

# RAPID<sup>3</sup> REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

## Subcommittee

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## Charge

The RAPID<sup>3</sup> subcommittee of the Strategic Planning & Assessment Committee (SPAC) was charged by SPAC and Cabinet with reviewing the current processes for moving innovative academic program ideas from thought to implementation and then making recommendations for improving that process.

## Input

During the Fall 2021 semester the sub-committee conducted a listening tour with the following focus groups:

- Education Council
- LAS Senate
- Curriculum Committee
- Graduate Council
- Deans
- Open Forum

During the Spring 2022 semester, the sub-committee wrote and edited the report and presented it to SPAC for consideration and feedback. The co-chairs then presented a draft report to the Interim Provost for additional review. This Report & Recommendations includes input from each of these constituencies.

## Listening Tour Themes

During our listening tour, we posed general questions about experiences with program development and revision. The following themes emerged from our meetings with campus constituencies:

- People don't have an understanding about how the entire process works. Even if they understand their role, they don't necessarily know what happens before or after.
- Program developers lack tools or experience to do market analysis, ROI, and budget proposals.
- There is concern about time investment for faculty, about processes going forward without deans or department chairs being aware, and about inertia caused by not knowing whether there will be institutional or SUNY support.

- There is some concern about the timing of committee meetings and lack of clarity about what each level of review is looking for.
- There is lack of clarity about intersections between departments/schools with interdisciplinary programs.
- There are challenges associated with physical routing of paperwork (including revisions and signatures).
- There are concerns about program launch/marketing/follow-up.

### Recommendations for Improvement

The subcommittee notes that the program approval process includes elements outside campus control. The subcommittee has focused primarily on examining internal processes. External processes – those at SUNY and New York State Education Department (NYSED) and Office of the Professions – might also bear reviewing by appropriate stakeholders at some future point but are not included in these recommendations except in relation to market analyses.

The RAPID<sup>3</sup> subcommittee recommends the following five actions:

1. Improve the initiation process
2. Improve communication and sharing of information
3. Improve paperwork support and management
4. Improve the review process
5. Improve the launch process

We provide more information on each recommendation in the table below.

<b>1. Improve the initiation process</b>	
Establish and publish clear and transparent criteria for initiating a new program, including campus priorities. For example, could senior administration confirm that we are primarily, though not exclusively, seeking new programs that meet <i>most</i> of these criteria: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graduate programs</li> <li>2. Programs that “fit” our <a href="#">institutional identity</a> and serve our <a href="#">institutional mission and goals as well as the priorities identified in our 2021 MSCHE self-study</a>.</li> <li>3. Programs with demonstrated demand (potential students, employment opportunities)</li> <li>4. Programs with remote or flexible modalities (online, hybrid, low residency) that cater to working adults. Flexibility may also include compressed parts-of-term, stackable micro-credentials, etc.</li> <li>5. Programs that attract our undergraduates, including 4+1 and other accelerated pathways</li> <li>6. Programs that introduce a new population of students rather than siphoning/redirecting students from existing programs</li> </ol>	Provost/Cabinet
Establish and publish clear guidelines about how new programs may originate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify that program ideas stem from any level in Academic Affairs:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Faculty members and department chairs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Provost/Cabinet

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deans</li> <li>○ Senior administration</li> <li>● Dedicated administrative staff should be identified to assist senior administration and Academic Deans as they watch the market and workforce trends, scan the horizon for grant opportunities, and monitor sister SUNYs and other regional and national trends in higher education.</li> <li>● Make use of SUNY System market demand resources (i.e.: Emsi/Burning Glass) to assess market demand as part of an initial ROI analysis to gain administrative support for a proposal prior to investing substantial time and energy in the program proposal process.</li> <li>● Annually articulate any new academic programming goals Administration is particularly interested in developing and how the entire campus will support the goals.</li> </ul>	
<p>Because new program proposals must demonstrate evidence predicting strong return on investment (ROI) after a reasonable ramp-up period, we must have a clear and well-published process for conducting market research and establishing ROI and clearly identified staff to assist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● When someone has an idea for a new program, APLI should coordinate with that program proposer (and their Dean) and SUNY System to obtain an Emsi market report.</li> <li>● Academic Affairs, Administration and Finance, and Institutional Research coordinate to create a method for determining a ball-park ROI and identify a point person to run the ROI as needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use the 2021-22 data in the Siconolfi tool to run number of What-If scenarios for each college to build some general ranges for ROI (no need to renew the contract for this tool)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Senior administration can support this process by identifying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ an institutional point-person to work with departments/colleges to run this ROI analysis</li> <li>○ the minimum ROI needed for new program support</li> <li>○ administrative staff to assist with demand research and to conduct market analyses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Provost/Cabinet APLI (Academic Planning &amp; Learning Innovation)</p>
<p>Where a proposal involves taking an existing program online or developing a new program for online delivery, part of the ROI analysis must include an assessment of remote development needs.</p> <p>It would be helpful for OIT to develop and publish a brief remote learning needs assessment form that would help identify the number of courses to be developed online, number of existing certified faculty and number who would need to become certified, anticipated timeline for certification, etc.</p>	<p>OIT (Office of Instructional Technology) COE (Continuing &amp; Online Education) APLI (Academic Planning &amp; Learning Innovation)</p>
<p>It would be helpful for the Provost's Office to create a brief preliminary proposal format for use in presenting ideas to Provost/Cabinet for initial go-ahead prior to investing time and energy in developing a full proposal. This brief initial proposal form should include the most essential information the Provost/Cabinet would need to commit support for</p>	<p>Provost's Office/APLI</p>

