

## **EPC Annual Report 2012-13**

**Membership:** C. Kirk (Chair), D. Buhl (Fall) L. Putman (Winter), J. Milkie, J. Rashed, B. Sarjeant, B. Cherry, D. Walch, P. Duby, P. Lang, A. Orf, J. Leonard, B. Graves, H. Wallace, M Broadway, D. Kobie.

**Meeting dates:**

Monday, September 17, 2012  
Monday, October 1, 2012  
Monday, October 15, 2012  
Monday, October 29, 2012  
Monday, November 12, 2012  
Monday, November 26, 2012  
Monday, December 10, 2012  
Monday, January 21, 2013  
Monday, February 4, 2013  
Monday, March 18, 2013  
Monday, April 1, 2013  
Monday, April 15, 2013  
Monday, April 29, 2013

**Agenda Items:**

- A.** Deans' presentations on staffing and enrollment trends by College
- B.** Updates from Liberal Studies Task Force
- C.** HLC accreditation changes resulting from the Doctorate of Nurse Practitioner program
- D.** UP regional economic trends and state of UP labor force
- E.** Academic Program Review for Engineering Technology, CAPS, Physics, CoB CIS, and CoB Associates programs.
- F.** Requests for enhancement positions from:
  1. Dr. Alan McEvoy, Head and Professor of Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology; Dr. Scott Demel, Assistant Professor of Anthropology; Dr. Alex Ruuska, Assistant Professor of Anthropology; and April Lindala, Center for Native American Studies presenting their 2012 enhancement requests.
  2. College of Arts and Sciences 2012-13 enhancement requests by Dr. John Rebers, Biology; Dr. Susy Ziegler, Earth Environmental & Geographical Sciences; Dr. Jim Cantrill, CAPS; Dr. Michael Cinelli, Art & Design.
  3. College of Arts and Sciences 2012-13 enhancement requests from the English Department by Dr. Ray Ventre, Department Head.
- G.** Academic Program Review presentations.
  - a. Physics APR synopsis by D. Lucas
  - b. CIS APR synopsis by D. Helton and M. Sklar
  - c. CoB Associates program APR synopsis by C. Johnson and K. Stutz

**Actions Items:**

- A. APR recommendations for Engineering Technology submitted to the Provost (appendix A)
- B. APR recommendations for Communications and Performance Studies submitted to the Provost (appendix B)
- C. Ranking of 2012-13 Enhancement Requests: EEGS, Sociology, Social Work & Anthropology and Center for Native American Studies, Art and Design, English and CAPS.
- D. APR recommendations for Physics submitted to the Provost (appendix C)

**Unfinished Business:**

- A. APR for CIS. EPC needs CoB response to the external reviewers report.
- B. APR for CoB Associates programs. EPC needs CoB response to the external reviewers report.

## Appendix A

To: Paul Lang, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
From: Educational Policies Committee  
Subject: Recommendations regarding the Academic Program Review of the Engineering Technology Department  
Date: November 26, 2012

The Department of Engineering Technology (ET) conducted a formal Academic Program Review (APR) during the 2011 fall semester. This APR was done as a pilot project to ensure the APR process was appropriate to the goals and objectives of the Educational Policy Committee (EPC).

Following the ET-APR self study, an external assessment of the APR was conducted by Ron McKean, Interim Dean of the College of Engineering Technology at Ferris State University.

Dr. McKean conducted his on-site review during early March 2012. His formal report was received within a week of his visit.

As required in the APR guidelines, Michael Rudisill, Head, ET prepared a response of Dr. McKean's report which was submitted to the EPC at the end of May 2012.

Following a review of the three documents, the EPC prepared a formal set of recommendations to the Provost and the ET. Those recommendations are contained in this document.

The APR Guidelines suggested this report be submitted before the end of the winter semester. We believe that future APR's will be able to hold to the suggested calendar for submission deadlines.

