

**Day 19: Did you know that institutions are required to conduct program reviews and CMU has integrated the assessment of student learning into the program review process?**

**[4.A.1] Regular program reviews conducted.**

In Academic Year 2011-12, CMU's program review process was integrated with the assessment of student learning outcomes. Assessment of student learning and program review are two distinctly different processes, but they intersect at the point of program improvement being the goal. At CMU, program review and the assessment of student learning ran historically on parallel tracks rather than assessment results informing a program's review. By forging assessment and the self-study process into the evaluation of a program, faculty members and administrators gained 1) a more holistic view of program efforts, and 2) an understanding of the critical role outcome data play in planning a program's future goals and objectives for improvement.

The prior review process was based on a traditional self-study format that examined program strengths and challenges as well as analyses of relevant data, such as curriculum, enrollments, faculty activity, and survey results from alumni. The revised process added elements that include a current curriculum map, the program's student learning outcomes (SLOs) and their assessment methods, and a narrative describing program improvements resulting from the SLO assessment.

Once the current self-study is completed, the remainder of the process is very similar to the original approach. An external review is completed by a peer in the discipline who is expected to gauge, among the criteria, if the program's mission is consistent with that of the institution. They also observe if outcomes are appropriate, measurable, and assessed; how program faculty are involved in assessment; and faculty members' analyses of data leading to continuous improvement of the program. As the revised process has evolved, each year's cycle of external reviewers reflects more positive observations of the campus' assessment activities.

In addition to the external reviewer, the assessment portion of the self-study is sent to the Faculty Coordinator of Assessment and Director of Assessment of Student Learning who meet with the external reviewer as part of the campus visit. The Coordinator and Director also work with Faculty Senate's Assessment Committee to review the assessment information and report back to the Academic Department Head, the Assessment Committee member representing the department, the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA), and the Faculty Senate. All feedback is collected by the AVPAA, and the final phase of the review is a discussion of the self-study and external feedback by the ADH and Vice President for Academic Affairs with the President and Board of Trustees.

While program reviews are conducted every six years (unless a specialized program accrediting body specifies a different cycle), faculty members submit a follow-up summary of their assessment activities midway through the program review schedule. These three-year reports

summarize observations from assessment data and identify areas for program and course improvement since the self-study was completed. The end result of the combined processes is a shift from comprehensive discussions on program evaluation and improvement every six years to one that is continuous.

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