

**Saint Michael's College**  
**Goals, Objectives and Procedure for Program Review**  
*Revised June 2023*  
**Office of Academic Affairs**

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The every-sixth-year review of academic programs at Saint Michael's College is an ongoing, formative process, whose goal is to insure the strength and continual improvement of the program. It provides programs, in conjunction with academic administration, with an opportunity to reflect on their current situation and on best practices in their discipline, and to make plans for the future. Program reviews provide opportunities for both the department and the administration to propose questions/issues for analysis and review. In general, the review focuses on program goals and student outcomes, and how the program might need to change in order to achieve its goals.

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**Section I: Goals and Objectives – Data First**

**1. Identify and report on program success**

The review process recognizes that program “success” cannot be measured solely by the number of students who are declared as majors and minors, but also by other criteria, identified below.

- Contributions to areas of the core curriculum
  - Contribution to high impact programs such as First Year Seminar, Junior Seminar and Honors Program.
  - Fulfilling the educational mission of the college
  - Number of new courses created towards the major/program and the core. What was the rationale for creating these courses?
  - Courses eliminated or retired as new courses were added
  - Participation in ASC, Winter
  - Program Outcomes, Curricular Maps and identifying where the outcomes are assessed
- Note: One common answer is that program outcomes are assessed in the senior capstone. However, the review process requires more specific information: Are all program outcomes assessed in the capstone or are some assessed in a scaffolded manner earlier in the major? Curricular maps are important in this regard.
- How is the program attracting new students to the College and to the program among students already here?
  - What specific efforts have been made or could be made towards recruitment to and retention in the major/program?

2. **Identify and report on career discerning experiences/pathways of learning**
  - Current departmental internship opportunities – specify recent internships
  - Some programs have Experiential Learning opportunities such as work with refugees or working on the *Onion River Review* or working on the SMC Farm amongst others. If there are specific experiential learning opportunities in your program, what are these?
  - Examples of career pathways and graduate school opportunities
  - Alumni networks and connections to your students
  - Graduate school placement and employment post-graduation; consult with career education center and the alumni office for alumni surveys
  - Undergraduate research opportunities in your program or other opportunities
  
3. **Scholarship and Scholarly life.** Identify direct and indirect ways in which the scholarship of your faculty may play an integral role in teaching and the delivery of your program.
  
4. Any other initiatives that have contributed to your major/program.

**Available resources & references:**

- Canvas Core Curriculum Assessment course
  - General information (Dean of Faculty & IR)
  - Specific Core Curriculum assessment analyses relevant to courses taught by the department/program in the Core area (IR)
- Institutional Research Office (IR) web site –
  - Factbook Highlights, *including longitudinal Fall Enrollment by Major & Degrees awarded by Major*
  - Common Data Set (*current year, general SMC info*)
- Institutional Research Office (IR) portal page
  - NSSE survey results
  - Retention by Cohort/ Major
  - Admission Opening Profile (Table VI, Anticipated Majors)
- New courses offered by the department/program, and courses eliminated (REG)
  - Requests should be made to the Registrar’s Office
- Associate Director, Academic Innovation & Non Traditional Programs
  - ASC, Winter
- Director of Career Education Center
  - First Destinations Survey results
  - Career pathways, graduate school opportunities
  - Internships (*also REG, for credit-bearing internships*)
- Director of Alumni Engagement
  - Networking & student connections
- Director of Purposeful Learning
  - Connections to Purposeful Learning & advising program

For questions about specific data & reports, please contact the Registrar (REG) or Director of Institutional Research (IR), or the specific contact referenced above.

## Section II: Summary of Procedure

### **Step I: Self Study**

- The self-study focuses on the goals and objectives for majors and minors with specific emphasis on measures of program success and career-discerning opportunities listed under section I. See details on next page.
- The self-study includes a report on **direct** assessment of student learning outcomes for the major (both current and planned).
- As you plan the self-study process, be sure to collaborate with the Dean of the Faculty.

### **Step II: External Review**

- Includes a visit by normally one or occasionally two reviewers from other institutions.
- Not every program reviewed in a given year will have an external reviewer. This is determined by the Dean and VPAA in consultation with the chair or director.

### **Step III: Dialogue and Response**

Consists of a meeting of program faculty, the Dean, and VPAA, focusing on the results of the self-study and external review.

### **Step IV: Action Plan, Final Review and Approval**

Submit an action plan for final review and approval after the dialogue and response meeting.

