented on that body. The current Senate has representatives from 41 different organizations.

Additional information on this committee is available in the updates section of the APR website:

http://www.uregina.ca/president/governance/senate/index.html

**Data Sources**

The evaluation framework describes the data sources used for each issue. The data sources are summarized here. The methods used for scoring each type of data are described in the framework document available online at the following website:

http://www.uregina.ca/president/assets/docs/PVPA%20docs/APR%20Methodology%20Report%20Jan%202012.pdf

The following survey data was collected for the APR:

• Questionnaire to Deans and Department Heads: This was designed to obtain a range of qualitative information both at the unit level as well as the program level.
• Survey of faculty: All faculty members were invited to complete a short on-line survey. A total of 150 responded. There were too few respondents to report at the program level so only faculty survey data at the unit level is reported and only where there were at least 5 respondents in the unit. As a result, there was only sufficient faculty data to report for 13 academic units.
• Survey of current students: Current graduate and undergraduate students were invited to complete an on-line survey. Some questions were at the program level while others were at the level of the academic unit. A total of 4,129 students responded, but some were in programs that were not within the scope of the APR so they were excluded (all students were given the opportunity to respond.) A minimum of 5 responses was required for reporting at the program level. In some cases, similar programs were combined to produce a large enough sample for reporting.
• Survey of Alumni: Questions to address evaluation issues were added to a survey of alumni that the University was conducting in January 2011. We were only interested in the responses from recent graduates. A total of 942 respondents had graduated since 2005. Data was only reported for programs with at least 5 respondents.
• Survey of Advisors: Academic advisors were asked to complete a short questionnaire.

The University’s Office of Resource Planning provided the following data:

• Retention and completion data
• Analysis of characteristics of leavers
• Enrolment data from 2006 to 2010 (number of classes, seats, and credit hours)
• Convocation data from 2006 to 2010
• Financial data (revenue and costs)

The following University data was also obtained:

• Information on faculty retention supplied from the University’s Human Resources Department.
• Amount of Revenue from Tri-Council funding to cover indirect costs was supplied by the Office of Research Services.
• Information on library delivery and expenditures provided by the University Librarian.

HESA provided the following data:

H-index for all faculty members of each academic unit at the University of Regina, as well as comparable units at the following peer institutions:

   o Brock University
   o University of Guelph
   o University of Lethbridge
   o University of New Brunswick
   o University of Victoria

Tri-Council (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR) funding data for all faculty members of each academic unit at the University of Regina, as well as comparable units at the above peer institutions.

Enrolment data from the Post-Secondary Student Information System (PSIS).