

## Revised Process for Program Planning, Review, and Approval in the UW System

*Following approval by the Board of Regents in August 2012, the process detailed below replaces the previous process contained in ACIS 1.0 (Revised June 2010), the UW System's policy statement on academic program planning, review, and approval.*

Each University of Wisconsin System institution has its own internal processes for developing, approving, and reviewing new degree programs. The policies outlined in this document are intended to guide degree program approval as determined by the UW System on behalf of the System Board of Regents.

The process for program approval includes: 1) a pre-authorization phase in which the institution submits a Notice of Intent; 2) an authorization phase in which the institution submits a brief proposal and a Letter of Commitment from the proposing institution's Chancellor, Provost, or specified designees to the UW System President for BOR approval; and 3) an implementation phase in which the institution will notify the Associate Vice President (AVP) of the UW System Administration Office of Academic, Faculty, and Global Programs Affairs or its successor when it will implement the new program.

Good practice dictates that UW institutional leaders informally update the AFGP about nascent and emerging ideas for new programs before planning is well advanced to allow for consultation and exchange of information that may be relevant to the early planning process. Provosts or specified designees will have an opportunity to provide this information in the annual program planning report that is provided to UW System Administration. Alternatively, at any time, provosts or specified designees are invited to consult informally with AFGP on new program planning.

### I. Pre-Authorization: Notice of Intent

#### **Audience**

The intended audience for the Notice of Intent is UW chancellors, provosts and their staff members, as well as UWSA administrators and staff.

#### **Content/Structure of the Notice of Intent**

This public document should be no longer than two pages and include the following information:

- A. Name of proposed degree, institutional setting, mode of delivery, and institutional contact information. Information on other required approvals to offer the program beyond the BOR (such as accreditation bodies, including the Higher Learning Commission) should be included.
- B. Clear statement on how the program fits with institutional mission, strategic plan, and existing program array.

- C. Program description.
- D. Need for program (brief description of programs in the context of local, regional and systemwide programs).

**Process**

- A. After completing preliminary institutional planning processes, as required, the proposing institution's Chancellor, Provost, or specified designees will send the Notice of Intent to the AVP of AFGP and to the provosts or specified designees at all UW System institutions.
- B. Institutions will have 10 working days to review the Notice of Intent and respond to the proposing institution's Provost or specified designees with the following:
  - 1. Opportunities for potential collaboration.
  - 2. Serious concerns, including questions of duplication.
  - 3. General comments regarding other aspects, such as the compatibility of the proposed program with the institution's mission.
- C. Institutions may request from the proposing institution's Provost or specified designees additional time to respond, typically no longer than 10 working days. Concurrent with the institutional review, the AVP of AFGP will have 10 working days to conduct a review of the Notice of Intent focusing on overall systemwide program array and other matters in accordance with BOR and UWSA policy (see attached "Components of UWSA Program Array Management"). A response to the Notice of Intent will be shared with the proposing institution's Provost or specified designees and the Senior Vice President of the UW System Office of Academic and Student Affairs.
- D. At the end of the comment period, the proposing institution's Provost or specified designees will compile all responses and forward them to the AVP of AFGP and to the provosts or specified designees at all UW institutions.
  - 1. If an institution has not responded with comments or concerns by the end of the comment period, this will be interpreted to mean that it has no serious concerns or issues.
  - 2. If there are concerns, issues, or opportunities for collaboration, within 20 working days, the proposing institution's Provost or specified designees will consult with those institutions raising them, and submit a document to the AVP of AFGP that outlines how the concerns, issues, or opportunities for collaboration will be addressed.
    - a. If any institution judges that the concerns, issues, or opportunities for collaboration are not adequately addressed, that party will notify the proposing institution's Provost or specified designees and the AVP of AFGP, and request mediation by the AVP of AFGP. The issue will be resolved within 10 working days.

- E. If no mediation is requested, or after the mediation period, the AVP of AFGP will approve or deny the request for pre-authorization within 10 working days, following receipt of comments. The pre-authorization will expire after five years.
  - 1. In the event that a request for pre-authorization is denied, the institution may appeal to the Senior Vice President of the UW System Office of Academic and Student Affairs. The decision of the Senior Vice President is final.

