Program Prioritization Academic Task Force “AcTF”

February 2014 Faculty Senate Progress Report

**Ongoing Emphases in AcTF Work on Program Prioritization**

Since the last Faculty Senate meeting AcTF in December and the semester break the AcTF has been focused primarily upon three issues: ensuring program lists are complete and accurate; ensuring program data for templates is reliable, accurate, and user friendly; developing contingency plans for completing the program prioritization by June 30th so it may be used to guide decision making in AY2015-16.

**Program Lists**. This work has focused on two primary issues. First, continuing a dialogue with department chairs or other program representatives to ensure that programs are conceived of in a fair and consistent fashion. In addition to this the courses that constitute programs are also reviewed. In addition, in some grey areas there was discussion of a program’s placement in the academic program or support functions list. Feedback from program representatives was carefully considered and the program list and details were finalized. Second, a subcommittee of the AcTF has worked directly with staff institutional research and enrollment services. This subcommittee worked carefully to ensure that course listings for programs accurately reflected to the best extent possible the realities of students engaging the programs.

**Program Data**. This work has focused almost exclusively on ensuring that the data provided for programs is reliable, accurate, and as easy to understand and use as possible. A subcommittee of the AcTF was convened to work with IR and ESS and associated support staff to provide a faculty perspective on the constitution of the data and its presentation. This faculty oversight will help ensure that problems that were encountered in the first data roll out last semester are avoided. There is considerable pressure to complete the program prioritization this fiscal year so that academic planning for the 2015-16 budget year can be informed by faculty input. However, the AcTF has placed a higher priority on ensuring that the data are of high quality than on releasing the data by a particular date. Thus, the data are being very carefully scrutinized – double and triple checked. We anticipate the release of this quality data within the month of February.

**Contingency Planning**. When the AcTF membership accepted the nominations and the commitment to work this academic year they assumed that they would begin categorizing programs mid to late fall semester and their work would be completed by late spring semester. Due to delays in the release of program data and errors that had to be corrected after the initial release, this plan had to be abandoned. Much of time in the AcTF meetings in January have been devoted to developing a work flow and work team to ensure that the AcTF could finish its work by June 30th 2014 at the latest. The continued delays in releasing program data have made this effort challenging and dynamic. The current plan calls for 14 of the current 18 AcTF members to continue work after contract ends. To ensure consistency in the review and categorization process the same AcTF members will review all programs. Those members who are not able to continue work after contract ends will delegate more of their efforts during contract prior to Program Prioritization related activities such as training and support in completing templates.

**Training and Support**

The AcTF plans to announce a schedule of trainings and support sessions for the spring semester that corresponds to when program representatives will be more actively working on their templates. We have not released this schedule because it will correspond to the availability of the program data which has not been finalized. Trainings will be refined and enhanced based upon an improved understanding of the nature of the program data and the template software.

**Challenges & Projected Milestones in February and Beyond**

**Data from the Facilitation Team and AcTF subcommittee.** The AcTF Leadership is committed to only announcing a program data release date that is final. Given our experiences last semester, we are very conservative and are taking every available caution to ensure that the data are ready and that an announced release date is firm. We are confident that the data will be released within the month of February.

**Template Schedule of Due Dates**. Our plan for a schedule of template due dates will be very similar to the pattern of due dates released last semester, but revised based upon the release date of data this semester. It is likely that the first templates will be due in April and final template submissions for departments with many programs will be due no later than May 9th.