

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Agenda Item Summary Sheet

Committee: Academic and Student Affairs

Date of Meeting: March 18, 2009

Agenda Item: Overview of Academic Program Review

- Proposed Policy Change Approvals Required by Policy Other Approvals Monitoring
- Information

Cite policy requirement, or explain why item is on the Board agenda:

The Chair of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee requested that this topic be added to the March 2009 meeting agenda.

Scheduled Presenter(s):

Linda L. Baer, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs
Manuel M. López, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Program Quality

Outline of Key Points/Policy Issues:

Multiple methods are used to manage academic programs. Policy 3.36 – Academic Programs requires state colleges and universities to review all academic programs and departments on a regular basis and report a summary of the program activity to the chancellor. Additionally, the chancellor may conduct state or regional studies of academic programs or program clusters. This Policy also sets criteria for the approval of academic programs.

Background Information:

The inventory of academic programs is dynamic. Special studies, routine reviews and coordinated development and delivery efforts help academic programs respond to student interests and employment openings.

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MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

INFORMATION ITEM
OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

BACKGROUND

The inventory of academic programs is dynamic. Special studies, routine reviews and coordinated development and delivery efforts help academic programs respond to student interests and employment openings.

State colleges and universities plan new programs, update academic program curriculum, and make other changes based on periodic program reviews. Annually, we average over 1,000 changes to the system's program inventory. Changes include program closures and suspensions, the addition of new programs or movement of existing programs to new locations, the addition or deletion of program emphases and other changes such as a change to a program's credit length or its name.

At the request of the Chair of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee, the process is being brought to the Committee to provide a framework for pending system and Board actions.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM APPROVAL AND REVIEW RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Board of Trustees

- a. Within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities the Board of Trustees has **set policies** on academic program review and approval.
- b. Through Board of Trustees Educational Policy 3.36 Academic Programs, the Board
 - i. Requires approval of the chancellor for new academic programs, changes to existing academic programs, suspension of academic programs, and closure of academic programs at system colleges and universities
 - ii. Requires that each system college and university regularly review its academic programs for the purpose of academic planning and improvement
 - iii. Allows the chancellor, as appropriate, to conduct statewide or regional reviews of academic programs or program clusters, report findings to the Board of Trustees and, when necessary, impose conditions on academic programs.
- c. The Board has the responsibility to ensure that institutions have a “clean academic audit” through the accreditation process [from Peter Ewell’s June 2007 presentation to Board of Trustees]
 - i. The Board of Trustees, as needed, may delegate statewide or regional academic program (or program clusters) audits to the Office of Internal Auditing.

2. Office of the Chancellor: on behalf of the Board the Office of the Chancellor

- a. Implements Educational Policy 3.36 Academic Programs and the attendant procedure
- b. Receives and posts annual summary of institutional academic program review activity [Please see <http://www.academicaffairs.mnscu.edu/programreview/> for most recent summaries].

3. The Role of the Institutions

- a. Each system college and university shall regularly review its academic programs for the purpose of academic planning and improvement.
- b. The program review process begins with a program self-study by the faculty involved in the program under guidelines that are approved by the institution.
- c. The program approval process begins with standardized proposal forms, approval criteria, a set of common questions to be addressed in the proposals and a set of financial guidelines. A market study or needs assessment for the proposed program is also required. [Forms and guidelines are available online]. The completed new program proposals are sent to the central office for review.

Conclusions: Within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities the

- Board of Trustees **sets policies** on academic program review and approval
- The Chancellor is accountable to the Board of Trustees for **implementation** of these policies
- The Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs is accountable to the Chancellor, from whom she receives delegated authority, for the **management** of the day-to-day program approval and review processes.
- The institutions conduct, on a systematic basis, program development and program review.
- Accreditation (both institutional and specialized/programmatic) validates the processes by an independent third party on a systematic timeline.