In March, 2007, the Academic Council of faculty governance voted to endorse a plan by which faculty members would systematically engage in the assessment of the direction and performance of their primary administrative unit, through periodic program review. The plan calls for all Departments/Schools/Programs to be reviewed on a seven year cycle. The Academic Program Review (APR) is intended to be a comprehensive look at all academic aspects of the unit: teaching, research, service, and outreach and engagement. The APR should provide departments, school and programs, the colleges in which they reside, and the University with feedback that can be used to effectively manage change. Besides its value to the individual unit, the academic program review should generate information that will support and guide the University’s process of continuous renewal, improvement, and decision making. Academic program review is an essential component of university planning, and requires an enormous commitment by all parties within the University. The value of program review includes:

- Opportunity for each academic unit (Department/School/Program) to pause to periodically evaluate its strengths, weaknesses and progress, as a foundation for the development for planning and priority setting
- Opportunity for input into college and university-wide planning
- Opportunity for communication that expands understanding and appreciation for the role and function of the unit (Department/School/Program) within the college and University
- Opportunity for assessment and feedback from external experts
- Opportunity for increased visibility of the program, within and outside the University
- Enhanced connection between academic units (Department/School/Program) and faculty governance, through the University Faculty Program Advisory Committee.

The Academic Program Review is a multi-step process: first the individual department will conduct a self-study which documents the unit’s accomplishments and its short-comings, and generates an agreed-upon course of action for the future. This document serves as a basis for discussion with the College Dean(s), and allows the Dean(s) to report to the Provost on the status of units within his/her college. The self study answers the following questions:

1. What do we do?
2. Why do we do it?
3. How well do we do it, and who thinks so?
4. What difference does it make whether we do it or not?
5. Given our present status, how do we intend to change in ways that will help us advance?
6. How will we evaluate our future progress and successes?

Each unit will have available to them a set of standard University data, specific to their unit, which will assist them in addressing these questions.

Each unit will be expected to include as part of their self study their processes and procedures for assessing student learning. The discussion of assessment should include general discussion on the results of the assessments and changes made as a result.

In the case of some units, an external review may be included. This review consists of a set of external experts visiting campus to consult with Department/School/Program faculty and staff, students and appropriate unit constituencies within and external to MSU to evaluate the unit and its self study, and report directly to the unit and to the College Dean(s).

All units (whether conducting the self study phase or the self study with external reviewers) will be expected to engage in an action planning process. After discussion and feedback from the first phase(s) of the process, the unit is responsible for submitting an action plan for program improvement to the relevant Dean(s).

The following outlines the proposed steps in the process:

Before the APR Begins:

- Department chairpersons/School or Program directors consult with the Dean of their college to determine the schedule for program review within that college.
- Schedules for each college are submitted to the Office of the Provost, who, in consultation with the University Faculty Program Advisory Committee, determines the schedule and sequence of program reviews for the next 1-3 years.
- Deans are informed of the schedule for program review, and are asked to meet with units whose reviews are scheduled for the next 12 months.

The Self Study

- Deans meet with chairperson/director and relevant faculty to discuss the process, and to confirm the unit metrics. Upon request, representatives from the Office of the Provost may attend this meeting to respond to questions, and to provide information about the kinds of support (data and otherwise) available through the Office of the Provost.
- Department/School/Program receives data set from OPB.
The Department/School/Program conducts the self-study process (which should be completed within one semester).

The self-study is submitted for review by the Dean and College Advisory Committee; discussion with the chairperson/director follows.

Upon review of the self-study, the Department/School/Program OR the Dean of the College may indicate the intention of moving to the external review phase. The Provost, in consultation with the Dean, shall approve all external reviews.

If there is no external review phase, all responses from the unit, all reports, and comments from the Dean will be forwarded to the Office of the Provost.

The External Review

If an external review phase is initiated, the Department/School/Program will be asked to recommend reviewers.

External reviewers are selected by the Dean.

Reviewers visit and consult with faculty, staff, students, and relevant administrators.

Reviewers provide the Department/School/Program with a report, and the unit provides a written response to the report, which is forwarded to the Dean.

The Dean and chairperson/director review the external review report (along with the self study analysis) with the College Advisory Committee.

For All Departments/Schools/Programs (with or without external review)

All responses from the Department/School/Program, all reports, and comments from the Dean will be forwarded to the Office of the Provost.

The Provost reviews each Program Review with the University Faculty Program Advisory Committee.

Provost provides feedback to the unit directly or through the dean.

Department/School/Program creates an action plan for change.

Provost, in consultation with the Dean, uses self-study and action plan information to inform college planning and budget process.

Within 24 months of the self study and action plan, the Department/School/Program will submit a progress report to the Dean(s).

Dean uses progress report to inform college planning.