

4-23-1998

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Program Quality Review

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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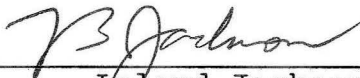
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UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
Kingston, Rhode Island
FACULTY SENATE
BILL
Adopted by the Faculty Senate

TO: President Robert L. Carothers
FROM: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

1. The attached BILL, titled Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Program Quality Review is forwarded for your consideration.
2. The original and two copies for your use are included.
3. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on April 23, 1998.
4. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of Governors, completing the appropriate endorsement below.
5. In accordance with Section 10, paragraph 4 of the Senate's By-Laws, this bill will become effective May 14, 1998, three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; (3) you forward it to the Board of Governors for their approval; or (4) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is forwarded to the Board of Governors, it will not become effective until approved by the Board.

April 24, 1998
(date)


Ieland Jackson
Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate
FROM: President of the University

Returned.

- a. Approved ✓.
- b. Approved subject to final approval by Board of Governors _____.
- c. Disapproved _____.

4/29/98
(date)


President

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
FACULTY SENATE

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE
ON PROGRAM QUALITY REVIEW

April 6, 1998

BACKGROUND:

Present University Manual regulations (see 8.86.10 -8.86.51) prescribe, in extensive detail, procedures by which existing programs at the University are to be reviewed from the standpoint of academic quality. Many faculty and administrators, including some who participated in devising these procedures, have expressed concern and raised criticisms about them. The main criticisms can be summarized as follows: First, the procedures are overly detailed and not adaptable to the wide variety of programs and circumstances found at the University. Further, the procedures are developed too much from the point of view that the primary purpose of program review is to make a decision about whether a program should be continued or discontinued rather than to assess program quality with the aim of making improvements. Hence, programs being reviewed can feel threatened and become defensive, unwilling participants rather than use the review as a productive opportunity.

In the fall of 1995, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, in a meeting with Provost Swan, discussed problems and criticisms that had been voiced about procedures for approval of new programs and for review of existing programs. At the request of the Provost, the Executive Committee agreed to form a special ad hoc sub-committee charged with reviewing and revising both sets of procedures. That sub-committee addressed the new program proposal and review process first and in the spring of 1996 presented and defended a report to the Senate which led to existing University Manual sections 8.85.10 through 8.85.40. Work on revising existing program review procedures was begun, but delayed for a variety of reasons.

In the fall of 1997, the Senate Executive Committee reconstituted the special ad hoc subcommittee and asked it to complete, as soon as possible, the work begun two years earlier. The members of the subcommittee were: Harold Bibb, representing the Graduate School and Graduate Council; Sheila Black Grubman, Faculty Senate Coordinator; Leonard Kahn, Physics, representing the Curricular Affairs Committee; James Kowalski, Computer Science and Philosophy, chair of the subcommittee; Blair Lord, representing the Provost; Anne Veeger, Geology; and Fritz Wenisch, Philosophy, representing the Constitution, By-Laws and University Manual Committee. The recommendations below represent the subcommittee's response to the Executive Committee's request.

Several points regarding the recommendations may be worth noting. First the proposed legislation describes a flexible review process, one that can be tailored to meet needs that may differ from program to program and goals which may change from one review to another. (See proposed 8.86.20-22). The proposed legislation also emphasizes that such reviews are to assess program quality; it removes the issue of

recommendations about program continuance/discontinuance which the Ad Hoc Committee saw as a serious flaw hampering the application and usefulness of the old procedures. (See proposed 8.86.11) In this regard, the Committee is of the view that, while program quality is an important factor in determining whether a program should be continued or discontinued, that recommendation itself should be left to some other venue and not be part of the review and assessment process. Finally, although the Committee at one time intended to make materials generated by the annual departmental report process the basis for much of the program quality review process, some comments that filtered back to us about the non-participation of many units in producing annual reports led us to propose only that this be a possible option. (See proposed 8.86.31)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Program Quality Review recommends:

- I. That existing Sections 8.86.10 - 8.86.40, 8.86.50, and 8.86.51 of the UNIVERSITY MANUAL (see Appendix) be replaced with proposed 8.86.10 - 8.86.50 as shown below.