Describes specific steps to

- 1) Maintain or improve the strengths of the program
- 2) Address any weaknesses in the program
- 3) Initiate or refine ~~the implementation of~~ direct assessment of student learning outcomes, including the core competencies, with feedback loop for continual improvement.

**Three Year Interim Report:** Each program submits an interim report to the Office of Academic Affairs (Dean's office) three years after the program review. This is the responsibility of the chair or director at that time.

## Section III: Details of Procedure

### Step I. Program Self-Study

The following guidelines should be followed when preparing the Self-Study Report. These questions and items are designed to help you organize your Self-Study report. If some of the suggested items are not appropriate to your program, substitute others that are more relevant. The administration and the department may both contribute additional or replacement questions or topics. Be sure to consult with the Dean of the Faculty at the outset of the process.

- Identify at least 5 programs of national or regional distinction in the field, to be reviewed on-line for best practices (e.g., curriculum, outcomes).
- Focus most of the work involved in this process on analyzing how to improve the program in order to better achieve goals related to student educational outcomes.
- In the three years immediately following a NECHE review, the most recent NECHE self-assessment or NECHE midterm report may be a foundation for this self-study.

**Program Goals (What does the program intend to achieve?)** Each program lists its learning outcomes on the SMC website. Existing departmental assessment and planning materials, along with the catalog, also contain this information. What does the program hope to achieve with its majors in terms of student learning outcomes and post-graduate goals ?

#### **B. Learning Outcomes (What does the program consider its measurable outcomes?)**

Include items such as knowledge, skills, competencies, student growth and development, experience. Provide a description (or a curriculum mapping) of how the required courses support these learning outcomes. For example, if “effective oral and written communication skills” is an outcome, indicate in which course(s) the students are introduced to these skills and become proficient in these skills. Be sure to include analysis of how core competencies (ethical reasoning, information literacy, oral communication, written communication) are taught and assessed in the major (see the 2019 “Guidelines and Learning Outcomes for the Core Curriculum.”)

**C. Assessment of Student Outcomes.** How does the department know that student learning outcomes and post-graduate goals are being realized? What measures of indirect and direct program assessment are being used? Indirect indicators are graduate school placement and employment post-graduation; consult with career education center and the alumni office for alumni surveys. Direct assessments may be embedded quiz or exam questions, portfolios, presentations, projects rated with rubrics, or standardized tests.

**D. Program Data (for the past five years).** The offices of Institutional Research and the Registrar compile and provide enrollment and graduation data routinely for analysis and review by the program and administration. Faculty members, including chairs and directors, can generate a real-time report of current enrollment in a program on the “O” drive. If student interest (as indicated by enrollment) is decreasing, the program should try to determine what steps it might take to become a vital program once more.

#### **E. Curriculum**

This section includes a detailed description of the curriculum and a rationale for it. Emphasis is on curriculum for majors and minors, CORE curriculum, and connections with other programs. How are major and minor requirements reviewed on a regular basis? How do they compare to requirements at peer and aspirant institutions (including

the best practices that were identified earlier)? If labs or other specialized spaces are required, evaluate their quality. What are opportunities for experiential learning, service learning and independent research? In what ways does the department discuss the relationship among the various courses in the department, to minimize overlap and assure that introductory courses prepare students for the subsequent level of courses? What specific contributions has the department made to non-department based courses, such as First Year Seminar, Junior Seminar, and courses in interdisciplinary programs? In an appendix, include representative syllabi from courses in the program.

#### **F. Pedagogy**

Describe when and how pedagogy is discussed within the department or program. How is peer-review of teaching conducted (discussion of syllabi, classroom visitations, team-teaching)? How does the department or program use assessment results to improve teaching and learning?

#### **G. Students**

Describe any formal or informal opportunities for faculty-student interaction. Describe and evaluate the processes in place for advising students in your program. How are students assigned to advisors? Are there ways that the department can improve this process?

#### **H. . Faculty**

In an appendix, provide a current CV for each full-time faculty member.

#### **G. Reviewed and Updated Scholarship Guidelines**

Provide a copy of an updated departmental or program scholarship guidelines revised for this program review. What changes have been made to the scholarship guidelines since the department's previous review? For example, what innovations in the delivery of scholarship or creative productions have emerged in the field (online peer-review journals, blogging, website design, etc.) that should be considered? Any changes to Scholarship Guidelines must be submitted to the Faculty Council for review.

