Institutional Program Review – WSU

1. In a diagram, graphic, or paragraph or two, please briefly describe your campus program review process. (You may also provide a link if this information is in succinct form on a website.)

Institutional Overview of program review process

[Wichita State University academic program review](https://www.wichita.edu/administration/assessment/academicprogramreview.php) is organized around a year-long preparation and review of a self-study that is intended to create a thoughtful assessment of the quality and relevance of academic programs and to establish goals for improvements. The process of reviewing these programs (which includes department (faculty and chair), the college deans, dean of the Graduate School (for graduate programs), the University Program Review committee, the senior associate vice president for institutional effectiveness and strategic enrollment management, and the executive vice president and provost) is expected to strengthen the academic programs, identify program needs and campus priorities, identify areas for reorganization, and provide opportunities for both short and long-term goal setting.

On a four-year cycle each academic unit prepares a self-study using a standard reporting template. These four-year reports then feed into the required review by the Kansas Board of Regents (i.e., each program is required to be reviewed twice during an 8 year period). Programs that demonstrate the need for additional support are asked to complete interim reports. Hence, there is a continuous review process of each academic unit.

The quadrennial reporting cycle begins in December, one year in advance of the due date, (on a staggered schedule so that college programs are reviewed together). The review cycle begins with a workshop for chairs and assessment coordinators which is hosted by the Office of Accreditation and Assessment within the Division of Academic Affairs. The first submission deadline is April 1st when the program self-study and supporting documentation is submitted to the respective Dean’s office for review. After which, the self-studies are reviewed by the Dean, Graduate School (as appropriate) and the University Program Review committee (consisting of the senior associate vice president for institutional effectiveness and strategic enrollment management; assistant director of the Office of Planning Analysis; the president, president-elect, and past-president of the Faculty Senate; a dean appointed by the executive vice president/provost, two department chairs, and three faculty at large representatives), where each department/unit is provided with an opportunity to discuss and clarify their reviews. The university committee then submits its final report with recommendations to the executive vice president/provost by December 5th of the next year.

All programs are reviewed including those at the bachelor, master, and doctoral level.

To assist programs in writing their self-studies, departments/programs have access to:

* Program minima data provided by the Office of Planning and Analysis.
* Past self-studies performed by past department chairs.
* Data from exit surveys and other surveys collected by the University and within departments.
* External specialty accreditation reports (as appropriate).

Annual Timeline for Program Review

A black and white diagram

Description automatically generated

**Wichita State University**

The programs being reviewed this year by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) in the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Science include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Program** | **CIP** |
| Women’s Studies | 05.0207 |
| Philosophy | 38.0101 |
| Geology | 40.0601 |
| Physics | 40.0801 |
| Forensic Science & Technology | 43.0106 |

1. **Women’s Studies (Bachelor of Arts in Women's, Ethnicity, & Intersectional Studies)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Preliminary Analysis | | | |
| Student Demand | Degree Production | Talent Pipeline | Student ROI |
|  |  | Checkmark outline | Checkmark outline |
| 11.25 Majors (4-Year Average) | 4.25 Degrees (4-Year Average) | 58.33% Employed in Region Within 1 Year After Graduation  (4-Year Average) | ^ Median Salary 5 Years After Graduation |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Other Universities Offering Program | | |
| Other KS Public Universities  Offering Program | # of KS Private Universities  Offering Program | State Market Share  Completion Data |
| 2: K-State & KU | N/A | 8.59% |

**Recommendation (Phase out, Merge, or Action Plan):**

(Type recommendation in box above)

Merge

**Required additional information – Please insert below this box**

* If Phase out, provide phase out plan including detail on how institution will reinvest resources from phase-out program into other academic programs/services.
* If Merge, provide merge plan including detail on immediate cost savings. Include how this plan will impact your FTE for merged program(s).
* If Action Plan, provide action plan and indicate how plan will improve metrics (Student Demand, Degree Production, Talent Pipeline, and/or Student ROI) where program did not meet minima.

**Overview of Program:**

The Department of Women’s, Ethnicity, and Intersectional Studies (WEIS) is a recently redesigned department that combines the courses from Women’s Studies and Ethnic Studies through the lens of intersectional experiences. WEIS builds on a long history of addressing the challenges that women and men face in a transforming workspace, the complexities of work/life balance, the different needs and experiences of urban and rural women and families, and the academic needs of the Wichita community and the SE Kansas region.

Currently, WEIS offers a Bachelor of Arts major and minor, a Bachelor of Science major, and an emphasis within the Bachelor of General Studies (BGS). Over 94 percent of students enrolled in WEIS courses take them to fulfill general education requirements, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) competencies, and/or university-level diversity bucket requirements.