Proposed 8.86.10 - 8.86.50

8.86.10 Program Quality Review. In this section the term "program" shall be understood to include any curriculum or University sponsored activity requiring the assignment of one or more faculty to serve in a teaching, research, or service capacity and intended to result in the conferral of a certificate or other credential or of an undergraduate or graduate degree.

8.86.11 The primary purpose of program quality review shall be to assess the academic quality of a program with a view to planning, making recommendations, and setting goals for the future.

8.86.12 The Chair of the Graduate Council, the Chair of the Curricular Affairs Committee, and the Vice Chair of the Faculty Senate shall have general responsibility for determining a program review cycle conforming to the guidelines specified below, for adjusting that schedule if necessary, and for carrying out other oversight functions of the University's program quality review process. This includes notifying affected parties and publishing schedules of reviews to allow effective planning and workload assignment for the review. This group shall meet at least once each year, early in the fall semester, and as often as necessary to accomplish their assigned responsibilities.

8.86.13 In general, programs should be reviewed at least every seventh year, that is, reviews should be scheduled so that the completion date of successive reviews for a given program should be no more than seven years apart. Programs may be reviewed after an interval of less than this at the mutual agreement of the Provost and the chair or person responsible for the program.

8.86.14 In consultation with the Provost, the group specified in 8.86.12 may schedule a number of related programs to be reviewed simultaneously and may make special arrangements to this end.

8.86.20 Program Review Steering Committees. Each program identified for review shall have its own three member Program Review Steering Committee appointed to oversee and coordinate the review of that specific program. The Provost shall appoint one person to the committee, the program being reviewed shall appoint one person to the committee, and the third person shall be an individual agreed upon by both the Provost and the program. The Provost's appointee shall chair the committee.

8.86.21 A basic responsibility of a Program Review Steering Committee for a particular program shall be to meet with the members of that program in order to design and determine the specific procedures and formats that will be followed in the current review. General guidelines for reviews are given below, but adjustments or modifications to them can be recommended by a Program Review Steering Committee. For example, the Program Review Steering Committee may decide that outside reviewers should be consulted in a particular review or that a recent accreditation review document prepared by the program can serve as the primary component of the current review.

8.86.22 Each Program Review Steering Committee shall prepare a brief program review plan in consultation with members of the program and submit it to the Provost for approval. If the program review plan contains a recommendation to use outside reviewers in a program review, a mechanism for selecting them shall also be included as part of the plan. An approved plan shall be the basis for a specific program review. This plan should normally be submitted and approved in the semester prior to the beginning of the review. The review process itself normally shall extend over the two semesters of an academic year, with a report being submitted to the Provost in the spring semester.

8.86.23 During the course of the review and during the formulation of the report, a Program Review Steering Committee shall help coordinate the steps of the review, shall assist in the formulation of the report, and shall check it for accuracy, comprehensiveness, and adequacy.

8.86.30 Report. In general terms, the report prepared as a result of a program quality review should have three basic parts: a descriptive section; an evaluative section; and a recommendations section. These are described in sections 8.86.31-33 below.

8.86.31 Description. The descriptive section may be comprised largely of departmental material produced on an annual basis such as past annual reports, supplemented by curricular proposals submitted since the last review, updated vitae of all tenure-track faculty members and other personnel, other than graduate assistants teaching on a part-time and/or non-continuing basis, the latest accreditation report, if applicable, and such

other documentation as the department considers pertinent. The Program Review Steering Committee shall determine what specific information may be used or must be included in the descriptive section. (see, 8.86.21).

8.86.32 Evaluation. The members of the program, in cooperation with their Program Review Steering Committee, shall use the information contained in the descriptive section to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program including a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the teaching, research, service, and/or other creative accomplishments of the faculty.

8.86.33 Recommendations. On the basis of the assessments made in the evaluative section, the members of the program, in cooperation with their Program Review Steering Committee and the Dean or academic administrator to whom the program director or chair reports shall develop a plan to help direct the future efforts of the program. The plan should include: goals, steps to be taken to achieve those goals, and a timetable.

