Southwestern College Achieving Institutional Mission: Program Review

Introduction

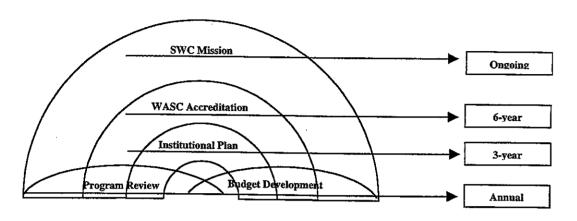
Background

For several years, the academic programs/disciplines at Southwestern College have undertaken a self-study review to determine their effectiveness in delivering instruction and affecting student outcomes. The early days of the review, the mid-1980s, were a time of statewide fiscal constraint; the results of program/discipline review were utilized to determine which programs/disciplines were discontinued and which were retained. Improvement of program/discipline quality was a secondary concern.

Following that early, somewhat negative experience, a committee of faculty and administrators undertook the task of reshaping academic program/discipline review into a process that would highlight both the positive aspects and the needs of the academic programs/disciplines, with the primary goal being to continuously improve the quality of the offerings. The Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) Committee, a shared governance body, created Subcommittee "C" to develop and oversee the review process. In Spring 1988, the subcommittee, in conjunction with the office of Institutional Research, designed a five-year review process. This process would provide for approximately one-fourth of the programs/disciplines being reviewed each year for four years; the fifth year would be used to review the process and to determine modifications for the next cycle. The academic programs/disciplines have since completed two review cycles, with 1999-2000 being the year to review the process.

A systematic, universal review of all programs and services began in fall 1999. Superintendent/President Serafin A. Zasueta, Ph.D., convened an interested group of faculty, staff, and administrators to discuss the need for a comprehensive review process. The college had received a Title III grant four years prior, and one of its major objectives was the revamping of the academic program review process. That requirement, coupled with the fact that the academic review process was in the year for reviewing its procedures, made the discussion timely. The group quickly reached consensus on a plan that would expand the current process to include all academic, student, and administrative programs and services and also agreed that the program review process should be integrated with other campus processes, such as accreditation, planning, and budget development. (Figure 1 depicts that integration while Appendix A shows a more detailed timeline and the interaction among the various processes.)

Figure 1
Relationship of Southwestern College Mission,
WASC Accreditation, Institutional Plan,
Program Review, and Budget Development



To signify the college's commitment to its students, the committee, working with a program review consultant built the assessment process upon the college mission statement and took the name of "Achieving Institutional Mission (AIM)."

Southwestern College Mission Statement

Southwestern College is committed to meeting the educational goals of its students in an environment that promotes intellectual growth and develops human potential.

The AIM committee was expanded to include the vice presidents and other representatives from each of the areas to be reviewed—academic affairs, student affairs, and administrative units—as well as from the Classified Senate, the Academic Senate, the Title III grant, and the Institutional Research office. The consultant, the Title III project director, and the director of institutional research worked closely with representatives of each of the groups. The result was a review process that encompasses those elements that are common to all areas as well as those unique to each area. Data elements, survey instruments, and self-study criteria were determined. This procedural guide is the result of a full academic year of collaboration and is designed to guide each unit in a comprehensive self-evaluation of its role in achieving the institutional mission.

Purpose

The purpose of Southwestern College's program review process is to review, analyze, and assess the content, currency, direction, and quality of all programs and services in order to invest in that unit's future.

The intent of the program review process is to promote student-centered educational and service excellence by engaging all college units in self-examination and self-improvement. The review process is to be broad-based, accessible, and incorporated into other campus-wide processes, such as accreditation, budget, and planning. The campus at large is to be informed of the progress made by the various units undergoing review.

The information gathered and analyzed in program review aids in planning, decision making, personnel development, program improvement, and better utilization of the college's resources.

Each unit's final report should be designed to give insight into three broad questions:

- Where has the program or service been?
- Where is it now?
- Where should it go from here?

Specifically, program review will:

- Ensure that all college programs and services are functioning in support of the college's student-centered mission.
- Promote steady improvement in the quality and currency of all college programs and services.
- Provide evidence of institutional effectiveness at all levels for accreditation.
- Promote broader understanding of the college's many programs and services.
- Facilitate self-analysis of each unit's functions and its relationship to college goals and the internal and external conditions that impact its operation.
- Note areas of strength and acknowledge accomplishments.
- Note areas in need of improvement to alert the college to problems in time for proactive solutions.
- Provide a vehicle for information-based, timely, equitable input for budget consideration to support development and improvement of all college programs and services.

Procedures

As a subcommittee of CLC (College Leadership Council), the AIM Committee (Achieving Institutional Mission) serves as a facilitator to the universal program review process and communicates the results of the reviews to the CLC and to the Governing Board.

Program Review follows a six-year cycle: five years for the review of all programs and services and one year for review and update of the process. Each program and service will undertake a self-study at least once during the five years. See Appendix B for the review schedule. Extraordinary circumstances, events, or significant changes in the discipline, program, unit or service may require adjustments in the timeline. State and/or federal assessments may be required more frequently for some programs and services. Additionally, significant changes in a discipline, program, unit or service may necessitate an earlier review than previously scheduled.

