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**Academic Program Review:
Promises and Perils**

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ABSTRACT

The most frequent use of Academic Program Review is in response to a need for retrenchment. During a time of duress, often with a very short time line, decisions are made about criteria to use in determining what to jettison. Many times the criteria with the greatest weight is simply cost to operate the program(s) being eliminated. This paper reviews research on decision making; identifying the differences between colleges and universities who attempt this in response to budget shortfalls and those that engage in this routinely as a means of program improvement and institutional effectiveness.

This paper also discusses the experience of a university currently undergoing an academic program review with a timeline of 24 months and the commitment (and struggle) to keep the focus on quality, not cost.