8.86.40 Presentation of the Report. The Steering Committee for each review, the program director or chair, and the Dean or academic administrator to whom the program director or chair reports shall meet with the Provost to present and explain the report, and to discuss the recommendations made in the report. As soon as feasible, but no longer than ninety calendar days following this meeting, the Provost shall provide the program director or chair and the Dean or academic administrator to whom the program director or chair reports with a written response to the report and the meeting including what support can be expected to help implement recommendations made in the report or subsequently agreed to.

8.86.41 In general, the written report submitted to the Provost as a result of the program review process shall be made available upon request to any interested parties. Any individual or group of standing in a particular program review may request that some portions of the report, especially those relating to specific personnel issues, not be made public. The Provost shall have the final authority to decide whether or not to withhold any portions of the report from public distribution.

8.86.50 Follow-Up. Each Steering Committee, in consultation with the Provost, the Dean or academic administrator to whom the program director or chair reports and the program director or chair, shall determine the length of a follow-up period. This period, usually two years, should allow for implementation of at least some of the recommendations made in the report or subsequently agreed to as a result of discussions with the Provost. At the end of the follow-up period, the Provost, the program director or chair, the Dean or academic administrator to whom the program director or chair reports and such members of the Program Review Steering Committee as are available, will review the recommendations and assess progress. Further recommendations, including recommendations to schedule subsequent follow-up meeting(s) may be negotiated at this time.

- II. That the Constitution, By-Laws, and University Manual Committee be charged with finding a suitable renumbering of existing Manual sections 8.86.41 - 8.86.44 (see Appendix).

APPENDIX

EXISTING SECTIONS 8.86.10-8.86.51 of the UNIVERSITY MANUAL

8.86.10 Review of Existing Programs. The program review cycle shall consist of a seven-year period in which all degree-granting departments and programs at the University will undergo a comprehensive review and evaluation. The Program Review Committee shall establish a schedule for review, inform departments to be reviewed a calendar year in advance of their scheduled review, and at that time apprise departments of the data needed for the review, provide departments to be reviewed with guidelines for completing the review, and provide a set of criteria that will be used by the Committee in the review.

8.86.11 Procedure for Completing the Report of the Review. Upon completion of its draft Report of the Review of the Department, the committee shall forward the draft to the department chair for the correction of any errors of fact. The revised final Report will be sent initially to the chair of the department and the appropriate college dean, each of whom shall have ten working days to provide a written response to the Report. Any written responses by the department and the dean shall be appended to the final Report, and shall be sent to the Provost as part of the Report. Information copies of the final Report, including responses from the dean and chair, will be forwarded to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the dean and the department chair. Within forty-five days of the beginning of the semester following that in which the Report is submitted, the Provost shall indicate, in writing, to the departmental chair and the college dean the actions to be taken on the "Recommendations" contained in the Report.

8.86.20 Data Collection. Immediately prior to being reviewed by the Program Review Committee, the Department or Program to be reviewed will compile a Departmental Overview that will contain the information included in sections 8.86.21-8.86.23.

8.86.21 As part of the Departmental Overview, the department will compile data for the Program Review Committee's use according to the following general category and guidelines:

- a. A statement detailing and explaining the Department's identity and objectives. The statement should include an assessment of strengths and weaknesses, needs and concerns, short-range and long-range goals, and means to attain these goals. This statement should include a narrative noting areas of research, teaching, and public service in which the Department regards itself as especially outstanding, and areas of research, teaching, or public service which the department would like to improve, establish or eliminate.

