

# **Academic Prioritization Process**

## **Adopted by the University Planning Group**

**22 July 2009**

### **I. Introduction:**

The Academic Priorities Process Task Force was created in the spring of 2009 by the University Planning Group (UPG) to develop a process by which Northeastern State University would prioritize academic programs. Dr. April Adams, Budget Director Christy Landsaw, Dr. Denise Deason-Toyne, Dr. Sheila Collins, Dr. Janet Bahr, Vice President Kim Cherry, Vice President Mark Kinders, and Dr. Martin Venneman were appointed by the UPG to serve on the Task Force. Martin Venneman was designated as Chairperson of the effort.

Since its formation in March, the Task Force has met six times and addressed the issues associated with effectively prioritizing academic programs. Best practices employed across the country were examined and an amalgamated process designed to reflect the best attributes of several different best practices were molded into the recommended process being submitted to UPG for consideration. The Academic Priorities Process recommended for adoption as well as a Time-Line for Implementation are presented in the balance of this report.

### **II. Recommended Process for Academic Prioritization**

- 1. Process Overview:** The recommended steps to be followed in prioritizing academic programs on the Northeastern State University campus are summarized as follows.

**Step 1:** Programs/Academic Majors will individually complete a comprehensive Academic Priorities **Self-Study** document.

**Step 2:** Completed Academic Priorities **Self-Study** documents will be submitted to the Chairperson of the Department. The Chairperson will work with the Dean of the College to identify the relative **Potential, Quality, and Value ratings (PQV Ratings)** of the Programs/Academic Majors within their Departments. The information will be shared and discussed with the Program Heads and Program faculty within the Department and College.

**Step 3:** The Dean will forward the **Self-Study** documents, the **PQV Ratings**, and the **PQV Assessment Determinations** for the Programs/Academic Majors to the Provost-Vice President for Academic Affairs.

**Step 4:** The Provost-Vice President for Academic Affairs will review the **PQV Rating** and **PQV Assessment Determinations** with the Dean and generate a **University PQV Matrix** reflecting the **PQV Assessment Determinations** of each Program/Academic Major on campus. The **University PQV Matrix** will be shared and discussed with each College Dean and with the Academic Council as a whole.

**Step 5:** The Provost-Vice President for Academic Affairs will submit the final **University PQV Matrix** to the President's Cabinet for review and implementation of administrative action as appropriate.

## 2. Self-Study Documentation (Step 1)

- a. **Overview:** The Self Study document will be organized into six **Categories** to be evaluated. The **Categories** are:
  - **Centrality to - and Consistency with - the University's Mission**
  - **External and Internal Demand for the Program**
  - **Program Inputs and Outcomes**
  - **Program Productivity (past 3 fall semesters)**
  - **Cost and Academic Efficiency**
  - **Critical Information not Categorized**
- b. Each **Category** has a series of **Criteria** to be addressed. The **Criteria** for the respective **Categories** are described in Appendix I. It is incumbent on the Program/Academic major to put its best foot forward in the Self-Study process. Documentation of claims and assertions is expected.

Following submission of the Academic Priorities Self-Study document to the Chairperson of the Department, the Chairpersons will work with the Dean of the College to identify the relative **Potential, Quality, and Value ratings (PQV Ratings)** of the Programs/Academic Majors within their Departments as defined immediately below.

## 3. Academic Priorities: Program/Academic Major Potential, Quality, and Value (PQV) determination and rating (Step 2)

- a. **Overview:** Although the Self-Study documents will be evaluated in their entirety to define the final Academic Priority determination, selected **Criteria** by which all programs will be compared within the Self-Study **Categories** have been chosen for standardized assessment of program **Potential**, program **Quality**, and program **Value (PQV)** and are referred to as **PQV Assessment Indicators**. The **Categories**, the standardized **Criteria** within the **Categories**, and the **PQV Assessment Indicators** are defined in Appendix II.
- b. Each **PQV Assessment Indicator** will be rated on a one (1) to five (5) scale in half-integer increments: one representing the lowest value and 5 representing the highest. Several of the ratings will be predetermined by the order of a Program/Academic Major in a rank-order listing of all University Programs/Academic Majors based on hard data. That information will be supplied centrally. Other **PQV Assessment Indicators** will be rated on the 1 – 5 scale by the comparative, subjective judgment of the evaluator.

