Report of the
URSA Credit-Generating Program Report Evaluation Team

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Executive Summary

The University Review and Strategic Allocation (URSA) Committee convened the ten-member Credit-Generating Program Report Evaluation Team to read and evaluate reports from credit-generating programs at Plymouth State University. The Evaluation Team's charge from the URSA Committee was to score each program on the basis of established criteria, place programs in quintiles, and provide a report of the quintile rankings and related observations.

The Evaluation Team met during the Fall 2015 semester and evaluated 141 reports from credit-generating programs. Before Evaluators began the process of reading and scoring reports we met for training and adopted a consensus scoring method. The Evaluators then read each report and established holistic program scores for 10-12 programs per week over a 13-week period. After all the reports were scored, the programs were ranked and placed into quintiles. As directed by the URSA Committee, only the quintile placements of program—not individual program scores and rankings—are presented in this report. The report also includes analysis and observations related to the quintile rankings in order to provide important context for the campus community.

During the process of reading and evaluating reports, the Evaluation Team made a significant number of observations about the reports, the URSA process, program responses to individual criteria, and the state of resource allocation at Plymouth State University. These observations have been collected into six Key Findings:

1. Plymouth State University has a large number of credit-generating programs.
2. Strategic stewardship of resources is often not evident.
3. Program reports indicate challenges to maintaining the core values of the University in the current budgetary environment.
4. Program reports indicate a high degree of variability in faculty workload (teaching, scholarship, and service).
5. Program reports indicate that innovation is a challenge at Plymouth State University.
6. Program reports indicate that collaboration is a challenge at Plymouth State University.

The Evaluators have developed a set of recommendations for the University community based on each of these findings. The details can be found in the Key Findings and Recommendations section of this report. The Evaluation Team has also provided recommendations for future iterations of an URSA-like process.

This report represents the completion of the tasks assigned to the URSA Credit-Generating Program Report Evaluation Team. Programs have been evaluated, scored, ranked, and placed into quintiles. Insights gained from the evaluation process are captured in the Key Findings and Recommendations, which call for changes at Plymouth State University and indicate the most significant changes that are needed.

Introduction

As part of the University Review and Strategic Allocation (URSA) process, the Credit-Generating Program Report Evaluation Team (hereinafter referred to as "the Evaluation Team," "the Evaluators," or "we") undertook the significant task of reading and evaluating 141 Credit-Generating Program reports with the hope of gaining insight into the current state of Plymouth State University. This report contains important information concerning our work. This report describes the process that we used to evaluate the program reports and presents the results of that evaluation in the form of quintile rankings. The report also includes observations regarding the quintile rankings, key findings, and recommendations.

This work is part of the "University Review" stage of the URSA process. The "Strategic Allocation" of resources will be determined by key decision-makers once the report is available to the campus community. This report is neither a blueprint for next steps nor a directive for cuts. Instead, it provides valuable insights for decision-makers to use in developing a set of priorities that will help guide future strategic allocations.

Our charge was to place each program into a quintile that accurately describes its current status in comparison to other programs on campus. That is, the evaluation results provide a categorization of programs rather than a determination of some absolute value of each program. Therefore, the report is not a program-by-program analysis with observations about individual programs. Instead, the report provides context to be used in conjunction with individual program reports to make strategic, sometimes difficult, decisions about where to allocate our scarce resources and, just as importantly, where not to.

We believe the evaluation process has provided us with a privileged, panoramic view of Plymouth State University. This report is our articulation of that view and should inform all future decisions related to resource allocation.

Evaluation Process

Formation of the Credit-Generating Program Report Evaluation Team

In the Spring 2015 semester, the University Review and Strategic Allocation (URSA) Steering Committee asked for nominations of qualified faculty and staff to serve on the Credit-Generating Program Report and Non-Credit Generating Program Report Evaluation Teams.

All people who accepted their nominations were assigned by the URSA Steering Committee to one of the two evaluation teams, so that each team consisted of ten individuals. The Credit-Generating Program Report Evaluation Team included seven undergraduate and two graduate faculty members and one professional staff. Six Evaluation Team members had previously been involved in other parts of the URSA process.

The URSA Steering Committee's charge to the Evaluation Teams is provided in Box 1.

Box 1: Prioritization Process Program Evaluator Team Charge, 2015

Purpose: As "trustees" of the institution, to rate and rank academic / operations and support programs, delivering the Quintile Rankings and Observations Report.

Objectives:
1. *Define and participate in Program Evaluator Team processes to accomplish its assigned objectives*
2. *Accomplish program rating and ranking*
3. *Publish Quintile Ranking on URSA website*
4. *Publish Observations Report on URSA website*

Task Force Member Expectations:
1. *Attend meetings (no representatives in your place)*
2. *Deliver on committed actions*
3. *Hold an institutional perspective (vs. departmental or constituency)*
4. *Faithfully represent Evaluation Team activities to the broader community (build trust and transparency), consistent with the Team's decisions re: what will be shared (decisions, rationales) and what will be confidential (discussions to reach decisions, perspectives of individual Team members)*
5. *Demonstrate leadership*

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6. *Lead and honor the process*
7. *Maintain strict standards of confidentiality (as agreed upon)*
8. *Group will work together as a team*
9. *Time commitment and workload*
   - *Two-day team formation workshop (Faculty Week in August)*
   - *Workload: Evaluators will most likely read at least 10 reports per week in order to meet the December 21, 2015 deadline. Once a baseline has been established, evaluators will determine the best method and schedule for meetings to ensure completing the evaluation of all program reports by the deadline.*
   - *It is essential for evaluators to discuss the workload requirements for the evaluator position with their supervisors; supervisors are encouraged to support evaluators in finding time, space, and other accommodations necessary for them to complete their URSA work over the fall semester.*

Evaluators should adhere to the following guiding principles:
1. *Understand and embrace the mission of the institution*
2. *Take a 'trustee' view as opposed to 'representing' a particular program or department*
3. *Be student-centered*
4. *Be an effective member of a team*
5. *Have substantial institutional knowledge to be able to recognize larger structural patterns*
6. *Display personal characteristics such as critical thinking, analytic skills, problem-solving, fair-mindedness, empathy, and openness to differing viewpoints*
7. *Maintain a high level of credibility as demonstrated by respect of peers, previous leadership experience (and potential for leadership), and professional accomplishment.*
8. *Be reliable*
9. *Be collaborative*

Evaluator Training

In late August 2015, the Evaluator Team met with consultants for a two-day training about the evaluation process, which was set to begin as soon as the URSA program reports were due from report writers on September 1. During our training session, we familiarized ourselves with materials developed by the URSA Committee for evaluating the program reports. This material included the ten criteria for evaluation, the questions associated with each criterion, and the scoring rubric. In accordance with the rubric, each question is scored individually but the criterion score is holistic. We then practiced scoring using some sample URSA program reports to ensure that we were in agreement about how to score each criterion and that we established consistency for evaluating responses. The scoring rubric, taken directly from the template provided to program report authors, is attached as Appendix A.

During the training evaluators developed norms for consensus scoring of each criterion. These norms provided us with guideposts for assigning scores to programs holistically and prevented us from assessing any criterion based on a single question. We decided that we would use a consensus-based decision-making process rather than a voting process and established that consensus would be reached when all but two of the evaluators agreed on a score. Finally, we signed a confidentiality agreement regarding the proceedings of the evaluation. The text of the confidentiality agreement is available in Appendix B.

Scoring Process

We divided the 141 program reports into a schedule that required us to read and come to consensus about the scores for 10-12 reports a week for the duration of the Fall 2015 semester. Each report was read and scored individually by every Evaluator. Then the report was thoroughly discussed by a group of five Evaluators before being brought to the entire team for further discussion and consensus scoring. The only exception to this process was that Evaluators who had written program reports did not provide scores for their reports and were not present for any discussion of their reports.

The final ranking of a program was based on the scores assigned to the ten criteria (see Box 2). Within these criteria, there were individual questions. Using the scoring rubric, each Evaluator assigned a score of 1 ("orange"), 3 ("white"), or 9 ("green") to each question. These scores were then considered holistically to assign a score of 1, 3, or 9 to the overall criterion. These criterion scores were used by the whole Evaluation Team to establish the consensus scores.

Once all of the programs were scored via our consensus process, we used Prioritization Plus and other software to examine the frequency distribution of program scores. From this distribution, programs were placed into five evenly sized groups, or quintiles. A full discussion of the process and quintile rankings can be found in the next section of this report.

Box 2: Criteria Used in Report Evaluation

1. HISTORY, DEVELOPMENT, AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE PROGRAM (Weight: 5%)

2. EXTERNAL DEMAND (Weight: 15%)

3. INTERNAL DEMAND (Weight: 12%)

4. INPUTS (Weight: 5%)

5. PROGRAM OUTCOMES (Weight: 5%)

6. REVENUE AND OTHER RESOURCES GENERATED BY THE PROGRAM (Weight: 6%)

7. COSTS (Weight: 6%)

8. SIZE, SCOPE, AND PRODUCTIVITY (Weight: 15%)

9. IMPACT, JUSTIFICATION, AND OVERALL ESSENTIALITY OF THE PROGRAM (Weight: 15%)

10. OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAM (Weight: 5%)

As has been emphasized since the beginning of the URSA process and as stated on the URSA website, "[p]lacement in a quintile does not determine the outcome for a program. Rather it will serve as a guide for discussion in the decision-making phase of URSA with the cabinet and president" (https://www.plymouth.edu/ursa/). As directed by the URSA Task Force, this report does not include the scores of individual programs. The scores will remain confidential and will not be released beyond the URSA Evaluation Team; in fact, as instructed by the URSA Committee, all records of the details of the evaluation process have been permanently deleted as of the release of this report.

The program report scores were used solely for determining quintile placement; that is, programs are not ranked *within* a particular quintile but are instead listed alphabetically (see Quintile Assignments, below). The labels for the quintiles, provided to us by the URSA Steering Committee, are given in Box 3.

