

# Academic Program Review

## Considerations & Proposed Modifications

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### RATIONALE

Periodic comprehensive academic program review has traditionally been embraced by universities to help ensure strong academic program quality, drive appropriate resource alignment, and encourage program improvement. Despite these important objectives, because most reviews typically occur on a five to seven year cycle, programs can wait a relatively long period of time to have important discussions about program outcomes.

Recent debate and research have called into question the impact of these traditional reviews and the expense involved. The national conversation has resulted in the emergence of two very different approaches to academic program review. One approach recommends the review of all academic programs at the same time with the goal of program prioritization and resource reallocation (Robert Dickeson, 2010). An alternative approach proposes that traditional periodic reviews are outmoded in today's disruptive higher education environment and calls for more nimble strategies and metrics to take the pulse of academic programs. Research supporting this option points out that the traditional program review requires significant time, effort and resources which lead to results that are "predictable and unhelpful...and typically have little impact on important resource allocation or performance improvement decisions" (EAB 2012, p.12).

Given these alternative scenarios, RIT should consider re-imagining its program review process and projected calendar. Even though RIT's Comprehensive Program Review Framework was approved by Academic Senate in 2010, it has not yet been formally implemented, and in fact it was placed on hold until 2015 so that the University could complete its work on calendar conversion. The review schedule is slated to be established during the academic year (2014-2015). Such reimagining should include an annual program analysis process as the first step in the review continuum. While the overarching goal would remain the quest for program excellence and student success, consideration of other factors (e.g. program size, revenue/expense) should be factored in as appropriate and relevant to the type of program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the above considerations, the Provost's Council recommends that RIT develop a three-tiered program analysis and review process that is more agile, less resource intensive and focused on an end goal of program improvement, reinvention and revitalization.

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This process would include 3 tiers of analysis.

### **TIER 1: (Applies to every program, every year)**

Tier 1 would be fashioned as an Annual Program Analysis Process – a nimble annual screening process through which the dean, department head and Provost examine program performance on a set of key agreed-upon metrics which fall into one of four categories: Enrollment, Student Learning Outcomes, Student Success, and Revenue/Expense (see Appendix A<sup>1</sup>, A<sup>2</sup>, A<sup>3</sup>).

- Data will be generated centrally on an annual basis and distributed to each college
- Data will be reported in absolute numbers or percentages with a comparison to Institutional Goals or college averages. Where possible, benchmarks will be established and adjusted as appropriate after each three year trend (See Appendix A)
- While all metrics will be taken together and reviewed holistically; trends in enrollment and revenue/expense, if declining, may trigger further analysis
- Analysis would occur in October-November time frame
- Actions taken following this analysis would occur in December and would fall into three categories:
  - Category 1: No perceived red flags – no further actions or analysis needed
  - Category 2: Specific metrics (particularly Enrollment and Revenue/Expenses) are trending in wrong direction and raise “heads up” concern – Tier 2 action plan including a deeper dive into further data may be required. Input from Enrollment Management related to the program’s market share and competition as well as future recruitment potential will be sought in Tier 2 and Tier 3 analysis.
  - Category 3: Serious issues about program viability emerge from longitudinal analysis – Tier 2 or Tier 3 review is recommended based on discussion between the program, dean and Provost.

### **TIER 2: (Applies to programs flagged through Tier 1 analysis)**

Tier 2 review typically would require a deeper dive analysis including a response from the program. The current RIT Framework for Comprehensive Program Review (2010) (without the external review component) may also be recommended. Should the Comprehensive Program Review approach be warranted, the Self-Study would be written from January-May and the review would occur the following Fall.

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### **TIER 3 (Optional): (Applies to programs flagged through Tier 2 analysis recommended for comprehensive review and programs voluntarily wanting to use the comprehensive approach)**

The Comprehensive Program Review (2010) approach with an external team of reviewers would be an optional approach used only if the College and/or the Provost recommended this option.

In no case, however, would it be expected that RIT would have more than 10 programs undergoing Tier 3 Comprehensive Review in any academic year.

### **For Further Consideration as this model is rolled out:**

- The design and cost model for Ph.D. programs are so different that they will need a different tiered approach to be developed moving forward.
- Graduate programs will need to review the Tier 1 metrics to determine if these are the right ones, keeping in mind that the metrics should not be overly burdensome and should be able to be generated centrally.
- Process recommended here for Tier 1 does not directly address program/departmental operations and faculty quality. Is assessment of these areas satisfactorily addressed at college level through the normal on-going efficacy assessments that occur? Is there any additional review needed?
- What role should/could the ICC and Graduate Council play in Tier 1 analysis? Graduate Council, in particular, is very interested in playing a role.
- This will be an iterative process and we will expect to fine tune the metrics and the benchmarks as we gain experience. For example, the deans have raised the following questions:
  - where does interdisciplinarity fit into the model?
  - what benchmark should we use for institutional r graduate school placement rate goals and job placement goals?
  - Do we have the right metrics? How do we communicate a formative tone and ensure that the process gives faculty important information on their curriculum so that steps can be taken to mitigate any continuing red flags in the metric domains?

