

**MANAGEMENT REPORT**

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| *Report Title:* | **Program Policy Development - Update** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *Report Number:* | **A.13.02.140** | | | ***Date to Committee:*** | | February 13, 2013 | | | ***Date to Board:*** | | February 13, 2013 | |
| *Report To:* | **AUDIT, FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE**  **GOVERNANCE**  **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & RENEWAL**  **STUDENT SERVICES**  **NOMINATING**  **OTHER:** | | | | | | | | **BOARD**  **MEG**  **SMT** | | | |
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| *Item Class:* | CLOSED |  | OPEN | |  | | DECISION |  | | INFORMATION | |  |

1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the Board of Governors receives for information Report # A.13.02.140: *Program Policy Development - Update*.

1. **Purpose & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Staff are developing a new Program Quality policy as well as procedures covering three key academic responsibilities:

* Exciting New Programs
* Quality Programs
* Program Closure and Consolidation.

This report provides a status update on the development of these documents.

1. **BACKGROUND:**

In June 2012, the Board of Governors approved the following annual strategic plan priority actions:

Key Project 1.1.1 - “Exciting Programs" - Establish revised policies and procedures by March 2013 that will ensure relevant and vibrant programs are developed for Board approval on an ongoing basis.

Key Project 1.1.2 - "Quality Programs" - (a) Revised policies and procedures by March 2013 to ensure that existing programs undergo enhanced quality assurance; (b) Develop metrics to allow easy monitoring of the process by the Board.

Key Project 1.1.3 - “Closure and Consolidation" - Establish revised policies and procedures by March 2013 that will ensure outdated or unsustainable programs are recommended for closure or consolidation on an ongoing and timely basis.

**RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

| **STRATEGIC PRIORITY** |  |
| --- | --- |
| **QUALITY** |  |
| Quality Programs and Strategic Enrolment Management | √ |
| Quality Employees |  |
| Quality Facilities, Equipment, and Services |  |
| **INNOVATION** |  |
| Future Ready Students | √ |
| Future Ready College |  |
| Future Ready Community |  |
| **SUSTAINABILITY** |  |
| Social Inclusion |  |
| Greening Mohawk |  |
| Financial Well-Being | √ |

1. **DISCUSSION:**

EXCITING NEW PROGRAMS – PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Staff have utilized fundamental principles employed in private sector product design to inform a new process for program development at Mohawk College. The new process will be used to formulate the revised policy for program development.

Staff proposes to ground program development in market research conducted annually to determine market trends and needs to guide the deployment of college resources. This research will allow for both reactive and proactive program development to take place. Research will first survey the offerings and success of programs at competitor colleges to lever off of the work being done at other institutions and their successes. This is a highly cost effective way in which to consider new program offerings at Mohawk as the data is readily available. Beyond this competitor analysis, staff further proposes to conduct a market scan on a regular basis to canvass industry and government institutions to project market needs going forward. Finally, such a market scan will also assess the views of faculty, staff, administration, and students on desirable program offerings.

Staff will utilize this research to conduct a gap analysis between our current program offerings and credential mix to determine where the best opportunities for new programs exist. It should be noted that this research is also likely to inform the program prioritization process being designed by staff as market trends may also indicate that certain current offerings are not well aligned to where the market needs are trending. The market scan when combined with some financial analysis should allow the determination of an ideal program mix for the college which will take into account both market needs in terms of program content and credentials but also project a sustainable number and assortment of programs for the College.

With this research in hand, staff will issue a call for proposals from Deans, Associate Deans, and faculty members. The proposal call will share the high level results from our market scan to help guide proponents in the proposals they bring forward. It is contemplated that apparent gaps that fall out of the research will also result in directed program development where we will deploy a team to develop a program which is an obvious need (as opposed to simply hoping that a willing proponent comes forward to fill a gap).

The next stage in the process involves a screening of the program proposals. Proposals will be assessed first on the basis of their alignment with market trends but also having regard to our strategic plan, branding, and marketing strategies. Proposals will then be prioritized based on their suitability in the market, and their alignment and fit with College strategy. The highest rated programs should move forward in accordance with the resources available for program development.

The last two phases, business analysis and program design, while shown as sequential are in fact likely to be iterative. A business analysis will be conducted to determine projected contribution margin having regard to tuition, projected enrolment, operating and capital costs. Where a feasible business case is demonstrated, the program proposals can move into the design phase.

As a rule, programs will be expected to project a business case that achieves the expected range of acceptable contribution margins for Mohawk programs within their first 5 years. Currently, there is a goal of a 39% contribution margin on average for our programs excluding the cost of capital. However, provision will be made to allow for some programs which carry a higher level of risk in terms of their business case to ensure that aversion to risk does not preclude innovation in programming.

The design phase will be guided by the principles outlined in the Academic Plan. The Academic Plan is founded on the Strategic Plan and our Branding strategy and sets forth guiding principles around the characteristics of Mohawks delivery platform, and the skills and attributes of our graduates.

