Memorandum

To: Cabinet, Deans, Chairs, Directors, and Faculty Senate Officers

Subject: Initiating a New Academic Program Review and Improvement Process

Date: April 22, 2008

Following discussions with the Campus' academic deans and representatives of the Faculty Senate, and consistent with the objectives outlined in the Campus' Strategic Planning documents, I am pleased to describe a rationale for and process of self-study and reflection designed to enhance institutional and program quality and effectiveness. The process will employ internal and external evaluation to examine the current status of educational offerings, utilizing existing processes of program accreditation whenever possible; assess the future potential of those offerings, and identify opportunities for program alignment and reinvestment to strengthen the programs and the Campus.

Several external forces bring the need for review and prioritization into clear focus. The most important of these is the absence of additional funding from the State of Indiana, which has led to long-term stagnation of the campus' budget. In addition, soon we will be facing ICHE review of poor performing programs and the ICHE's latest initiative: funding based on graduation rates. By managing the review process ourselves, the Campus will be in a deliberative, proactive position to

respond positively to the ICHE's agenda. These circumstances underscore that faculty and administration must exercise responsibility for ensuring that academic programs are organized to achieve the Campus' mission in a manner that is consistent with academic quality, student interest, and available resources.

There are other compelling reasons for undergoing systematic program review. Consistent with the Campus' commitment to the "Good to Great" model, excellence demands focus and commitment. To ensure continued effectiveness and to move from "good to great," we must determine what is working and what is not working, and we must use that information to ascertain how best to allocate Campus' resources to be positioned for a successful future.

The Campus now operates in a highly-competitive environment. Although we are a regional comprehensive university, it is clear that we cannot and should not try to be all things to all of our external and internal constituencies. It would stretch our limited resources too thinly, disadvantaging all programs and, ultimately, the entire campus. The campus has already made difficult strategic decisions, cancelling the Associate's in Nursing Degree (ASN) at the conclusion of the current academic year and dropping the Associate of Arts in Arts and Sciences Degree. Ending the ASN presented a significant challenge in terms of the loss of credit hours we knew

would impact campus enrollment. However, the decision to end the ASN was made for all the right reasons:

- It recognized the national trends in nursing education towards the baccalaureate degree.
- It supported the goals of regional hospitals to obtain "magnet" status.
- It was consistent with our faculty's strength as consisting of the highest percentage of terminally-prepared faculty at IU's regional campuses.
- It was done in the context of having a well-conceived enrollment plan to replace lost ASN students over time.
- It was consistent with the Campus' message about being a primarily baccalaureate institution

Program review would help the campus address the issue of low-enrolled courses. Programs with low enrollment typically support a large number of undersubscribed classes, resulting in an ineffective allocation of faculty time and resources. During 2006-2007, there were 74 sections with enrollments between 1 and 10 and 78 sections with enrollments between 11 and 15. This makes a total of 152 sections with enrollment under 16. (None of these sections were clinical sections in nursing which may not exceed 10 under state licensing requirements.) Nearly all of these sections were at the 300 or 400 level in one of our majors. With little hope of additional resources from the State, the campus cannot sustain this many low-enrolled courses.

Finally, program review is consistent with the central themes in the campus' Strategic Plan and Strategic Action Plans, namely, to be more intentional and systematic in clarifying purposes, setting and aligning priorities with identified regional needs, and reallocating resources to meet institutional goals. Systematic, intentional program review enables the campus to identify resources needed to add new programs and maintain or strengthen existing ones. We must maintain the Campus' reputation by avoiding overextending our resources and thereby weakening successful or promising programs. The flat enrollment projections from University Budget Office and Kokomo Center School Corporation's announcement of the long-term loss of 2000 students suggests that the region's demographics will not provide a growing pool of eligible students. Rather, overall campus enrollment growth will be achieved only through careful and deliberate investment in programs that promise both excellence and significant new enrollment.

Because the Campus must address low-enrollment courses and programs and because the Campus needs to be able to reallocate resources to sustain successful and promising programs, avoidance or delay are not options. We can either review and take action on programs now in a thoughtful and deliberative manner or continue to face stagnant enrollment and flat budgets.

The campus currently offers twenty-five baccalaureate majors, not including the BS in Labor Studies. We also offer four graduate degrees and a modest number of associate degrees, as well as several certificate programs. Many of these programs are robust and have solid enrollment and fine reputations. Others are new and have yet to establish themselves in terms of enrollment or reputations. Still others, while mature, have continued to struggle for sufficient enrollment in order to sustain themselves and contribute to the overall vitality of the campus.

In order to respond to the ongoing challenge of meeting new program demands within in the constraints of finite campus resources, the academic deans have identified a template for external program review that looks across a wide range of programmatic metrics (see attachment). These include the following:

- Consistency with Campus Mission, Vision, Values
- External and Internal demand
- Learning Outcomes and Evidence of Successful Achievement of Program outcomes
- Productivity
- Quality, Program Strengths
- Program Concerns

The proposed process is a thoughtful one that places collective responsibility for responding to the reviews and recommending actions on the reviews most appropriately with the academic deans. They have pledged to make recommendations on programs based the findings of the reviews. In some instances, their recommendations may have consequences for programs and faculty, despite the best efforts to soften the impact. The deans and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs believe that in order to sustain the Campus community through the review and response processes there must be broad-based consensus that this effort is critical to the well-being of the Campus and the process must receive commitment and involvement by programs, departments, governance at all levels, and administrators.

The deans have indicated that they will provide recommendations based on the program reviews in one of the following categories.

- **Programs that are recommended for revision, merging or other action** will be charged to present specific plans for revision, etc. by December 1 following the recommendation of the deans. These plans must provide measurable objectives and a year by year plan for the delivery of these objectives. Failure to meet objectives may result in a decision to eliminate the program.

- **Programs that are recommended for additional investment** will be charged to present specific plans for revision, expansion, etc. by December 1 following the recommendation of the deans. These plans must how additional investment will positively affect the program in the categories of productivity and quality, and indicate how these enhancements will be measured over time both quantitatively and qualitatively.

- **Programs that are recommended for elimination** will be charged to present specific plans for phasing out the program, accommodating the graduation of current students or arranging for their transfer to another program, and reassigning faculty to non-programmatic responsibilities.

This process will be initiated in the fall of 2008, beginning with programs that have been identified by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education as having too few graduates. Additional programs that have been in place for at least five years may also be selected for review. A calendar will be established in 2008-2009 for the review of all programs five years old or older that do not fall under a national accreditation cycle. The calendar will assure that these programs are reviewed every five years.