Introduction

GCC’s mission is to teach, in a small, supportive and intimate learning environment, the knowledge and skills necessary for our students to reach their highest potential. Our doors are open to all who seek to learn. In striving to fulfill this mission we also seek to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to reach our highest potential as a college. At GCC, we are passionate about teaching and learning together!

The academic review process provides a means by which academic departments and programs can engage in thoughtful, candid, periodic self-evaluation. One overriding reason propelling academic review is to promote the quality and effectiveness of departments and programs through assessment of curriculum and student learning outcomes; another is to critique the congruency between the college mission, institutional priorities (see Appendix C), and its academic offerings. The process is effective when the assessment results are used to improve teaching and learning and to promote student success. The academic review process is essential for monitoring the college’s success in helping to transform the region into a knowledge-based economy, which prepares students to live and work in a global society.

Academic Review Goals

- To assess the relationship between curricula, the college mission, institutional priorities, the economy, community, and culture.
- To provide a basis for establishing annual goals and year-end reports.
- To provide informative groundwork for improving program quality.
- To strengthen teaching and learning throughout the institution.
- To enhance institutional awareness of emerging and long term programmatic needs.
Implementation Process

The academic review process is flexible and offers autonomy to programs and departments in deciding what to review and when.

Departments and programs are required to submit a *Year-End Report* at the end of each academic year. In a year-end report, goals set at the beginning of an academic year by the program coordinator and department faculty are assessed, with particular emphasis placed on current institutional priorities, teaching, and learning. The questions to ask before setting these goals might be "What do we want to try to accomplish this year?" and "What will we need in order to accomplish these goals?" Effective year-end reporting will provide much of the content and groundwork for comprehensive academic review.

*Comprehensive Academic Reviews* are conducted every five to seven years, depending on individual program and institutional needs. A comprehensive program review is an in-depth assessment of the curriculum emphasizing:

- Short-term and long-term goals.
- Teaching and learning among students and faculty.
- Additional areas pertinent to individual programs/departments.

Each review is sent to the parent division Dean and from there to the Dean of Student and Academic Affairs. While printed texts provide one form of reporting the results of an academic review, digital and other alternative modes may be explored.

Effective comprehensive academic review will provide a basis for establishing subsequent yearly goals, year-end reporting, and critical supporting information for institutional self-study as required by NEASC. Every department/program is required to conduct such a review between institutional self-studies (which occur every ten years).

Student Quality Assessment

An important goal of program review is strengthening the quality of our programs. Whenever possible, the assessment of this area should be from the perspective of actual student experience. Student perspective is important because it provides information that may not be accessible through review of data. That being understood, supporting evidence can also be in the form of:

- Student survey results
- Anecdotal information gathered from faculty, transfer coordinators and faculty at other institutions, job placement, internships, students, and alumni
- Student testimonies
- Student success stories

The primary areas of program quality requiring assessment are:

- Curriculum
- Faculty
- Teaching and learning within and outside of the classroom
- Academic Advising
• Resources
• Community
• Transfer, job placement, licensure/certification

Student perspective of these areas is valued as an important part of assessment. It is understood that departmental work in these areas is ongoing, periodic, considered as critical to the college’s mission, and, as a result, form an integral part of year-end reporting. You will find these areas highlighted in the recommended program review structure with an asterisk (*).

Recommended Program Review Structure

What follows is a recommended structure for comprehensive program review. It is anticipated that departments/programs will review individual areas within this structure during the years between comprehensive reviews and that not all areas will be addressed on a yearly basis. It should be noted that the structure was not designed on a “one size fits all” approach, but to accommodate all: The content listed under the various areas is provided as a basic guide rather than a required list of bullets. Areas may be added to and non-critical/program applicable content ignored.

The program review as a whole should be based on the three-part system of:

Description — states observable fact and reflects the current status of the listed areas under review

Appraisal — reflective and honest assessment of the areas reviewed in the description above, referencing data and faculty, student, and alumni perspectives/testimonies.

