

BOARD OF REGENTS
BRIEFING PAPER
Existing Program Reviews – Quality Presentations

BACKGROUND & POLICY CONTEXT OF ISSUE:

Nevada, along with many other states, through organizations like Complete College America (CCA), adopted aggressive goals to increase degree productivity. The Board of Regents and the Nevada System of Higher Education have adopted policies and embraced a number of initiatives aimed at graduating more students with a degree or credential of value. The Board indicated on several occasions in recent years the importance of ensuring a high-quality learning experience for students and graduating students with the skills and knowledge that Nevada employers seek. While the ARSA Committee and the Board have sought to analyze metrics about “quality,” there is no single nationally recognized quality metric. Ensuring program quality is a complex task, but necessary to ensure that we are not forsaking quality in light of aggressive state goals to graduate more students.

At the meeting of the Board’s Academic, Research and Student Affairs (ARSA) Committee in December 2015, System staff presented the annual Review of Existing Programs (*Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 5*) which requires institutions to review both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of a program’s effectiveness, including criteria such as the quality, need/demand for the program, relation to the institutional mission, and student outcomes. The Academic Officers, in consultation with the ARSA Chair, recommend that the annual presentation of the existing program reviews be expanded to include more detail from the institutions on program quality, including the process for evaluating existing programs generally, indications of quality, whether the specific program is meeting employer expectations, improvements in student learning outcomes, and any action steps identified based on the review of the program and the status of the action steps. System staff recommends amending existing policy to include these expectations for future reports.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS BEING RECOMMENDED OR REQUESTED:

Amend *Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 5* to require that when the annual Review of Existing Programs is presented to the ARSA Committee, at least two teaching institutions selected by the Chancellor’s Office will also present in detail the reviews conducted for at least one program. The presentation by each institution shall include, but is not limited to, the institution’s process for evaluating existing programs generally, indications of quality, whether the program is meeting employer expectations, improvements in student learning outcomes, and any action steps identified based on the review of the program and the status of the action steps.

IMPETUS (WHY NOW?):

This policy revision responds to the request of the ARSA Committee at its meeting in December 2015.

BULLET POINTS TO SUPPORT REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

- There is no one accepted method of or tool for evaluating program quality. Thus, the Board and institutions must utilize many different tools and metrics for this purpose. Revising Board policy to specifically require expanded presentations from the institutions when the Review of Existing Programs is presented to the ARSA Committee will ensure these discussions continue and provide an annual opportunity for the Board to discuss program quality with the institutions.

POTENTIAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE REQUEST/RECOMMENDATION:

None have been presented.

ALTERNATIVE(S) TO WHAT IS BEING REQUESTED/RECOMMENDED:

Retain existing policy without specifying the additional requirement for institutional presentations.

COMPLIANCE WITH BOARD POLICY:

- Consistent With Current Board Policy: Title # _____ Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- Amends Current Board Policy: Title #4 Chapter # 14 Section # 5
- Amends Current Procedures & Guidelines Manual: Chapter # _____ Section # _____
- Other: _____
- Fiscal Impact: Yes _____ No X _____
Explain: _____

POLICY PROPOSAL
TITLE 4, CHAPTER 14 SECTION 5
Existing Program Reviews – Quality Presentations

Additions appear in *boldface italics*; deletions are [~~stricken~~ and bracketed]

Section 5. Review of New and Existing Academic Programs and Established Certificates

1. A review of existing academic programs shall be conducted by the universities, State College, and community colleges on at least a ten-year cycle to ensure academic quality, and to determine if need, student demand, and available resources support their continuation pursuant to the following.
 - a. The review of existing programs must include multiple criteria. Although criteria may vary slightly between campuses, as institutions have different missions and responsibilities, there should be comparable data from all programs. The review must include both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of program effectiveness, and peer review.
 - b. Criteria to be utilized in the review of existing programs shall include the following: quality, need/demand for the program, relation to the institutional mission, cost, relationship to other programs in the System, student outcomes, and quality and adequacy of resources such as library materials, equipment, space, and nonacademic services.
 - c. An annual report will be published by the institution on the results of existing program evaluations and a summary of that report will be forwarded to the Chancellor's Office and presented to the Academic, *Research* and Student Affairs Committee annually. *When the annual report is presented to the Committee, at least two teaching institutions selected by the Chancellor's Office will also present in detail the reviews conducted for at least one program. The presentation by each institution shall include, but is not limited to, the institution's process for evaluating existing programs generally, indications of quality, whether the program is meeting employer expectations, improvements in student learning outcomes, and any action steps identified based on the review of the program and the status of the action steps.*

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