- c. To finalize Step 2 of the process, the Chairperson will work with the Dean of the College to identify ratings for each **PQV Assessment Indicator**. The ratings for each **PQV Assessment Indicator** will be summed and averaged; thereby, providing an **Average PQV Rating** for program **Potential**, program **Quality**, and program **Value**. The respective **Average PQV Ratings** for each Program/Academic Major will be interpreted as a “low,” a “medium,” or a “high” designation according to the following **PQV Assessment** table. All results of the ratings and interpretation of the ratings to make the **PQV Assessment Determinations** will be shared with the Program Heads and faculty of the College.

**Table 1: PQV Assessment Determination**

<b>Average PQV Rating</b>	<b>Assessment Determination</b>
1.000 – 2.333	low
2.334 – 3.668	medium
3.669 – 5.000	high

- d. The Dean will forward the **Self-Study** documents, the **PQV Ratings**, and the **PQV Assessment Determinations** for the Programs/Academic Majors to the Provost-Vice President for Academic Affairs (**Step 3**)

**4. Development of a University wide PQV Matrix (Step 4)**

- a. The three **PQV Assessment Determinations** (one for Potential, one for Value, and one for Quality) for each Program/Academic Major will then be used to place the Program/Academic Major into a **University PQV Matrix** as presented in Appendix III.
- b. The **University PQV Matrix** will be shared with each College Dean and the Academic Council as a whole. It will also be shared with the Chairpersons of the Colleges and the University faculty.
- c. The Provost-Vice President for Academic Affairs will submit the final **University PQV Matrix** to the President’s Cabinet for review and implementation of administrative action as appropriate (**Step 5**).

### III. Recommended Time-Line for Implementation

A proposed time-table for campus implementation of the Academic Prioritization Process in FY 2012 is presented below. All Priorities must be established by 1 September 2010.

**Table II: Recommend Time-Line for Campus Review and Process Implementation**

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Activity</b>
July – September, 2009 UPG	UPG Report Review; Concept Modification; Process finalization
September – November 1, 2009 UPG	Distribution to Governance; Academic Units and Faculty for review
November 15, 2009 UPG	Final authorization of Process
December, 2009 UPG	Forward to President’s Cabinet for approval; distribution of Process to Academic Units to initiate self study
January 1, 2010 – March 15, 2010 STEP 1	Self Study preparation by Academic Units
March 15, 2010 – April 30, 2010 STEP 2/STEP 3	Dean’s Review; Shared Discussions; Dean’s conversations with unit
May 2010 STEP 4	VPAA and Academic Council Review; Matrix compilation
June/July, 2010 STEP5	President’s Cabinet Review; Priorities established; actions identified.

# **Appendix I**

## **Criteria and Category Explanation for Program/Academic Major Self-Study Documentation**

### **I. Category 1: Centrality to - and consistency with - the University's Mission**

1. Historical Development of the Program (i.e., When started; why established; current status)
2. Congruency with the institution's expectations and mission. (i.e., List up to 5 core strengths that tie into the University's Mission, Vision, and Values)
3. Why does the program need to be continued and strengthened? (i.e., what impact has the program had on the institution? What are the benefits to the institution through offering this program? How essential is the program to the University? What is the relationship of this program to the success of other programs? Does this program serve students in ways no other program does?)
4. How does the program distinguish NSU from other Universities?

### **II. Category 2: External and Internal Demand**

1. External Demand
  - a. Workforce needs.
    - i. National (i.e., Occupational Handbook data; Employment projections data; ACT data on students/major);
    - ii. State (i.e., shortage areas reports, program requests by competing agencies)
    - iii. Local (i.e., Chamber of Commerce data; local industry data)
  - b. National student interest in the program. (i.e., trend lines over time: nationwide enrollment figures)
  - c. Are their external pressures on offering this program?
    - i. Statutory pressure to deliver program
    - ii. Political consequences of eliminating program
    - iii. Other programs offering similar degrees

2. Internal Demand
  - a. Data to define the extent of how the program supports other programs (General Education, other majors, minor programs)
  - b. Internal trend lines (i.e., majors, SCH, degrees granted)