- b. A statement detailing and explaining the Department's affirmative action efforts. This statement should include a profile of the Department's racial, ethnic and gender diversity, among faculty, staff, undergraduate majors and graduate students. As well, the statement should explain how the Department integrates affirmative action measures in the recruitment of faculty, staff and students. It should also specify the Department's affirmative action goals with regards to students, staff and faculty for the next five years.
- c. A statement indicating ways in which the Department is involved in joint or collaborative instructional, research and service efforts with other programs and faculty at URI and, if appropriate, at other institutions and entities.
- d. A curriculum vitae for each faculty member of the Department involved in graduate and/or undergraduate instruction, including a statement of areas of specialization, courses taught, current research activities, publications and other scholarly achievements, and all additional academic achievements which indicate a faculty member's professional stature. The faculty curriculum vitae may be limited to recent (e.g. the most recent five years) activities and publications.
- e. A listing of courses taught during the past five years with identification of teachers of those courses along with their status (e.g., regular faculty, adjunct faculty, post-doctoral fellow, visiting faculty, teaching assistant, etc.). Maximum, minimum and typical teaching loads should be detailed, and Faculty Expectation Reports should be included. As well, a description of the procedures used to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and course offerings should be included.
- f. A separate list by faculty rank of: (1) the number and type (e.g., authored book, edited book, refereed publication, book review, etc.) of publications during the last five years; (2) current research funding; and (3) significant honors of all members of the faculty.
- g. A statement about special workload assignments in lieu of formal instruction (e.g. University College advisor, Graduate Studies Director, etc.).
- h. A statement of the ways in which the Department supports students, faculty, and staff who provide service to the national, state, local, university and professional communities.
- i. A statement about the adequacy of equipment and support services for instruction, research and service (e.g. computers, audio-visual equipment and services, building maintenance, custodial services, etc.). The statement

should contain a description of facilities and resources available for (1) instruction; (2) faculty research; (3) undergraduate and graduate student research. If facilities and resources are deemed to be inadequate, a statement of explanation should be included. A separate statement assessing and evaluating the physical space occupied by the Department should also be included.

- j. Statistical information that includes the number of students matriculated in the Department, the annual number of graduates, and student/teacher ratio for the past five years. Data on students should be compiled and reported on the basis of the Registrar's semi-annual (October 15, April 15) reports. The Office of Institutional Planning can assist in compiling these and other data.
- k. Information indicating Departmental policies or practices that encourage student participation, that allow for student-faculty interchange and individualized instruction, or that demonstrate innovative approaches to instruction and evaluation.
- l. Details on any academic credit for work done off campus, such as internships or clinical practicum.
- m. Details of Departmental orientation, guidance, and counseling services provided to students.
- n. A statement about the adequacy of URI libraries in supporting Departmental programs and research.
- o. A statement on Departmental policies and procedures regarding faculty recruitment, retention, promotion and tenure.

8.86.22 In addition to compiling general data as outlined in 8.86.21, the Department or Program to be reviewed will compile data for the Committee's use on undergraduate programs, if appropriate, according to the following guidelines:

- a. A statement outlining the basic aims and purposes of undergraduate programs including a description of intended changes in the scope and/or direction of undergraduate programs, (e.g., new degrees, shifts in organization, new instructional techniques, etc.).
- b. A statement of degrees offered, program options available and requirements necessary for graduation.
- c. Departmental or College policies and specific criteria governing the recruitment, admission, and evaluation of students.
- d. Information indicating the past academic performance of students entering the Department and the academic performance of students enrolled in the Department.

- e. Information regarding the demand for undergraduate programs as indicated, for example, by enrollment trends, employment opportunities for graduates in specific fields, prospective students of high ability, etc.
- f. Information indicating the placement of students following graduation (e.g., graduate and professional school, private and public sector employment, Peace Corps/Vista, etc.).
- g. A statement concerning: (1) contributions, if any, to the General Education and Honors Programs, or other non-departmental programs; (2) courses offered by the Department that are required by other departments and programs of their majors, identifying courses, requiring departments, and an assessment of the Department's ability to deliver such courses; (3) courses offered by other departments and programs required of majors in the Department, identifying such courses and an assessment of the services provided to the Department by such courses.