In 2020, prior to the KBOR Program Review, the department began addressing its low enrollment, student demand, and degree production trends by making radical changes to its department and structure, major/minor degree requirements, and course offerings. The 2020 Program Review resulted in a new structure for the major and minor and a redesigned department, changing from Women’s Studies to Women’s, Ethnicity, and Intersectional Studies (WEIS).

The department has developed **merge plan** with components designed to:

**a) Preserve and Expand Academic Opportunities**: Transition the Women's, Ethnicity, and Intersectional Studies (WEIS) program into the English Department, offering it as a field major, emphasis within the Bachelor of General Studies (BGS), or as a minor—ensuring continued access to interdisciplinary study aligned with student interests and career goals.

**b) Enhance Flexibility and Cross-Disciplinary Learning**: Leverage the field major and BGS structures to allow students to design personalized academic pathways that integrate WEIS with other disciplines, supporting broader educational and occupational aspirations.

**c) Align with Enrollment Trends and Resource Efficiency**: Respond to current enrollment patterns and structural changes by consolidating administrative oversight, maintaining program integrity, and optimizing resource use while continuing to support student engagement and academic success.

1. **Philosophy (Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Preliminary Analysis | | | |
| Student Demand | Degree Production | Talent Pipeline | Student ROI |
|  |  | Checkmark outline | Checkmark outline |
| 17 Majors  (4-Year Average) | 3.5 Degrees (4-Year Average) | 60% Employed in Region Within 1 Year After Graduation  (4-Year Average) | ^ Median Salary 5 Years After Graduation |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Other Universities Offering Program | | |
| Other KS Public Universities  Offering Program | # of KS Private Universities  Offering Program | State Market Share  Completion Data |
| 4: FHSU, KSU, KU, & WU | 3 | 10.19% |

**Recommendation (Phase out, Merge, or Action Plan):**

(Type recommendation in box above)

Action Plan

**Required additional information – Please insert below this box**

* If Phase out, provide phase out plan including detail on how institution will reinvest resources from phase-out program into other academic programs/services.
* If Merge, provide merge plan including detail on immediate cost savings. Include how this plan will impact your FTE for merged program(s).
* If Action Plan, provide action plan and indicate how plan will improve metrics (Student Demand, Degree Production, Talent Pipeline, and/or Student ROI) where program did not meet minima.

**Overview of Program:**

The philosophy program has a rich history of service to other programs in areas such as logic and applied ethics, Engineering Ethics as well as through four concentrations in Analytic Reasoning, Ethics, Pre-Law, and World Philosophy. The program also provides a pipeline to graduate school in popular fields including Law, Philosophy and Communications. The Philosophy Major at WSU develops maximally versatile skills that are highly sought by employers in all sectors. Those skills include but are not limited to critical reasoning, ethical insight, intellectual creativity, and philosophical foundations of global diversity. Students in this program thrive in a workforce that currently faces unprecedented transformative pressures and opportunities due to AI, CRISPR, blockchain currencies, social shifts, and other 21st Century developments. Additionally, graduates of this program are prepared to responsibly invent new paths, adapt to new roles, and creatively prevent or solve the problems of the future.

The department has developed an **action plan** with components designed to:

1. **increase declared BA Philosophy majors** through a newly available marketing plan through WSU Strategic communications, 4 new concentrations and other curriculum development, and several high school outreach initiatives (**recruitment**);
2. **support those students through their graduation** into their next career phase through emergency funding support, a new Philosophy at Work applied learning initiative, and personalized mentoring (**retention**); and
3. **continue to operate as a high service department** throughout the university for programs that require our expertise for professional development and accreditation (**service**).
4. **Geology (Bachelor of Arts/Science in Geology)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Preliminary Analysis | | | |
| Student Demand | Degree Production | Talent Pipeline | Student ROI |
|  |  | Checkmark outline | Checkmark outline |
| 23 Majors  (4-Year Average) | 7.75 Degrees (4-Year Average) | 67.86% Employed in Region Within 1 Year After Graduation  (4-Year Average) | $64,856 Median Salary 5 Years After Graduation |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Other Universities Offering Program | | |
| Other KS Public Universities  Offering Program | # of KS Private Universities  Offering Program | State Market Share  Completion Data |
| 4: ESU, FHSU, K-State. & KU | N/A | 14.78% |

**Recommendation (Phase out, Merge, or Action Plan):**

(Type recommendation in box above)

Action Plan

**Required additional information – Please insert below this box**

* If Phase out, provide phase out plan including detail on how institution will reinvest resources from phase-out program into other academic programs/services.
* If Merge, provide merge plan including detail on immediate cost savings. Include how this plan will impact your FTE for merged program(s).
* If Action Plan, provide action plan and indicate how plan will improve metrics (Student Demand, Degree Production, Talent Pipeline, and/or Student ROI) where program did not meet minima.