### **III. Category 3: Program inputs and outcomes**

1. Inputs
  - a. Faculty Quality (i.e., % full time/part time/ % with terminal degrees – average ranking; market forces regarding faculty)
  - b. Student Quality (i.e., ACT majors, GPA majors, progressive standards for advancement)
  - c. Quality of program (i.e., cohesiveness of curriculum, relevance of curriculum to current times; to what extent the program develops global awareness; integration of technology into curriculum; scheduling adaptability; major support; resources needed to enhance the quality of the program; what resources are needed to bring the program up to a quality level?)
  - d. Quality of Equipment, Facilities, and other resources. (i.e., how current are equipment and materials; existence of modern facilities; program/library holdings; web page/resources)
2. Outcomes
  - a. Student Outcomes.
    - i. Outcomes assessment
      1. Degree of student satisfaction
      2. Degree of alumni satisfaction
      3. Degree of employer satisfaction
      4. Success on certification/licensure examinations
      5. Success of entry into professional school or graduate studies
      6. Student awards
      7. GPA average by major as compared to University
    - ii. Retention rates, drop-out rates, completion rates – major core curriculum
    - iii. Redundancy rates (e.g., persistence of students in major)

**IV. Category 4: Program Productivity (e.g., data for the past three fall semesters)**

1. Number of majors, second majors, minors – majors per FTE faculty
2. Number of faculty by FTE
3. Number of student credit hours generated by department
4. Number of student credit hours generated by department
5. Student Faculty Ratio: FTE students to FTE faculty
6. Number of degrees awarded – graduates
  
7. Number of undergraduates/graduates formally engaged in research activity (narrative)
8. Number of undergraduates involved in internship experiences (narrative)
9. Number of students that co-author with faculty (narrative)
10. Number of students presenting or co-presenting at a state, regional or national conference (narrative)

**V. Category 5: Cost and Academic Efficiency**

1. Resources available
  - a. E&G Budgets
  - b. Tuition/Student Credit hours Generated
  - c. Academic service fees
  - d. Other Program Generated Revenue
  
2. Costs
  - a. Instructional cost: Budget (includes academic service fees)+(expenses offset by program generated revenue)
  - b. Cost: Budget – (Academic Service Fees + net program generated revenue)
  - c. Future costs required of programs (provide tangible evidence of cost)
    - i. Cost of investing in new programs
    - ii. Academic efficiencies to increase productivity and decrease cost

## **VI. Category 6: Critical Information Not Categorized (presented in narrative format)**

1. Items to be addressed:
  - a. How can the program seize opportunities heretofore not considered by the institution?
  - b. Uniqueness of the program?
  - c. Niche programs or special programs that appeal to special categories of students
  - d. What suggestions are made for innovative program reduction, elimination, consolidation, or enrichment
  - e. Are there opportunities for the program to continue but in a different format?
  - f. What cooperative or collaborative relationships exist with other programs (internal and external)
  - g. External validation of program quality: (accreditation, program review)



# Appendix II

## Academic Priorities: Self-Study Category Assessment and Rating Process

Number	Proposed Category/Criteria	PQV Assessment Indicator	Rating Scale (0.5 integer)*
4	Program Productivity (past 3 fall semesters)	Value	Rank order quantification: 1-5
	Majors per FTE faculty		
	Number of faculty		
	Number of SCH by department		
	Number of SCH by major		
	FTE students: FTE faculty by discipline		
	Number of degrees - Rank order		
	Undergraduates/graduates engaged in research activity (narrative)	Potential	1-5
	Undergraduates in internship experiences (narrative)		
	Student publication productivity (narrative)		
5	Cost and Academic Efficiency		
	Resources Available	Value	1-5
	E&G Budgets		
	Tuition/Student Credit Hours generated		
	Academic Service Fees		
	Other Program Generated Revenue		
	Cost		
	Instructional Costs [Budget (includes academic service fees) + (expenses offset by program generated revenue)		
	Cost = Budget - (Academic Service Fees + net program generated revenue)	Value	Rank order quantification: 1-5
	Future costs required of program	Value	Rank order quantification: 1-5
6	Critical information not categorized	Potential	1-5
	Can the program seize opportunities not addressed?		
	Is the program unique?		
	Are their special populations for which the program is intended?		
	Can the program exist in a different format?		
	What cooperative or collaborative relationships exist with other internal and external partners?		
	Other information not identified.		
	External validation of program quality: (accreditation, program review)		
	* Integer scale from a low value/potential/quality rating of 1 to a high value/potential/quality rating of 5 in 0.5 integer increments.		

# Appendix III

## Academic Prioritization: University PQV Matrix

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date: 16 July 2009

	Low Quality			Medium Quality			High Quality		
	Low Potential	Medium Potential	High Potential	Low Potential	Medium Potential	High Potential	Low Potential	Medium Potential	High Potential
High Value									
Medium Value									
Low Value									