

## 2010-2011 Annual Report of Educational Policies Committee

Submitted by Lesley Putman, EPC Chair 2010-2011

**EPC Members 2010-2011** Dwight Brady, Tawni Ferrarini, Brent Graves, Alec Lindsay (replaced by Jane Milkie for Winter Semester), Steve Oates, Lesley Putman, Marcus Robyns, Michael Broadway, Paul Duby, Daryl Kobie, Paul Lang, Jamal Rashed, Terrance Seethoff, Darlene Walch

**EPC Responsibilities are defined in section 3.3.2.2.** of the AAUP Master Agreement. “The responsibilities of the EPC shall include advising the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and keeping the Association informed on mission statements, on short- and long-term academic program planning for the University, and on financial considerations attendant to implementation of new programs such as majors and minors. In particular, the above described responsibilities of the EPC shall include concern with and making recommendations on such matters as: enrollment patterns and projections, the allocation of budget for the support of academic programs, the generation of credit hours within colleges and academic departments, and staffing requirements within colleges and academic departments. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will provide written feedback on the implementation or non implementation of all EPC recommendations. The rationale for recommendations regarding the curriculum shall be reported to the academic senate.”

**Meeting Frequency:** EPC met a total of 12 times during the academic year.

**Communication/transparency:** In an effort to communicate with the university community, a website for EPC was put online. This website, in addition to general information about EPC and its role, contains links to data, presentations by the deans, and other relevant documents.

**Data:** EPC uses data to inform themselves about programs, enrollment, credit hour production, costs, etc. To this end, P. Duby presented data to help differentiate between programs for the purpose of prioritizing programs. T. Seethoff also presented data on costs associated with individual academic majors.

**New Biology Major:** A Fisheries and Wildlife Management major was approved by the Senate and was on the Provost’s desk for her approval. She brought it to EPC to get our recommendation. After a presentation from the Biology Department Head (Pat Brown), the major was put on the list of programs that were already in line for more resources.

**EN 109/109W:** This new course proposal was approved by the Senate but brought to EPC by the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, S. Koch, due to financial implications. It first came to EPC in April of 2010 at which time it was deferred to a fall meeting. Laura Soldner and Ray Ventre came in to discuss the need for this course for international students and answer questions from the committee. EPC, unconvinced that this course was necessary, recommended that the English Department offer the course as an EN 295 until they could prove that it was necessary. At a later meeting Ray Ventre explained why EN 295 wouldn’t work as a short-term substitute for EN 109/109W. After much discussion, EPC narrowly agreed to allow the English Department to offer EN 109 and EN 109W as a trial for two years.

**Benchmark Reports: Psychology Graduate Program and MBA:** EPC has approved new programs in the past with a stipulation that they meet certain benchmarks. Such was the case with the Psychology Graduate Program (M.S. Degree in Experimental Psychology) and the MBA. EPC reviewed a report from the Psychology Department showing that they did not reach the benchmarks that they had established for themselves. EPC voted to recommend to the Provost that this graduate degree program be suspended, with the understanding that the department can come to EPC to request reinstatement as described by the EPC Program Review and Modification Procedures. EPC also reviewed a report about the MBA program outcomes. The committee was satisfied with the progress of the MBA program.

**Policy:** EPC made some changes to the Program Review and Modification Procedures from 2007. The purpose of the change was to facilitate termination of programs that were suspended but whose departments did not go through the process of officially terminating them. The committee agreed that programs that have been suspended for 4 years should be automatically terminated. See Appendix for the modified procedures. Sixteen programs were identified as meeting this criterion (suspended for 4 years but never terminated).

**Reallocation:** In the previous academic year, EPC formulated and agreed on 11 Criteria for Reallocation of Resources in response to a charge that President Wong issued in April of 2010. In this academic year we intended to use these criteria to identify 3-5 enhanced or new academic program initiatives and 3-5 programs for termination, as requested by President Wong.

Each Dean presented the state of their College's programs, noting which ones were most in need of additional resources for maintenance or for growth. At the end of the presentations, there were 9 programs on the table requesting additional resources for continuation at the present level of enrollment or for growth in an area that satisfies the 11 criteria.

We had additional discussions regarding the definition of a "program" and what "programs" should be considered in the reallocation process. For example, some programs are not traditional major programs but require investment nevertheless. For example: international programs, FYE, liberal studies, TLC. Ultimately these did not get added into the mix for reallocation.

One program was brought to EPC for consideration of suspension: Personal Financial Planning. EPC voted to recommend to the Provost that the Personal Financial Planning Program be suspended.

