

Role of the External Consultant in Middlesex Community College's Program Review Process

The external consultant to a program review serves as an objective, discipline-based expert who provides an external perspective on the department's demonstrated effectiveness in the areas of supporting student success and academic achievement, productivity and resource management, as well as the department's use of external environmental trends as they impact future opportunities for students in the discipline. It is hoped that the external consultant may be able to contribute ideas related to new and innovative program enhancements, teaching methodologies, and organizational structures. The recommendations made by the external consultant are influential in decisions about the future directions of the program.

The external consultant will:

1. Review the program's self-study and accompanying documents prepared for the program review;
2. Conduct a site visit to MCC in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the program and its context within the college. This site visit should include meetings/interviews with:
 - Program Chair/Coordinator
 - Division Dean and Assistant Dean for program
 - Additional full and part-time faculty teaching in the program
 - Students taking both lower and upper-level courses in the program
 - Provost and Dean of Assessment and Professional Development
3. Within 2 weeks of the site visit, submit to the Program Chair/Coordinator, Division Dean, Assistant Dean and Dean of Assessment and Professional Development a report that provides feedback to the program related to the following questions, including recommendations that will be used by the program for improvement.
 - *From your perspective, are there trends or conditions (enrollment and student success data, academic support and student services) that would present opportunities or threats to the program's ability to achieve its vision, mission, goals, and objectives?*
 - *From your perspective, is the program prepared to meet the emerging needs of the field?*
 - *From your perspective, is the program's infrastructure (human, physical, and financial) sufficient to achieve its vision, mission, and goals?*
 - *From your perspective, are expectations for student learning appropriately rigorous and relevant, and does the evidence of student learning support the achievement of these expectations? Are there other expectations for student learning and achievement that the program should be considering? Are there adequate and appropriate opportunities within the curriculum for students to achieve the learning outcomes?*
 - *Other specific questions relevant to the program under consideration.*

Timeline for the Site Visit

I. Before the Visit

- Dean of Assessment and Professional Development and/or designee sends external consultant the program self study and related documents at least one month prior to scheduled site visit.
- External consultant reviews self-study document and generates a set of questions for site visit meetings with program review team, faculty, staff, students, and other groups as needed. Any questions that potentially require additional documentation should be forwarded to the appropriate Program Chair in advance of the visit so that the documentation can be provided to the consultant in a timely manner.
- External consultant communicates with Program Chair to develop a site visit agenda that will be most meaningful.

II. During the Visit

- External consultant meets w/ individuals and groups as noted in the agenda to ask questions and discuss program.
- External consultant requests additional information as needed.

III. After the Site Visit

- Within two weeks of the site visit, external consultant submits report to the Program Chair, Assistant Dean, Division Dean and Dean of Assessment and Professional Development. This report consists of observations and recommendations, feedback that can be used by the program for improvement. Brevity is encouraged – bulleted lists with narrative are completely acceptable!
- Within one month of the site visit, Program Chair adds External Consultant's report to self study appendices, integrates recommendations and action items as appropriate, and submits to Division Dean in preparation for presentation to Provost and Associate Provost.
- Division Dean reviews and approves completed program review.
- Finalized program review sent to Dean of Assessment and Professional Development for dissemination to Provost and relevant others.
- Provost, Division Dean, Assistant Dean, Program Chair/Coordinator, Dean of Assessment and Professional Development and relevant others (including program faculty) meet to discuss program review.
- Provost provides recommendations for future directions of the program based on the findings of the program review. These recommendations are made within the context of future planning aligned with MCC's strategic initiatives and budgetary decisions.

IV. Reimbursement

External consultants will be reimbursed for mileage, provided with lunch, and paid an honorarium of \$800.00.

I agree to serve as an external consultant to MCC's program review process as described in this document.

NAME

DATE