OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

On a rotating basis over a 5-6 year period, each academic program at William Paterson University undergoes program review and/or accreditation self study. This process provides an opportunity for departments to reflect on all aspects of their program within the context of the changing needs of students and society, the changing nature of academic disciplines and changes at our university.

Usually, all programs within a department are reviewed simultaneously. Through this assessment process, department and program strengths, areas needing attention, and opportunities for future growth and development are identified. Based on the results of program review, departments develop plans to guide their efforts over the next five years. Progress in implementing these plans is reported annually in the Department’s year-end report. The major steps in the program review process are:

1. **Preparation for Self-Study.** Departments review their mission statement, student learning outcomes, course outlines, and assessment plans (see Assessment Resources on pp. 22-33) and revise them, if needed. Departments also decide how they will organize their self-study and provide a brief written summary of the process to their Dean, along with their mission statement and student learning outcomes.

2. **Self-Study.** Departments prepare a self-study document following the Self-Study Outline in this handbook (pp. 11-21). The self-study should be a collaborative effort and should involve most members of the Department. It is recommended that students and alumni also be invited to participate.

3. **Selection of External Reviewer.** Departments nominate three individuals to serve as reviewers for their programs (see pp. 37-39 for information on program review consultants). The Dean, in collaboration with the Provost’s Office, selects one of the nominees to serve as reviewer.

4. **Administrative Review.** Prior to making final arrangements for the visit of the external reviewer, copies of the completed self-study report and assessment plan are submitted to the Dean for review. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the self-study report and the assessment plan are thorough and follow the self-study guidelines. If the report and/or plan do not meet these criteria, they are returned to the Department for revision.

5. **External Review.** The completed self-study document, along with the Department’s assessment plan and other documents are provided to the external reviewer or to the appropriate accrediting body. The external reviewer or representative of the accrediting body visits the campus to meet with faculty, students and the Dean and view the facilities first hand. Based on the self-study report and the site visit, the external reviewer prepares a report outlining strengths as well as areas in need of attention. This report is submitted to the Dean who shares it with the Department and the Provost.
6. **Agreement on Future Directions.** Using the results of the self-study and external reviewer’s report, the Department develops a five-year plan that details its future direction, and the activities, time lines and resource requirements to achieve its desired goals. This plan is reviewed by the Dean and Provost, and, if necessary, revised. When the plan has been finalized, a memorandum of understanding between the Department, Dean and Provost indicates mutual agreement to the plan.

7. **Planning, Implementation and Progress Reports.** Progress in implementing the Department’s plan is reported each year in the Department’s annual report. During the third year of implementation, members of the Department review the Plan and modify it, if needed, to reflect current realities.

A checklist of program review activities on the next page will assist departments in tracking program review activities.