Program Prioritization Report

This report will outline the process taken in prioritizing programs at College of Micronesia-FSM, the recommendations from the working group and suggestions for improving the overall prioritization process.

ADOPTION OF THE PROCESS

Faculty workshop fall August 5, 2011 – shared webinar, "Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services" with presenters Robert Dickeson, Victoria Payseur, and Richard Staisloff. Initial reaction was that watching the webinar was a waste of time and not related to the situation at the college.

President's Retreat August 24, 2011 – DAP and DCTE shared a Powerpoint presentation on program prioritization with the college community. The participants were then asked to rate the ten criteria for prioritizing programs suggested by Dickeson from most important to least important using a paired comparison process. The ten criteria are:
1. External demand for the program
2. Quality of outcomes
3. Size, scope and productivity of the program
4. Impact, justification and overall essentiality of the program
5. Costs and other expenses associated with the program
6. Internal demand for the program
7. Revenue and other resources generated by the program
8. History, development, and expectations of the program
9. Quality of program inputs and processes
10. Opportunity analysis of the program

The college selected the following 5 as the most important:
1. Quality of outcomes
2. Impact, justification and overall essentiality of the program
3. Revenue and other resources generated by the program
4. External demand for the program
5. Quality of program inputs and processes

The Acting VPIA/DAP, DCTE, and Director of IRPO prepared a proposal outlining a process for program prioritization at COM-FSM based on Robert Dickeson's work "Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services" (2010). This proposal asked Curriculum Committee to identify which of the ten criteria to use, data sources, how to rate the criteria selected, again rank the criteria in order of importance and how to classify programs once they are reviewed such as the top xx percentile, or top 3rd, middle 3rd, etc. The Curriculum and Assessment Committee was asked to rank the ten criteria again since the presentation at the President's Retreat was general and didn't allow time for discussion or questions on each of the ten criteria.

Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CAC) October 17, 2011 – The committee reviewed the proposal for program prioritization. There were still concerns about data being available and if the process would actually lead to improvement. The proposal was not adopted at this meeting, but sent for electronic vote.

October 19, 2011 – CAC recommended the proposed process for program prioritization. The recommendation includes using all ten criteria and all the data sources suggested.

The Acting VPIA, DCTE and Director of IRPO began putting together the data identified in the proposal recommended on October 19. Data collection has been a challenge. The SIS has inaccurate information or the way the information is tracked creates problems. An example is graduation rates. Students are not counted as graduated, unless they pay the graduation fee. A student may have finished all other requirements except the fee. Finally, there is no way to track students who transfer to different majors or where the students go after leaving the College.

November 18, 2011 – CAC recommended a ranking for the ten criteria and using Likert scales to rate program information given for each of the ten criteria. The ranking of the ten criteria by CAC is:

1. Quality of outcomes
2. Impact, justification and overall essentiality of the program
3. Size, scope and productivity of the program
4. External demand for the program
5. Internal demand for the program
6. Revenue and other resources generated by the program
7. Costs and other expenses associated with the program
8. History, development, and expectations of the program
9. Quality of program inputs and processes
10. Opportunity analysis of the program

IMPLEMETATION OF PROCESS

November 29, 2011 - The Acting VPIA sent a memo to the Interim President requesting the appointment of the initial group to begin the prioritization process. This group will review the program reviews submitted to CAC using the data provided in the program reviews and data generated by IRPO such as enrollment, retention, and graduation rates. This group is the ICs, DAP, DCTE, Division Chairs, Registrar, Director of Financial Aid, a representative from the Business Office, Director of Information Technology and Director of Facilities and Maintenance. The Interim President approved the appointment of these people to the review group on Dec. 1, 2011.

January 12, 2012, IRPO Director, Director of Academic Programs, Director of Career and Tech. Education and the VPIA met to decide how to proceed with the process. The Director of IRPO, DAP and DCTE are collecting the data, preparing a rating form for each program review and a tally sheet for each programs ratings. This process will be presented at the Micronesian

Leadership Conference Feb. 1 – 3, to gather comments from the outside stakeholders on programs at the College. Once this information is gathered and put in an easy to read format, the group appointed by the Interim President will meet to make the initial recommendations. The target date is mid-February.

Feb. 6 & 7, Training and face-to-face ratings for AA degrees. The following people attended the two-day training.