Annual timeline and budgetary process. It is the college's intent to utilize the results of each year's program reviews as a basis for funding decisions. Each unit will submit the completed reviews to the appropriate entity as identified below to be incorporated into the college's annual budget process as outlined in timelines distributed annually to all budget managers by the Vice President of Fiscal Affairs. The CLC serves as the college steering committee for institutional planning and as the budget development committee in recommending general institutional priorities for allocation of available resources based on the college mission, strategic goals, planning assumptions, and funding. Therefore, the AIM committee will also send the executive summaries of each completed program review to the CLC.

Budget managers maintain copies of all reviews, including resource implications and long-term goals. It is suggested that these be maintained beyond the year of the study in the event significant change in the discipline, program, unit or service or other unforeseen changes require their consideration. The timeline for the process of program review is contained in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Southwestern College Achieving Institutional Mission: Program Review Timeline and Process

Timeline	Process	Academic Affairs		Student Affairs		Admin Units
		Disciplines	Schools	Functions	Departments	
May	AIM notifies units of review, Institutional Research Office (IR) under Institutional Advancement works with units to develop survey instrument.	х	х	х	х	х
August	Units assemble Program Review team	х	x	х	х	x
Mid-	IR conducts surveys and assembles standard data	x	X	х	х	х
September	Units notify reporting entity ⁽¹⁾ if external review is also being required by outside agency, i.e., Board of Registered Nursing, Matriculation, etc. Entity examines the content of the external review vis-à-vis the SWC Program Review process; notifies unit whether the external review will meet any portion of the Program Review requirements.	x	x	x	x	x x
Late September	IR provides standard statistical information and survey results to units.	х	х	х	х	x
Late October	Units complete Program Review self-study report, secure signatures of committee members, submit to cognizant manager for review and signature.	х	х	х	х	x
Mid- November	Cognizant manager reviews self-study report, makes any comments in the comments sections, signs off on report, submits report to the reporting entity ⁽¹⁾ .	х	X	х	х	x
Mid- December to Mid-January	Reporting entities ⁽¹⁾ : • review self-study report for accuracy, completeness, signatures, and Executive Summary, • submit self-study report and Review Form to committees ⁽²⁾ for review and approval, and • submit Executive Summary and copy of Review Form to AIM and cognizant managers.	x	х	х	х	x
Early- February	 Cognizant managers incorporate self-study results into college-wide budget process. AIM submits a summary report to CLC and to the Governing Board. 	X	X	x	Х	X

(1) Reporting entities for units undergoing review:

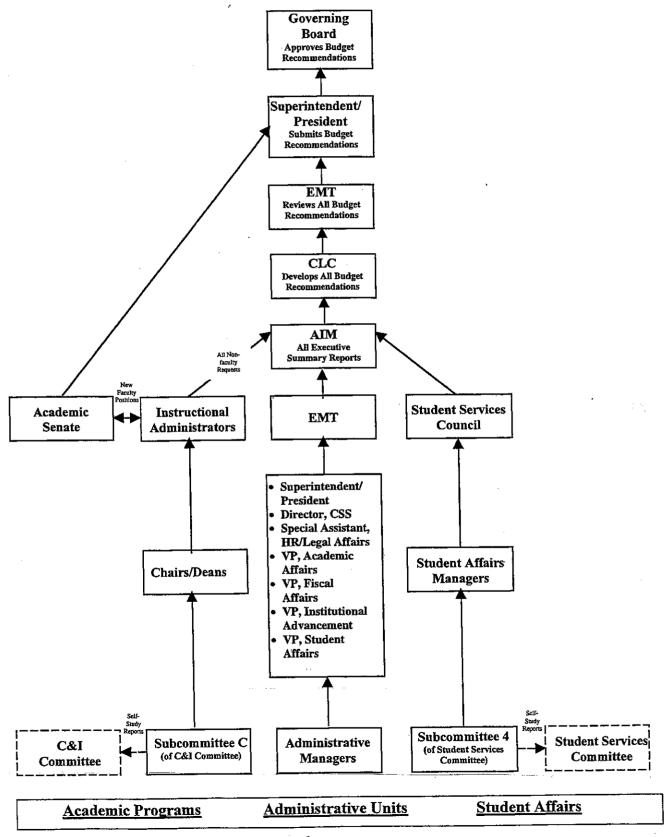
- Academic Programs Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) Committee, Subcommittee C
- Academic Schools Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Student Affairs Functions Student Services Committee, Subcommittee 4
- Student Affairs Departments Vice President for Student Affairs
- Administrative Units Cognizant Manager

(2) Committees for units undergoing review:

- Academic Disciplines Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) Committee
- Academic Schools Executive Management Team (EMT)
- Student Affairs Functions Student Services Committee
- Student Affairs Departments EMT
- Administrative Units EMT

Figure 2

Achieving Institutional Mission: Program Review Budgetary Process
(Integration of program review reporting process with the annual budget development process.)



<u>Components of Program Review:</u> The components that comprise a unit's program review generally include the following.

- Statistical data that describe the unit in terms of student contact and outcomes and staff assigned to the unit.
- Survey results that indicate customers' degree of satisfaction with the program or service.
- A <u>self-study</u> of the unit that addresses its long-term goals, functions and services; an evaluation of the data and survey results; and its response to a number of criteria. The self-study should also include recommendations for improvement as well as a work plan that outlines resources required for implementation.
- An executive summary that lists the names and signatures of all required personnel and highlights the major findings of the self-study. The executive summary will provide the basis for AIM's annual summary report to the CLC and the Governing Board.
- A <u>review form</u>, signed by the appropriate reporting entity, indicating that all criteria have been adequately addressed.

Note: Refer to the specific guidelines for additional details regarding the components of academic, administrative, and student affairs units.