Procedures for Reviewing
Academic Program Sustainability

This process establishes protocol for reporting and determining academic program efficacy in light of program sustainability. The intent of the process is to improve the viability of all academic programs.

At the beginning of the fall semester of each academic year, academic program faculty will receive information regarding the efficacy of their program in the form of a Program Data Analysis Report based on program effectiveness criteria (see below). The purpose of this information is to provide faculty and administration with trend data so that the college can assess the programs and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. If the weaknesses indicate a problem with viability, programs will work through the program sustainability committee to develop action plans for improvement. The outcomes of this process may include program modification, enhancement, modernization, or discontinuance.

Programs will fall into 3 levels of effectiveness: the Green Level, the Yellow Level, and the Orange Level. Programs in the Green Level will score 5-6 positive notations in the program effectiveness criteria. Green-level programs should continue with self-assessment as indicated in the assessment and/or program review process to maintain noted status. Programs in the Yellow Level will score 3-4 positive notations. Yellow-level programs should target their assessment process towards noted deficiencies to achieve a Green Level status. Programs in the Orange Level will score 1-2 positive notations. Orange-level programs are "At-Risk" and will need immediate supportive action. Orange-level programs will initiate sustainability actions including a comprehensive program review.

The following effectiveness criteria will constitute information given in the Program Data Analysis Report. Although the items listed may have impact on the program's efficiency, not all criteria will carry the same weight for all programs.

Data of immediate importance will reflect:

- Program FYE—the number of full year equivalent students generated by program courses. This is found by multiplying the number of students in the program courses by the credit value divided by 30 credits. Note that 30 credits represents a full time equivalent student.

- Graduate/FTE—this number is a ratio of graduate to full time equivalent instructors. It represents how well we respond to industry needs as well as contribute to student success.

- Cost Ratio (FYE x $4577/instructional total costs)—this number compares revenues and expenditures. A number greater than 1.0 means that revenue exceeds expenditures. Small numbers indicate that the expenses greatly exceed the revenues.

- Student FYE to Faculty FTE—this number represents the ratio of full time students to full time instructors.

- Instructional cost study—this is a comparison of our programs to like programs across the state. Our funding is, in part, based on a positive comparison of the cost effectiveness of our academic programs to other like programs in the state. The number represents the college average costs per program divided by the MnSCU average costs per program. A number greater than 1 indicates that our program is more expensive than the MnSCU average.

- Percent full by section—this number represents the total number of students enrolled in the program courses versus the total capacity in the courses.

Other data included on the Program Data Analysis Report:

- Total FYE by major—this number represents the total FYE generated by the declared major. This includes general education and core courses that program students complete.

- College percent full—this number represents the total college percent full on all courses for comparison purposes. Note that this is merely for comparison reasons. We need to strive to be as close to 100% as possible. Striving for a 70% fill rate is not necessarily a good target.

- Completion ratio (1st year-2nd year-graduation)—this number represents program retention and graduation. These numbers are found by taking the enrollment in a representative first year course and comparing those numbers to a representative second year course and then to the number of graduates.

- Total instruction costs—this number represents personnel, supply, and equipment costs pulled from a BRIO report.

- Number of sections—the number of sections offered by the major.

- Average section size—this is the average number of students enrolled in the program courses.

- Faculty FTE—this number represents the number of full time faculty, which is the number of credits assigned divided by 32 credits for technical (30 credits for liberal arts).

- Total tuition received (FYE x $4,577). This number represents the tuition revenue received. (Differential tuition is applied to applicable programs.)

- Assessment & program review plan is current—this is a yes or no response indicating that the program has a current assessment plan in place, which has identified action plans for program improvement based upon analysis of data in comparison to identified performance targets.

- Employment placement rate/continuing education—this number represents placement rates for program graduates. Note that this number lags a couple of years since it requires follow up and reporting requirements from the placement office.

- Job demand—this identifier indicates the projected employment demands in the field. The information is found on the ISEEK website. Categories include: much faster than average, faster than average, as fast as average, more slowly than average, and decline.

Should programs need supportive actions, program faculty and administration will meet in the fall to discuss the Program Data Analysis Report. A Program Sustainability Committee will create and facilitate a plan to improve the program's health. The following representatives will form the Program Sustainability Committee:
1. Institutional Research-Scott Godfrey
2. Enrollment Management-Gene Klinke
3. Marketing Director-Jason Trainer
4. Academic Coordinator-Shannon Nelson
5. Academic Deans-Norma Konschak & Kent Hanson
6. Program Representatives
7. Assessment & Program Review Faculty Member
8. Faculty Association to Elect 2 Members
9. Academic Affairs & Standards Council Faculty Member
10. Additional faculty as desired by program faculty

The Program Sustainability Committee will develop and implement an action plan to improve the program using a variety of methods, which may include but are not limited to the following:

- Advisory committee recruitment,
- Curriculum Changes,
- Consult current and former students for their input in how the program can be made more viable,
- In-depth look at successful programs that are similar in nature,
- Marketing methods that include program brochures, inclusion in media ads, etc.,
- On-site visits to program area with possible hands-on activities,
- Personal recruitment sessions involving faculty, current students, and possible former students who have graduated from the program,
- Other actions as needed.

The committee will meet to create, review, modify and implement an action plan during the months of September, November, February and April. Program faculty and administration may determine the necessity for and number of follow-up meetings throughout the course of the plan. These meetings will not replace the regularly scheduled meetings or the Program Data Analysis Report given to each program in September.

The action plans and outcomes are evaluated by academic administration on an annual basis regarding program viability.