- Lourdes Roboman, Yap Campus Director (first day)
- Kalwin Kephas, Kosrae Campus Director
- Magdalena Hallers, Education Division Chair
- Paul Dacanay, Health Science Division Chair
- Rafael Pulmano, Business Instructor (first day)
- Joseph Felix Jr., Business Division Chair (second day)
- Snyther Biza, Math/Science Division Chair
- Nena Mike, Instructional Coordinator, Kosrae
- Debra Perman, Business/HTM Division Chair
- Resida Keller, Languages & Literature Division Chair
- Delihna Ehmes, Social Science Division Chair
- Kind Kanto, Instructional Coordinator, Chuuk
- Mariano Marcus, Chuuk Campus Director (first day)
- Francisco Mendiola, Dir. of Facilities and Maintenance
- Grilly Jack, Dir. Career and Tech. Education
- Gardner Edgar, Trade & Tech. Division Chair
- Maria Dison, Acting Campus Dir/Instructional Coordinator Pohnpei
- Karen Simion, Dir. Academic Programs.

Not in attendance were representatives from the Business Office, Admission Office, Financial Aid Office, and IT department.

The first day of the training consisted of defining the purpose of program prioritization, the process, why each one of the working group members was selected, and reviewing the ten criteria used for ranking each program and the data sources for each criterion. The working group revised the rubric so that each criterion was rated on a 3 point scale (5, 3, or 1) and that each rating be multiplied by a number to reflect the importance of each criterion. The criteria were ranked and listed in order of importance. Therefore, criterion 1 will be multiplied by 10, criterion 2 will be multiplied by 9, criterion 3 will be multiplied by 8 and so on down the line so that criterion 10 will be multiplied by 1. Jimmy Hicks, Director of Institutional Research and Planning presented the data available for the group to refer to and background information on errors in the data. The Student Information System (SIS) was developed several years ago and data before that time was imported into SIS without making corrections. Data from the 1990's tends to be less accurate than the more current data, 2007 to the present. The Dir. of IRPO informed the group that they will have to establish benchmarks for the program prioritization process as well as analyze what the data is telling.

On the second day, the group completed rating the Liberal Arts program. The group decided to use this program as a program from which to compare all other programs. Comments will be

added to the rating sheet so that the next group to look at the recommendations will have an idea of the discussions that went into each rating. The also devised a formula for figuring cost of a program for purposes of comparison. Number of credits in the major courses x cost per credit x 10 (the number of students to run a course) = _____cost of the program. If there are other unusual expenses associated with the program such as the $100 lab fee for SCUBA, extensive lab supplies because the program has several required labs, special equipment such as the simulation patients for the nursing program, etc. will be added in after figuring the cost using the aforementioned formula. Credits generated by major will be based on 2010 and 2011 data because in 2009, the College still had General Studies. Many students who didn't place into degree program selected General Studies as a certificate. In 2010, ACE was implemented which replaced General Studies. ACE students declare and actual degree major so the data is different in 2010 and 2011.

The plan is for the group to continue rating programs by working individually, posting ratings and comments on a designated wiki page and then conferencing on Thursdays at 1:30pm, to discuss and settle differences in the ratings. Once all programs have a rating, the group will divide them into the top third, the middle third and the lower third for priorities. The recommendations will be formalized in a report and sent to the Planning and Resource Committee for review and recommendation. The PRC will send its recommendation to the Cabinet, and from the Cabinet to the BOR for final approval. Let it be noted that the process for preparing the set of recommendations is extremely rushed. At a minimum the process should take 6 months. We are trying to finish this in 1 month. The working group has expressed deep concern over making major decisions for the future of the College in such a manor with these recommendations forming basis for integration of all master plans.

First teleconference is scheduled for Feb. 16, 2012, at 1:30 in the President's Conference Room. Each member of the group is to have rated each program against the ten criteria. Very few members of the group had ranked the programs against the criteria. A new deadline of Feb. 20 was set for turning in all rankings. A meeting to determine priorities and recommendations was set for Tuesday, Feb. 21, beginning at 8:00 am and ending when the work is done.

February 20, Joseph Felix Jr., Magdalena Hallers, Paul Dacanay, Resida Keller, Snyther Biza, Debra Perman, Gardner Edgar, Nena Mike, Kind Kanto, Joy Guarin, Joey Oducado, Eddie Haleyalig, Grilly Jack and Karen Simion submitted rankings of most programs by noon. The DAP prepared the raw data and sent to Joey Oducado who will determine the frequency distribution for each criteria of each program. The formula used was:

$$\Sigma fX / \Sigma f \text{ Where F=Frequency, X=Midpoint}$$

These numbers will be used to calculate the final score of each criteria as determined at the training on Feb. 6 & 7 (criteria #1 x 10, criteria #2 x 9, criteria #8 x 8…) since criteria were ranked in order of importance. A final overall score will be assigned to each program. This will help us determine which programs fall in the top third, the middle third and the lower third. Finally, recommendations will be written based on these findings and comments from CAC as well as working group members. (Ratings and comments for each program are attached as well as a summary of the final ratings and the ranking of the programs into top third, middle third and lower third.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the working group now represent Kosrae Campus, Chuuk Campus, Yap Campus, Pohnpei Campus, the Business Office, Financial Aid Office, Admission Office and National Campus. The group ranked the programs reviewed into three groups. The group rated as performing the highest at the College are:

- Liberal Arts
- Third Year Cert. in Teacher Preparation
- Pre-Teacher Preparation
- Micronesian Studies
- Business Administration
- Marine Science
- Telecommunications Technology
- Computer Information Systems

These programs are now the key programs at the College.