Following the first year we will debrief as a leadership group to assess whether this Tier 1 process is achieving its intended outcomes and what changes need to be made.

# Academic Program Analysis: Undergraduate

## Appendix A<sup>1</sup>: Tier 1: Undergraduate—Main Campus Only

[Metrics Reported in #'s and/or %'s over 3 year period]

<i>Trigger Metrics</i>	<i>Supporting Metrics</i>	<i>Supporting Metrics</i>	<i>Trigger Metrics</i>
<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Student Success</b>	<b>Revenue / Expense</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student Headcount (FT &amp; PT)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ First Time</li> <li>○ Transfer</li> <li>○ Overall Enrollment               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Internal Transfers</li> <li>▪ Continuing Students</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>Benchmark:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall Headcount (3 yr average)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BS/BA &gt; 30</li> <li>○ AAS/AS/AOS &gt;15</li> <li>○ CT/DP/UND &gt; 7</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Program Learning Outcomes Assessment Results</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met or exceeded program's achievement benchmark</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>First Year Retention</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met or exceeded RIT goal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Program Net Surplus/Deficit*</b> (College overhead costs only)</li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive net revenue position</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overall Headcount Change (3 yr average)</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stable enrollment trend:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BS/BA: &lt; 10% decline (3 yr average)</li> <li>○ AAS/AS/AOS: &lt; 10% decline (3 yr average)</li> <li>○ CT/DP/UND: &lt; 10% decline (3 yr average)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Program Improvement Results</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used assessment results for program improvement (Y or N)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Graduation Rate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ First Major               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 150% of Program Time</li> <li>▪ 100% of Program Time (On-Time Rate)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>Benchmark:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met or exceeded RIT actual rate</li> <li>• Met or exceeded RIT target goals</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Career Outcomes (6 months after graduation)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Employment</li> <li>○ Further Study</li> <li>○ Alternative Plans</li> </ul> </li> <li>Benchmark:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met or exceeded RIT goal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

\* Surplus / (Deficit) at College Cost Responsibility: Net tuition revenue from students matriculated in each program less the cost of instruction for all credit hours consumed by these same students including only expenses within the colleges' collective control.

# Academic Program Analysis: Graduate Programs

Graduate programs at RIT are a complex portfolio, and thus a set of metrics applicable to all programs is not possible. At minimum, 3 classes of graduate programs should have a specific set of metrics as follows:

- Professional degrees (MS, MBAs)
- MFAs
- PhD

## WORKING DRAFT

### Appendix A<sup>2</sup>

#### Tier 1: Graduate (Professional Degrees and MFA) – (Under Development)

<i>Trigger Metrics</i>	<i>Supporting Metrics</i>	<i>Supporting Metrics</i>	<i>Trigger Metrics</i>
<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Student Success</b>	<b>Revenue / Expense</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Student Headcount</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Full-Time</li> <li>○ Part-Time</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Benchmark:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total enrollment &gt; ??</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Program Learning Outcomes Assessment</b></li> </ul> <b>Benchmark:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met or exceeded achievement benchmark level (Y or N)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Persistence (F/T Students)</b></li> </ul> <b>Benchmark:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &gt; x% (3 yr average)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Programs Net Surplus/ Deficit* (College Overhead Costs Only)</b></li> </ul> <b>Benchmark:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive Net Revenue</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overall Enrollment Trend</b></li> </ul> <b>Benchmark:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable enrollment trend: &lt;10% decline (3 yr average)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Program Improvement</b></li> </ul> <b>Benchmark:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used assessment results for program improvement (Y or N)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Graduation</b></li> </ul> <b>Benchmark:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of graduates &gt; x (3 yr average)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Application Yield/Acceptance Rate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Applied</li> <li>○ Admitted</li> <li>○ Enrolled</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Benchmark:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &gt; x%</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Time to Degree (F/T Students)</b></li> </ul> <b>Benchmark:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• = or &lt; 1 ½ x published program length</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Career Outcomes (6 months after graduation)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Employment           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall</li> <li>▪ Related to Field of Study</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <b>Benchmark:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• = or &gt; RIT benchmark (3 yr avg)</li> </ul>	

\* Surplus / (Deficit) at College Cost Responsibility: Net tuition revenue from students matriculated in each program less the cost of instruction for all credit hours consumed by these same students including only expenses within the colleges' collective control.