Box 3: Quintile Labels

1. Area of distinction
2. Area of strength
3. Area of adequate performance
4. Area of concern
5. Area of significant concern

As we read and scored the credit-generating program reports, we noted observations concerning both the prioritization process and the individual program report contents. Upon completion of the scoring process, the Evaluators met to review the quintile rankings and discuss our observations, looking particularly for patterns and themes. These patterns and themes informed our Key Findings and Recommendations. All Evaluators collaborated in writing this final report.

We believe it is important to conclude this Evaluation Process section of the report by affirming our confidence in the integrity and fairness of the evaluation process. Through the intensive process of consensus scoring, we gained valuable, shared insights about credit-generating programs at Plymouth State University, which are discussed below.

Quintiles

Quintile Assignments

As described in the Evaluation Process section, our charge was to evaluate credit-generating program reports according to the rubric provided. The rubric designated the weighting for individual criteria that were used to determine program quintiles.

We began the process of determining the quintile rankings by examining the distribution of program scores (see Figure 1). During our examination of these initial results, it became clear that the distribution of program scores is skewed toward lower scores, with the median occurring well below the average. Therefore, forcing programs into strict quintiles (i.e., equal groups of 20%) seemed arbitrary, and so in keeping with the spirit of using a data-driven process, we looked for the natural breaks in program scoring to determine more organic "quintile" boundaries. We believe the resulting quintile rankings provided below are more reflective of our holistic process and the credit-generating programs at Plymouth State University.
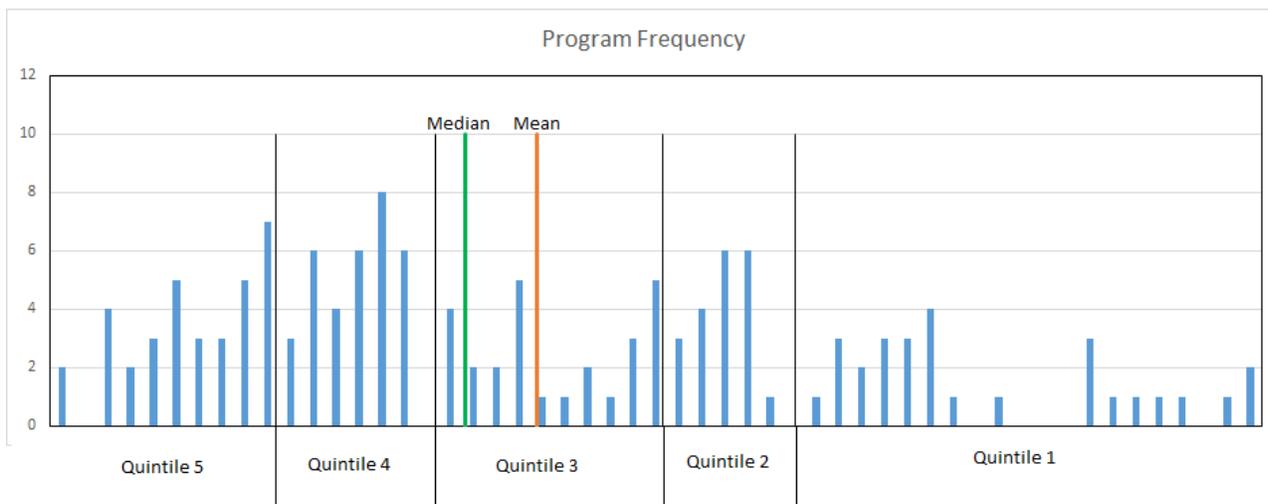
Figure 1. Frequency (# of reports) of Credit-Generating Program Scores.
Median and average program scores are marked with the green and orange lines, respectively. Black vertical lines show the upper boundary of quintiles 5 - 1 (left to right).

The data show several natural gaps in the frequency of program scores. The first natural break occurs at a value just below the median score. Sixty-seven (of 141), or approximately 47% of programs, have scores less than the value of the break. We decided that these programs would be in quintiles 4 and 5 and split this group of 67 into two equal parts. This produced 33 programs (approximately 23.5 % of the total) in Quintile 5: Area of Significant Concern and 34 programs in Quintile 4: Area of Concern.

The next natural break is observed at values well above the median score that clearly separates programs with the highest scores. These 28 programs (approximately 19% of the total) with scores above the natural break are placed into Quintile 1: Area of Distinction.

The remaining 46 programs are divided evenly. The 23 programs (approximately 17% of the total) nearest the median value are placed into Quintile 3: Area of Adequate Performance and the other 23 programs are placed into Quintile 2: Area of Strength.

The five quintiles are given below, with the programs within each quintile listed alphabetically.

Quintile 1: Area of Distinction

> Accounting - BS
> Adventure Education - BS
> Anthropology/Sociology: Sociology Option - BA
> Applied Meteorology - MS
> Biology - BS
> Communication and Media Studies: Media Studies - BA
> Communication and Media Studies: Professional Communication - BA
> Criminal Justice - BA
> Early Childhood Studies: Teacher Certification (PreK-Grade 3) - BS
> Early Childhood Studies: Early Care and Education- BS
> Eating Disorders Institute - Certificate (graduate)
> Elementary Education: Teacher Certification (K-8) - BS
> English - BA
> English: Writing Option - BA
> English Education: Teacher Certification (5-12) Option - BA
> Environmental Biology - BS
> Health Education and Promotion: Health Promotion Option - BS
> Management: General Management Option - BS
> Marketing: Professional Sales Option - BS
> Mathematics - BS
> Meteorology - BS
> National Writing Project - Certificate (graduate)
> Political Science – BS
> Psychology - BA
> Psychology: Mental Health Option - BS
> School Counseling - MEd
> Special Education Programs - MEd
> Sports Management - BS

Quintile 2: Area of Strength

    Art History - BA
    Athletic Training - BS
    Athletic Training - MS
    Biology - BA
    Biology - MS
    Business Administration - BS
    Clinical Mental Health Counseling - CAGS, MS
    Educational Leadership: K-12 School Principal Certification - CAGS, MEd, Certificate
    Elementary Education: K-8 Teacher Certification, Dual Certification, Non-Certification - MEd
    English Education: Teaching of Writing and Teacher Certification 5-12 - MEd
    Environmental Science and Policy: Environmental Science Option - BS
    Exercise and Sport Physiology - BS
    General Management - MBA
    Graphic Design - BA
    History - BA
    Information Technology - BS
    Language Education: TESOL Certification, Non-Certification - MEd, Certificate
    Marketing: Strategic Marketing Option - BS
    Physical Education: Teacher Certification Option - BS
    School Psychology - CAGS, MEd
    Social Studies Education - BS
    Social Work - BS
    Social Work: Child and Family Services Option - BS

Quintile 3: Area of Adequate Performance

Art: Studio Art - BFA
Art Education - BS
Art Education - MAT
Chemistry: General Option - BS
Chemistry: Biochemistry Option - BS
Computer Science - BS
Environmental Science and Policy - MS
Environmental Science and Policy: Community and the Environment Option - BS
Geography - BS
Graphic Design - BFA
Finance - BS
Learning, Leadership, and Community - EdD
Mathematics: Secondary Teacher Certification - BS
Mathematics Education: Certification/Non-Certification Options - MEd
Library Media and Educational Technology Integrator - MEd (dual)
Music: Music Technology Option BA
North Country Teacher Certification Program (special version of Elementary Education) - BS
Nursing: Pre-Licensure Option - BS
Philosophy - BA
Physical Education: Adventure Learning - MEd
Physical Education: Athletic Administration - MEd
Physical Education: Health Education Teacher Certification - BS
Theatre: Musical Theatre Performance Option - BA

Quintile 4 - Area of Concern

Anthropology/Sociology: Anthropology Option - BA
Art: Studio Art - BA
Business Administration - Minor
Chemistry: Chemistry Education Option - BS
Chemistry: Environmental Chemistry Option - BS
Childhood Studies - BS
Coaching - Minor
Curriculum and Instruction: Adult Learning and Development - MEd
Educational Leadership: Special Education Administration - CAGS, MEd, Certificate
Educational Leadership: Superintendent for Schools - CAGS, Certificate
Environmental Planning - BS
First Year Seminar
French - BA
Health Education and Promotion: K-12 Certification - MEd
Heritage Studies - MEd
Historic Preservation - MA, Certificate
Integrated Arts - MEd
Interdisciplinary Studies - BA or BS
Language Education: TESOL - Minor, Certificate (undergraduate)
Management: Small Business and Entrepreneurship Option - BS
Marketing: Public Relations Option - BS
Mathematics: Middle School Teacher Certification Option - BS
Music Education - BS
Music: Voice Performance and Pedagogy Option - BA
Psychology: Developmental Psychology Option - BS
Public Management - BS
Reading and Writing Specialist - CAGS, MEd, Certificate
Science Education in Middle School - MAT
Social Work: Health Services Option - BS
Social Work: Mental Health Services Option - BS
Spanish - BA
Theatre: Acting Option - BA
Theatre: Design/Technology Option - BA
Tourism Management and Policy - BA

Quintile 5: Area of Significant Concern

Addictions Treatment - Certificate (graduate)
Arts, Leadership, and Learning - CAGS
COBA Honors
Dance - Minor
Educational Leadership: Curriculum Administrator - CAGS and Certificate
Educational Leadership: Neurodevelopmental Approach to Teaching - CAGS, MEd, Certificate
Educational Leadership: Teacher Leadership - MEd
English: Literature/Film Option - BA
Health Care Administration - MS and Certificate
Health Education and Promotion: School Health Option - BS
Higher Education: Administrative Leadership - CAGS
Higher Education: Curriculum and Instruction - CAGS
Higher Education - EdD
Human Relations - MA (previously MEd)
Management: Human Resource Management Option - BS
Management: International Business Option - BS
Modern Languages - BA
Music Education - MEd
Music: Commercial Voice Performance Option - BA
Music: Contract Option - BA
Music: Piano Performance and Pedagogy Option - BA
Nursing: RN to BS Option - BS
Personal Organizational Wellness, PATH and OATH - MA, Certificate
Physics - Minor
Play Therapy - Certificate (graduate)
Psychology: Psychology and Law Option - BS
Small Business Institute
Social Science - BS
Social Work: Social Services for Spanish - BS
Social Work: Aging Services - Option - BS
Theatre: Dramatic Writing Option - BA
Theatre: Contract Option - BA
Women's Studies – Minor

Sensitivity Analysis of the Quintile Rankings

We are confident that the final quintile rankings are based on a holistic view of the programs. In order to validate the robustness of the scoring rubric and subsequent rankings, we tested each of the criterion to see if removing that individual criterion from the analysis significantly altered the quintile rank of a program. Not surprisingly, when a criterion was removed, the quintile placement of programs changed. Upon removal of a single criterion, individual programs were seen to move up, down, or remain unchanged in the quintile ranking, depending on which criterion was removed. This indicates to us that a program's placement into a particular quintile was not strongly dependent on a single criterion, but rather was a combination of all criteria scores.