8.86.23 In addition to compiling data as outlined in sections 8.86.21 and 8.26.22, the Department or Program to be reviewed will compile data for the Committee's use on graduate programs, if appropriate, according to the following guidelines:

- a. A statement outlining the basic aims and purposes of the graduate program including a statement of intended changes in the scope and/or direction of graduate programs (e.g., new degrees, shifts in organization new areas of research specialization, etc.).
- b. A statement of all degrees, degree requirements, and program specialities in the department.
- c. Samples of typical Masters and Doctoral degree programs (copies of actual Programs of Study could be used for this purpose). Sample programs should be representative of the areas of specialization in the Department.
- d. A statement of methods employed in recruiting, admitting, and evaluating graduate students. Specific criteria used in recommending admission of students should be described.
- e. Information indicating the quality of graduate students admitted to the program to include undergraduate majors, undergraduate (and if applicable, graduate) GPA, scores of examinations (GRE, Advanced GRE, MAT, GMAT), if examinations are used in the admission process.
- f. Information pertaining to numbers of applicants to and matriculants in graduate programs, by degree, for the past five years. Data should indicate numbers and percentages of women and minority students, and full-time or part-time or continuing registration students.

- g. Information pertaining to the number of degrees, by degree program, awarded in the past five years, and the average time to completion for recipients of Masters and Ph.D. degrees. Assistance in compiling these data can be obtained from the Office of Institutional Research and The Graduate School.
- h. A statement on teaching and other duties required of all graduate assistants in the department.
- i. Data on present and projected employment opportunities for graduate degree recipients, if available. Sources of information should be documented.
- j. Information indicating the placement of graduates within the past five years.
- k. A list of all theses and dissertations completed within the five years immediately preceding the year of the review, by year, listing student, title of the thesis or dissertation, and major professor.

8.86.30 Identification of Programs for In-Depth Reviews. Examples of factors which might motivate the Program Review Committee to conduct an in-depth review of a program are:

- a. Lack of relevance to the mission of the University as defined in 8.86.41.
- b. Indications of low cost-effectiveness based on one or more of the following:
 - 1. High cost of a program (relative to similar programs) or substantial increase in cost to the University (e.g. because of "drying up" of outside funding);
 - 2. Small number of students served by a program or significant decline in students served (percentage of decline relative to other programs);
 - 3. Significant decline in employment opportunities for graduates from the program or poor record of placing graduates from the program;
 - 4. Low student-faculty ratio or significant decrease in student-faculty ratio compared to similar programs;
 - 5. Duplication with other nearby institutions.
- c. Request for review by a program's director or the appropriate dean.

A judgment that a program is to be reviewed is not to be construed as prejudicing its elimination, reduction, reassignment or redesign. If, because of some of the reasons cited above, or because of other reasons, the Program Review Committee deems a review of a given

program desirable, the question of elimination, reduction, expansion or the like shall be considered, taking into account the data maintained on the program as well as data maintained on similar programs.

8.86.40 In-Depth Reviews. The Program Review Committee (see sections 5.67.10-11) shall appoint a subcommittee for each program identified for an in-depth review. Each subcommittee shall be chaired by a member of the parent committee. Other members of the subcommittee need not be members of the Program Review Committee. Each subcommittee shall report its findings to the Program Review Committee. The four criteria by which programs are to be judged, in order of importance, are 1) centrality to the mission of the University of Rhode Island (8.86.41); 2) contribution to the three main responsibilities of the University (8.86.42); 3) relationship to developmental plans (8.86.43); and 4) cost/effectiveness considerations (8.86.44). It should be noted that although cost/effectiveness considerations shall be of utmost importance in identifying programs for in-depth review, the other three criteria shall be given greater weight in arriving at the final recommendations.

8.86.41 Of the criteria according to which programs are to be judged, the first--centrality to the mission of the University of Rhode Island--is of major importance. The mission of the University of Rhode Island is embodied in its name and consists of two components -- one being those responsibilities that distinguish it as a University (not a program shall be considered appropriate to the mission of U.R.I. as a University to the extent to which it fits one of the following descriptions:

- a. the program constitutes a theoretical pursuit;
- b. the program contains many aspects of practical application, but these aspects require a strong theoretical foundation (e.g. certain professional programs, applied fine arts, etc.);
- c. the program provides some general skills needed for students to be able to engage in theoretical pursuits or to understand the theoretical foundations of practical aspects of other programs. Taking into consideration the present situation within higher education, a university must, in this context, also provide skills which are judged by some to be remedial in nature.