The second group of programs are:
- Health Career Opportunity Program
- Agriculture and Food Technology
- Public Health Training Program
- Building Technology
- Electronics Technology
- Trial Counselor
- Hospitality and Tourism Management
- Achieving College Excellence
- Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
- Third Year Accounting

The final group rated as the weakest programs are:
- Secretarial Science
- Building Maintenance
- Cabinet Making
- Carpentry
- Small Engine Repair
- Agriculture & Natural Resources (AS)
- Career Education – Motor Vehicle Mechanic
- Third Year General Business

1. All certificate programs in the weakest group will not admit new students in fall 2012. The faculty of these programs will concentrate on graduating all currently enrolled

students by spring of 2013. At the same time, program faculty will recruit for new students and if there are 15 new students for fall 2013, the program may continue. If there are not 15 new students the program will be "shelved", meaning no new students will be admitted until there is a cohort of at least 15 or 19 students. (course completion rates?)

2. The AS in Agriculture and Natural Resources Management was declared a priority, even though it is in the lowest performing group. (Program is mission critical) The nation has always declared agriculture a priority. The entire world is looking for ways to preserve the natural resources and ways to increase food production and make food handling safer. The program coordinator is to increase recruitment and program promotion efforts since in the last two years enrollment is increasing from below 10 up to 23 for fall 2011. Overall coordination of the program must show improvement over the next year.

3. ACE courses should be change to ACE II only. Students will be admitted as degree students with scores of 7th grade on Gates/McGinitie Reading Test; 28 on COMET essay and MS 099 on the math section. (These are the current placement scores, but more reasonable scores are the originally proposed scores of 8th or 9th grade on the Gates/McGinitie and 35 on the COMET and MS 099. The original scores were lowered so the enrollment would not be so greatly affected. This proposal does not affect enrollment overall, only the number of students entering either certificate or degree programs.) ACE will then be offered only during the summer session. Students will have one chance to pass ACE and move into degree course work in the fall. If a student fails, then that student will select a certificate program. The state campuses may choose to offer non-credit trainings to build English and math skills for students who desire to move into a degree program, but didn't pass ACE. These short-term trainings would be designed to help students prepare for COMET. Implementation of this proposal is summer 2012, but if not possible with the short time remaining before the summer 2012 session, then summer 2013.

4. All programs need to be reviewed by December of 2012, regarding the number of credits required. Most associate degree programs are well over 60 credits and the certificate programs are over 30 credits. This means the students cannot complete the program in the required time given, 2 years or 1 year. The mission of each program has to be reconsidered. The College is a 2-year institution. In line with this, all courses, which require 4 credits and six contact hours, will be re-evaluated.

5. **Each program coordinator is to establish and advisory counsel by fall 2012, to get input from outside stakeholders. The main focus of the College is to make students employable. Outreach to the community is vital in knowing what skills and work ethics the graduates need.**

6. **Finally, the programs in the lower third are given one year to make improvements. When it becomes necessary to eliminate programs, these will be the first ones eliminated, especially when there is no improvement. The process of Program Prioritization will be repeated in fall 2013. The remaining programs will again be divided into thirds. If more programs need to be eliminated, those in the lowest third will be the first to be considered for elimination.**

Some options for combining programs were also suggested. These were HCOP, Public Health and Nursing and then Cabinet Making and Carpentry.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROCESS

1. The Program Evaluation (appendix T in the Curriculum Handbook) must be revised to match the 10 criteria of the program prioritization. **The next program evaluations are due in May 2013.**
2. The data for this process needs a standard format and needs to be generated each semester for ease in completing the program evaluation. The program evaluation should contain all information necessary for prioritization.
3. A set formula for seat cost must be established.
4. The number of people rating each program must be equal. This time fourteen people rated most programs and only six people rated some programs. This created differences in the frequency distribution numbers. The best way to solve this problem is to allow enough time for the entire process. Program reviews are always due in May. Program prioritization can begin in August or September and finish in March.
5. Any surveys used should make sure the questions are appropriate, and the techniques make the survey valid.

Works Cited

Dickeson, Robert C. Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services Reallocating Resources to

Achieve Strategic Balance. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.