The two criteria that proved to be the most predictive and important in determining the final quintile ranking of programs were Criterion 2: External Demand and Criterion 8: Size, Scope, and Productivity. In other words, when each of these criteria was removed from the scoring, a fairly large number of programs changed their quintile placement. Both of these criteria involve program size; Criterion 2 primarily concerns total number of students enrolled in the program (i.e., majors), while Criterion 8 largely involves numbers of students enrolled in any and all courses offered by the program. This finding leads to the observation that program size is somewhat predictive of quintile placement.

We observed that several criteria are either directly or indirectly related to average program and course enrollment. As discussed above, both Criterion 2: External Demand and Criterion 8: Size, Scope, and Productivity are relevant to this program characteristic. Additionally, Criterion 6: Revenue and Other Resources Generated is related, since attributed revenue is derived directly from course enrollments and program size.

To see the relationship between program ranking and average five-year enrollment, we calculated the median enrollment for programs in each quintile (see Table 1 below) and noted tendency for average enrollment to increase with higher quintile placement. We then eliminated the criteria clearly related to program size (Criteria 2, 6 and 8) from the score calculation and used the new scores to determine quintile placements (also see Table 1). Again, the average enrollment increases (although not as steeply) with higher quintile placement. This tells us that larger programs tend to score well in many criteria, not just those closely related to program size. In other words, programs that wish to improve their quintile placement should focus on more than simply trying to increase enrollment.

In order to further consider the influence of program size on quintile placement, we also looked at the minimum and maximum program enrollments (five-year averages) in each quintile (see Table 1). From this, it can be seen that some small and some large programs are found in each of the quintiles. In other words, while smaller programs tended to be ranked lower, being larger did not guarantee placement in the highest quintile. Again, we conclude that a focus on increasing enrollment without a concurrent focus on improving other program characteristics is not the way to move up in the quintiles.

Finally, we note from our sensitivity analysis that Criterion 10: Opportunity Analysis is least predictive and important in determining the final quintile ranking of programs (that is, when we removed Criterion 10 from the scoring, the fewest number of programs changed their quintile placement). This is likely because few programs scored well on question 10. Further discussion of this observation can be found in the Key Findings.

Table 1: Selected Data for Programs by Quintile					
Quintile	Descriptor	Median Enrollment	Median Enrollment With Criteria 2, 6, and 8 Removed	Minimum Five-Year Average Enrollment	Maximum Five-Year Average Enrollment
1	Distinction	63	47	10.3	310.6
2	Strength	44	32	5.2	438.2
3	Adequate Performance	22	22	8.8	110.8
4	Concern	17	14	0	45.8
5	Significant Concern	8	8	0	38.0

Observations Regarding the Quintile Rankings

Initial analysis and review of the quintile placements revealed some commonalities among programs within the assigned quintiles, including characteristics such as age of the program, size, resources, and type of degree. Below we describe some of our observations and initial analysis. This type of analysis is somewhat beyond our charge, and we performed it rather qualitatively based on the information provided in the program reports. Programs falling into the five quintiles had the following representative characteristics:

Quintile 1: Area of Distinction
- Typically scored 9 in more than three criteria and scored 1 in two or fewer criteria. When the program scored 1, typically the low score was in Criterion 7: Costs.
- Scored 3 or 9 in Criterion 4: Inputs.
- Tend to be larger as a whole.
- Often have more grant-based activity than other programs.
- Have high service credits and/or General Education contributions.
- Often are connected to well-established and successful areas of study, such as Education or Business.
- Provided clear reports that fully addressed the questions.

Quintile 2: Area of Strength
- Tended to score 3 in most criteria. Typically, scored 9 in two or three criteria and scored 1 in two or fewer criteria.
- Have above average student retention rates.

Quintile 3: Area of Adequate Performance
- Scored 3 in most criteria, with scores of 9 in one or two criteria, OR scored 1 in three or fewer criteria and 9 in at least two criteria.

Quintile 4: Area of Concern
- Scored 1 in at least three of the criteria, and rarely had scores of 9. Most scores of 9 for programs in this quintile were in Criterion 7: Costs, indicating the program was inexpensive.
- May be a non-degree-granting program, such as Minors or undergraduate certificates. (See further discussion below.)
- Frequently have a large percentage of low-enrolled courses.
- Commonly have low graduation rates.
- Have low service credits and/or General Education contributions.
- Many are coordinated by a single individual or by an individual who is coordinating several programs.
- Frequently, answers in the report did not address the questions.

Quintile 5: Area of Significant Concern
- Scored 1 in at least five of the criteria and had one or no criterion scores of 9. With one program exception, scores of 9 for programs in this quintile were in Criterion 7: Costs, indicating the program is inexpensive.
- Scored 1 or 3 in Criterion 4: Inputs.
- Are often new programs with limited history, data, and/or reported outcomes.
- May be a non-degree-granting program, such as Minors or undergraduate certificates. (See further discussion below.)
- Frequently have a large percentage of low-enrolled courses.
- Commonly have low graduation rates.
- Have low service credits and/or General Education contributions.
- Many are coordinated by a single individual or by an individual who is coordinating several programs.
- Frequently, answers in the report did not address the questions.

Additionally, our analysis identified some programs that are clearly not like the others. There are some programs at Plymouth State University, such as minors, in which students enroll only in conjunction with other credential-bearing programs, such as a degree.

These include the following programs:

- Business Administration Minor
- Coaching Minor
- COBA Honors
- Dance Minor
- First Year Seminar
- National Writing Project
- Physics Minor
- Small Business Institute
- TESOL Minor and Certificate
- Women's Studies Minor

In general, we found it difficult to evaluate these programs using the rubric. In particular, these programs typically did not have data to support several of the criteria (e.g., Criterion 2: External Demand, Criterion 3: Internal Demand, Criterion 5: Program Outcomes, Criterion 6: Revenues, Criterion 7: Costs, and Criterion 8: Size, Scope, and Productivity), and their reports were not able to adequately address these criteria through their answers to the non-data-based questions. As a result most—but not all—of these programs scored in the lowest two quintiles. The Evaluators considered removing these programs from the quintile rankings because they are so different from other programs. We recognized, however, that our charge included these programs; therefore, they have been placed in a quintile based on their overall score. It is our strong recommendation that decision-makers consider these programs individually.

Finally, through our evaluation and analysis, we noted that placement within quintiles was influenced by whether programs were grouped together or separated (see discussion of the definition of "Program" in Key Finding #1). We observed particular disparity in the way that undergraduate and graduate programs were assigned to reports.

Observations Specific to Graduate Programs

Through the criteria sensitivity analyses described above, we made several observations with regard to graduate programs. Our analysis showed that very few graduate programs scored a 9 in Criterion 3: Internal Demand. We believe this is because most graduate programs are neither designed nor expected to provide courses and services for other programs on campus. When Criterion 3 was removed from the scoring, two of the 44 graduate programs moved up in the quintile rankings, and three moved down. These five represent 11% of graduate programs. Doing a similar analysis of undergraduate programs showed that 16% of undergraduate programs moved when Criterion 3 removed. This shows us that internal demand is relatively similar in predicting quintile placement for graduate and undergraduate programs. Analysis of the other nine criteria demonstrated a similar level of stability in the quintile placements of graduate programs vs. undergraduate programs.
Because we have looked at the scoring data and resulting quintiles in a multitude of ways, we are confident that the quintile placements, including graduate programs, provide an accurate overall picture of all credit-generating programs at Plymouth State University.

Observations Regarding Scoring of Reports

The URSA process is intended to be data-driven, leading to better planning and decision making at the University level. For this reason, a great deal of data was provided by Institutional Research to report writers and the Evaluation Team. As part of the scoring rubric, specific cutoffs were designed by the URSA Steering Committee and Provost Bernier and provided to guide the Evaluators in scoring the data-specific questions (see Appendix A for the scoring rubric). Thus, the scores for these questions were, in a sense, predetermined. For example, based solely on the data and the rubric, one-third of programs should have received a score of 1 on Question 2a. Table 2 provides the predetermined distribution of scores for the data-specific questions.

Table 2: Predetermined Scores of Data-Specific Questions from Data Provided by Institutional Research			
	Percent of Programs Receiving Score		
Question	*1*	*3*	*9*
2a: Students enrolled in program	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
3a: Service credits for non-majors taking courses in the program	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
3b: Service credits for students taking Gen Ed courses in the program (UG only)	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
5a: Retention of students from first to second year (UG) or first to second semester (G)	25.4%	31.5%	43.1%
5b: Four-year graduation rate of students initially enrolled in program	40.3%	26.3%	33.3%
6a: Revenue attributed to program	20%	60%	20%
7a: Costs attributed to program	20%	60%	20%
8a: Credit hours per FTE (*note: determined by department, not by program*)	20%	60%	20%
8c: Low-Enrolled courses (*note: determined by discipline code, not by program*)	61.4%	18.1%	20.5%
8d: Net contribution (revenue minus costs) attributed to program	20%	60%	20%
Note: UG = Undergraduate, G = Graduate			

For comparison, we calculated the actual distribution of scores resulting from our evaluation for each criterion across all credit-generating programs (see Table 3). By comparing Tables 2 and 3, it is clear that some criteria (notably 2, 6, 7, and 8) were strongly data-driven, and to a large extent, the final scores on these were indeed predetermined. On the other hand, significant differences in the distributions between the data and the final scores are particularly notable in Criterion 3: Internal Demand and Criterion 5: Outcomes.