A program may be considered appropriate to the mission of U.R.I. as an institution of higher learning of Rhode Island to the extent it fits one of the following descriptions.

- a. the program is of general or universal interest or applicability -- one that typically exists at all quality universities;
- b. the program is in keeping with the mission of a land-grant institution (e.g. agricultural experiment station, cooperative extension program);

- c. the program has special regional or local relevance because of its relationship to social/demographic characteristics of the geographical area, unique collaborative opportunities with institutions or organizations in the area, or present and projected employment opportunities or needs of the area.

8.86.42 A second criterion of major importance is the extent to which the program contributes to the University's fulfillment of its three main responsibilities: to provide the opportunity for education at the undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels; to conduct research and other scholarly and creative activities; and to serve the people of the state by making knowledge, information, and expertise available to individuals, to other educational organizations, and to business, industry, and government. It is envisioned that review of a program with respect to this criterion will be the most time-consuming and thorough-going component of the review process. In carrying out this aspect of its task, the subcommittee reviewing an identified program shall interview faculty, students and staff involved in the program, program directors, department chairpersons, and the appropriate dean. The committee shall examine the record of opportunities and accomplishments that derive from the program including examination of the following:

- a. What opportunities does the program make available which are not otherwise available to the people of the state?
- b. How does program effectiveness measure up based on national reputation, peer evaluation, accreditation reviews, and test scores of program graduates on licensing exams, graduate record exams, etc.?
- c. How much research support is obtained by faculty associated with the program? What is the quality and quantity of scholarly activity, both sponsored and unsponsored, in terms of national reputation and other measures?
- d. What special University, community, state services are provided by faculty or students associated with the program?

8.86.43 A third criterion of major importance is the relationship of the program to developmental plans of the University. Is the program inside or outside the areas where greater emphasis is envisioned?

8.86.44 A fourth set of criteria related to cost/effectiveness considerations, of less importance than the three defined in paragraphs 8.86.41-43, shall include the following:

- a. How does the program compare with others based on cost/revenue relationships (overall cost and income and per student)?
- b. How does the program compare with others based on numbers of students served (majors, etc.)?
- c. How does the program compare with others considering student-faculty ratio?

- d. How does the program compare with others in terms of employment opportunities and actual placement of graduates?
- e. Are there special facilities or equipment needed or uniquely available for the program?

This set of criteria shall be applied uniformly to all programs as far as such criteria are relevant.

8.86.50 Recommendations. It shall not be assumed that each program review cycle shall necessarily result in at least one program being recommended for reductions or elimination. If the Program Review Committee (see sections 5.67.10-11) arrives at a conclusion that a program reviewed is to be redesigned, reassigned, or eliminated, the Committee shall report its recommendations to the Curricular Affairs Committee, Council for Research or the Graduate Council as appropriate and for information to the appropriate dean, college committee, department chairperson and/or director. A representative of the Program Review Committee shall be present during the deliberations of the designated committees and the Faculty Senate when the recommendations are under review. The designated committee shall review the recommendations, express its opinion on the recommendations and forward recommendations and opinions to the Faculty Senate within three months. The recommendations shall be accompanied by a statement of cost reductions to be achieved by such program adjustments as well as a statement of disadvantages to the University connected with the proposed change in the status of the program. The recommendations shall be supported by a clear statement of the reasons, as to why the committee judges that the program under review should be changed or terminated as recommended. Analogous procedures shall apply if the committee deems appropriate a significant reduction in scope of a program except that, if no part of a program is to be eliminated (e.g. if only a lesser frequency of offerings of given courses is recommended), the recommendations shall be addressed to the appropriate administrative channels. If the recommendations from the committee call for elimination or significant reductions in a program, the committee's report should address the following matters:

- a. What accommodations should be made with respect to tenured and non-tenured faculty or other employees?
- b. What are the implications of program curtailment for bargaining unit relationships?
- c. What provisions are to be made for currently enrolled students?

8.86.51 Nothing in 8.86.10-8.86.50 shall prohibit college or university committees or administrative officials from making recommendations directly to the appropriate Senate committees without prior review and recommendation by the Program Review Committee.