moving forward with the full proposal and campus review process (ex: program name, level, modality, brief description, demand, ROI).	
Many of our new programs have been interdisciplinary (e.g.: MS Behavior Analysis & Interdisciplinary Autism Studies, MA: Digital Design and Fabrication, BA: General Studies). Responsibility, authority, and funding must be designated for any interdisciplinary program.	Provost/Cabinet
<b>2. Improve communication and sharing of information</b>	
Develop and post clear information about the process and important details about each level of review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate that information in an easy-to-access location</li> <li>• Provide clarity about the order of the steps and anticipated timeline (a flow chart would be helpful)</li> <li>• Provide clear directions about who helps with each step</li> <li>• Provide easy access to appropriate forms, including annotations where appropriate, to clearly communicate expectations and roles</li> <li>• Include a checklist of everything that needs to happen</li> <li>• Include a list of best practices for developing a program proposal and related courses</li> </ul>	Provost's Office/APLI/OCM
Each level of review should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use campus and SUNY created standard forms/processes to facilitate clear and accurate communication throughout the development and review processes</li> <li>• Keep all documents in Word format throughout the entire development and review process as this facilitates communication sharing as drafts are revised, edited, and reviewed.</li> </ul>	Division of Academic Affairs (Provost's Office/APLI/LAS Senate/Education Council/Curriculum Committee/Faculty Senate)
<b>3. Improve paperwork support and management</b>	
Provide more support for program development paperwork and process management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have administrative staff pre-fill forms where possible</li> <li>• Provide exemplar proposals</li> <li>• Have a common location for storing one version of the proposal so that every level of campus review can access the correct and most recent version</li> <li>• Identify a better system for digital signatures</li> <li>• Ensure clear, timely progress/follow-up through at each level of review</li> </ul>	Provost's Office/APLI
<b>4. Improve the review process</b>	
Ensure each level of review has a clear charge and that each level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has clarity about and understands their responsibilities</li> <li>• Reviews their own processes and procedures and considers improvements where appropriate (ex: LAS Senate mentioned they are delayed by a possibly outdated college publication step)</li> <li>• Facilitate review across all levels by using standard formats (ex: standard syllabus template) and by following guidelines in Items 2-3 above regarding communication and paperwork management</li> </ul>	APLI, DRAFT Review Responsibilities Checklist is in development

<p>Faculty review bodies and governance committees should consider their meeting schedules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does frequency of the meeting coincide with the typical timing of proposals (ex: A committee may meet bi-monthly all semester, but most proposals may come in during the last half of the semester. Might it be desirable to meet less frequently at the beginning of the semester and more frequently at the end?)</li> <li>• Does one level's meeting schedule sequence well with the next level? (Ex: If a proposal goes to Ed Co one week, can it then go to Grad Co the next week?)</li> <li>• The Provost's Office should coordinate with the faculty review bodies at the beginning of the Fall/Spring semesters to publish the respective meeting schedules.</li> </ul>	<p>Provost's Office</p>
<p><b>5. Improve the launch process</b></p>	
<p>Provost and Cabinet should commit that programs selected for development will be prioritized to receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing and promotional support</li> <li>• Support from enrollment management</li> <li>• Support services for students (advising, academic support, etc.)</li> <li>• TA/GA or scholarship support where appropriate</li> <li>• OIT support where appropriate</li> <li>• Additional/restored resources, including faculty lines/additional PST-I, if needed</li> </ul>	<p>Provost and Cabinet</p>
<p>A clear Notifications List needs to be created and managed (Who needs to be notified, when should they be notified, and when should they be updated?)</p>	<p>APLI</p>
<p>Processes should be developed and published so that new programs know when and how to begin working on each of these critical areas of support well in advance of the program's approval. Ex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing planning should begin shortly after the program proposal goes to SUNY for review.</li> <li>• Enrollment Management should have been consulted in the ROI analysis and should have been part of the initial decision to support the proposed program. EM should also be involved in marketing and promotional support planning and development.</li> <li>• TA/GA needs should be included in the ROI estimate from the beginning of the proposal process and processes for establishing any new/renewed TA/GA lines should be clearly published and available.</li> <li>• OIT support should also be included in the ROI estimate at the beginning of the proposal process and any training and certification needed to launch an online/hybrid program must begin in a timely fashion to ensure a sufficient number of faculty are certified in time for program launch.</li> </ul>	<p>Provost's Office, APLI, OCM, EM, and GPIS</p>