In designing new programs, staff will ensure they utilize new learning technologies and have a curriculum that emphasizes leading technology being employed in the field. Our new programs will employ cross-disciplinary learning, embed institutional learning outcomes, and embrace internationalization. Furthermore, our new programs will be designed with multiple pathways in and out for our students, and wherever possible involve close connections to business, community and industry partners. Careful consideration will also be given to the modularity of the program to take advantage of existing offerings at the college and how they can be levered to reduce the requirement for new courses while providing more flexibility to students in course choice.

A deliberate focus on the development of entirely online credentials will be integrated into the new process. Staff will aggressively search for partners in the private sector as well as within the postsecondary education sector to accelerate our progress in online learning offerings for our students.

It is contemplated that during and subsequent to the design phase the conclusions arrived at during the business analysis will have to be reconfirmed based on the design features being utilized in the program.

The final stage of the process is program launch. At this stage consideration will include promotional strategies, and risk mitigation for innovative programs. More conventional low risk programs will be launched as part of the College’s regular program offering. Consideration will be given to piloting more innovative higher risk programs through continuing education or otherwise so as to mitigate downside risk.

The proposed program development procedure is given in Appendix A: Program Development Process. The program development cycle, from market research to launch, is expected to range from six months for innovative pilot programs to two years for conventional program offerings.

During the policy and procedure development stages, staff intends to focus exclusively on directed program development until a more strategic balance of programs and credentials is achieved.

QUALITY PROGRAMS – Program Review

Staff are proposing major changes in the program review process at Mohawk College. Principles for quality assurance will be based on the procedures developed and implemented by our own academic staff in the Faculty of Health Sciences for external accreditation by licensing bodies. The Health Sciences programs at Mohawk College consistently receive the highest level of accreditation, for the maximum terms allowed within the external accreditation policies and practices. The faculty members within these programs have been using the proposed process for their own internal program review, and it is seen as a best practice in the College by the Vice President Academic.

It should be noted that the Quality Assurance process will follow many of the steps given for the proposed Program Development process described above. Staff expect that the new model will include a comprehensive review process, and will also introduce a new, compressed annual review process. The latter will enable us to improve any aspect of the program that should not be delayed by a formal review cycle.

Programs that demonstrate high levels of quality will require less frequent reviews while programs requiring improvement will have more frequent reviews, which will be specified in the review report. It is proposed that all programs will have at least one review every seven years.

Program review will cover all college programs, including programs offered through continuing education and part time studies.

CLOSURE AND CONSOLIDATION

Staff are developing the Closure and Consolidation component of the policy to ensure that programs not meeting College standards in quality and sustainability are closed or consolidated with other programs.

Staff are considering the program rationalization and consolidation principles and guidelines given in Robert C. Dickeson's book, "Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services – Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance" (Jossey-Bass, 2010). The author recommends general criteria to use in the decision making process, which align very well with the relevant components of the program development process described earlier in this report. The overarching evaluation factor is “Essentiality”, which refers to the importance of the program to strategic direction of the institution. In our circumstance, the principles given in the Academic Plan, Strategic Plan and our Branding strategy will be the foundation of the process. Staff are proposing that our strategic focus on Health and Technology as well as Access form the basis for program essentiality at Mohawk. Additional criteria such as internal and external demand for the program, quality of program inputs, and outcomes are captured using the College’s program review process. Data by which the criteria will be evaluated are available in the academic program scorecard, financial metrics for the program and enrollment planning documentation.

Staff are developing a decision making framework recommended by Dr. Dickeson, to guide the evaluation of programs. This framework is given in Appendix B: Decision Making and Prioritization. Decision grids will be developed as a component of the procedure to capture all data and final decisions. It is contemplated that the decision grid reports will form an integral component of all program review documentation.

The proposed processes described in this report are summarized in the program lifecycle model, as illustrated in Appendix C: Program Life Cycle. This model was first presented at the April 12, 2012 Board of Governors meeting in Report A.12.04.105: Academic Program Scorecard.

The new Program Quality Policy and accompanying procedures will be finalized by March 31, 2013.

1. **STUDENT IMPACT:**

The policies will adhere to all Ministry binding policy requirements regarding completion of programs and communication to students.

1. **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The achievement of targets for contribution margins will be one of the criteria used to make decisions on the future of a program.

The Program development policy will ensure that the College is providing programs that are exciting to potential applicants and relevant to employers.

1. **Human resources IMPACT:**

The new policies will adhere to requirements of collective bargaining agreements.

1. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:**

N/A

1. **COMMUNICATION IMPACT:**

A comprehensive communication plan for the new policies will be created and will be implemented and managed with the support of the College’s Communications team.

1. **legal IMPACT:**

N/A

1. **GOVERNMENT/REGULATORY IMPACT:**

The new policy will comply with all provincial binding policy requirements.

1. **CONCLUSION:**

The new policy and procedures for program development, review and consolidation and closure will enhance innovative academic programming at the college, and ensure an effective development and review process. Evidence-based decisions for program development as well as for closure and consolidation will allow for a program mix that is sustainable and aligned with the College’s Strategic and Academic Plans.

Respectfully Submitted, Approved for Submission,

Cheryl Jensen      Rob MacIsaac

Vice President, Academic President

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| ***Appendices:*** | Appendix A – Program Development Process  Appendix B – Decision Tree  Appendix C – Program Life Cycle | |
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| ***Staff & Others Consulted:*** | Name | Telephone |
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