Table 3: Distribution of Scores Across Credit-Generating Programs by Criterion			
	Percent of Programs Receiving Score		
Criterion	*1*	*3*	*9*
1: History, Development, and Expectations	29.10%	62.40%	8.50%
2: External Demand	31.90%	39.70%	28.40%
3: Internal Demand	43.30%	45.40%	11.30%
4: Inputs	14.20%	73.80%	12.10%
5: Outcomes	31.20%	57.40%	11.30%
6: Revenue and Other Resources Generated	21.30%	50.40%	28.40%
7: Costs	20.60%	61.70%	17.70%
8: Size, Scope, and Productivity	29.10%	56.70%	14.20%
9: Impact, Justification, and Overall Essentiality	31.90%	57.40%	10.60%
10: Opportunity Analysis	50.40%	47.50%	2.10%

General observations on contributions to and the distribution of the scores for individual criteria are noted below. (See Appendix A for the Scoring Rubric.)

Criterion 1: History, Development, and Expectations

This criterion asked programs to describe how they have "adapted to meet change." Scoring for this criterion was largely based on the ability to provide evidence showing "effective responsiveness to change." To score a 9, the report needed to articulate what changes were made, explain why the changes were made, and show some evidence that the changes were effective. With only 8.5% of programs scoring 9 in this criterion, it should be clear that most reports did not provide strong evidence for all three elements. Most programs were able to articulate some specific change, many provided a reason for the change, but very few could, or

did, identify effectiveness. Programs that scored 1 in this criterion did not identify any reason for change or identified no changes.

Criterion 2: External Demand

As noted above, this was largely a data-driven criterion based on Question 2a. Most often, program size data agreed with the demand trends described in response to Question 2b (e.g., large programs had significant, positive demand trends). Occasionally, the answer to 2b shifted the holistic score. For example, a newer, smaller program with strong evidence for significant, positive demand trends might have scored higher than the data for Question 2a predicted or a larger program with clearly declining demand trends might have scored lower as a result.

Criterion 3: Internal Demand

Two of the four questions (3a and 3b) in this criterion were data-based, but the final distribution of scores does not reflect the distribution of the data. Only 11.3% of programs scored a 9 in this criterion. Due to the data-driven nature of Questions 3a and 3b, it was challenging for a program to score well overall unless it scored 9 in both of these questions. Furthermore, the answers to Questions 3c and 3d tended to result in lower scores overall on this criterion.
- Question 3c dealt with "the services and/or supports your program regularly provides for other programs on campus." Many answers focused either on the *courses* the program offers or on *outreach* activities, but this question is specifically about *services/supports* that are not courses and that are offered to *other programs on campus.*
- Question 3d asked what the impact would be if the program "stopped providing seats in courses for students outside your program" or stopped "other services." As such, answers that scored 9 referred to the courses and services previously mentioned in Questions 3a, 3b, and 3c and identified specific programs that would be affected. Many lower-scoring responses focused on what the effect would be if the program were eliminated (which was not the question) and/or did not provide specific answers.

Criterion 4: Inputs

Nearly three-quarters of all programs scored a 3 in Criterion 4: Inputs. None of the questions for Criterion 4 were based on quantitative institutional data. Few programs stood out overall in input quality. Likewise, few scored low on enough questions to score a 1 in this criterion.

For Question 4a, report writers were asked to provide evidence that the program's curriculum is appropriate in breadth and depth. It was challenging for programs without national accreditation or guidelines from an external, discipline-specific organization to score a 9 in this question. Regardless, some such programs did score well by providing credible evidence for appropriateness.

Question 4b asked that report writers link faculty qualifications to program quality. Most programs had well-qualified faculty but very few linked the qualities and qualifications of faculty to the quality of the program itself. The only programs that scored less than 3 in this question were those that very clearly lacked qualified faculty.

As detailed in Key Finding #2 in this report, Question 4c, about resources, was challenging for programs to articulate and evaluate. Program reports that did not specify any needed resources scored a 9, according to the rubric. On the other hand, answers describing either minor requests for resources, such as more pedagogically appropriate furniture, or that the program had challenges but "is doing the best it can" received a score of 3.

Question 4d asked report-writers to reflect on the program's ability to attract and retain qualified students, faculty, and staff. In many cases, the Evaluators used evidence from throughout the report to supplement evidence provided in 4d. For example, if a report writer indicated that the program was successful in recruiting and retaining quality students, but data on program size, low-enrolled classes, or retention rates suggested otherwise, the Evaluators scored the question accordingly.

Criterion 5: Outcomes

Similar to Criterion 3, two of the four questions (5a and 5b) in this criterion were data-based, but the final distribution of scores, with only 11.3% of programs scoring 9, does not reflect the distribution of the data. Due to the data-driven nature of Questions 5a and 5b, it was challenging for a program to score 9 for Criterion 5 overall if it did not score 9 in Questions 5a and 5b. Furthermore, the answers to 5c and 5d tended to result in lower scores overall in this criterion. The report rubric required a "predominance" of high scores in the questions to receive a 9 in the criterion, and it was rare for a program to score well in both data-driven components. Furthermore, it was challenging for a report to receive a score of 9 in 5c and 5d:

- Question 5c required "strong evidence" of "meeting high standards of quality" and being "effective in preparing students for the future," which was a difficult standard for many programs to meet. Answers that scored 9 included positive results of exit or professional certification exams, positive responses to alumni surveys (including high response rates), and/or significant and positive data on job and/or graduate school placements. Many reports lacked such data, and indeed there appears to be a wide range in the collection of such data among programs.
- Question 5d required "strong evidence" of the program consistently bringing "positive recognition to PSU." This was also a difficult standard for programs to meet: there was a tendency for programs to inadequately address this question and focus instead on one or two individual accomplishments of faculty, student, and/or alumni.

Criterion 6: Revenue and Other Resources Generated

Based only on the institutional data on revenue for Question 6a, program scores should have been distributed 20%, 60%, 20%, but the final distribution was skewed in the positive direction.

This is likely due to the influence of question 6b, regarding grants and other non-tuition revenue. When the score for 6b was higher than for 6a, the criterion scored higher than if 6a was considered alone. Thus, programs with significant grant revenue received a higher score. Conversely, a lack of additional revenue from 6b was not held against programs in the overall criterion score. There were no qualitative questions for this criterion.

Criterion 7: Costs

The final scores for this criterion almost exactly reflect the predetermined distribution based on data for Question 7a, indicating that Question 7b on reducing costs and increasing efficiency mattered very little. In other words, the Evaluation Team rarely determined that the efforts to reduce costs and increase efficiency compared to or were on the scale of the actual costs of a program. The most commonly identified efforts to reduce costs and increase efficiency, by far, were raising course caps, utilizing teaching lecturers, and distributing materials electronically to save printing costs.

Criterion 8: Size, Scope, and Productivity

In Criterion 8, Questions 8a, 8c, and 8d were determined by quantitative institutional data. Questions 8a and 8d were intended to have a distribution of 20%, 60%, 20%. The distribution for Question 8c, however, was closer to 60%, 20%, 20%.

The Evaluation Team noted a challenge in scoring Criterion 8 due to the combination of the disparate metrics involving productivity, size, and profitability. The holistic score was based largely on the three data-driven questions (8a, 8c, and 8d). Question 8b focused on faculty scholarship and service. A report that scored 9s in the data- driven questions and 1 in Question 8b received a 9 holistically for Criterion 8, but a report that scored 9 in Question 8b and 3s in the other questions would receive a holistic score of 3. That is to say, in the scoring of the Criterion, scholarship and service were outweighed by measures of program size and teaching load.

For a more detailed discussion of themes related to Criterion 8, see the Key Findings.

Criterion 9: Impact, Justification, and Overall Essentiality

For this Criterion, report writers were asked to describe how their programs align with and support the University's mission and strategic plan, as well as how they bring value to PSU. Only 10.6% of programs scored a 9 in this Criterion. Many programs simply claimed that they aligned with the mission to "provide well-educated graduates," without providing evidence to support that answer. To score a 9, programs needed to supply "multiple, specific examples," but most answers merely quoted the mission and/or did not provide specific examples. For example, many programs claimed to "serv[e] the North Country and Lakes Region," without specifically stating how.

Criterion 10: Opportunity Analysis

Only 2% of programs scored 9 in Criterion 10. This Criterion asked report writers to identify emerging external opportunities, describe potential new collaborations, and share ideas for future innovations, including the potential benefits to Plymouth State University. Many programs were able to identify opportunities and potential collaborations but were unable to articulate how the program could act on them or what the benefits would be to the University. This resulted in many scores of 3 in those questions. Reports that provided no evidence of potential collaborations or opportunities received a score of 1.

For a more detailed discussion of themes related to Criterion 10, see the Key Findings.

Key Findings

In the course of reading and evaluating reports, we made note of a large number of observations. As we moved toward the end of the evaluation we could see that many of the individual observations related to larger themes. Below we present those larger themes as six Key Findings. For each Key Finding we provide a discussion of the sources of the finding and Recommendations related to the finding. These Key Findings are interrelated and a number of observations support several of the Key Findings.

Key Finding #1: Plymouth State University has a large number of credit-generating programs.

Discussion:
It was immediately obvious to the Evaluators that 141 credit-generating programs is a large number for an institution the size of Plymouth State University. As we undertook the evaluation process, one question kept recurring: How were programs defined? The URSA Committee defined programs as follows:

> *A program is an activity or collection of activities at PSU that consumes resources (i.e. money, people, space, equipment, time). It provides a function or a service that can be articulated, measured, and/or evaluated. A Credit Generating Program is a specific collection of activities that have credits associated with them, and consume resources, dollars, people, space, equipment, and/or time.* (See Appendix C for full definition.)

One consequence of the application of the program definition is that it resulted in a very long list of programs. At the undergraduate level, reports were generated for nearly every option within a degree program. At the graduate level, application of the definition resulted in a surprisingly large number of programs, some of which had nearly identical names. It was at times challenging for the Evaluation Team to discern the differences between some programs, despite having full reports for each. That led us to wonder about the ability for current and prospective students to understand the differences and make informed decisions when selecting programs. The abundance of degrees, options, minors, and certificates may not only be confusing to students, but it also presents a challenge for strategic planning for resource allocation.

