



Questions Shaping Project # 5 of CSU, Chico's Educational Effectiveness Review: Refinement of the Academic Program Review

CSU, Chico recognizes that program review processes play a key role in the improvement of its undergraduate and graduate educational offerings. Such reviews provide a framework for quality management in our program offerings and other educational activities. They have the potential to systematize a program's approach to academic quality and educational excellence. Accordingly, Chico proposed to refine its Five-Year Program Review processes as one of its areas of emphasis in its Educational Effectiveness Review.

More specifically, CSU, Chico proposed to develop a new framework for Academic Program Review. The elements of this new framework are to align under the strategic priorities of the university, the ten principles of *Cornerstones*, the principles of the CSU Accountability Process, and the "core commitments" to institutional capacity and educational effectiveness that are embodied in the new WASC accreditation standards. The new review process is intended to refocus programs toward becoming more systematic and intentional about gathering data about the *right things*—performance and effectiveness—and on *using* the resulting information to continuously improve what the program does.

Questions to shape the refinement of the Academic Program Review Process include:

- How do we ensure that Program Review is considered to be an integral part of managing the university, college, department and/or program?
- How do we structure criteria for review and guidelines for documentation so that self studies shift from program description to illustrations of how well programs perform relative to their goals and standards of performance? How do we shift toward effectiveness and performance indicators beyond inputs and resources as the organizing basis for defining and evaluating program quality?
- How do we overcome barriers to effective program review? How do we ensure that the opportunity for critical reflection is not lost in the desire to get things done? How do we foster a leadership of engagement in program evaluation?
- How do we make program review more than a periodic event and encourage significant levels of on-going engagement by internal and external stakeholders in issues of program capacity and program effectiveness?
- How do we instill a culture of evidence in which a spirit of reflection and continuous improvement based on data receives a matter-of-fact acceptance as a tool for decision making? That is, how do we move beyond mere collection of 'piles of evidence' to analysis, interpretation, meaning making, and ultimately, informed decision making?