**Overview of Program**

Geology is fundamentally an applied and practical discipline that supports industry and societal interests. Since 1926, the Department of Geology program has operated as an educational, cultural, and economic driver for the State of Kansas and the Wichita area. Its purpose is to prepare students with the scientific knowledge to proceed to geologic careers in industry and government or to be admitted to a geology graduate program. Our curriculum prepares students for ASBOG (Association of State Boards of Geology) licensing, which is required of geologists in Kansas and most other states. Students are prepared with the background and skills to enable them to continue to learn, develop, and adapt their geoscience career goals as demand for different natural resources fluctuates.

The program goals include:

• Prepare individuals for current and future geologic careers in industry, government, or academia.

• Foster professional growth and commitment to lifelong learning for students and faculty.

• Emphasize applied learning with multiple field experiences, internship programs, and business partnerships.

• Support and encourage scholarly research in the geological sciences.

• Ensure efficient and effective program operations are consistent with the college, university, and profession.

Since its founding, the Department of Geology has traditionally supported Kansas's local oil and gas industry. With changing economic and political winds and a decline in employment opportunities in this area, the department is adapting by also emphasizing other employment areas in geology. These include groundwater resources, civil engineering applications, water and soil remediation, and critical and strategic minerals exploration. These efforts include hiring new faculty (2024) in strategic and critical minerals to expand its curriculum and training for students in this potential employment growth area for geologists. This should help translate our degree offerings to students and lead to increased student demand and degree production.

The department has developed an **action plan** with components designed to:

1. **Curriculum Development:** Introduce new lower-level General Education and First Year Seminar courses, revise existing courses to meet updated science criteria, and expand dual-enrollment and immersive high school programs to increase visibility and interest in geology.
2. **Promotional and Outreach Activities:** Launch targeted marketing campaigns, participate in admissions and orientation events, and collaborate with university communications to promote the program using labor market data and student success stories.
3. **Hands-On Learning and Research Integration:** Expand the Geology Field School and promote student involvement in specialized research labs (Economic Geology, Environmental Sustainability, and GIS) to provide applied learning experiences and career preparation.
4. **Physics (Bachelor of Arts/Science in Physics)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Preliminary Analysis | | | |
| Student Demand | Degree Production | Talent Pipeline | Student ROI |
| Checkmark outline |  |  | Checkmark outline |
| 29.25 Majors (4-Year Average) | 6.25 Degrees (4-Year Average) | 50% Employed in Region Within 1 Year After Graduation  (4-Year Average) | $89,774 Median Salary 5 Years After Graduation |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Other Universities Offering Program | | |
| Other KS Public Universities  Offering Program | # of KS Private Universities  Offering Program | State Market Share  Completion Data |
| 6: ESU (Phasing Out), FHSU,  K-State, KU PSU & WU | 3 | 8.86% |

**Recommendation (Phase out, Merge, or Action Plan):**

**Required additional information – Please insert below this box**

* If Phase out, provide phase out plan including detail on how institution will reinvest resources from phase-out program into other academic programs/services.
* If Merge, provide merge plan including detail on immediate cost savings. Include how this plan will impact your FTE for merged program(s).
* If Action Plan, provide action plan and indicate how plan will improve metrics (Student Demand, Degree Production, Talent Pipeline, and/or Student ROI) where program did not meet minima.

(Type recommendation in box above)

Action Plan

**Overview of the Program**

Physics is the root of all sciences and engineering. Without a broad educational base in physics programs in other sciences and in engineering would not have the solid foundation they need, nor would local industry be provided with the leadership necessary in diverse groups of scientists and engineers. A strong knowledge of physics is also helpful for pre-med students since the topic is required by medical schools and the MCAT exam.

The purpose of the undergraduate BS program in Physics is to provide a broadly based, flexible program in undergraduate level physics which will prepare students for graduate study in physics or a related discipline or for physics-related employment in academic, industrial, or government positions. Of the 66 graduates from the last 10 years, 41 reported their after-school plans. 61% went on to graduate school, 22% are in industry, 9% entered teaching, and 7% are in the military. Industries that our students work at include Spirit Aerosystems, Smith & Loveless Inc., and the Cosmosphere in Hutchinson. 76% of our students entering the workforce (based on our internal records of student success) were employed in Kansas. This number is reduced because of the large number of students that attend graduate school. Graduate schools include WSU, the University of Kentucky, K-State, and Heidelberg University in Germany.