Having such a large number of programs means that many programs are very small. In fact, fully one-third of all programs have an average enrollment under 12 (a score of 1 on the rubric under Criterion 2: External Demand). Small programs often pointed out that they are "low-" or "no cost." Individually, they may not use substantial resources, but taken together they represent a significant commitment of University resources. When we consider the true cost of a program, we must include all resources required to run a quality program, not just financial ones. As noted, smaller programs, in general, were more often placed in the lower quintiles. This

suggests that smaller programs face challenges in terms of resources and quality. A number of small programs identified significant resource challenges.

There are also some degrees with very similar names, or with BA and BS versions (e.g. Biology), or BA and BFA (e.g. Studio Art), or MEd, CAGS, and EdD versions. Report writers rarely articulated the differences among these similar programs, and often, these similar programs ended up in different quintiles based on reported differences in attention and investment in the administration of the programs.

Recommendations:
A. Articulate the structures and characteristics that should define programs at Plymouth State University, including degrees, options, minors, certificates, and other programs. Regularly evaluate whether programs are continuing to meet the agreed-upon parameters.

B. Determine the true cost of new and continuing programs, because claiming to be "low cost" or "no cost" has resulted in an unsustainable proliferation of programs.

C. Require each individual program to have a clearly articulated rationale.

Key Finding #2: Strategic stewardship of resources is often not evident.

Discussion:
The guiding principles or strategic plan by which resources, human and otherwise, have been allocated across the University are not readily observable. Throughout our review, it became evident that there are wide discrepancies in resources allocated to programs across the University. We were unable to discern why that is the case or how decisions regarding equipment, materials, facilities, and faculty are made. Decision-making at the University level does not currently appear to be well-grounded in evidence. Given the score of questions related to reflecting on, measuring, and articulating the quality and effectiveness of changes, decision-making at the program level also does not appear to be evidence-based.

Our observations related to resources can be categorized into two areas—Equipment and Facilities, and Faculty—followed by some general observations.

Equipment and Facilities:
Question 4C asked programs to "explain the extent to which the equipment, materials, and facilities (including technology resources) for the program are conducive to an overall high quality learning experience for the students." Two observations emerged from the answers to that question:
- We could not detect a pattern regarding which programs have adequate resources and which do not. Some programs claimed to have adequate equipment, materials, and facilities to deliver high quality learning experiences to their students. Other programs

expressed concern that the quality of existing equipment, materials, and facilities is having a negative impact on their ability to deliver high quality learning experiences to their students.

- Many investments in equipment and materials are one-time provisions, without a plan for maintenance, replacement, or sustainability.

A number of programs indicate that their facilities allow them to deliver high quality learning experiences to their students. For example, the Psychology Mental Health BS program report stated,

> *The various laboratory experiences offered to our students is one of the most promising and exciting aspects of the Department/Program. To date we have 4 working laboratories that have attracted a great deal of student interest and involvement. The Department houses a Psychophysiology Laboratory equipped to assess cardiovascular, respiratory, and Galvanic Skin Response measures in relation to different aspects of frontal lobe function, attentional control, and anxiety. The Lifetime Learning Laboratory is well equipped.... The Learning Laboratory is well equipped… Our newest Emotion and Relationships Laboratory is well equipped…. All of these programs utilize students as research assistants resulting in presentations at various regional conferences and publications in peer reviewed journals.*

The Psychology Mental Health BS program is placed in Quintile 1 as an Area of Distinction.

In contrast, quite a few program reports stated that their lack of resources is negatively affecting program quality or public perception of program quality. Some reports suggested that they lack what might be considered a basic level of facilities in order to deliver high quality educational experiences for students. For example, the Criminal Justice BA program report stated,

> *CJ continues to grow and be limited in our space. For example, scheduling all our classes in only 2 classrooms is a challenge, and we are especially in need of a classroom that can hold 35-40 students. This semester we had to lower our caps on some of our courses from 35 to 24, due to inadequate and insufficient classroom availability.*

The Criminal Justice BA program is also placed in Quintile 1 as an Area of Distinction, despite these limitations.

Our point in quoting these two reports is not to say that one program deserves excellent facilities while the other does not. We also do not intend to suggest that these are the only two programs where we saw such discrepancies or that these discrepancies exist only in facilities. Our point is that we could not discern a decision-making strategy for investing resources in programs.

In addition, quite a few reports indicated that their programs have sufficient resources to run a high quality program but would benefit greatly from relatively small investments in classroom furniture that is more pedagogically appropriate for group activities.

Some programs have been able to use grants and/or one-time resource allocations to upgrade facilities and/or technology. Many of these programs report that their equipment and facilities are currently supportive of high quality learning, but that after purchasing or receiving those materials, funds were not allocated through University channels for maintenance or replacement. This lack of continuing support on the part of the University highlights two problems: First, the University does not plan for sustainability of new resources; and second, successful grant-writing and fundraising seem to be regarded as a reason for the University not to invest in the program.

Some programs also indicated that they had recently received one-time funding from a University source (most often Academic Affairs) to purchase equipment or technology in an effort to provide high quality learning experiences. Nearly all of those programs also expressed concerns that, subsequent to the purchase, no funds had been allocated for the maintenance or replacement of those resources, again indicating a lack of planning for sustainability. Such funds (both the initial, internal funding of the purchase and the maintenance funding) should be reported as part of the cost of the program.

Faculty:
 Question 4b asked report writers to describe the qualifications of program faculty in relation to program quality, and Question 4d addressed the adequacy of faculty resources. As is the case with other resources, some program reports indicated that their faculty resources were adequate while others indicated a significant need for additional faculty. A number of programs reported having lost faculty when a faculty member retired or left the University and the position was not refilled; in many cases, this had a detrimental effect on the program, such as lowered student enrollments or gaps in addressing curricular needs. On the other hand, some programs reported being able to immediately fill vacant positions. Once again, we were unable to discern a strategic decision-making process for the allocation of faculty resources. For example, for multiple external review cycles, external reviewers of the History BA program have stated that the program's lack of a European historian has negatively affected program quality. Despite this, the History BA is in the top third of programs in terms of size and placed in Quintile 2 as an Area of Strength. We are not commenting on whether the decision to forego investment in a European Historian is incorrect. Instead, we use this example to illustrate our inability to determine the basis on which such decisions have been made. This example also causes us to question the value of investing resources in external program reviews if the University is not going to use the results as part of a transparent, strategic decision-making process.

General Observations:
It appears from our review of the program reports that one way to receive resources from the University is to propose a new program. Reports from several programs that were established in the last five years state that they have the faculty and physical resources necessary for their program. This is clearly related to Key Finding #1. If resources are attached to new programs, it is not surprising that we have a large number of programs. As a consequence many report writers proposed new or expanded programs as potential innovations (see further discussion in

Key Finding #5 below). Another problem with program proliferation has been that as programs are requested and created they are not carefully integrated into existing structures, leading to duplication of efforts and a lack of collaboration (see Key Finding #6 for more on Collaboration).

We believe it is important to note that many program reports scored low on answers to questions requiring articulation, assessment, or evidence regarding goals, outcomes, curriculum, and mission. For Criterion 1: History, Development, and Expectations, most programs were able to articulate some specific change and many provided a reason for the change, but very few identified evidence of effectiveness. For Criterion 4: Inputs, most programs had well-qualified faculty but very few linked the qualifications of faculty to the quality of the program itself. For Criterion 5: Program Outcomes, many reports lacked data to support claims regarding program outcomes. Criterion 9: Impact, Justification, and Overall Essentiality, asked programs to describe how they align with and support the University's mission and strategic plan. Most answers were rather general, merely repeating the mission, or did not provide specific examples. Taken all together, this observation suggests to us that the University does not often encourage programs to reflect on and provide evidence of the effectiveness of their activities. Without such reflection, the University cannot know whether it is thoughtfully stewarding its resources.

From reading the program reports, it is clear that many educator preparation programs are facing serious challenges, including lower enrollments, diminished resources, and increased demands on program faculty, which reflect broader political and economic issues that are affecting the field of education as a whole. Plymouth State University has a rich history of providing excellent educator preparation programs. In fact, this is what the institution was founded upon. PSU needs to carefully examine the institutional commitment to undergraduate and graduate educator preparation programs. This is important to consider for science education, art, languages, music, health education, and administrator preparation, among others. If the institutional mission supports educator preparation, PSU should have a plan for such programs and commit the resources needed to carry out the plan. The current state of affairs offers an opportunity to move away from the model of small, stand-alone educator preparation programs and envision a new, more collaborative delivery model. The state and region have critical needs in certain key subject areas; for example, many reports noted the critical need for STEM graduates. A concerted effort to address those critical needs could reestablish Plymouth State University's reputation as a leader in educator preparation in the state and region.

Recommendations:

A. Make strategic choices about adding, changing, and supporting programs based on a long-term vision for the University that allows prioritization of programs. There is a limited amount of resources that must be distributed across all programs at the University; therefore, if we start doing something new, we must consider suspending or eliminating a different activity.

B. Develop a process for fair and transparent allocation of resources, human and otherwise. Once the process has been implemented, the resulting decisions about where resources will be allocated should be made available to the entire campus.

C. Include in long-term planning the resources needed to maintain or replace facilities and equipment obtained through one-time grants or funding. Establish a mechanism by which programs can build up funds for repairing or replacing large-ticket items when they inevitably fail or become obsolete.

D. Establish and clearly define the program characteristics that are most valued by the University (e.g., productivity, quality, reflection, assessment, meeting the mission). Encourage careful stewardship of resources by incentivizing programs to meet these characteristics and rewarding those that do.

E. Base decisions about resource allocation for programs on evidence, including program quality, demonstrated need, and alignment with the PSU mission and vision in order to establish and maintain transparency regarding resource allocations. That is, everyone should know the plan for resource allocation, the criteria for resource allocation, and the results of resource allocation, so everyone has a fair shot at resource allocation.