### Recommendations

1. An increase in lab space: The department makes a very convincing argument on p. 4 of their response, particularly with respect to the alternative energies lab and the SAE Baja Club being "crammed" into inaccessible areas, and the complete lack of lab space dedicated for faculty research. "Bottom line is that while we talk about wanting to increase enrollments available lab space is already negatively impacting the department and student's perceptions of the curricula and programs."

2. New faculty position: There has already been a failed search. It may be necessary to authorize a higher starting salary and a tenure earning position to attract a new faculty member. The empty faculty line affects the workload of the current faculty and makes it difficult for them to help recruit local students, establish the recommended student clubs, and pursue faculty development.

3. Budget for new marketing materials: The department's self study report indicated that nearly every dollar of their budget goes toward running the labs. Perhaps additional funding could be provided to help the department market its programs. This is especially important in order to attract more students from other areas. This is a key pool of students since they would be more willing to leave the area to seek employment after graduation. Perhaps local students are more likely to drop out of the program if they believe they can't find employment in the local area. There needs to be a balance between local students and those from outside the area.

4. Recruitment and retention: We support the Department's initiative to participate with area CTE teachers to establish articulation agreements related to engineering technologies. We also support the Department's idea of redesigning the Engineering Design associate degree to ladder into the base Mechanical Engineering Technology baccalaureate degree. This could help enrollment in both programs. In order to aid student recruitment and retention, the external reviewer recommends an early advising relationship with the students. Upper-level students might also be effective mentors for new students. In addition, we support the Department's plan to bring professional engineers and technologists to visit with students both in the context of course enrichment and student-led activities and organizations.

5. Learning Outcomes Assessment: The Department reports administering locally developed tests to measure the students' basic level of proficiency. Also, each graduating student is asked to complete an online survey and personal exit interview to ascertain student satisfaction with their experience at NMU and education received. According to the Department, the percentages of students that actually take the examinations and complete the exit interviews are areas that need improvement. The Department reported there are no procedures in place that requires the students to take the exam or complete the interviews. The Department is considering instituting

a non-credit course in which they are required to fulfill certain obligations (assessment tests, exit interview, etc) to graduate.

The EPC recommends that the Department institute a process that require the completion of both the proficiency examinations and the exit interview in order to successfully complete the various programs.

6. Job Placement and Grad School: The Department reports surveying graduated students immediately after graduation and for the first five years of their careers in order to track job placement data. The Department reports varying levels of success in collecting job placement data across the various programs.

The EPC recommends the Department should continue to refine the job placement data collection in programs where response rates are low.

7. The EPC recommends the Department implement a process of strategic planning in successive stages such as: critical analysis of the programs, policy formulation and appraisal, action planning, management and monitoring, review and evaluation. Experience and lessons learned from implementation, monitoring and evaluation shall provide feedback for adjusting the current programs for the next cycle of Academic Program Review.

## Appendix B

To: Paul Lang, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
From: Educational Policies Committee  
Subject: Recommendations regarding the Academic Program Review of the Communication and Performance Studies department  
Date: November 1, 2012

The Committee reviewed the consultant's report of his assessment of the CAPS department, the faculty's response to the report and the Dean's response to both documents. The Committee concurs with the consultant that the department is meeting the standards required of undergraduate programs by the National Communication Association (NCA) and that the department enjoys "a solid reputation on campus."

According to the consultant each of the department's programs have "developed specific learning outcomes that are appropriate for it, and assessment measures have been developed and adopted for each major." These assessment data have been used to revise the department's programs. The consultant noted that the department has "sufficient" resources to achieve its mission and the committee concurs. In short, the department has the necessary processes in place to ensure its mission and goals are met.

The committee concurs with the consultant, faculty and Dean that since a MAC platform is the industry standard in media production serious consideration should be given to providing all CAPS students with a MAC computer instead of the current Lenovo machine. As the Dean noted, "leaving aside any contractual obligations that the University has with Lenovo it simply makes sense to provide CAPS students with a Mac computer."