Although no other programs were brought to the committee to be considered for suspension, the Deans recommended programs for early academic program review. All programs will undergo academic program review using a process that is currently under development by an AQIP committee, but programs were needed to undergo immediate review as a pilot study. The following programs/departments were recommended for early academic program review: CAPS, Psychology, Engineering Technology, Sociology-Social Work, Auto Repair, Business CIS, CIS (2-yr programs), Health Information Processing, Office Information Assistant, and Office Services. The AQIP committee developing academic program review can only include 2 programs (departments) in the pilot study, and they chose CAPS and Engineering Technology.

Programs that were identified by the deans as ones that needed additional resources were ranked by EPC. The following is a prioritized list of these programs.

1. Art and Design
2. Exercise Science/Sports Science
3. Outdoor Recreation and Leisure Studies
4. MBA
5. Biology
6. AIS
7. Clinical Lab Science
8. Marketing

## APPENDIX

### **Educational Policy Committee Program Review and Modification Procedures**

The demand for academic majors changes through time, and one would expect that the majors offered by the university would change accordingly. Naturally, with a specific allocation of resources, a fluctuating overall enrollment level, and minimum course sizes, there is a limited number of majors that can be offered at any one time.

In order to maintain both quality and viability in our programs, the Provost/VPAA has decided to institute ongoing procedures for program review based on several factors, including data on major enrollments, course enrollments, student performance, accreditation standards, and other related information that has been available for some time. The data sets are updated regularly, shared with all academic departments and are accessible on the university website. (See <http://www.nmu.edu/ir/> and <http://www.nmu.edu/ir/BPweb/Menubp.htm>) To facilitate a clear process for dealing with program decline, the Provost/VPAA and the members of EPC have agreed to the following procedures to insure adequate administrative and faculty involvement in timely reviews of programs for which there may be concerns.

#### 1. Annual Departmental Review:

Annually, academic departments conduct a department review as part of the development of staffing plans. This necessarily includes a data based review of department programs, courses and enrollment trends. In their review of their programs and courses, the faculty of a department can recommend the elimination of a major program through the normal review channels of CUP or GPC, the Academic Senate, and Provost/VPAA. They can also recommend suspending enrollment in a program. An enrollment suspension has the advantage of putting a major on hold and not terminating it while a department takes the time to review matters. If a program is terminated, a full review up through the state level would be required to start the major again. In effect, it would be treated as a completely new major which is not the case for a suspended major.

#### 2. Annual EPC Staffing Recommendations:

During the first four weeks of the fall semester, the Deans submit their staffing recommendations to the Provost/VPAA. These are reviewed by EPC along with enrollment data for majors and courses. At that time, the Academic Deans shall also submit recommendations to the Provost/VPAA for program suspensions, which will also be reviewed by the EPC. Such recommendations should take into account but not be limited to evidence of certain warning signs such as:

- a. Differentiation from another major by only one or two courses;
- b. A declining trend in the enrollment of majors over successive years;

- c. Enrollment in required or elective courses falling below the minimum course requirements (20 for lower division; 10 for upper division) over successive offerings;
- d. Use of directed studies as substitutions for required courses for successive years;
- e. Inability to meet the standards or course rotations necessary to maintain quality, or meet the requirements for program accreditation;
- f. Evidence from the annual program review that the major is no longer meeting the expectations described for it in the initial approval or subsequent revisions of the program.

3. Deans will notify departments of programs for which they are submitting suspension recommendations to the Provost/VPAA and EPC including the reasons for these recommendations by September 30.

4. The department faculty shall meet to review all programs recommended for suspension and submit a response to the EPC by January 15th of the current academic year. The department response shall either:

- a. indicate acceptance of the suspension, or
- b. indicate the need to study the program more carefully before making changes or terminating the program, or
- c. provide data and narrative indicating why the recommended suspension would be ill advised.

Failure by the departmental faculty to respond by this date will be taken as tacit agreement to suspend the program. EPC will review recommendations from the Deans and responses from departments and make their recommendations to the Provost/VPAA by February 28.

5. A department can request reinstatement of a suspended program by submitting a data-based plan using the EPC reallocation criteria, from the department faculty, through the department head, and the college dean that will result in a major/program with a sufficient rationale to justify offering the required courses using the resources available.

6. If the departmental faculty chooses to recommend termination of a program or substantive changes to maintain a program, they must also process such proposals through the normal academic oversight of CUP, GPC, the Senate and the Provost/VPAA as appropriate. **Failure to process a termination proposal within 4 years of the suspension date will result in an automatic termination of the program.**

**7. A program suspended for any reason will automatically be terminated after 4 years from the suspension date.**