
MEMORANDUM

DATE: JULY 8, 2024
To: AMY BANES-BERCELI, ASSOCIATE PROVOST
FROM: LORI BURRINGTON, CHAIR, SENATE PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE
RE: SENATE PLANNING REVIEW COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

During the 2023-2024 academic year, The Senate Planning Review Committee (SPRC) conducted the following business:

1. The SPRC reviewed and approved the following program proposals:
 - BS in Data Science
 - MS in Energy Engineering
 - BS in Mechatronics and Robotics
 - MS in Mechatronics and Robotics
2. The SPRC also held meetings with program proposers for the following programs: an MS in Data Science Engineering (SECS) and a BS in Applied Data Science (CAS). The committee voiced concerns about the potential confusion of the various proposals labeled “data science,” and tabled approval of these proposals pending a discussion among various deans and members of the administration to determine how best to offer these various programs without creating confusion or spreading university resources too thinly. There were also some concerns expressed about whether there was adequate demand to support all of these programs, and some skepticism about the proposed enrollments for the SECS proposal, which appeared to have the same numbers in its budget as a proposal approved by the committee in the prior academic year. Finally, and of greatest importance, there were concerns that the various programs would potentially overlap with regard to HLC classifications, creating logistical difficulties. (In a follow-up report back to SPRC, it was indicated that these issues have been resolved as a result of productive discussions among the various stakeholders in the administration.)
3. The committee also reviewed a proposal for an MS in Bioengineering, a graduate complement to the existing undergraduate degree in this interdisciplinary (CAS and SECS) specialization. The proposers were highly responsive to committee comments; however, the proposal became caught in the committee’s overarching concerns about the flurry of proposals received from SECS in two successive academic years (see number 5, below). The committee will return to this program proposal in Fall 2024 to make a final determination.
4. The committee also had a first reading of a new program proposal for an MS in Smart Manufacturing (in April 2024). SPRC will complete its review of this program in Fall 2024.
5. Generally, committee members expressed concerns about our inability to better understand how the various recent (2022-23 and 2023-24) SECS new program proposals fit within the larger structure of the school, and whether resources existed to support the various new programs along with all of the current existing programs in SECS. This critique is a general one (though applied specifically to SECS in this case), as colleges and schools tend to put forth numerous new program proposals in a short timeframe without also furnishing plans to “sunset” other degrees that may be out-of-date and superseded by the proposed new programs, so that resources may be

reallocated. It is the committee's hope that the "approval to plan" process that is underway may address these concerns and provide greater clarity.

6. Associate Provost Kristin Landis-Piwowar has joined the committee in a non-voting capacity to ensure that she has adequate information given her role in accreditation of the many new programs we review. As part of an effort to ensure that program reviews of existing programs (which are forwarded to our committee by Associate Provost Landis-Piwowar) receive a systematic review within the university, SPRC has been asked to become more formally involved in the process of these program reviews (including meetings with program representatives), and put forth its recommendations to Senate Steering. Since this has not been a traditional SPRC role, the committee worked to develop a procedure by which program reviews can be evaluated by the committee. To that end, Song Yan's staff in OIRA supplied our committee with a helpful rubric the committee can use to make these evaluations. At the end of this academic year, SPRC provided initial feedback on this rubric, which we hope to approve at the start of the 2024-25 academic year. At that time, the committee will then be able to turn to the existing backlog of program reviews (which were tabled until a procedure could be finalized).
7. With SBRC, the SPRC received its annual briefing on the university budget from President Ora Pescovitz and Vice President for Finance and Administration Stephen Mackey.
8. The Registrar was named a standing member of SPRC starting in 2023-24. As a result, an additional AP member should be named to SPRC in the 2024-25 academic year.
9. SPRC Chair for 2023-24, Lori Burrington, has agreed to serve as SPRC Chair again in 2024-25 to provide continuity for the various ongoing matters before the committee (pending program proposals and various program reviews). The goal for 2024-25 is to identify another member of the committee who may be trained over the course of the upcoming year to take over chairing the committee in 2025-26.