## II. Authorization

### Audience

The intended audience for the Authorization is the members of the BOR, administrators, and other interested parties. The use of technical jargon should be minimized and acronyms should be avoided. The proposing institution's Provost or specified designees will submit the authorization document to the AVP of AFGP for review.

### Content/Structure

The proposal, no longer than 10 pages in length, will address foundational elements: who, what, where, when, and why. The document should be clearly written to convey the purpose and need for the proposed program; the benefits of the program to the institution; the ability of the institution to carry out the program; and the likely value to, and impact on, students and the residents of Wisconsin.

A. **Abstract:** A description of the proposed program in 50 words or less.

B. **Program Identification:**

- 1. Institution name
- 2. Title of proposed program
- 3. Degree/major designation
- 4. Mode of delivery
- 5. Single institution or collaboration
- 6. Projected enrollment by year five of the program
- 7. Tuition structure (i.e., standard tuition, differential tuition, etc.)
- 8. Department or functional equivalent
- 9. College, School, or functional equivalent
- 10. Proposed date of implementation

C. **Introduction:**

- 1. Why is the program being proposed? What is its relation to the institution's mission?
- 2. How does it fit into the institution's overall strategic plan?
- 3. Do current students need or want the program?

4. Does market research indicate demand?
5. How does the program represent emerging knowledge, or new directions in professions and disciplines?

D. ***Description of Program:***

1. Describe the general structure of the program, including:
  - a. The ways in which the program fits into the institutional program array and academic plan.
  - b. The extent to which the program is duplicative of existing programs in the University of Wisconsin System.
  - c. The collaborative nature of the program, if appropriate, including specific institutional responsibilities.
  - d. The ways in which the program prepares students through diverse elements in the curriculum for an integrated and multicultural society (may include inclusion of diversity issues in the curriculum or other approaches).
2. Explain briefly program's plan for assessing student learning outcomes, including:
  - a. Specifying what students will know and be able to do as a result of completing the program.
  - b. How the program will continuously assess (using both direct and indirect assessment measures) the extent to which the learning outcomes are accomplished.
3. Describe the programmatic curriculum, including:
  - a. How the curriculum is structured (include web links to courses, prerequisites, and other programmatic components).
  - b. Projected time to degree
4. Summarize the program review process, including:
  - a. How and when the program will be reviewed by the institution.
  - b. A discussion of what aspects will be evaluated to determine the quality of the program.
  - c. How the review will provide consideration to equity and inclusive excellence, as appropriate.
  - d. Need for external accreditation.

E. ***Institutional Commitment:***

A Letter of Commitment submitted with all accompanying documents (i.e., the authorization materials) from the proposing institution's or institutions' Provost(s) to the President of the UW System should affirm that:

1. the program has been designed to meet the institution's definition and standards of quality and to make a meaningful contribution to the institution's overall academic plan and program array.
2. there is institution-wide support for the program, including faculty governance approval.
3. the necessary financial and human resources are in place and/or have been committed to implement and sustain the program.

4. program evaluations are in place.

### **Recommendation**

The AVP of AFGP will notify the proposing institution's Provost and Chancellor of the President's decision whether or not to recommend the proposed program to the BOR for approval.

### **Approval**

- A. The BOR will decide whether or not to authorize the program. The BOR's policies can be found at <http://www.wisconsin.edu/bor/policies/rpd/>.

## **III. Implementation Process**

The proposing institution's Provost will notify the AVP of AFGP of the implementation date for the approved program. Authorizations will expire five years after the date of BOR approval.

## **IV. Institutional Quality Control**

The UW faculty, with oversight by deans, provosts, chancellors, and higher education accreditation agencies, are responsible for developing, implementing, and reviewing high-quality degree offerings in ways that leverage academic strengths and respond to emerging workplace and societal needs. Institutions will assist the BOR in meeting its statutory requirement for assuring academic quality by demonstrating commitment to the following practices:

- A. Establish and maintain a website with the institution's definitions of and standards for quality in academic programming; and the program planning and review process, including general information on how program evaluation and assessment of student learning are conducted (where applicable, through evaluation by external accreditation agencies).
- B. Submit a brief report to the AVP of AFGP about the results of the first institutional or external review of new academic programs. This report is provided in the context of the annual institutional report on program planning and review to UWSA. If the external or institutional review bodies identify areas of concern, the AVP of AFGP will review the institution's action plan for addressing them.