The consultant identified the Theater major as an area of concern noting that the lack of majors can create difficulties for students who need theatre classes to graduate and find them cancelled due to low enrollment. The department's defense of the low number of theatre majors rests on the fact that NMU is no different from "other comprehensive regional universities." But the reality is that the University made a commitment made to the program when it hired a new director two years ago; moreover regardless of enrollment numbers the contribution of the program to the cultural life of the community cannot be underestimated. EPC recommends that the theater program be given time to grow in terms of enrollment under its new Director.

EPC acknowledges that there were no staffing recommendations from the consultant. Instead the consultant refers to the budgetary decision to replace three retiring faculty members with two faculty members as a challenge for the department, since the new hires will be responsible for devising a new curriculum that merges the Entertainment and Sports Promotion major with the Public Relations majors. EPC recognizes that this process will necessarily result in the department offering fewer electives at the upper division and see an overall decrease in introductory sections. EPC recommends that these factors should be taken into consideration in any assessment of enrollment patterns.

EPC supports the opinion of the department that they are "not any less 'distinguished' than most other departments on campus", and that the incoming departmental colleagues have solid

research agendas. The study abroad partnering with Michigan State University should indeed spread NMU's presence. EPC notes the department has recognized that extra-curricular activities and department self-promotion can and will occur.

EPC has no recommendations regarding the suggestion of the department changing its name, but notes that the CAPS moniker is well-known.

EPC recognizes that the department already collaborates across campus with other disciplines. We agree that the emerging partnerships with English regarding the multi-media Journalism major and new faculty hired into the department might further enhance cooperation and believes that given time, success will breed success.

Overall, despite the consultant's evaluation not being 100% aligned with the 11 points of the Criteria for the Reallocation of Resources, it is clear that the process has been beneficial for all concerned. A mirror has been held up to CAPS as well as the examination of the department by a well-qualified external pair of eyes. Successes as well as suggestions for improvements have been noted.

## Appendix C

To: Paul Lang, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
From: Educational Policies Committee  
Subject: Recommendations regarding the Academic Program Review of the Physics department  
Date: May 10, 2013

The EPC reviewed the Physics Department's self-study, the external reviewer's evaluation of the Physics Department and the faculty's response to the report. The EPC concurs with the consultant that the department is a "solid" program, and although the number of majors is small, the graduation rate is consistent with national benchmarks provided by the American Institute of Physics.

The EPC concurs with the external reviewer that the faculty are well qualified and dedicated to student learning which is reflected in the positive comments provided by current and former students. The EPC also acknowledges that the program successfully prepares students for post-baccalaureate careers, as evidenced by the success of alumni.

The EPC commends the Physics department for implementing one of the external reviewer's key recommendations to use social media as a means to recruit more majors; although it should be noted that the department had already embarked on this strategy with an improved department web page including biographies of physics department alumni, a faculty video, along with program and career information. The EPC recommends the Physics department identify the unique opportunities they can offer to prospective students and then meet with the NMU Communications and Marketing staff to develop a social media plan.

The external reviewer's other principal recommendation dealt with hiring a lab technician who would be able to repair and maintain undergraduate laboratory equipment. This would have the benefit of freeing up faculty to engage in activities more centrally related to their teaching, scholarship and service functions. EPC acknowledges that similar positions exist in Biology, Chemistry and Art & Design but these departments have many more majors and have higher credit hour production than Physics. Nevertheless, EPC recommends that the Provost consider hiring a part-time lab technician or one that would be shared with another department on campus where a similar need might exist.

The external reviewer found Physics curriculum to be comparable to other physics programs around the country. The external reviewer recommended increasing opportunities for undergraduate research. The EPC agrees with the suggestion of the reviewer that one effective mechanism for increasing recruitment to Physics is to increase on-campus profession-related experiences, particularly the opportunity for individual undergraduate research projects. The Physics Department enjoys close mentorship of majors and it is clear that the department faculty already excel in their student support. The EPC encourages the department to consider enhancing research opportunities for their students.