#### **J. Overall Program – Summary**

What could be done to help the program achieve higher quality, in terms of the achievement of student educational outcomes? In other words, what would it take for your program to become a “best practice”, recognized by other institutions as supporting the highest standard of student achievement? With current resources? With additional resources?

### **Step II. External Review**

In those cases where an external reviewer has been approved, the department recommends reviewers to the Dean, who contacts the potential reviewers. The reviewer(s) will meet with relevant students, faculty and administrators, review the Self-Study Report and documents available on-line. The report and accompanying documents should be available to the reviewer at least two weeks in advance of their visit. The reviewers prepare a report, which contains a summary of relevant information, a review of the program (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities) in light of its goals and student outcomes, and recommendations for change

### **Step III. Dialogue and Response**

The third step in the program review process provides an opportunity for constructive dialogue among program faculty and administrators-focused on educational quality. What are the educational goals of the program? How well are they being achieved? What changes should be made in light of the review findings?

A group consisting of the academic program faculty members, the Dean of the Faculty and the Vice President of Academic Affairs meets to discuss the Self-Study Report and the External Review Report and to determine the college's support for additional resources, and the expectations of the department in terms of curricular change, etc.

**Step IV. Development of the Departmental Plan and Interim Report**

The final step of the program review process is the development of a departmental plan. The members of the program meet and formulate the plan which articulates specific steps to 1) maintain or improve the strengths of the program, 2) address any weaknesses in the program 3) Initiate or refine the implementation of direct assessment of student learning outcomes with feedback loop for continual improvement.

**The chair/ program director is responsible for putting the plan in writing and forwarding copies to the Dean and VPAA within a month of the meeting in step III. The VPAA provides final approval of the plan.**

**Interim Report:** Three years later, the chair or program director follows up with a written interim report to the VPAA on implementation of the plan.

**CORE COMPETENCIES\_ADDENDUM** (excerpted from SAINT MICHAEL'S COLLEGE GUIDELINES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES\_FOR\_THE CORE CURRICULUM)

*Each of the following four areas is to be addressed and assessed by each department for their majors: Ethical Reasoning; Information Literacy; Oral Communication; and Written Communication.*

## **Ethical Reasoning**

### **Description:**

Not merely a question of academic integrity, the study of ethical thinking and decision-making is foundational to the mission of Saint Michael's College. This is because we believe that moral integrity and ethical living are essential to the dignity and success of human life, both as individuals and within communities of all sizes and types, from the family unit to nations and the world.

Therefore, the College promotes ethical reasoning across the curriculum, both within the CORE and within its majors. Since departments and disciplines vary so much in how they can achieve this goal, guidelines for this requirement must be developed and articulated by each major. They should also appear in appropriate course descriptions and their syllabi. Some major programs may opt to create a specific course or courses addressing this area; others may opt to incorporate such discussion through many or all courses, both for their majors and for their courses in the CORE. Below are the minimum goals of such efforts.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes:**

*By graduation, all Saint Michael's College students should be able to:*

1. State their own core ethical beliefs and values and recognize the existence and viability of other ethical perspectives.
2. Identify situations within their own lives and/or disciplines that raise ethical issues.
3. Analyze such situations and use ethical reasoning to develop and defend appropriate responses to that situation.

## **Information Literacy**

### **Description:**

The development of information literacy will occur throughout the curriculum but especially within the student's major field of study. Information literacy involves researching, evaluating, and appropriate use of resources. As part of this requirement, students will be introduced to research skills in the First Year Seminar and learn more advanced skills in research and evaluation of resources in the upper-level courses in the major, including senior capstone. Ideally, research assignments would be required throughout the major courses, allowing the students time to further practice these skills prior to the senior capstone.

### **Guidelines:**

First Year Seminar courses introduce students to information literacy skills in collaboration with Research & Instruction Librarians.

1. The remainder of this requirement will be fulfilled by a combination of courses within the major and other courses in the Core.
2. As many courses as possible should include assignments designed to allow students to practice the common forms of information-seeking skills required in a variety of fields, especially in their major, and also offer specific feedback to students for the development of these skills.

### **Intended Learning Goals:**

#### **First Year**

*By the end of their first year, all Saint Michael's College students should have been introduced to the following:*

1. Key principles of academic integrity including copyright, plagiarism, and fair use.
2. Navigating the library website to conduct research by locating scholarly articles, books, and other resources relevant to an assignment.
3. Evaluating search results in terms of being able to classify sources into popular press versus scholarly publications, while discerning authority and relevant credibility of those sources.
4. Summarizing, organizing, and integrating research into a written assignment or presentation effectively, employing a citation style appropriate to the discipline.