Projection — outlines a set of priorities and goals, both short-term and long-term, based on the findings within the appraisal

1. Overview
   a. Executive summary of contents

2. Mission and Purposes
   a. Department/Program Mission Statement
   b. Historical Perspective: Origins and evolution of department/program
   c. Department/program priorities

3. Curriculum*
   a. Programmatic curricular goals
   b. The development of General Education Abilities across the curriculum (see Appendix A)
   c. Relevance of curriculum to external workplace/transfer institutions
   d. Curricular changes/initiatives including updating individual courses to provide cohesiveness across the curriculum
   e. Retention

4. Teaching and learning within and outside of the classroom*
   a. Assessment of student learning at the course and program level

5. Faculty*
   a. Full-time
   b. Full-time faculty non-instructional workload
   c. Adjunct
d. Achievements
  e. Professional development
    i. Sabbaticals
    ii. Other

6. **Academic Advising***
   a. How advising functions within the department/program
   b. Advisee to advisor ratio and:
      i. Contact hours
      ii. Accessibility
   c. Obstacles, challenges, goals to meeting the guidelines set forth in the college’s Institutional Statement on Academic Advising (see Appendix B)

7. **Community***
   a. Program/department community
   b. Relationships with external communities
   c. Obstacles, challenges, goals
   d. Community building initiatives

8. **Marketing***
   a. Marketing initiatives
      i. Publications
      ii. Web presence
      iii. Outreach and recruitment

9. **Transfer, job placement, and licensure/certification***
   a. Internships/job placement opportunities
   b. Transfer and Articulation
      i. Articulation agreements with other institutions
      ii. Scholarships available to transfer students
      iii. Student acceptance and transfer successes
      iv. Transfer challenges, obstacles
   c. Alumni achievements
      i. Employment
      ii. Other
      iii. Perspectives
   d. Licensure/certification

10. **Resources***
    a. Current space usage and usability
    b. The role of technology in the classroom
    c. Equipment in the classroom
    d. Educational support
    e. Student/faculty access to space/equipment/technology
    f. Student/faculty access to support
    g. Evolving space/equipment/technology/support needs
    h. Long-term space/equipment/technology/support needs

11. **Budget***
    a. Department/program budget past and present
    b. Evolving budgetary needs
    c. Long-term budgetary needs

12. **Summary***
    a. Next steps
    b. Long term steps
c. Institutional support required to achieve steps

**Supporting Data** (NOTE: It is anticipated that data may be referenced within the text or embedded in the form of charts/tables/diagrams, etc.)

a. Enrollment data and interpretation  
b. Student body data and interpretation  
c. Graduation data and interpretation  
d. Transfer data and interpretation  
e. Program/department budget data and evaluation  
f. Student experience

**Institutional Support**

The college will provide support to DCPCs who conduct program reviews:

- Clerical staff person who supports program review work  
- Advisory group of faculty, staff and/or administrators with experience in program review and accreditation who consult on review functions  
- Institutional researcher who collects data regarding graduates and conducts relevant market research  
- Appropriate workload adjustments for DCPCs who lead comprehensive reviews  
- A resource collection including internal and external examples of printed program reviews and electronic portfolios  
- Access to institutional self-studies  
- Other support determined necessary by individual DCPCs
Appendices

The following documents are provided as an informational resource you may refer to during the academic review process. They provide a formal overview of what constitutes teaching and learning within the institution. The documents are evocative of what is valued and aspired to at GCC.

Appendix A: General Education Abilities

The College expects students to develop foundations and skills for lifelong learning, including the following General Education Abilities:

1. Appreciate diverse cultural and individual perspectives
2. Solve problems collaboratively
3. Reason and act ethically
4. Demonstrate civic knowledge and engagement
5. Communicate in various modes and media
6. Use quantitative concepts and processes
7. Locate, evaluate and use various sources of information
8. Explore the natural and physical world
9. Think creatively and critically
10. Apply, integrate, and synthesize learning
Appendix B: Institutional Statement on Academic Advising

Introduction

Academic advising is a collaborative teaching and learning relationship crucial to student success. Advising embodies the Principles of Education by engaging the student and the advisor in a consistent and enduring relationship; helping the student to recognize that teaching and learning occur in many activities, services and interactions, as well as in the classroom; and fostering an understanding of the connection between the student’s education and the student’s life.

What is Academic Advising?

