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**Subject:**

RE: SIGNATURE PROGAMS

**From:** Cathy Ostos**Sent:** Tuesday, August 28, 2012 2:22 PM**To:** Michael White; Tony Cantu; Deborah Ikeda**Cc:** Robert Fox**Subject:** SIGNATURE PROGAMS

The agenda (DRAFT)below is suggested to guide our discussion of the development of a group to undertake the formulation of procedures to guide the assignment of signature program district wide. Additionally , I have included several articles that might prove helpful to our discussion.

**AGENDA****8-28-12**

- I. Committee's Role
  - A. Charge
  - B. Genesis of "Signature" Requirement
  - C. Composition of districtwide group
    1. Charge
    2. Structure
- II. Definitions of Key Terms
  - A. "Signature Programs"
  - B. Others
- III. Review of Existing Signature Program Guidelines
- IV. Next Steps

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# FACULTY FOCUS

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September 11, 2008

## Setting Academic Priorities, Identifying Signature Programs

By: [Rob Kelly](#) in [Curriculum Development](#)

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What are your institution's signature programs—those programs that epitomize your institution's mission and define its distinctiveness in the marketplace? It's a question that every institution should address, particularly when faced with increasing competition and decreasing resources, says Jonnie Guerra, vice president for academic affairs at Cabrini College in Pennsylvania.

Cabrini College is currently in the process of setting its academic priorities by defining its signature programs (i.e., selecting programs for targeted investment over the next five to 10 years) with the help of an outside consultant. *Academic Leader* recently spoke with Guerra and Carol Guardo—-independent consultant and former president of the College of St. Benedict, Great Lakes Colleges Association, and Rhode Island College—about the process and how other institutions might undertake a similar process.

### Collect data, solicit candidates

Before selecting signature programs, the institution must do a significant amount of “homework,” gathering data on the number of full-time and part-time faculty, faculty compensation, faculty teaching assignments, enrollment numbers, cost per student credit hour in each program, retention patterns, and graduation rates. “You need to ask, ‘Is this academic area receiving the kind of support that you would expect in this kind of institution?’ Everything doesn't need to be normative, but you want to make that choice deliberately, not by default,” Guardo says.

The next step is to solicit candidates for signature program status. These can be discipline-specific programs or programs that span numerous departments and majors, such as experiential learning programs or first-year experience programs. “‘Signature’ does not mean it's limited to a major. I know of an institution that has made experiential learning its signature element, and the institution has begun by increasing its efforts in international education and undergraduate research as part of making experiential learning its signature element. It really is institution specific. You have to look at the particular makeup of that institution programmatically and in terms of the educational philosophy that that institution is trying to convey,” Guardo says.

Questions asked of each signature program candidate at Cabrini fall into three categories: resources, demand, and impact. “There were not as many candidates as I had initially imagined. I think there were departments that realized that they simply didn't have the numbers to qualify for consideration for signature status, so they didn't put forward a proposal,” Guerra says.

Even those programs that did not submit a proposal have developed signature elements. For example, Cabrini does not have a large number of students enrolled in its foreign-language program, but the program has developed a series of introductory and intermediate courses designed specifically for students in education, business, social services, and the health professions. “That was a way for them to do something that is distinctive even though they could not currently become a candidate for signature program status,” Guerra says.

### Selection process

Choosing programs for signature status should involve a diverse group of stakeholders. At Cabrini, this group includes the dean of academic affairs, department chairs, key faculty members, the president, the academic affairs committee, and the entire board of trustees.

The academic council, which is made up of all the department chairs and key administrators, developed the signature program criteria. The final selection of signature programs falls to Guerra. “I'm not sure that we're actually going to bring everything to a vote of every governance body at the college. I think that we certainly will have conversations with the appropriate governance bodies—the academic council, the curriculum committee, and the full faculty—but ultimately I will most likely draft a proposal and get feedback on it, and hopefully get the endorsement of the various groups. But if not every group is willing to endorse this, the board [of trustees] has already endorsed it in principle, and we'll move ahead on it,” Guerra says.

This decision-making process will vary by institution, but, Guardo says, “I think it's very important for your board of trustees to know that this is under way, because it is a basic policy question when you're talking about mission and market.”

