Northern Illinois University’s Program Prioritization
Charge and Charter for Academic and Administrative Task Forces
Delivered September 3 and 4, 2015

This document serves as the Charge and Charter for the Academic and Administrative Task Forces for Northern Illinois University’s (NIU) first Program Prioritization Process.

Program prioritization challenges us to plan changes that enhance institutional quality and effectiveness, and that encourage innovation, informed by experience and inspired by the needs of our region. An essential component of the prioritization process is the work of the two task forces, whose members are charged with conducting an evaluation of all academic/administrative programs at NIU. This work will help NIU to better align resources with institutional priorities, strengthen the overall program portfolio, and provide the highest possible value to students and other stakeholders.

The task forces will work with the criteria and weightings developed through NIU’s shared governance process with collaboration from the Academic Planning Council and the University Council’s Resources, Space, and Budgets Committee. Further, in their program reviews, the task forces will utilize data and narratives populated by centralized data offices and local program authors within the Prioritization Plus data platform. The task forces will work to develop scoring, decision-making, and program ranking processes within a rigorous and equitable framework.

The task forces are charged with evaluating all identified academic/administrative programs, using the approved criteria to determine relative strengths and weaknesses, in a fashion consistent with the core values of: impartiality; fairness; confidentiality; integrity and efficiency. The purpose of this evaluation is to support the classification of each program into one of five categories (to be labeled by the task forces). The categories will correspond to recommendations regarding varying levels of future resource commitment.

The task forces will receive administrative and logistical support from the Task Force Support Team and expert human resources from across the campus. The task forces will also have access to advice from Larry Goldstein, President of Campus Strategies, LLC, who will serve as a trainer-consultant to assist with this process.

Working with NIU’s President, Executive Vice President and Provost, Vice President of Administration and Finance, and the Program Prioritization Coordinating Team, the task forces will provide communications to ensure that the broader NIU community remains fully informed of this effort. As such, the task forces will work with the Communications Support Team to ensure that the process is undertaken in an appropriately transparent manner, with the review criteria, task force membership, program lists, submission and scoring templates available to the community prior to completion of the review process, and the program narratives and final results available for comment when the task force work is finalized. At the same time, the task force members are expected to maintain confidentiality in accordance with the ground rules and guidelines they establish. Recognizing the bias in favor of process transparency, three specific items must remain confidential at all times: recommended scores of
individual programs, votes taken with respect to individual programs, and commentary attributed to any individual task force member.

Following training events in fall, 2015, the task forces’ work is expected to begin by January 4, 2016 and continue through May 13, 2016. It will culminate with the submission of a written report to shared governance bodies on campus for their review and comment, and ultimately, to the President of NIU. In addition to describing the process and acknowledging the task force and support group membership, the report should contain an alphabetical listing of the academic/administrative programs assigned to each category. The report may also include an addendum addressing supplemental information deemed relevant by the task forces (e.g., recommended policy changes).

In carrying out the work of the task forces, members are advised that they are expected to maintain a focus on what is best for NIU, rather than what might be advantageous for themselves or any particular program. They are expected to act with a “trustee mentality” throughout the process.

*My signature below indicates acceptance of the responsibilities described within this document and my commitment to adhere to the confidentiality principles detailed above.*

Signature: _____________________________________________ Date: __________________

Task Force Member’s Name (printed) _______________________________________________