Shawnee State University

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The UFA's Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee

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SECTION I: HOW DO OUR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS SUPPORT OUR MISSION, AND HOW DO WE SUPPORT THEM WITH HUMAN, FINANCIAL, AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES.

SSU'S mission is to prepare students for the changing needs of business, industry, education, and society through its diversified degree programs. We are achieving this mission by offering both certificate programs, as well as bachelor and/or associate degrees in allied health, business, engineering technology, and the arts and sciences. In addition, we offer teacher certification for those intending to enter elementary and secondary education. Our future plans include several proposed bachelor programs, two of which are under active consideration and review (health care management and administration and a legal assisting/social science 2 + 2).

The above programs are extensively supported with an appropriate mixture of human, financial, and physical resources. Our courses are staffed with over 100 full-time faculty. Though we do use well-qualified adjuncts, their number is being reduced through an agreement between faculty and administration. To service our large segment of non-traditional students, SSU offers both day and evening sections of most of our courses, along with the necessary support staff to service these enrollments. Though we have an unofficial minimum enrollment of 10 students per class for a course to be offered, this number is waived if a student requires the course for graduation. In addition to offering courses on campus, we routinely offer courses to students at off-site locations. Our commitment to physical resources includes a university center, an engineering technology building and a fine arts center. Long range plans include other new buildings such as the College of Business.

SECTION II: HOW DO OUR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS ACCOMPLISH OUR PURPOSES AS AN INSTITUTION?

SSU's mixture of one-year certificate, associate and bachelor degree programs offers an affordable opportunity for students to advance their education, regardless of age, background, or past academic difficulties. Of the thirteen Ohio Universities, we not only have the lowest tuition and fees, but also provide extensive developmental education courses, advising, and tutoring services to help ensure that once a student enrolls at SSU, he has a reasonable opportunity of success.

Our efforts are not restricted to the student who requires only remedial assistance. We are currently in the process of developing an honors program to improve the learning experience for the intellectually gifted.

SECTION III: WHAT ARE OUR PLANS FOR PROGRAM REVIEW, AND HOW WILL THAT PROCESS AID DEPARTMENTS, COLLEGES, AND THE UNIVERSITY AS A WHOLE?

The Education Policy Curriculum Committee (EPCC) subjects academic programs to an extensive review prior to their vote by all faculty in the University Faculty Assembly. The

EPCC membership consists of five faculty representing the Colleges of the University and an administrative representative. The rigorous review of EPCC of all new academic programs and policies typically include the following steps:

1.   A proposal is initially presented to the faculty and/or administrators in an academic unit for initial review and approval. If approved, the proposal is sent to EPCC for additional review and consideration.

2.   The EPCC and the initiator discuss the proposal at length. Questions which frequently arise during this phase include the occupational outlook for the programs graduates, the demand for the program, the financial implications on SSU, textbook selection, library holdings, staffing and the relationship of the proposed course to those currently in the curriculum.

3.   At least one open hearing is held on the proposal during which time any faculty and administrators can express their support or concern regarding the proposal. In addition, EPCC solicits written comments from any faculty and administrators who may be unable to attend these hearings.

4.   After these inputs are received, EPCC again reviews the proposal, and votes whether to recommend passage or rejection to the UFA membership. Because the initiator is usually responsive to the needs and concerns expressed at the open hearings and EPCC, programs are improved by these inputs. This process enables most programs to be forwarded to the UFA with a favorable recommendation.

5.   During the UFA meeting, a brief discussion regarding the merits of the proposal usually ensues, followed by a vote on the policy.

6.   If approved, the policy is forwarded to the administration for appropriate approval and action and if necessary to the University trustees.

In addition to new programs, existing programs are subject to continual review by faculty and administration. If major opportunities for improvement exist, the faculty or administrator follows the above procedure for incorporating the change into SSU's policy and procedures. Minor revisions to programs, such as a modification in course descriptions or change in course title or number, is reviewed by EPCC and, if approved, sent directly to the Registrar.

The program review process is extensive, allowing for all valid concerns to be investigated and hopefully resolved to everyone's satisfaction. This process helps to ensure that major problems are identified, discussed, and evaluated prior to the adoption of any new academic program, policy or course.

SECTION IV: WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS OF SSU'S ACADEMIC PROGRAMS? WHAT CONCERNS SHOULD WE HAVE; WHAT ISSUES NEED TO BE ADDRESSED?

The strengths of SSU's academic programs include our emphasis on teaching. SSU encourages, but does not require, research and class preparation, student advising, new course development,

and other areas which can best directly benefit our students. Our teaching emphasis includes the recognition that our open admission policy encourages the enrollment of some students who may have experienced academic problems prior to attending SSU. In response to their needs we have incorporated developmental education testing, remedial courses, and tutoring services for at-risk students.

The major weaknesses in academic programs can be traced to budgetary constraints that cause an over-reliance on adjunct faculty and an inability to offer enough sections of required courses to fully meet the needs of non-traditional students, and an inability to offer all the courses in our course inventory. We are also reluctant to periodically remove courses which have not been offered for several quarters.