

MEMO Subject line: Weighing the Baby – Program Review

“You don’t get a baby to grow by weighing it”

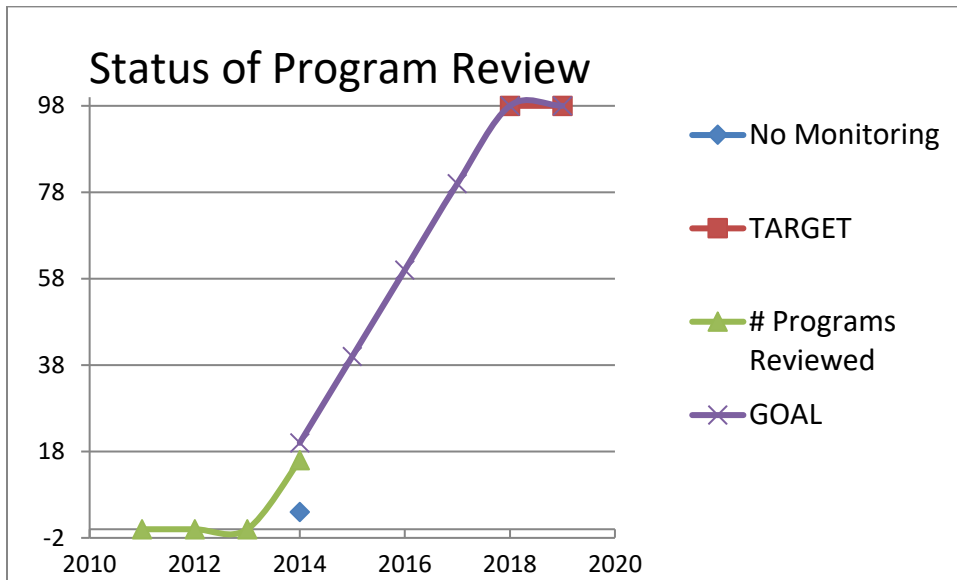
We all value student learning, and set high expectations for the value and effectiveness of our degree program. Just as weighing the baby doesn’t make it grow, program review doesn’t make the program better, but using the information from that review can improve the program.

We do program review because it can help us improve our program, and also because it is an explicit requirement of our institutional accreditation found in Core Component 4.A.1 that “the institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.” But collecting reviews isn’t the end-goal, it is using the “the information gained from assessment to improve student learning” (Core Component 4.B.3).

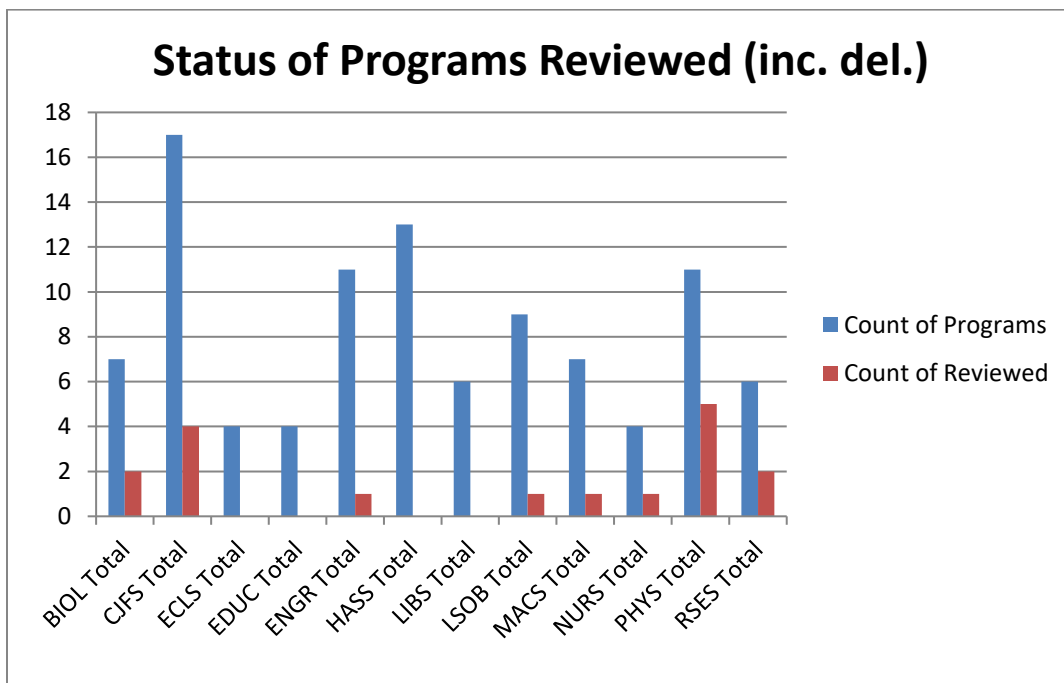
Previously we differentiated between three processes:

- 1) Program Assessment – are students achieving the learning outcomes established for the program? Some outcomes may be met in a class, others may be co-curricular or relate to employability, employer reviews, graduate school admission and completion.
- 2) Program Review – is the program effective in meeting student needs, regional or disciplinary needs, is the program accredited, properly staffed, adequately funded and equipped, and able to respond effectively to internal and external challenges. Program assessment is just one component in program review.
- 3) Program Prioritization – does the university have an appropriate collection of academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs to effectively fulfill our mission. Are there opportunities for new programs, have some programs become less effective or less important due to innovation and change. Program review is one component of prioritization.

The University adopted a Program Review template in October 2013, yet by March 2015 fewer than 17% of all academic programs have submitted faculty-developed reviews of academic programs. Of the 17 program reviews submitted, over half came from two of the twelve schools, and four schools have not submitted any program reviews. The chart below tracks the number of program reviews submitted (green), the number that did not need monitoring reports (blue), the goal for all programs to be reviewed in a five-year cycle (purple) and the target for all programs (red).



The chart below identifies the number of programs per academic school, and the number of programs which that school has reviewed at the time of this report.



It is critical that the university continue to make progress in the completion of meaningful program review, and to use the information collected to improve student learning and achievement. In the fall 2014 the assessment committee will lead a review of the criteria and reporting format used for Program Review with the express goal of reducing the reporting burden while ensuring that evidence is collected to address the accreditation requirements contained within the HLC's Core Components. In addition the university needs to engage in review of all aspects of the university: student support services, the learning environment, etc.