

University of Missouri Task Force on Academic Program
Analysis, Enhancement, and Opportunities

Phase I Report

September 1, 2017

This report provides an update on the progress of the University of Missouri Task Force on Academic Program Analysis, Enhancement, and Opportunities (the “Task Force”). We summarize the progress to date of the Task Force, discuss the principles that are guiding our work, note the data sources being compiled to inform recommendations and decisions, outline processes for engaging with the MU community, and address next steps.

Task Force Progress

On April 3, 2017, University of Missouri System President Mun Choi sent a message to campus that mentioned, among other items, the need to comprehensively review the academic programs offered by the University of Missouri. Provost Garnett Stokes formed the Task Force to lead the campus in undertaking such a review. Specifically, the Task Force was charged with three general directives:

1. Making recommendations regarding programs/units that should be considered for additional investments from campus,
2. Making recommendations regarding programs/units that should be considered for combination or consolidation, and
3. Making recommendations regarding programs/units that should be considered for discontinuance.

More information on the development of the Task Force and its overall charge can be found here: <http://provost.missouri.edu/about/academic-programs-task->

[force/Proposed%20University%20of%20Missouri%20Comprehensive%20Program%20Review
Final.pdf](#).

In selecting members of the Task Force, Provost Stokes consulted widely on campus. In particular, she sought members who had experience working broadly across different units on campus, had some familiarity with data sources that would be pertinent to the Task Force's work, and/or had recent experience in both administrative and faculty roles (*e.g.*, department chairs; associate deans who continued to be active in faculty activities like teaching, research, and student mentoring). She also wanted to ensure that the Task Force was diverse in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and academic background. Finally, she instructed Task Force members to recognize that they are serving the campus at large, not as representatives of individual colleges, departments, or other units. Task Force members have committed to providing recommendations that we believe are in the best interests of the university, regardless of the potential impact on our home units/departments. The Task Force held its first meeting on June 30, 2017, and has been meeting bi-weekly since.

Guidelines and Principles

Several general principles guide the work of the Task Force. First, the university's primary mission involves providing an exceptional education to our students; thus, excellence in teaching is among our most important institutional goals. Second, we recognize that MU is a research-intensive institution whose work should be relevant and of benefit to the lives of the citizens of Missouri and beyond. Third, we are a comprehensive institution whose mission is to provide a wide array of degree programs across diverse scholarly and professional disciplines. Fourth, as an institution we are facing challenges that are unprecedented in our recent history, though not unique to higher education in general at this time. The past several years have

challenged our campus and community, but have also created an opportunity to critically evaluate our future directions. Finally, this Task Force can be successful only if we embrace transparency and shared governance. We are committed to being open regarding our processes, procedures, and progress as a committee, and we will seek input, advice, ideas, and recommendations from the full MU community.

As would be expected at an institution that embraces diverse views, Task Force members will have different opinions about how to put these principles into practice. For example, some members may view certain research metrics as more important than other members do in terms of defining program quality, or members may disagree about the importance of certain degree programs across the state. However, we view this diversity in perspectives as a strength of the group as it moves forward in making comprehensive recommendations regarding the future of MU's academic programs.

Data Synthesis and Integration

Much of the Task Force's effort to date has involved gathering data to inform our efforts. Members of the Task Force recognize that all individual data sources have strengths and limitations, as well as differential relevance to the different missions of the university. Below are the data sources the Task Force has gathered or is in the process of gathering, along with a brief summary of its relevance to our mission.

Existing Data Sources

- Census data, both total and per faculty member (e.g., number of graduates from a program, number of student credit hours generated by a program)—*Indicator of student interest*

- Application and acceptance rates for all graduate programs—*Indicator of student interest, indicator of program selectivity, indicator of program selectivity/capacity*
- Results of the Missouri Department of Higher Education’s audit of degree programs, which identified programs whose average number of graduates is below a threshold of 10+ undergraduate, 5+ masters, or 3+ doctoral graduates/year—*Indicator of student interest and retention*
- Program rankings and program accreditation status—*Indicator of program quality*
- Academic Analytics data for all programs and departments—*Indicator of program/departmental research productivity as compared to similar units at peer institutions*
- External funding data at the departmental and school/college level, including yearly expenditures, overall award amounts, and overall proposal amounts—*Indicator of research productivity for some units consistent with our institutional mission, indicator of student financial support (i.e., research assistants funded on external grants)*
- Future occupational projections for the state of Missouri and beyond—*Indicator of current and future student needs in our role as a state-supported institution to prepare its citizens for future employment opportunities*

Data Sources to be Gathered

- Market demand analysis for future students—*Indicator of future student interest and demand*

- Quantitative/qualitative information related to our efforts to recruit students from diverse backgrounds—*Indicator of our mission to enhance the lives of Missourians and others from a wide array of backgrounds*
- Information on similarities/differences with program offerings at other universities in the state—*Indicator of potential student demand*
- Quantitative/qualitative information on program contributions to diversity and inclusion—*Indicator of our mission to foster an inclusive environment*
- Quantitative/qualitative information on state-wide engagement—*Indicator of our mission as the flagship and land-grant institution*
- Quantitative/qualitative information on similarities across academic programs—*Indicator of potential opportunities to improve programs through consolidation/combination*
- Efficiency/cost data related to our degree programs—*Indicator of resources necessary to offer or enhance specific programs*

Additional data sources may be gathered in response to feedback and input from the MU community and additional discussions among the Task Force.

Strategies for Engaging with the MU Community

With the publication of this report, the Task Force moves into Phase 2—active engagement with the MU community to seek feedback, advice, ideas, and input regarding the details of its mission. We view this phase as the most important part of the process, as it is critical that the full range of stakeholders in the MU community has the opportunity to be heard. To achieve this aim, the Task Force will begin scheduling meetings with the following groups (note that this list is not exhaustive):

- Faculty Council
- Council of Deans, as well as individual meetings with each dean
- Provost's Staff
- Chancellor's Staff
- Staff Council
- Missouri Students Association
- Graduate Student Association
- Graduate Professional Council
- Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
- MU Alumni Association
- Chairs' Council
- Faculty by college

Once these meetings are scheduled, the Task Force welcomes requests from other groups that were not already able to provide feedback at a meeting. Given the time constraints, it is not possible for the Task Force to meet with individuals or small groups, so some small meeting requests may be combined. Meetings can be scheduled through the Office of the Provost (882-6597), which will coordinate times when Task Force members are available. Although it is unlikely that the full committee will be available for each of these meetings, we will try to ensure that one of the Task Force co-chairs and at least one additional member is present at each meeting. Summaries of each meeting will be created and shared with Task Force members unable to attend in person. Finally, once all of the group meetings are complete, we will hold an open forum for any members of the MU community who wish to provide input but were unable to attend earlier meetings.

Additionally, we have established an email address, muprovostacademic1@missouri.edu, where members of the MU community can ask questions and provide unsolicited feedback.

Next Steps

The Task Force has established a regular meeting schedule for the Fall semester in order to discuss the input from the MU community as we receive it. We are in the process of scheduling meetings with constituent groups within the MU community. Updates on the Task Force's progress will be provided on the Provost's Website, and the final report is due to be submitted no later than January 15, 2018.