#### **Sophomore to Senior Years**

*During the remainder of their college years, all Saint Michael's College Students should learn to:*

1. Evaluate all search results in terms of their authoritativeness and relevant credibility.
2. Employ specialized reference sources (e.g., subject dictionaries) and sources specific to the major field (e.g., case studies, surveys, polls, statistics, fieldwork).
3. Manipulate special features of subject databases, including controlled vocabulary, limiters, etc., to refine data searches.
4. Use appropriate style manuals and/or citation style formatting software in a written assignment.
5. Incorporate outside sources into a major paper/project and create an original analysis which contributes to the ongoing scholarly conversation.
6. Adhere to any guidelines, standards, and ethics endorsed by their major discipline/profession applicable to the collection of information—for example: interviewing, human subjects research, or laboratory experiments.

### **Oral Communication**

#### **Description:**

The development of oral communication skills will occur throughout the curriculum but especially within the student's major field of study. Oral communication involves speaking and listening as principal and integral means of learning. Courses fulfilling this requirement provide several opportunities for students to practice their oral skills in course assignments and may emphasize any of the modes of communication, including presentations, small group debates or discussions, and/or one-on-one communication. The feedback students receive on these skills will help them develop confidence in their ability to participate in discourse and public speaking.



**Guidelines:**

1. Courses must provide explicit instruction in oral communication through readings, lectures, class discussion, and/or other features of the course.
2. This requirement may be fulfilled by a single course or by means of a combination of courses within the major.
3. Courses must provide several opportunities for students to practice their oral skills in course assignments, and also offer specific feedback to students for the development of these skills.
4. Courses may emphasize any of the modes of communication, including presentations, small group debates or discussions, and/or one-on-one communication.

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

*Students will demonstrate:*

- 1) The ability to listen and speak effectively in one or more of the following modes: interpersonal communication, small group discussion, public presentations.
- 2) The ability to use listening and speaking as a means of learning.
- 3) Improved abilities to speak, listen, and engage in thoughtful discourse.

**Written Communication****Description:**

The skills of written communication will be developed throughout the curriculum, but especially within the student's major field of study. All students will demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly in written English including the ability to formulate a thesis statement and to validate it in a clear, well-organized essay; **proficiency in these basic academic writing skills will be assessed and is required for graduation.**

All students at the College will take two writing-intensive courses intended to develop critical thinking and compositional skills: the First Year Seminar and a writing-intensive course in their major. As part of this requirement, students will be introduced to research skills in the First Year Seminar and learn more advanced skills in research and documentation in the writing-intensive course in their major.

See page 2 of this document for the description, guidelines, and learning outcomes associated with the **First Year Seminar. Writing-Intensive Courses in the Major** introduce students to the common *forms of professional or technical writing in the discipline*, along with the *processes* used to achieve those forms. Ideally, these courses would be required early in the major, allowing students time to further practice these modes prior to the senior capstone. Writing-intensive courses in the major should be small enough to allow faculty time to respond to student writing but may also rely more on peer responses, encouraging collaboration and mimicking the kinds of feedback practiced by professionals in the field.

**Guidelines for Writing-Intensive Courses in the Major:**

1. Course must have regular writing assignments, which may include informal writing and preparatory stages used by professionals in the field.
2. Courses must include assignments designed to allow students to practice the common forms of writing required in the field.

3. *Courses must have at least one formal assignment that requires students to do research in the field and incorporate sources into their writing using the formats of their discipline.*
4. *Courses must provide clear, written, commonly accepted criteria for good writing in the discipline making use of texts as well as professional and student models demonstrating those criteria.*
5. *Courses must provide regular opportunities for feedback on writing, from peers or the instructor, in small groups, workshops, and/or individual conferences.*
6. *Courses must include revisions involving feedback.*

***Intended Learning Outcomes for Writing-Intensive Courses in the Major:***

*Students will demonstrate:*

1. *An understanding of the purposes and components of the main forms of writing in the discipline.*
2. *The ability to manage the writing process (prewriting, drafting, gathering feedback, revision, editing, and proofreading) to produce professional products.*
3. *The ability to generate their own research topics; find, analyze, and synthesize appropriate sources; and integrate research into their own voice with appropriate citations.*
4. *The ability to give constructive criticism on the writing and ideas of others in the field.*