### Resource reallocation

Signature program designation is an internal distinction that helps determine resource allocation and is usually not used to market programs to the public. However, those designated as signature programs might receive more resources to raise their visibility. These may include developing a financial aid strategy tailored to the signature programs or endowed professorships.

Identifying signature programs can be a great help with fund-raising. Marketing, communications, and fund-raising staff at institutions that have identified signature programs feel that they can be more effective in their fund-raising efforts when they can tout a specific program rather than more amorphous priorities, Guardo says.

Although signature programs may attract more attention and funding, identifying key programs will inevitably result in reallocation of resources. “When you do your initial analysis, you look at all your resources—faculty resources, facilities, financial resources—that go into the academic areas.

Maximizing these allocations is an ongoing process. One might stop allocation entirely to a given area and phase that out in order to put those resources elsewhere. I think most institutions are looking at reallocation rather than adding more resources,” Guardo says.

Reallocating resources is bound to cause conflict, which is why it is important to base decisions on an analysis of facts such as cost analysis and 10-year enrollment projections. The analysis from an outside expert can add credibility to resource reallocation decisions. “There are things that people will hear more easily coming from somebody who is external,” Guerra says.

Although the selections have not yet been made, this process has caused departments to think more critically about their programs. “I have found that departments that have recognized that they aren’t going to be considered signature programs have nonetheless taken steps to improve, and I think that has been very beneficial—that they are more interested in developing some of the characteristics of signature programs. I do think there can be inertia in higher education. There are people who have done things the same way their whole lives, and they don’t have a whole lot of incentive to do things differently. When you introduce this new concept into the environment, it does shake things up. People can’t be complacent, so they respond,” Guerra says.

Contact Jonnie Guerra at [JGuerra@cabrini.edu](mailto:JGuerra@cabrini.edu) and Carol Guardo at [cguardo@cox.net](mailto:cguardo@cox.net).

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Tags: [curriculum committee](#), [Curriculum Development](#)

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# Keck School of Medicine of USC

The Keck School of Medicine of USC greeted the 21st century with ambitious determination backed by a multi-million dollar naming gift from the W.M. Keck Foundation, along with a 10-year strategic plan designed to position the School as a world-class academic medical center. In the decade since, much of that strategic plan successfully migrated from the printed page to campus reality. In fact, the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) is today ranked among the top biomedical enterprises nationwide and is home to premier research teams membered by leading clinicians and scientists from across the globe. And—with the recent acquisition of USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, as well as the opening of the new LAC+USC Medical Center—the KSOM unquestionably has achieved leading academic medical center status.

While the KSOM has made monumental strides, the School's ambitious determination has not been quelled, as reflected by its vision for the future that sets its sights on groundbreaking discoveries in basic science, clinical research and patient care—discoveries that together will dramatically decrease human suffering and immeasurably improve the practice of medicine. To shepherd this vision, a new 10-year strategic plan was developed. As part of the plan's implementation process, the School's Faculty Research Leadership Committee identified key research development priorities that simultaneously served as a bridge to both available resources and external funding opportunities. Specifically, a set of Signature Programs was designated. In the coming years, these Programs will play a pivotal role in helping the KSOM to fulfill its vision. These Signature Programs—which will be the focus of the School's development efforts—form a matrix, with overlap among disease or systems-focused and crosscutting areas. Although each Signature Program stands as a unique initiative, they share several unifying characteristics. Specifically, these programs:

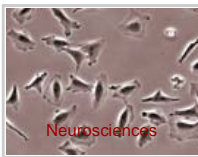
- Leverage existing KSOM strengths and provide a strong foundation on which to build;
- Have an interdisciplinary focus that facilitates University-wide collaboration;
- Have great potential to tap into key external funding opportunities;
- Distinguish the KSOM from other medical schools and move us forward toward higher levels of achievement;
- Possess tremendous potential to yield discoveries that translate into improved health and better health care.

While some Signature Programs already are deeply developed, others are start-up ventures. All, however, will contribute significantly to solidifying the KSOM's position as a world-class biomedical standard-setter. An over-arching strategy is to establish new and/or strengthen existing cross-disciplinary core resources that support the spectrum of signature programs and position KSOM and USC competitively.

