

Associate of Arts (AA) Program Review

Executive Summary

Process

The Associate of Arts (AA) program is one of the first programs offered at Azusa Pacific University - University College / Los Angeles Pacific University (UC/LAPU), having been offered since 2011. As originally conceived, this program was intended to provide an opportunity for students who wanted to complete their first two years of undergraduate studies online, with the goal of transferring into a bachelor's program at UC or another online university.

A Program Review Committee (PRC), comprised of academic administrators, full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and an instructional design expert was appointed in August 2017 to conduct a comprehensive program review. Following guidelines provided by the WASC Senior Colleges and Universities Commission (WSCUC), the program review examined the following components:

Program Quality

Students

Curriculum and learning environment

- Alignment with program and institutional outcomes

- Currency

- Breadth and depth of learning

- Sequencing and availability of courses

- Review by internal and external stakeholders

- Comparison to competitors' programs

Student learning and success

- Faith integration

- Retention and graduation rates

- Preparedness for advanced study and/or careers

Faculty

- Faculty composition

- Faculty contribution to the quality of the program

Program Viability and Sustainability

Program demand

- Enrollment trends

- Market demand

Allocation of resources

- Faculty

- Student support

- Information and technology resources

- Facilities

Staff
Financial resources

The PRC's review of the AA program was based on analyses of student enrollment information; program purpose and design; annual learning results for the program; similar programs offered by competitors; student retention, completion, and graduation rates; student survey results; faculty information and feedback; market trends; and institutional resource allocated to the program.

Once the PRC completed an initial review of the program, external reviewers were invited to conduct their own review of the program and provide additional feedback. The outcome of this process was then synthesized in a 17-page *AA Program Review 2017* report that was presented to and approved by the Educational Effectiveness Committee (2/7/2018). The summary findings and recommendations are presented below.

Findings

- The curriculum, practices, processes, and resources align well with the program goals. The curriculum provides students with a broad foundation and there are sufficient faculty from a variety of disciplines to support the program. Students who complete the AA program are well prepared to continue their studies at UC or another higher education institution.
- The facts that nearly 20% of the students enrolled in the AA program have earned the AA or another UC degree, nearly 30% have transferred to other UC bachelor's-level programs, and approximately 18% are still enrolled in the AA program all indicate that there is good alignment between the program goals and the goals of the constituents the program serves.
- With recent course revisions that have occurred in AA courses, the curriculum in this program reflects current university standards. The courses generally make use of standardized rubrics, updated course shells, and learning activities that engage learners in meaningful ways. UC has not conducted a student or alumni survey aimed specifically at AA students. However, in recently conducted general student and alumni surveys, 71% (5 of 7) of AA respondents indicated they were pursuing their degree for career-related purposes.
- The fact that the AA program provides a pathway for students to enroll in a bachelor's-level program, regardless of whether they first complete the AA program, is a strong indication that the goals of the program are being achieved. The strong completion, passing, and mastery rates for AA students in their courses are also an indication that the program goals are being achieved.
- Students have generally achieved the program learning outcomes (PLOs) at the expected level, with some exceptions. The exceptions have consistently led to revisions to courses and/or the assessment process as means of improving the quality of the AA program and the students' learning experiences.

Recommendations, Future Goals, and Planning for Improvement

Recommendations

1. Review the curriculum to determine how 21 - 27 units of 200-level courses can be included.
2. Review the program structure to determine how better alignment with the general education core can be achieved.

3. Review the curriculum to determine which courses will best help students transferring into a UC bachelor's program.
4. Review the AA Curriculum Map with a view to closing the gaps identified in the AA Curriculum Outcome Analysis.
5. Align General Studies Core with the AA curriculum.
6. Explore the possibility of partnering with degree-completion institutions that may want to recommend UC's AA program to their students who need lower-division units.

Future goals

As a result of this program review process the following goals have been established:

1. Complete the AA program review noted above by the end of FY 2018.
2. By the end of FY 2018, complete the revision of five courses that have not recently been revised. This includes ART 110, ECO 203, SPAN 121, SPAN 122, and SPAN 123.
3. By the end of FY 2019, complete the revision of any other AA courses that may still require revision, i.e., REL 100 and REL 105.
4. By the end of FY 2018, establish a clear process for tracking student progress for those students who enroll in the AA This should include those who (1) complete the degree; (2) transfer to another UC program; (3) transfer to another institution; and (4) withdraw from the institution.