F. Establish assessment and data collection systems or expectations at the University level, and encourage a culture of reflection and evidence-based decision making at all levels of the institution. Note that resources will need to be allocated to this significant task.

Key Finding #3: Program reports indicate challenges to maintaining the core values of the University in the current budgetary environment.

Discussion:

Not surprisingly, in the current budgetary environment, much emphasis has been placed on keeping costs low. Reading the reports raises some issues concerning the negative effect that this emphasis might have on University values such as program quality and personalized connections between students and faculty.

The rubric used for evaluating credit-generating programs places heavy emphasis on size. For example, higher enrollments score higher in Criterion 2: External Demand and larger class sizes

score higher in Criterion 8: Size, Scope, and Productivity. In addition, many program reports stated that efficiencies were achieved by raising caps on course enrollments, relying on part-time faculty for teaching and program coordination, and/or overload teaching by full-time faculty. Yet at the same time, many reports claimed that particular programs distinguish PSU from other institutions by having small class sizes. As class sizes increase, this distinguishing feature becomes more difficult to maintain. Some program reports suggested that developing connections between faculty and students is important but increasingly difficult, because faculty are overloaded with teaching responsibilities or because faculty in the program are not regularly available on campus.

The current evaluation process favors measurement and analysis of faculty *teaching* productivity in the form of class sizes and credits generated per faculty member, both of which are directly related to costs. The reports show that programs with high faculty teaching productivity tend to have lower faculty *scholarship* and *service* productivity. Although teaching is of primary importance in the evaluation of any faculty member's performance, faculty are expected to engage in all three areas of productivity. A focus on teaching more—more students, more classes—in order to reduce costs means that faculty have less time to focus on other important aspects of their work.

Partnership programs, especially those for which many or all courses are taught through an entity outside of PSU, (e.g., PE/Adventure Learning, Play Therapy, Neurodevelopmental Approach to Teaching) may limit the institution's ability to track and ensure quality of the program.

The challenges of maintaining PSU values in the face of the current budget realities are not limited to teaching and faculty resources. It is apparent from the reports that cost-cutting in the area of facilities and equipment also often favors low costs over high quality. For example, a number of programs note that their equipment is, or soon will be, out of date and in need of repair or upgrade. Other programs express frustration with the lack of library resources available for their faculty and students. Some reports indicate that the lack of resources allocated to the program has already begun to erode the perceived quality of the program (e.g., Superintendent of Schools CAGS). Some low-cost programs that were created with minimal resources have difficulty attracting students.

Recommendations:

A. Implement an assessment plan that includes measurements of program quality and other University values to determine the effectiveness of long-term strategic investments and cost-saving plans.

B. Establish program priorities based on a strategic plan and adequately support those programs. Stretching scarce resources among too many programs negatively affects the quality of all programs.

C. Weigh any cost-cutting efforts against potential reduction in quality. Cost-cutting within programs should not be considered productive or useful in and of itself.

D. Develop long-term strategic investment and cost-saving plans that do not sacrifice the values that distinguish Plymouth State University.

Key Finding #4: Program reports indicate a high degree of variability in faculty workload (teaching, scholarship, and service).

Discussion:

Report writers provided Information about faculty productivity in answers to Criterion 8: Size, Scope, and Productivity. Evaluators also gained insights about faculty productivity from answers to questions 4b and 4d. As discussed in Observations Regarding the Quintile Rankings, above, faculty teaching productivity as measured by question 8a is partially related to the size of a program (number of students served per full-time equivalent faculty member); however, as noted by many programs, the data do not account for the distribution of teaching loads within programs. The responses to the questions about faculty workload indicate that some faculty are teaching high amounts of overload or fulfilling other responsibilities that are time-consuming while others are not. It is unclear whether faculty want to teach overloads in all of these cases. Regardless of whether the overloads are voluntary or expected, models that rely on such heavy workloads may not be sustainable in terms of maintaining high quality teaching or faculty well-being.

A number of programs rely on part-time faculty coordinators. Part-time faculty positions also face high turnover, which can present a challenge to maintaining program quality. In several graduate programs, all full-time faculty associated with the program teach the graduate courses in overload. Programs using this model highlight the efficiency and low cost of the program, but this again raises questions regarding sustainability. It is not clear whether as positions turn over, other faculty members will be willing or able to sustain the efforts. Another concern that arises from rewarding faculty productivity for the number of students served (size) is that this may detract from faculty satisfaction or recruitment. Many faculty members choose PSU because they want to work in a close-knit community where they get to know their students well.

Faculty productivity in scholarship and service was only reported in question 8b. This means that this information was minimized in the holistic criterion score for Criterion 8: Size, Scope, and Productivity, because 8a, 8d, and to some extent 8c, are measures of program size related to large classes. Evaluators observed that programs with high productivity in class size and credit hours per FTE often had lower levels of faculty scholarship and/or service. Other programs, with lower levels of productivity by other measures, demonstrated considerable high-level scholarship. Service was also highly variable across programs. Nearly all faculty listed in the answers to 8b demonstrated some service. Many programs, however, had few or no faculty engaged in significant University service; instead they focused on service within their department or service to their profession external to PSU. Other programs had every member of the faculty involved in service to the University.

It should be noted that measures of student advising and mentoring were not included in the reports. Therefore, the effects of either large or small advising loads on faculty productivity cannot be deduced from these reports. Evaluators suspect that advising loads may also impact productivity.

Recommendations:
A. Measure faculty productivity in all three areas: teaching (including advising and mentoring per the Faculty Handbook), scholarship, and service. The evaluation of productivity should not be conflated with measures of productivity related to program size.

B. Encourage programs at all levels (undergraduate and graduate) to carefully consider the mix of full-time, part-time, and faculty overload, not only through the lens of efficiency and cost but also in terms of how faculty workload and assignments relate to quality and sustainability.

Key Finding #5: Program reports indicate that innovation is a challenge at Plymouth State University.

Discussion:
We were struck by how few program reports described ideas for innovation beyond adding courses to existing programs, expanding to an online format, hiring additional faculty, or having the University increase the marketing of their programs. As noted earlier in this report, approximately 2% of programs scored 9 in Criterion 10: Opportunity Analysis, which asked about innovation and collaboration. A plethora of possible opportunities went largely unrecognized by program report writers.

Evaluators noted several factors that may have led to this result. Over the last few years, the focus of the University has clearly been on maintaining or increasing enrollments and resources have been devoted to this effort. The effect of this focus may have been to encourage increasing enrollments as the most desirable "innovation." Small programs have been focused

on increasing enrollment; many small programs, including nearly all of the small graduate programs, are convinced that more effective marketing of their programs by the University will produce enrollment increases. Large programs may be satisfied with their enrollments, or may believe that their enrollments are at or near capacity for the resources allocated to them, and therefore there may not be strong incentive for them to innovate. A few reports from large programs demonstrate clearly that they have not given much thought to innovation. The Evaluators also suspect that, given the financial state of the University, programs may believe that their resources and workload are already at capacity and therefore may not be willing to take on the additional workload that is likely to accompany innovation. Although they may be interested in innovation, they may resist it without the guarantee of additional resources to support innovation.

It should be noted that the URSA report rubric itself may have contributed to the lack of innovative answers in Question 10c. According to the rubric, programs that identified resource needs in Criterion 4: Inputs or unique costs in Criterion 7: Costs would receive scores of 3 or 1 in those criteria. Since a low overall score could result in placing the program in a lower quintile, we believe several reports did not contain ideas for innovations that might have required additional resources.

Recommendations:
A. Provide additional training and facilitate connections among programs to promote creativity and develop a culture that intrinsically values innovation.

B. Continue to encourage the pursuit of grants and other external funding.

C. Invest in additional resources as needed to encourage a culture of innovation, including physical spaces and time for people to think, talk, and plan.

Key Finding #6: Program reports indicate that collaboration is a challenge at Plymouth State University.

Discussion:
Report writers addressed collaboration in answers to two criteria in the report. Question 10b asked about *potential* collaborations, including *specific* examples. Many reports listed ongoing collaborations, while others responded very generally, such as "we could collaborate with other departments." In some cases, program reports demonstrated that those programs view the service courses offered to students outside their program as "collaboration." Recall again that just 2% of programs scored 9 in Criterion 10: Opportunity Analysis. Many programs identified opportunities and potential collaborations but did not articulate how the program could act on them or what the benefits would be to the University. It was notable that for this criterion the evaluation rubric did not reward programs that are already collaborating.

For Criterion 9: Impact, Justification, and Overall Essentiality, Questions 9a and 9b asked programs to identify ways that they meet the University mission. The current mission statement emphasizes commitment to service and the community. Question 9b asked specifically how programs meet societal needs related to the University mission. In answers to Questions 9a and 9b, program reports often mentioned current collaborations, particularly with community partners, but did not often articulate how those collaborations benefit their program or the University.

It was also apparent that some report writers were inspired to write about collaboration after they attended the University Day discussion on August 26th in which President Birx introduced the concept of academic Clusters. Their responses to Questions 9b and 10b mentioned general interest in participating in Clusters and/or Open Labs.

Our participation in the process of reviewing and evaluating reports provided Evaluators with the unique opportunity to become familiar with all of the credit-generating programs at Plymouth State University. We were interested to see connections among programs and even courses, within and across graduate and undergraduate programs, of which we were not previously aware. Some programs have similar strengths, face similar challenges, and/or have identified similar opportunities. These affinities may present possibilities that haven't yet been considered in Cluster planning. Recognizing that few people at the University have this perspective, we believe it is important to share insights we've gained that could inform the development of Clusters.

Several programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels offer coursework, options, and/or degrees related to mental health—Psychology, Social Work, School Psychology, Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Given the high need for mental health professionals in the region and nationally, this seems to be a promising area for collaboration. Some programs on campus are also offering courses or minors focused on addressing the needs of an aging population, which is another area of increasing societal need.

We noted that a number of undergraduate and graduate degree programs from different departments include the word "environmental" in their titles: Environmental Planning, Environmental Science and Policy: Community and the Environment, Environmental Science and Policy: Environmental Science, Environmental Biology, and Environmental Chemistry. These titles suggest a shared focus and commitment to the natural environment that could be explored through the Cluster planning process.

