Executive Memorandum 22-016

May 25, 2022

From: Gayle E. Hutchinson, President

Subject: Graduate Program Review Policy

Upon the recommendation of the Academic Senate and with the concurrence of the Provost, I approve the Graduate Program Review Policy, effective immediately.

Policy Title:	EM 22-016 Graduate Program Review Policy
Contact:	
Supersedes:	
Revision:	
Enabling Legislation or Executive Order:	

DEFINITION AND SCOPE

In their Program Review Resource Guide, Chico State's regional accreditor, WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), defines program review, which is a "required element" in accreditation and reaffirmation, as "a cyclical process for evaluating and continuously enhancing the quality and currency of programs."

In addition, they state that program review

> is conducted through a combination of self-evaluation, followed by peer-evaluation by reviewers external to the program or department and, usually, also external to the organization. It is a comprehensive analysis of program quality, analyzing a wide variety of data about the program. The results of this evaluation process are then used to inform follow-up planning and budgeting processes at various levels in the institution—program, department, college, university—and incorporated into the institution's overall quality assurance system. An institution's program review process typically occurs on a regular cycle of five to eight years, meaning that each program/department is reviewed every five-eight years.

Aligned with the above, the following Executive Memorandum (EM) establishes and clarifies the institutional, faculty, and administrative role in the graduate program review process. In addition, this EM charges the Graduate Council (GC) to review and report on graduate program review materials.

This EM also charges the GC to determine whether externally accredited graduate programs ought to be subject to any portion of the existing or altered program review process.

MEMBERSHIP, SELECTION OF CHAIR, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRADUATE COUNCIL (GC) IN THE REVIEW OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS.

Membership of the GC:

The Graduate Council consists of:

- The Dean of the Graduate School, who serves as chair;
- Graduate coordinators of every master's degree program, including Interdisciplinary Studies;
- Two student representatives chosen by and from the Council of Graduate Students;
- One member designated by the Academic Senate selected from the Educational Policies committee.

The Dean of Graduate Studies will keep a record of and track committee membership, and convene the first meeting of the committee.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Dean and Office of Graduate Studies (OGS)

- Update and maintain the graduate program review guidelines and process.
- Update and maintain a list of graduate program review deadlines by program.
- Communicate with department chairs and graduate programs to ensure, as much as possible, the timely submission of their program review materials (conducted every five to eight years).
- Provide support to collect student and program data to complete the report.
- Provide feedback on report drafts and approval of final draft.
- Provide guidance to programs in selecting and guiding external reviewers.
- Meet with external reviewers.
- Collect and review all graduate program review materials and submit final drafts of all materials to the GC.

Responsibilities of the GC pertaining to program review include:

- Assigns two GC members to a subcommittee that reviews all materials, meets with the academic program reporter to offer verbal and written feedback, and prepares the reporter for a formal presentation of the program review to the GC.
- Schedules the academic program's formal presentation to the GC and invites the academic department chair and college dean to the meeting.

- Votes on whether to approve the completion of the report at the GC level and its transition to the final stages of review by the Office of Graduate Studies and the Provost's Office.

PROGRAM REVIEW WORKFLOW

Program Review Workflow for non-Externally Accredited Graduate Academic Programs:

1. On an ongoing basis, the Office of Graduate Studies notifies each program of the due date of their expected review.
2. At the beginning of each academic year, the Office of Graduate Studies provides the GC a list of expected graduate program reviews to be completed in the forthcoming academic year.
3. Each academic program scheduled for review completes a comprehensive self-study.
4. An external site visitor with disciplinary knowledge conducts a review of the program and provides a written external review to the academic program.
5. The academic program provides a reflective essay addressing the external reviewer's report and plans to address recommendations.
6. The final program review draft, the external reviewer's report, and the reflective essay are submitted to the GC and Office of Graduate Studies.
7. For each program review, the GC assigns two GC members to a subcommittee that reviews all materials, meets with the academic program reporter, offers written feedback and questions to prepare the academic reporter for formal presentation of the program review to the GC, invites the academic department chair and college dean to the meeting, and facilitates the formal presentation and discussion.
8. The subcommittee submits any updated or supplemental materials introduced during the GC review to Office of Graduate Studies.
9. The Office of Graduate Studies provides the Provost's Office with an evaluation of the program, including whether the program is to be reaffirmed, and if so, for how long.
10. The Provost's Office writes a final evaluation of the program, including whether the program is to be reaffirmed, and if so, for how long.

Program Review Process for Externally Accredited Programs

In their Program Review Resource Guide, WSCUC states:

> Universities and colleges are encouraged to coordinate the specialized program accreditation process (e.g., ABET, NCATE, AACSB, etc.) with the institutional program review process to avoid duplication of labor. This is sometimes accomplished by substituting the specialized accreditation review for an institution's internal program review process. If the specialized accreditation review does not include assessment of student learning outcomes and/or other required elements of an institution's internal program review process, then these additional elements are sometimes reviewed immediately prior to or following the specialized accreditation review (and then appended to the specialized accreditation review documents).

The GC will determine if any or all externally accredited programs should be subject to some portion of the internal program review process. This determination will be made on the basis of whether any external reviews lack correspondingly rigorous review of any internal program review requirement.