# Academic Program Analysis: Ph.D. Programs

## WORKING DRAFT

### Tier 1: Ph.D. (Under Development)

<i>Trigger Metrics</i>	<i>Supporting Metrics</i>	<i>Supporting Metrics</i>	<i>Trigger Metrics</i>
<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Student Success</b>	<b>Revenue / Expense</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met Projected Enrollment (Y/N)</li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Learning Outcomes Assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met or exceeded achievement benchmark level (Y or N)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persistence (F/T Students)</li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt; x% (3 yr average)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs Net Surplus/ Deficit* (College Overhead Costs Only)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application Yield               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applied</li> <li>Admitted</li> <li>Enrolled</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>= or &gt; ??%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program Improvement</li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Used results for program improvement (Y or N)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graduation</li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of graduates &lt; x% (3 yr average)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of external support</li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;25% of ?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average GRE/GMAT of Entering Grad Students</li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>= or &gt; x score</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time to Degree (F/T Students)</li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt; 1 ½ x published program length</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career Outcomes (6 months after graduation)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall</li> <li>Related to Field of Study</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Benchmark:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt; x% (3 yr average)</li> </ul>	

## Tier 2

### Appendix B

### Academic Program Analysis

#### Potential Deeper Dive Metrics for Tier 2/3 Analysis (Undergraduate and Graduate)

Enrollment	Student Success	Instructional Activity	Faculty	Revenue / Expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Application Yield</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Applied</li> <li>○ Admitted</li> <li>○ Enrolled</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Retention</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met or exceeded RIT Goal: represented as quartile for RIT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b># of Sections Taught per FTE Faculty in Program Home Dept.</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Average Salary by Rank</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b># of Student Credit Hours Generated</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Met Enrollment Projections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes or No</li> <li>○ Were quality students turned away?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Year Retention</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represented as quartile for RIT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FTE Students Taught per FTE Faculty</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>% with Terminal Degree</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Net Tuition Revenue</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>% Receiving Financial Aid (?)</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Licensure Pass Rate, if appropriate</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professional Recognition of Program's Graduates (Awards, Global Visibility, Indicators)</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Research Awards (\$ amount per T/TT faculty)</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Average UG GPA/GRE/GMAT of Entering Students</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>On-time Graduation Rate (to be developed per degree program)</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Leadership Positions of Program Graduate and Other Indicators of Success</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>% of T/TT Faculty PI's</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overall GPA of Graduates (?)</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Graduate Programs:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Top 10 employers, Fortune 500 employers</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Amount of External Funding</b></li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	

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Enrollment	Student Success	Instructional Activity	Faculty	Revenue / Expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time to Degree for Each Graduate</li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate Programs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Placement in academic teaching jobs, top ten employers</li> <li>○ Placement in academic teaching jobs, top ten employers</li> <li>○ Professional recognition of program's graduates (e.g., awards in the arts, Pulitzer prizes, professional organization awards)</li> <li>○ 3 year average creative and scholarly activities/presentations at national and international conferences, etc.)</li> <li>○ 3 year average of graduate faculty creative and scholarly/research endeavors</li> <li>○ 3 year average of graduate faculty professional and artistic recognition</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>			



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Enrollment	Student Success	Instructional Activity	Faculty	Revenue / Expenses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate Programs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Top 10 employers</li> <li>○ Employer type distribution (academic, government, industry, other)</li> <li>○ 3 year average number of peer-reviewed publications by Ph.D. graduate (as senior author, coauthor)</li> <li>○ 3 year average number of presentations at national and international conferences</li> <li>○ 3 year average of competitive funding secured by faculty</li> <li>○ 3 year average of graduate faculty scholarly productivity</li> <li>○ Citation impact of Ph.D. student and Ph.D. faculty scholarship</li> <li>○ Graduate student awards (fellowships, grants, best conference papers, etc.)</li> <li>○ Professional recognition of Ph.D. graduates (national and global visibility indicators)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Benchmark:</p>			

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Enrollment	Student Success	Instructional Activity	Faculty	Revenue / Expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual # of students transferring out of program and into another RIT program</li> </ul> Benchmark:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-op Employer Results Evaluation</li> </ul> Benchmark:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of Female Students</li> <li>• % of AALANA</li> </ul> Benchmark:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alumni Survey Results</li> <li>• NSSE Results</li> </ul> Benchmark:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of double majors</li> </ul> Benchmark:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noel Levitz Results</li> </ul> Benchmark:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of internal transfers</li> </ul> Benchmark:				