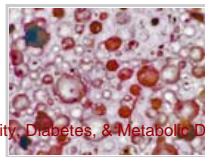
Cancer

Emerging & Global Pathogens

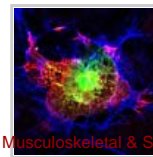
Cardiovascular & Lung Disease



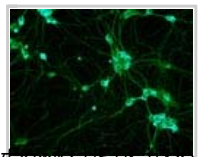
Neurosciences



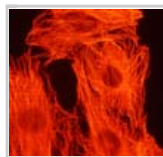
Obesity, Diabetes, & Metabolic Disease



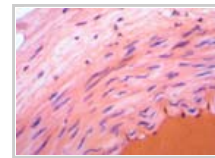
Trauma, Musculoskeletal & Skin Disease



Biomedical Imaging

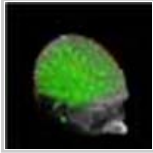
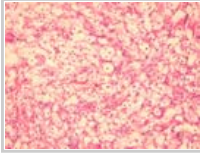


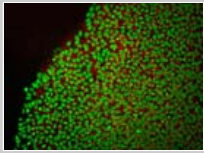


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<p data-bbox="224 594 498 617">Stem Cells &amp; Regenerative Medicine</p> 		

University of Southern California

## SCCCD Signature Programs Task Force

### Background:

The impetus of this effort is based in part on the: discussion in Communications Council on November 30, 2010 during a review of recommendations made in the document, *District-wide summary of Priorities & Recommendations based on the College Educational Master Plans, October 21, 2010*; and the recommendation of ACCJC/WASC in its most recent action letter containing a District Recommendation noting the need for the District to engage in dialogue on the location of signature programs. Districtwide CTE leadership has also indicated an interest in addressing signature programs, in an effort to provide guidance in the identification of existing programs, and development of new signature programs to serve the needs of our students and the community.

### Committee Charge:

- Define signature programs with the intent to improve student access, equity and success.
- Recommend a process to guide the identification, support and evaluation of new and existing signature programs as they relate to the District Strategic Plan.
- Recommend strategies to promote signature programs garner community support, and increase external funding.

### Report to:

Chancellor/Cabinet through the colleges/campus presidents and the Vice Chancellor, Educational Services & Institutional Effectiveness.

Meeting Schedule: TBD

Chair: Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Institutional Effectiveness

### Membership:

(3) Vice Presidents of Instruction; (3) CTE Deans; (3) Campus Curriculum Committee, Chairs; (3) Faculty members (nominated by the Faculty Senate)

Reviewed by Cabinet: 10-1-12

**SCCCD Signature Programs Committee**  
**Tuesday, August 28th**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**Polycom: FCC/RC PCR/WI AC1-270**

**Attending:** Michael White, Tony Cantu, Deborah Ikeda, Robert Fox (convener)

1. Committee's Role

- a. Charge: The group agreed that the charge was to:
  - i. Recommend the composition of a committee with districtwide representation to develop a process to identify and designate "signature programs";
  - ii. Develop a "charge statement" for the committee.
- b. Genesis of "Signature" Requirement: The group discussed the genesis of the signature program requirement.
- c. Composition of districtwide group (*see attached document*)
  - i. The attached document is loosely based on the discussion of how the Signature Program Committee was to look with several obvious personnel embellishments. It was clear to R. Fox as he read the literature that an institution's treatment of the topic of signature programs is more effective when undertaken within the context of the entire curriculum and that signature programs and those not so designated should conform to a standard process when being developed.

2. Definitions of Key Terms

- a. It was agreed that it is imperative that standard definitions of terms to be used during ensuing discussions of signature programs be developed and consistently applied.

### 3. Review of Existing Signature Program Guidelines

- a. Guidelines: The following institutions were identified as having guidelines for the designation of signature programs and commitments were made to obtain copies and contact the staff responsible for their administration. They were:
  - i. Riverside Community College
  - ii. College of Alameda – D. Ikeda
  - iii. Los Rios Community College
- b. Notes: M. White requested that evidence of this meeting be shared with Dr. Marilyn Behringer.

### 4. Next Steps

*From R. Fox:*

*Obviously this is not intended to be a verbatim record of our discussions. Please provide any salient information I failed to include and identify any instances where my recollection is not consistent with yours.*