PROCEDURE: Academic Program Review

PROCEDURE TITLE: Academic Assessment - Academic Program Review Procedure

EFFECTIVE: May 6, 2020

A. PURPOSE:

The mission of the Community College of Rhode Island stipulates that, *"Our primary mission is to offer recent high school graduates and returning adults the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for intellectual, professional and personal growth through an array of academic, career and lifelong learning programs."* As such, the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs is the primary unit tasked with effectively ensuring achievement of CCRI's mission regarding how well its students learn.

The New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) Standards mandate that CCRI faculty and administration systematically develop, assess, and document student learning outcomes as well as demonstrate continuous improvement as a means of demonstrating CCRI's commitment to assuring educational quality to the public and retaining its institutional accreditation. The Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education also requires systematic program evaluation and reporting in accordance with national and regional accreditation agencies, as well as its Policy on Academic Program Review.

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the steps and timeline of the Academic Program Review process.

B. SCOPE:

This procedure applies to all degree- and certificate-granting academic programs.

C. DEFINITIONS:

Academic Program Personnel: The Department Chairperson, Program Director, Program Coordinator, or other program faculty designated to lead the APR process for a program
Academic Department – An academic unit with 6 or more full-time faculty
Academic Program – A formal course of study that leads to a degree or a stand-alone, credit-bearing certificate.

Academic Program Review (APR) – The Academic Program Review is a comprehensive and systematic analysis used to provide feedback and make recommendations to the program. Departments are required to provide reviews and appraisals of various programmatic dimensions, as well as plans for improvement wherever warranted.

D. PROCESS:

The Academic Quality Assessment Committee (AQAC) reviews all academic programs on a five-year cycle in a process aligned with NECHE accreditation requirements and state policy standards. This review includes an analysis of a program's mission, alignment with the College's institutional needs, curriculum, assessment of course and program Student Learning Outcomes, assessment of program performance, resources, and overall strengths and challenges. This analysis forms the basis for feedback and recommendations by AQAC and the Divisional Dean with the primary goal of recognizing excellence and improving the quality of academic programs. Recommendations are made to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who makes a final recommendation to the President on the outcome of the Academic Program Review (APR) process.

Academic Program Review Preparatory Process
Each January, the Academic Quality Assessment Committee (AQAC) notifies relevant academic program personnel (i.e., department chairs, program directors, program coordinators) and the appropriate divisional dean of upcoming Academic Program Reviews or self-studies for externally accredited programs which will be due in January of the following year. For externally accredited programs, AQAC determines if the self-study covers all major topics covered by the APR template. For non-externally accredited programs and externally accredited programs that will need to complete a portion of the APR, AQAC provides the APR template for completion. In support of the Academic Program Review, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Division of Finance and Strategy shall collaborate with academic departments to provide needed program data. The Division of Finance and Strategy will provide program financial data. Members of the Academic Quality Assessment Committee (AQAC) are available to provide guidance as a resource to program personnel in planning and completing their APRs. Academic program personnel shall collaborate with program faculty when completing the report.

Submission and Distribution of Academic Program Review
Completed APRs and/or self-studies are submitted to the Chair(s) of the Academic Quality Assessment Committee (AQAC) on or before the end of the first week of classes

in the spring term (i.e., January). By the end of January, the Chair(s) distribute the APRs to each committee member for review, and schedule review meetings with program personnel in the spring term during regularly scheduled AQAC meetings. Individual committee members complete a full review of each APR and submit a review one week prior to relevant scheduled APR meetings.

Preparation for Academic Program Review Meetings
One week prior to scheduled AQAC meetings, committee members submit to the Chair(s) their reviews (e.g., questions, concerns, strengths, weaknesses) pertaining to the upcoming APR/self-study. Committee members use the *AQAC APR Review Criteria* for reviewing each APR. Prior to the review meeting, the Chair(s) summarize members' questions for dissemination and discussion at the start of the review meeting.

Academic Program Review Meeting
Academic Program Review meetings include members of the Academic Quality Assessment Committee (AQAC), the academic program personnel associated with the APR/self-study, and the divisional dean. APR Meetings provide program personnel with the opportunity to present their program's strengths, challenges, and steps taken to improve student outcomes and program performance. Committee members and the dean will have the opportunity to ask program personnel questions related to their program and the submitted APR/self-study document. Upon completion of the presentation, AQAC will summarize their evaluation of APR and information presented to the committee and provide feedback and a recommendation identifying steps to maintain excellence, the need for corrective action, or when fully justified, program closure.

Academic Program Review Recommendation Letter
Within one week of the APR meeting, the AQAC Chair(s) send the APR Recommendation Letter to the academic program personnel for review, giving a recommendation and feedback on specific areas for action to be taken. Program personnel have one week to review the letter for accuracy of factual matters and reply to the AQAC Chair(s). After making relevant corrections, the AQAC Chair(s) send the final version of the APR Recommendation Letter to the academic program personnel and the divisional dean by the end of May.

Division deans should forward the APR Meeting Letter to the Vice President of Academic Affairs with their own recommendation for continuation, remediation, or closure. The VPAA's final recommendation shall be presented to the President no later than June 30 of each year. The President has the power to create, consolidate and propose

elimination of programs and courses of study in conformity with RI General Law, Chapter 16-33.1.

Academic Program Review Recommendation Actions
Programs are responsible for implementing any program improvements in the timeframe communicated in the final recommendation by the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In the context of the College's mission and strategic plan, reviews shall be one source of data to inform the progressive improvement, maintenance, remediation, suspension or closure of academic programs.

E. EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to this policy will be made at the discretion of the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

F: RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:

The office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs is responsible for implementing and maintaining this policy.

G: RELATED POLICIES:

Academic Program Review Policy

APPROVED: Dr. Meghan Hughes, President Date: 5/6/20202