

Quadrennial Departmental Plan

Background:

Accreditation, as well as academic integrity, require that academic institutions articulate their academic goals, make efforts to determine the extent to which they are meeting those goals, and adjust their practices in the light of what those efforts reveal. The determination of a department's goals and the assessment of whether or not those goals are being met or not in no way reflect poorly on the faculty in the department (and it may not be used for their evaluation). Instead, assessment of needs provides guidance for the faculty and, when staffing or budget are involved, a claim on resources for the administration, one which is backed by evidence. For such an instrument to be effective, it must be responded to by the administration as carefully as it is prepared by the faculty, and consequently the final part of this document is an administrative response which is left blank by the department and filled in after a full discussion of the plan among the department faculty, the Dean, the Registrar and the Division Coordinator.

At Mary Baldwin College, the terms "discipline," "department," and "academic program" have been used with various meanings. In this document, a "department" is a group of faculty who are headed by a department chair; all faculty have appointments in one department. "Disciplines" are academic specialty areas which may or may not be coterminous with departments; for the purposes of planning, "majors" is the preferred term since the main concern is with the students who are pursuing a course of study leading to a specific major (and those who are not). When a major is staffed by faculty from more than one department, the department of the faculty member who signs off on the major should cover the evaluation of that major. In questions relating to majors, it should be made clear which statements apply to all majors and which to only specific ones. Similarly, some departments have more than one operating budget; it should be made clear in these cases which budget is the one being discussed.

Departmental Quadrennial Plan

Department _____ Chair: _____

Preface

Does your department have more than one defined major, minor, or sponsored program? If so, please list each below and when answering major-related questions provide responses for all. Does your department have more than one operating budget? If so, please address each operating budget separately in all answers concerning budget items.

I. Discipline Goals

1. What are the department's educational goals for its majors?
2. What are the department's educational goals for non-majors?
3. What are the department's professional goals for its faculty members?
4. How do these goals relate to the mission of the College and (where appropriate) to the goals and strategies of the Mary Baldwin College Advantage?

II. Assessment

1. How does the department assess the appropriateness of its educational goals?
2. How does the department determine how well its majors in **all** programs are meeting its educational goals for them?
 - a. Are MFATs or other standardized tests required of all majors?
 - b. Are GRE subject area tests or other graduate entry tests required?
 - c. Are other assessment methods used for which data can be presented?
(For any of these, please attach all available data for the period of the last four years.)
3. How does the department determine how well non-majors taking its courses meet its goals for them?

III. Results and Response

1. What are the department's main conclusions from the assessment of its majors during the last four years, and what response has the department already made to improve?
2. What are the department's main conclusions from the assessment of its general education students during the last four years, and what response has the department already made to improve?
3. What are the department's main benefits from its faculty development goals during the last four years, and what are the department's plans for further faculty development?
4. Please comment on the extent to which the discipline serves students in multiple MBC programs, referring to the appended Registrar's report.

IV. Departmental Needs and Plans

1. To what extent do the department's goals for majors, non-majors, and faculty depend on unmet or inadequately met staffing needs? Please be specific about what is needed and make reference as needed to the Registrar's COL appended to this plan.
2. To what extent do the department's goals for majors, non-majors, and faculty depend on unmet or inadequately met financial needs, either in operating budget or in faculty development funds or otherwise (physical facilities, library holdings, etc.)? If there are major unmet needs please provide a reasonable estimate of the cost of meeting each one (and note which ones are interconnected).

V. Data Attachments

1. Four-year curriculum (COL material with staffing indicated)
2. Registrar's Office list of previous 4 year curriculum with enrollments, and departmental GPA.
3. Records of all non-course testing such as MFATs from the previous 4 years, together with national averages for those tests.
4. Summaries of faculty development/scholarly activities for all faculty during the previous 4 years.
5. Please attach a copy of your discipline's previous quadrennial (or triennial) plan and the administrative response to that plan.

VI. Administrative Response (to be appended by the Dean of the College after meeting with the department).