The URSA reports contain a wealth of valuable information. As we move toward developing Clusters, we strongly encourage people across campus to review the program reports with an eye toward potential collaborations. Decision-makers, in particular, will find these reports very useful in identifying strands that can be woven together in creative collaborations.

Recommendations:

A. Use the program reports as a resource for identifying potential collaborations, as part of a long-term planning process.

B. Provide time, space, and additional resources to enable programs to explore collaborations—both within PSU and with outside partners—that have been identified as worth pursuing through the University planning process.

Implications from Key Findings

It is clear from the Key Findings that Plymouth State University faces some significant challenges. This should not come as a surprise—the URSA process was initiated because the University recognized those challenges. Plymouth State University has a large number of credit-generating programs and a limited pool of resources. The reports indicate that these limited resources have been spread thinly across a great number of programs. This has impacted quality of programming, as 47% of programs have been placed in the lower two quintiles. Even programs that were placed in the upper three quintiles report resource challenges.

Aside from challenges related to resources, the reports showed that programs are not particularly innovative or collaborative, which may reflect a larger, institutional culture. Yet the reports indicate that programs are neither resistant to innovation nor stagnant. They are eager to embrace new directions. The challenge lies in envisioning new directions without simply adding new programs. As the University moves toward a more collaborative model that requires innovation on the part of programs, the challenge for campus leaders will be to harness the energy for new initiatives and allocate resources appropriately.

In order to accomplish this, we believe that campus leadership must fully embrace the Recommendations from our Key Findings and make the strategic decisions that will propel the University forward.

The URSA Process: Recommendations for the Future

Given the Key Findings and Recommendations, the following suggestions are provided to guide future URSA processes:

Defining and Identifying Programs
A recommendation for future URSA-like processes is to begin by clearly defining what constitutes a program for the purposes of reporting and evaluation. For example, there were many graduate programs offering significantly overlapping content. Some of those programs were combined for reporting (e.g., graduate Special Education MEd programs), yet others with similar content were separated (e.g., Integrated Arts MEd, and Arts, Leadership, and Learning CAGS).

Data and Data Analysis
Our recommendation is to begin tracking and appropriating relevant data to programs, rather than to departments or colleges. Tracking data by program will also ensure the consistency and reliability of data used in future URSA processes.

Report Writing
Strengthen the training for report writers to include instruction in interpreting the data. It is advisable that someone other than the report writer should serve as the report approver, and that the approvers should also receive training. The approval process should allow time for program approvers to review the reports carefully and ensure completeness and quality.

The Evaluation Rubric
The evaluation rubric included aspects related to the evolution, quality, and success of programs in attracting and graduating students. While the rubric provided a manageable number of indicators on which report writers and Evaluators were asked to reflect, it may have also minimized important nuances or information.

Some of our rubric observations are related to appropriateness of data. Criterion 2: External Demand included data on the average number of students in a program for the last five years. This measure does not actually measure external demand, but rather the number of students enrolled in courses at the present time as an indicator directly related to teaching load, productivity, and revenues. The assessment of external demand was thus heavily influenced by internal data.

There was no clear articulation of how to attribute the grant revenues to individual programs. Other sources of revenue such as course fees and box office revenue should also be reported. We recommend that PSU should provide data about grants and other sources of revenue and indicate how those revenues should be attributed to programs.

Question 7b regarding cost reductions and efficiencies did not contribute to our understanding of a program's cost. We recommend that this question not be included in the future.

The Evaluation Process
Our concluding observation is about the implementation of the URSA evaluation process in terms of workload. We found our work to be informative, interesting, absorbing, and extremely time-intensive—about the equivalent of working two months at 40 hours a week, on top of our regular workload. At the end of our evaluation effort this semester, the Evaluation Team strongly supports the consultants' initial recommendation that Evaluators should be released from other responsibilities during the evaluation process.

Conclusion

The URSA process has provided valuable insights into Credit-Generating programs at Plymouth State University. We have seen from the reports that PSU faculty and staff care about the success of students, work hard, and use ingenuity to do their best with limited resources. We have also seen, however, that PSU is trying to do too many things with too few resources so that, in some instances, quality is suffering.

If Plymouth State University is to be a strong, effective, and student-centered institution as the higher education landscape changes, the University must also change. The Key Findings and Recommendations in this report concern the areas where the most significant changes must occur. We know such change will require difficult decisions to be made. But imagine what we can achieve when we focus our energies on sufficiently resourced initiatives.

Appendices

Appendix A: Scoring Rubric

1. HISTORY, DEVELOPMENT, AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE PROGRAM (Weight: 5%)
a. Describe how your program has evolved over the years, focusing on how the program has adapted to meet change. Changes could include changing demographics and needs of PSU's students, changes in state or federal regulations, changes in the job market, changes in technology, etc. Provide specific examples of how your program has adapted to meet change.
- Green: Program provides strong evidence of effective responsiveness to change.
- White: Program provides evidence of effective responsiveness to change.
- Orange: Program does not provide evidence of responsiveness to change. OR It is not clear whether the program's response to change was effective.

2. EXTERNAL DEMAND: Identifies need for the program from potential students, drawing on enrollment data and other indicators of demand. (Weight: 15%)
a. The number of students in your program for the last five years is provided along with the number of students for all PSU programs (five-year average). Use these data and any other data sources you might have access to that would allow you to explain your program trends and any expected changes for future enrollments. If changes are expected, describe and provide evidence for your conclusion.
- Green: UG > 43.5   G > 29
- White: UG 12 – 43.5   G 12 – 29
- Orange: UG < 12   G < 12

b. Describe any local/regional, state, and national demand trends that may impact future enrollments in your program. Provide references to the sources for your data on demand trends.
- Green: Program provides strong evidence of demand trends associated with a positive impact on future enrollments
- White: Program provides some evidence of demand trends associated with a positive impact on future enrollments.
- Orange: Program does not provide evidence of demand trends associated with a positive impact on future enrollments. OR Evidence provided does not suggest   a positive impact on future enrollments.

3. INTERNAL DEMAND: Assesses the program's internal demand by looking at contribution to General Education and/or in serving students outside of the program (i.e. majors outside of

your department/discipline) as well as the impact of the program on other academic and service programs on campus. (Weight: 12%)

a. The service contribution data for your discipline is provided. Comment on the factors influencing your discipline's service contribution relative to other PSU disciplines.

- Green: UG > 477   G > 101
- White: UG 108 – 477 G 54 – 101
- Orange: UG < 108   G < 54

b. The General Education contribution data for your discipline is provided. Comment on the factors influencing your discipline's General Education contribution relative to other PSU disciplines.

- Green: UG > 542   G: NA
- White: UG 163 – 542 G: NA
- Orange: UG < 163

c. Discuss the services and/or supports your program regularly provides for other programs on campus (for example, students with special expertise gained through their enrollment in your program, faculty expertise, campus activities sponsored by your program, etc.).

- Green: Evidence shows that program provides multiple supports and/or services that are routinely utilized on campus.
- White: Evidence shows that program provides some supports and/or services that are utilized on campus.
- Orange: There is no evidence that the program provides supports and/or services. OR Supports and/or services are in low demand, based on the evidence provided.

d. What impact would there be on other programs on campus if your program stopped providing seats in courses for students outside your program and/or other services identified above? Cite examples of how other programs would be impacted.

- Green: Program provides examples of significant negative impact if its supports and/or services are stopped.
- White: Program provides examples of some negative impact if its supports and/or services are stopped.
- Orange: Program does not provide examples of the impact if its supports and/or services are stopped. OR The examples given do not suggest that stopping supports and/or services will negatively impact other programs on campus.

4. INPUTS: Considers factors impacting the quality of the program, such as curriculum, faculty, and resources. (Weight: 5%)

a. Cite evidence that your program curriculum is appropriate to the breadth, depth, and level of the discipline and is complete and coherent. (Examples of evidence might include: feedback on the curriculum from an external review and/or accreditation report; internal program review or self-study of strengths, gaps, and needs.)

- Green: Program provides strong evidence that the curriculum is appropriate, complete, and coherent.
- White: Program provides evidence that the curriculum is appropriate, complete, and coherent.
- Orange: Program provides no evidence. OR Evidence provided does not support that the curriculum is appropriate, complete, and coherent.

b. Describe the characteristics of your program faculty and how these characteristics specifically relate to program quality. This could include but is not limited to: degrees held; relevant area(s) of expertise; relevant professional experience; scholarly and creative contributions to the field; professional service to the field; recognitions and honors received.

- Green: Program provides strong evidence that faculty characteristics support a high level of program quality.
- White: Program provides evidence that faculty characteristics support a high level of program quality.
- Orange: Program provides no evidence that faculty characteristics support a high level of program quality. OR Evidence provided does not show that faculty characteristics relate to a high level of program quality.

c. Explain the extent to which the equipment, materials, and facilities (including technology resources) for the program are conducive to an overall high quality learning experience for the students.

- Green: Program's explanation establishes that existing resources are sufficient to provide a high quality learning experience for students.
- White: Program's explanation establishes that it is doing the best it can with its existing resources to provide a high quality learning experience for students, but additional resources are needed.
- Orange: Program does not provide an explanation that it is using resources to provide a high   quality learning experience for students. OR Program's explanation establishes that program does not have sufficient resources to provide a high quality learning experience for students.

d. Describe your program's effectiveness in recruiting and retaining faculty, staff, students, and/or other resources that contribute to program quality. Identify challenges to program's effectiveness in these areas.

- Green: Program's description establishes its effectiveness in recruiting and
  retaining faculty, staff, students and/or other resources that contribute to
  program quality and is not experiencing challenges to its effectiveness in these areas.
- White: Program's description establishes its effectiveness in recruiting and
  retaining faculty, staff, students, and/or other resources that contribute to
  program quality but has identified challenges to its effectiveness in these areas.
- Orange: Program does not describe its effectiveness in recruiting and retaining faculty,
  staff, students, and/or other resources that contribute to program quality. OR Program's
  description indicates significant challenges to its effectiveness in these areas.

5. PROGRAM OUTCOMES: Highlights the program's successes in achieving its goals. (Weight: 5%)

a. This question looks at how well your program helps PSU retain its students.

