

COLLEGE AREA REVIEW UPDATE

2013 TO PRESENT

The last Middle States Periodic Review Report in 2013 cited the CAR process as “encouraging a culture of assessment” at MC. Since its inception, CAR continues its robust and inclusive process of program review and assessment. The process was originally named Academic Area Review, which included the review of only academic areas (programs and disciplines). In 2007 the name changed to College Area Review, when the institution included administrative units as part of the review process. The process maintains a schedule of review that includes academic (credit and non-credit) programs, disciplines, special programs and initiatives, including student affairs and administrative units. The process includes a cross-sectional, internal review by the College Area Review Committee (CARC) that consist of representatives from all College stakeholders. Some twenty committee members serve rotating terms; some from the governance council (faculty and student), administrators, deans, faculty, staff, and student. The process is flexible and adapts to shifts in reporting lines, academic re-structuring, and reorganization of divisions and departments, while maintaining a systematic review cycle. Process planning considers institutional and organizational changes.

CAR continues to evolve and adjust to the needs of the institution as evidenced by the modifications highlighted below:

2013

- Provided industry data from the Economic Modeling Specialist International Company (EMSI) to academic areas to address job availability and needed employment skills in academic program reviews
- Completed one five-year cycle of existing administrative units reviewed using the CAR process following the CAR Master Plan Schedule of review
- Required academic areas and administrative units to address and link unit goals to MC 2020 strategic plans

2014

- Tracked academic and administrative recommendations using an automated database system
- Changed academic program review reporting forms to an improved self-study format to facilitate increased information about data benchmarks and SWOT analysis
- Solicited College Area Review Committee members from the new participatory governance system

2015

- Created and used rubrics for both the academic and administrative reviews
- Reviewed only academic programs and requested that an external peer review report be included in the academic program review

2016

- Required both administrative units and academic areas to benchmark best practices by comparing services/programs in similar community colleges and/or related professional organizations
- Modified final signature authority to the Senior Vice President of the specific administrative units participating in the review process due to organizational restructuring.
- Mapped program learning outcomes to courses.

2017

- Developed an implementation plan for program review viability process
- Drafted White Paper for Board of Trustees regarding program viability review

The CAR coordinator continues to provide assistance to the academic areas and administrative units participating in the review. Opportunities for individual areas and units to meet and gather details are scheduled and each year an “open lab” is provided. Handouts to assist with the review, such as, guides on writing recommendations, completing a SWOT analysis, surveying students, and planning the external peer review visit are provided. Administrative units are given guidance on how to assess their effectiveness and guidelines for review completion. Academic areas, faculty workgroups are given institutional data, program enrollment and award data, provided by the Office of Institutional Research with specific data benchmarks to address in the review. Also, industry data is given to academic programs to inform programs about forecasted industry’s future needs and demands.

For more than a decade the College has engaged in self-evaluation and assessment of its academic offerings, student services, and administrative units. The data and approved recommendations indicate the commitment of the institution to this process. Most academic units are on their third cycle of review. In reviewing the first two (five-year) program review cycles (2003-2012), 92 % (over 1400) of the academic recommendations have been implemented. A review of the third review cycle of academic program review (2013-2017) indicates that the most common themes among the approved recommendations include:

- 1) curriculum changes,
- 2) need for better scheduling and improved advising,
- 3) improvements to student learning outcomes,
- 4) improvements to student support, and
- 5) increasing program and course online offerings.

These major themes correlate directly to current institutional and academic priorities focused on improving student success. Repeatedly, the results of the academic program review substantiate and align with College priorities related to student completion and success. Approved CAR recommendations continue to address our annual Perkins Grant Funding Report for career and technical programs as well as addressing institutional priorities centered on student success strategies to increase completion and retention.

Over 22 faculty members and 6 staff have served on the CARC over the past fourteen years. In any given year, all four vice presidents and provosts are involved in the process along with numerous deans, chairs, full-time and part-time faculty and instructional staff. Administrative units are encouraged to have full participation of all unit stakeholders in the review process. The Administrative Units recommendations and actions related to MC 2020 strategic themes and college priorities are evident in the unit reviews and informed decision-making for institutional change. Examples of these changes are the re-organizations of the child care centers and the office of management and budget, the investigation of food services, and the creation of the community engagement centers. The Libraries, in their recent review, determined to reorganize their internal processes based on recently collected research data.

Consistent with other assessment processes, routinely CAR solicits feedback and modifies the process accordingly. Using surveys and focus groups feedback from Chairs, Deans, and Provosts, CARC, and faculty participants in the process, CAR has made numerous adjustments over the years. As a result of feedback, process timelines were adjusted to ascertain faculty input during spring discipline meetings. Also, flexible timelines are adjusted for administrative units. With the issuance of the new Academic Master Plan (AMP), the CAR process and the CARC will participate in helping the College create a process that “guides the development of new programs and provides recommendations for program continuance or discontinuance” (See AMP, page 3). Based on the new AMP, the revisions and improvements to academic program review will allow for deliberate focus on academic program viability, by examining data (qualitative and quantitative) and other related factors. Our goal is to maintain and improve academic programming that addresses the needs of our students, our institutions, and our community.