Academic advising is a collaborative process in which the academic advisor and the student form a partnership to assist the student in:

- exploring educational, career and transfer opportunities
- developing a plan to accomplish one’s goals
- building the capacity to achieve academic and career objectives
- thinking critically and making informed decisions about available options
- accepting responsibility for one’s actions and decisions

Academic advising is characterized by a multidimensional relationship between the academic advisor and the student in which the academic advisor seeks to:

- communicate clearly, honestly and respectfully
- expand the student’s knowledge of college policies, procedures, practices, requirements and resources
- promote an understanding of a college’s expectations of students in higher education
- encourage the student to devote one’s best efforts to achieving one’s academic and career objectives

Where does Academic Advising Occur?

Academic advising occurs formally between a student and his or her assigned primary academic advisor and between a student and an advisor in the Academic Advising Center. Academic advising occurs informally between a student and numerous other contacts with faculty, staff and others across the campus.

The student’s primary academic advisor is:

- assigned to the student by the Academic Advising Center or the appropriate Academic Affairs office
- a faculty or professional staff member of the Greenfield Community College Professional Association
- a faculty member teaching within the student’s major program of study, whenever possible
- a faculty member who has taught the student in class, whenever possible
the same faculty or professional staff member throughout the student’s time at the college (unless the student changes his or her major program of study, the student requests a new academic advisor or the advisor’s status with the college changes)

The Academic Advising Center:

- provides the primary initial registration advising for new, transfer, and readmitted students (except for selected programs)
- assigns students to their primary academic advisors (except for selected programs) and coordinates changes of advisor assignments
- encourages and strengthens the relationship between the student and the student’s primary academic advisor
- supports the student’s primary academic advisor by providing professional development opportunities to maintain current knowledge and enhance advising skills
- supplements the student’s primary academic advisor by responding to the student’s needs when the student’s primary academic advisor is not available

Informal academic advising occurs:

- between the student and a faculty member who is not the student’s assigned primary academic advisor
- between the student and staff members in offices and elsewhere across the campus
- between the student and classmates, friends, family members, and others

What are the Responsibilities of Academic Advising?

Effective academic advising requires the primary academic advisor and the Academic Advising Center advisor to:

- recognize that college is only one part of a student’s life, which also may include many responsibilities that affect a student’s educational experience
- know the college’s current policies, procedures and practices, including the graduation requirements for the student’s major program of study
- be appropriately available to the student by appointment, telephone or email
- maintain thorough and accurate records of all significant interactions with the student
- know the availability of services and resources and refer the student appropriately when his or her needs exceed the academic advisor's capacity to assist
- comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and maintain appropriate confidentiality of information regarding the student
- participate in advisor development opportunities to maintain current knowledge and enhance advising skills

Effective academic advising requires the student to:

- know who one’s primary academic advisor is, where one’s advisor’s office is located and how to contact one’s advisor by telephone and email
• meet with one’s primary academic advisor each semester and consult with one's advisor whenever uncertain about the college’s policies, procedures, practices or requirements
• become knowledgeable about the college’s current policies, procedures and practices, including the graduation requirements for one’s major program of study
• maintain thorough and accurate records of all significant interactions with an academic advisor
• prepare for scheduled meetings with an academic advisor by reviewing appropriate materials in advance
• use appropriate services and resources when referred by an academic advisor

How will Students Benefit from their Academic Advising Experience?

As a result of an effective academic advising experience, students will:

• demonstrate their knowledge of the college’s policies, procedures and practices, including the graduation requirements for their major programs of study
• demonstrate their knowledge of the educational and career opportunities available to them
• think critically and make informed decisions about their available options
• establish academic and career objectives and develop plans for accomplishing them
• accept responsibility for their actions and decisions
• enhance their own academic advising skills
• persist to the achievement of their academic and career objectives
Appendix C: Institutional Priorities

1. Increase student goal attainment—transfer, graduation, employment, lifelong learning and personal growth.
2. Expand access, outreach and collaborations in the Pioneer Valley and surrounding communities.
3. Foster a campus climate that respects each individual, values collaborative efforts and promotes professional development.
4. Implement integrative planning throughout the college - budget, enrollment, curriculum, program, staffing and facilities.