Guidelines for Action Plan Development

The Action Plan for a department that has completed Academic Program Review is the final step in the review process. The Action Plan draft is initiated by the department, approved by the Dean, and discussed with the Provost. It is the Provost who issues the final Action Plan.

The purpose of the Action Plan is to define the department’s direction based on information and recommendations provided at various stages in the review process (the self-study, the external reviewers’ report, the APACE report). Action Plans can be—and often are—requests for resources to carry out a plan that the review process has determined to be appropriate for the department’s continuing development.

I. Process. When developing your Action Plan, you will want to attend to both the APACE Report and the External Reviewers’ Report recommendations. Where you do not agree with a recommendation, you need to discuss why you don’t agree; where you do agree, you can use the recommendation to support your request.

Once you have drafted your Action Plan, you should send it to the Dean’s Office and arrange a discussion meeting. When you and the Dean agree on the content, the Dean will send it to the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness who will arrange a discussion meeting with the Provost.

II. Format. There is no single format required for Action Plan drafts. However, it is helpful to keep in mind that the Action Plan is, in fact, an argument justifying the department’s strategic goals with whatever resources are necessary to accomplish those goals. Effective Action Plan drafts typically have the following components: 1) a brief discussion of relevant findings (i.e., those related to your strategic goals) from the review process; 2) a summary of what the department has accomplished since the review process; 3) a point-by-point discussion of what you plan to do, the evidence supporting this direction, and the resources needed to achieve it; 4) a timeline and a budget for resources needed to carry out your plan.