



**Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs**

1730 Van Hise Hall  
1220 Linden Drive  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1559  
(608) 262-3826  
(608) 263-2046 FAX  
e-mail: [vpacad@uwsa.edu](mailto:vpacad@uwsa.edu)  
website: [www.uwsa.edu/vpacad/](http://www.uwsa.edu/vpacad/)

August 30, 2012

TO: UW Chancellors  
UW Provosts

FROM: Mark A. Nook  
Senior Vice President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark A. Nook".

RE: Implementation of New Program Approval and Review Process

As you know, the UW System Program Planning & Review Working Group was convened last winter to revise the System's academic program planning, review, and approval process in accordance with the recommendations made by President Reilly and the President's Advisory Committee on the Roles of UW System Administration. The group's work resulted in recommendations for a significantly revised process.

At its August 24, 2012, meeting, and upon recommendation of the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Board of Regents approved changes to Regent Policy Document (RPD) 4-12, "Academic Program Planning, Review, and Approval in the University of Wisconsin System." The Board's action constituted formal adoption of the revised process recommended by the Working Group. The revised process will be incorporated into ACIS 1.0, the UW System's policy statement on academic programming, replacing the sections in ACIS 1.0 that refer to the actions and steps necessary for the establishment of new academic degrees or programs. Other components of ACIS 1.0, including academic actions requiring approval or reporting (e.g., the approval of new colleges and schools, revisions to institutional missions, suspensions of degrees or majors, etc.), are still in effect.

The document detailing the new Program Planning, Review, and Approval Process can be found at <http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/planning/>. The new process will take effect September 4, 2012, at which time all proposals for new academic programs will follow the revised submission and review process.

Academic program proposals that were submitted to UW System Administration prior to September 4 will be considered under the new process, unless an institution formally requests review under the old process from the Associate Vice President of the Office of Academic, Faculty and Global Programs. Institutions are encouraged to consult with Associate Vice President Stephen H. Kolison in making such determinations.

In order to assist the Board of Regents in meeting its statutory requirement for assuring academic quality in all new programs it approves, the revised process requires institutions to establish and maintain a website with the institution's definitions of and standards for quality in

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academic programming; their local program planning and review process, including general information on how program evaluation and assessment of student learning are conducted (where applicable, through evaluation by external accreditation agencies). In the absence of the quality review formerly conducted by UWSA under the old process, we believe these websites will provide Regents with valuable information on the ways in which individual UW institutions define and determine quality academic programming. We ask that institutions have their websites operational as soon as possible, preferably by October 4, 2012.

We are deeply appreciative of the time and energy members of the Program Planning & Review Working Group put into this endeavor, and we believe that the results of the revised process will include greater efficiency in the entire academic planning effort, a reduction in the amount of time it takes to approve a new degree program, and improved flexibility to UW institutions allowing for enhanced responsiveness to both student and workforce demand for new programs.

Please contact Associate Vice President Stephen H. Kolison or my office if you have questions about the new process. Additional clarification on appropriate timing for submitting notices of intent and authorizations to UWSA for approval by the Board of Regents will be forthcoming.

Attachment: Revised Academic Program Planning, Review and Approval Process; RPD 4-12  
Revised

cc: Kevin P. Reilly, President  
Cabinet  
UWSA Program Planning Team  
Institutional Academic Program Planning & Review Liaisons