The undergraduate physics program is also committed to providing physics instruction needed by programs in other sciences, engineering, education, and health professions, and in the liberal arts. The physics division of the Mathematics, Statistics, and Physics department supports the university's educational commitment to the state and community by providing instruction in physics at all levels for beginning pre-med students and engineering students through doctoral study via the physics track of the PhD program in the MSP department. As discussed in detail below, nearly 93% of credit hours produced by physics faculty and instructors are for students in engineering and health sciences.

The department has developed an **action plan** with components designed to:

**a) Strengthen Recruitment Efforts:** Expand outreach to local high schools and underrepresented groups through programs like BAASE and the AIP TEAM-UP grant, leverage WSU marketing, and strategically place top instructors in introductory courses to attract double majors and transfers.

**b) Improve Student Retention:** Increase the frequency of key course offerings (e.g., PHYS 551 and core courses), review and align math prerequisites, and maintain support services like the Physics Help Room to ensure timely progress toward graduation.

**c) Build Career Pathways and Applied Learning:** Develop partnerships with local industries (e.g., NIAR) and explore opportunities in biomedical research to create internships and applied learning experiences that align with students’ career goals.

1. **Forensic Science & Technology (Bachelor of Science in Forensic Sciences)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Preliminary Analysis | | | |
| Student Demand | Degree Production | Talent Pipeline | Student ROI |
| Checkmark outline |  | Checkmark outline |  |
| 41.75 Majors  (4-Year Average) | 5 Degrees  (4-Year Average) | 87.5% Employed in Region Within 1 Year After Graduation  (4-Year Average) | ^ Median Salary 5 Years After Graduation |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Other Universities Offering Program | | |
| Other KS Public Universities  Offering Program | # of KS Private Universities  Offering Program | State Market Share  Completion Data |
| 1: WU | 1 | 41.02% |

**Recommendation (Phase out, Merge, or Action Plan):**

(Type recommendation in box above)

Action Plan

**Required additional information – Please insert below this box**

* If Phase out, provide phase out plan including detail on how institution will reinvest resources from phase-out program into other academic programs/services.
* If Merge, provide merge plan including detail on immediate cost savings. Include how this plan will impact your FTE for merged program(s).
* If Action Plan, provide action plan and indicate how plan will improve metrics (Student Demand, Degree Production, Talent Pipeline, and/or Student ROI) where program did not meet minima.

**Overview of Program:**

The Bachelor of Science in Forensic Science program is a collaborative program with the departments of Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, and Criminal Justice. The program is housed within the School of Criminal Justice. The School of Criminal Justice was established in 1934 at Wichita State—then called the Municipal University of Wichita—and is the nation’s second oldest criminal justice program. The department was started at the urging and with the support of a young Wichita Chief of Police, O.W. Wilson. Wilson instituted reforms to reduce corruption, requiring new officers to have college education, and inducted the use of a mobile crime laboratory. Wilson went on to serve as the Superintendent of Chicago Police Department and is often referred to as the Father of Police Ethics in the United States.

The School of Criminal Justice includes undergraduate degrees of criminal justice, homeland security, and forensic science, along with a graduate level criminal justice master’s degree. The department is housed along with the training sections of the Wichita Police Department and the Sedgwick County Sheriff Office in the Law Enforcement Training Center on the WSU Innovation Campus.

Continuing in the framework outlined by Wilson, the goal of the Forensic Science Program is to develop professional and ethical graduates with a competence in the use of the scientific method of investigation, problem-solving, quantitative reasoning, and sound scientific laboratory procedures which can be applied to direct employment or advanced graduate-level study to provide unbiased, accurate collection and examination of items of physical evidence for the criminal justice system.

While the Forensic Science program currently falls short of KBOR’s ROI benchmarks due to limited graduate salary data and traditionally modest earnings in civil-service roles, recent strategic developments signal strong potential for improvement. The establishment of the ATF’s Crime Gun Intelligence Center and plans for a $74 million national forensic laboratory on campus present significant opportunities for enhanced graduate employment and salary growth. In response, the program has implemented a comprehensive action plan focused on curriculum streamlining, expanded applied learning through federal partnerships, and efforts toward FEPAC accreditation—all aimed at improving student outcomes, retention, and long-term return on investment.

The department has developed an **action plan** with components designed to:

**a) Optimize Curriculum and Academic Pathways:** Revise core credit requirements and introduce biology and chemistry concentrations to reduce student burnout, improve retention, and support timely graduation, while allowing flexibility for interdisciplinary study.

**b) Expand Applied Learning and Career Preparation:** Strengthen partnerships with the ATF and other agencies to provide internships, research opportunities, and career pathways, including support for graduate study and participation in the upcoming national forensic laboratory.

**c) Enhance Student Engagement and Program Visibility:** Foster community through the Forensic Science Society, pursue FEPAC accreditation to boost program credibility, and invest in resources that support recruitment, inclusion, and long-term student success.