UG: First-year retention rate data is provided for your program

GR: Students who are admitted to a Graduate program, return for a second semester.

- Green: UG > 78%   G > 95%
- White: UG 72 – 78%   G 90 – 95%
- Orange: UG <72%   G < 90%

b. This question looks at how successful your program is in graduating the students who started in your program.

UG: Program 4-year and 6-year graduation rates are provided (for students who started and graduated in the same major)

GR Program graduation rates are provided.

- Green: UG > 28%   G > 74%
- White: UG 17 – 28%   G 60 – 74%
- Orange: UG < 17%   G < 60%

c. Specifically describe the evidence that your program meets standards of quality and is effective in preparing students for the future. This evidence could include (but is not limited to): student scores or passing rates on qualifying or certification exams; validation or accreditation of the program by external entities; job and/or graduate school placement data for program alumni; data on student achievement of program learning outcomes; survey data from satisfaction surveys of alumni and/or employees.

For each item of evidence, give the specific source of the evidence; use evidence from within the last 5 years.

- Green: Program provides strong evidence that it is meeting high standards of quality and is effective in preparing students for the future.
- White: Program provides evidence that it is meeting high standards of quality and is effective in preparing students for the future.
- Orange: Program does not provide evidence that it is meeting high standards of quality and is effective in preparing students for the future. OR Evidence provided does not indicate that the program is meeting high standards of quality and is effective in preparing students for the future.

d. Specifically describe the evidence that your program brings recognition to PSU. This evidence could include (but is not limited to): honors and awards for the program, its students, and/or its faculty; positive media attention to the program; requests from outside institutions or organizations for student or faculty contributions (interns, performances, service on boards, etc.); partnerships and/or relationships cultivated with other entities; has a strong, positive reputation among external stakeholders, audiences, and other constituencies. For each item of evidence, give the specific source of the evidence; use evidence from within the last 5 years.

- Green: Program provides strong evidence that it consistently brings positive recognition to PSU.
- White: Program provides evidence that it has brought positive recognition to PSU.
- Orange: Program provides no evidence that it has brought positive recognition to PSU. OR Evidence provided does not indicate that the program brings positive recognition to PSU.

6. REVENUE AND OTHER RESOURCES GENERATED BY THE PROGRAM: Focuses on revenues that are attributable to the program's efforts, including external funding and gifts/support from external stakeholders. (Weight: 6%)

a. The credit-generating revenue and fees attributed to your program for the last two years is provided along with the data for all programs. Explain the factors that influence your program revenue.

- Green: > $775.000
- White: $62 – 775k
- Orange: < $62k

b. Indicate and explain what revenue your program has generated for itself and/or the institution. Examples: Grant activity (data provided) or any other gifts or revenue.

- Green: > $100k

- White: $5 – 100k
- Orange: <$5k

7. COSTS : Identifies relevant costs that are associated with the program, as well as the program's actions to manage costs and create efficiencies. (Weight: 6%)

a. Data are provided about program costs. Identify and explain any unusual one-time costs that would have impacted the expenses. Identify and explain any ongoing costs that are unique to your program.

- Green: < $39k
- White: $39 – 417k
- Orange: >$417k

b. Describe any actions your program has taken to reduce costs and increase overall efficiency (for example, increased class size, fewer sections taught, use of free technologies, reduction in use of paper resources, etc.). Give specific examples and explain how these actions have reduced costs and increased overall efficiency.

- Green: Program provides specific examples of actions taken that have reduced costs and increased overall efficiency.
- White: Program provides examples of actions taken have reduced costs or increased overall efficiency.
- Orange: Program provides no examples of actions taken that have reduced costs and/or increased overall efficiency. OR Examples provided do not indicate that actions taken have reduced costs and/or increased overall efficiency.

8. SIZE, SCOPE, AND PRODUCTIVITY: Assesses the productivity of the program in relation to its size. (Weight: 15%)

a. Two years of data for faculty teaching productivity, reported as credit-hours generated per FTE faculty, are provided for your program and all PSU programs. Describe the factors that impact faculty teaching productivity in your program.

- Green: > 450
- White: 300 – 450
- Orange: < 300

b. Identify the number of faculty in your program who are expected to engage in service and scholarship. Give examples of the major scholarly and service activities of each of these faculty members.

- Green: Program provides examples of extensive scholarship and service by all of the relevant faculty over the last two years.

- **White**: Program provides examples of scholarship and service by most of the relevant faculty over the last two years.
- **Orange**: Program provides no examples of faculty scholarship and service. OR Scholarship and service are limited to a small percentage of the relevant faculty.

c. Data is provided for each discipline which includes average class size and the number and percent of low enrolled course sections offered (defined as 8 or fewer students).
- **Green**: UG avg > 17   or #low < 10%   *G avg > 15 or   #low < 10%*
- **White**: UG avg 14 –   17 or   #low < 20%   *G avg 10 – 15 or #low < 20%*
- **Orange**: UG avg < 14 or # low > 20% *G avg < 10 or #low > 20%*

d. Your program's net contribution margin (FY13 and FY14) is provided along with net contribution margin data for all programs for FY13 and FY14. Comment on the factors influencing your program's net contribution margin.
- **Green**: > $400k
- **White**: $17 – 400k
- **Orange**: < $17k

9. IMPACT, JUSTIFICATION, AND OVERALL ESSENTIALITY OF THE PROGRAM: Considers how the program aligns with and supports PSU's mission and strategic plan, as well as the ways in which it brings value to PSU. (Weight: 15%)
a. Give specific examples of how your program supports PSU's mission and strategic plan
- **Green**: Program provides multiple, specific examples of ways in which it supports PSU's mission and strategic plan.
- **White**: Program provides examples of ways in which it supports PSU's mission and strategic plan.
- **Orange**: Program provides no examples that it supports PSU's mission and strategic plan. OR Examples provided are not relevant to PSU's mission and strategic plan.

b. Identify the ways in which the program addresses regional, state, and/or societal needs that are integral to the institution's mission Give specific examples.
- **Green**: Program provides multiple, specific examples of ways in which it addresses needs that are integral to PSU's mission.
- **White**: Program provides examples of ways in which it addresses needs that are integral to PSU's mission.

- Orange: Program provides no examples that it addresses needs that are integral to PSU's mission. OR Examples provided are not relevant to how program addresses needs that are integral to PSU's mission.

c. Describe how this program helps PSU distinguish itself from other institutions of higher education in the state and/or region. For example, consider how your program leverages PSU strengths, people and expertise; capitalizes on uniqueness; takes advantage of the region; or provides a competitive advantage. Give specific examples.
- Green: Program provides strong evidence that it helps PSU distinguish itself from other institutions of higher education.
- White: Program provides evidence that it helps PSU distinguish itself from other institutions of higher education.
- Orange: Program provides no evidence that it helps PSU distinguish itself from other institutions of higher education. OR Evidence provided does not   demonstrate that program helps PSU distinguish itself from other institutions of higher education.

10. OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAM: Allows the program to share ideas for how it might strengthen its contributions to the PSU mission and strategic plan. There are three aspects to this analysis of opportunities: external factors that are opening opportunities; potential collaborations; and innovations. (Weight: 5%)
a. Describe the opportunities being created for your program by external factors, such as changes in your field, new technologies, state or federal laws, etc. Give specific examples of how your program might act on those opportunities.
- Green: Program provides strong evidence of opportunities created by external   factors and gives specific examples of how the program can act on these opportunities.
- White: Program provides evidence of opportunities created by external factors that the program can act on.
- Orange: Program provides no evidence of opportunities created by external factors. OR Evidence provided does not indicate how the program can act on opportunities.

b. Describe how your program might collaborate or cooperate with other programs internal or external to PSU in ways that benefit PSU. Give specific examples.
- Green: Program provides strong evidence of potential collaborations and gives specific examples of how these collaborations could benefit PSU.
- White: Program provides evidence of potential collaborations that could benefit PSU.
- Orange: Program provides no evidence of potential collaborations. OR Evidence provided does not specify how the collaborations could benefit PSU.

c. Describe innovations your program could make that would benefit the program and PSU. Give specific examples.
- ● <u>Green</u>: Program provides strong evidence of potential innovations and gives specific examples of how these innovations could benefit PSU.
- ● <u>White</u>: Program provides evidence of potential innovations that could benefit PSU.
- ● <u>Orange</u>: Program provides no evidence of potential innovations. OR Evidence provided does not specify how the innovations could benefit PSU.

Appendix B: Confidentiality Agreement

URSA Confidentiality Agreement:

The URSA Evaluation process requires high levels of trust and credibility among the members of the PSU Community. Aspects of your work will necessarily require you to read, create, and discuss materials that, by nature of the URSA process, should remain confidential.

As an URSA Evaluator, you agree by signing below, that you will respect the confidence and privacy of others and will not share any information that your position of trust as an Evaluator grants you access to. You further agree that you will not discuss with others, or make available to others, any discussions, information, or materials from the Evaluation process that are not part of the defined final work product.

_____   _____
Signed   Date

_____
Printed Name

Appendix C: Full URSA Program Definition

Definition of Program (s) *A program is an activity or collection of activities at PSU that consumes resources (i.e. money, people, space, equipment, time). It provides a function or a service that can be articulated, measured, and/or evaluated.*

In the URSA process, programs fall into two distinct categories: Credit-Generating Programs and Non Credit-Generating Programs. Some other institutions have defined these as "Academic" and "Administrative," with the key difference being the *Credit- Generating* aspect.

Crediting-Generating Program:
A Credit-Generating Program is a specific collection of activities that have credits associated with them, and consume resources, dollars, people, space, equipment, and or time.

- Programs and an academic department are NOT synonymous.
- Programs are more usually narrow and disciplinary or interdisciplinary in nature.
- Departments are administrative units designated to manage the resources under their jurisdiction. A single department may contain multiple programs, for example: individual majors, minors, options, certificate programs, General Education courses for other majors, graduate programs (individual/all Master's, Certificates, Doctoral programs), service courses to other undergraduate programs, service courses needed by other graduate and professional programs, partnerships, and institutes in specialized areas, all of which generate credit hours.