

Procedure for Departmental Program Review

May, 2011

Each academic department will undergo a systematic external program review, according to the following procedure. There are several reasons for conducting these reviews. First, in an environment with scarce resources, university leadership must make decisions about allocating budget funds. Program reviews help inform these crucial decisions by providing clear assessments of each program's current challenges and potential opportunities. Second, by looking critically at our own programs, often in comparison to their counterparts on other campuses, we can improve the quality of these programs. This will ultimately benefit our students, as well as the recognition and reputation of the University. Third, program reviews create opportunities to advance the strategic initiatives of the University by identifying common threads between departmental goals and those of the institution as a whole.

General Timeframe and Rotation

Each department will undergo a review every seven academic years. This will consist of a department self-study in advance of an external reviewer visit. Following receipt of the external reviewer's report, the Department will then develop and submit to the Dean an additional document that both details the Department's reactions to the review and outlines an action plan that responds to the critical points contained in the review. Once the Dean accepts this document, the Department begins implementing its action plan. In the middle of the fourth year, the Department will submit to the Dean a report, outlining the Department's progress on its action plan. In the eighth academic year, the process repeats itself.

Departments and programs will generally follow this rotation:

2016-2017	Geography & Meteorology, Music, Sociology & Criminology, Theatre, Theology
2017-2018	History, Social Work, Foreign Languages & Literatures, Economics
2018-2019	Mathematics & Statistics, Computing & Information Sciences, Education
2019-2020	Communication, English, Kinesiology
2020-2021	Biology, Chemistry, Physics & Astronomy
2021-2022	Art, Philosophy, Political Science & International Relations
2022-2023	International Studies, Psychology

Outline of the Process

- The Department prepares a self-study during the Fall Semester of the review year.
- Also in the Fall, the Department submits recommendations to the Dean of potential outside reviewers; the Dean may or may not select one of these reviewers.
- The Department submits two copies of the self-study document to the Dean no later than January 15.
- The Dean provides the self-study to the outside reviewer about a month before his/her campus visit.

- The outside reviewer visits campus and conducts his/her investigation, roughly in February or March.
- The outside reviewer submits his/her report to the Dean no later than the end of April.
- The Dean reviews the report and shares it with the department chair.
- The Dean provides, at the Department's request, funds for a modest one-day faculty retreat to discuss the external reviewer's report.
- The department chair, in consultation with his/her faculty, develops and submits a statement of response and an action plan to the Dean no later than June 15.
- The Dean responds to the Department, either accepting the action plan or returning it for further work until it is acceptable, but no later than September 1.
- The Department submits a progress report to the Dean on its actions by January 15 of the third year following the outside reviewer's campus visit.
- The Dean responds to the Department's progress report by May 31.
- The process repeats itself in the Fall of the eighth year since the beginning of the cycle.

Content of the Self-Study Report

In advance of the site visit of the external reviewer, each department will prepare a self-study report that adheres to the following table of contents. The report should be collected in a three-ring binder or a spiral-bound document. Some elements of this report consist of existing documents that require little or no additional commentary. Other elements will require narrative explanation, which the Department should craft tightly and concisely. The Department may include additional supporting materials in the appendix, but these should be kept to a minimum.

Table of Contents

I. Background Information

- a. University, College, and Department Mission Statements
- b. Brief Program History
- c. List of Faculty and Staff Members
- d. Program Offerings (majors, minors, tracks, etc.)
- e. Five-Year Student Credit Hour and Program Graduate Data

II. Student Learning, Advising, and Placement

- a. Department's Educational Objectives
- b. Current Assessment Plan and Recent Results
- c. Means of Evaluating Student Performance
- d. Departmental Advising Program
- e. Placement and Performance of Recent Graduates

III. Faculty-Work, Accomplishments, and Evaluation

- a. Faculty Competencies / Areas of Strength in the Discipline(s)
- b. Faculty Workload and Responsibilities
- c. Evidence of Teaching Quality
- d. Faculty Scholarly Productivity (books, articles, grants, etc.)
- e. Procedure for Faculty Evaluation and Recent Results
- f. Staffing Levels

IV. Curriculum

- a. Major / Minor Program Requirements
- b. Course Offerings
- c. Procedure for Faculty Review of Curriculum
- d. Role in General Education (course offerings, CORE instruction, etc.)
- e. Role in Graduate Studies (programs, courses, etc.)

V. Infrastructure

- a. Budget and Resources
- b. Facilities and Equipment
- c. Support Staff

VI. Critical Self-Assessment

- a. Areas of Departmental Strength
- b. Areas of Departmental Weakness
- c. Main Contributions to the University
- d. Overall Departmental Health

Appendix A: Faculty Curriculum Vitae**Appendix B: Current Departmental Listing from the *General Catalog*****Appendix C: Course Syllabi for the Previous Two Academic Years****Appendix D: Course Offerings for the Previous Five Academic Years by Semester****Guiding Questions**

What follows here is a series of prompts and questions that should help shape the commentary on various items in the Self-Study Report.

- I. *Background Information:*** Describe the mission and goals of your department, as well as its history. Who are the current members of your department? What majors/minors does your department offer? Is your department involved in our graduate offerings, or does it operate almost exclusively in the undergraduate realm? (The student-credit-hour data and numbers of graduates will be provided to you by the Dean's Office.)
- II.a *Educational Objectives:*** List your department's educational or learning objectives for students in your program(s). How did you arrive at these specific objectives?
- II.b *Assessment:*** Describe your department's assessment program, distinguishing between efforts to assess your disciplinary program(s) from those to assess general education offerings. Provide copies of your current assessment plan and the last few reports to the Assessment Committee. Do the syllabi in your department's courses all contain stated learning goals/objectives? Does your department have at least one meeting per year dedicated to assessment?
- II.c *Student Performance:*** Describe the level of performance of the students in your department. Do you have a sense of the academic credentials of the students entering your program(s), in terms of SAT/ACT scores, high school GPA, overall preparation for college? Does your program have any formal requirements to enter or remain in your program(s)? What is the grade distribution/average GPA across your courses? Must your students pass lower-level prerequisite courses before taking upper-level courses in your program(s)? How often do students complete Honors Work in your department? How many students graduate with

honors or other forms of recognition? Provide any other information that speaks to the rigor of your program(s) and the achievement of your students.

- II.d Academic Advising:** Describe how your department/program handles academic advising. Is there a primary/sole academic advisor in your department, or is this responsibility shared by several/all faculty members? How do you prepare or train faculty to serve as effective academic advisors? How do you keep experienced advisors educated and up to date on changing academic requirements and advising techniques? How many students does each faculty member advise?
- II.e Placement and Performance of Graduates:** Describe your efforts to prepare students for professional placement in your field and information you provide them to help them on career options. How well do your students do on standardized exams like the GRE, LSAT, etc.? What proportion of your students goes on to pursue graduate degrees in your field? At what institutions do your graduates study? For those seeking employment immediately after graduation, list some of the firms/agencies and positions they obtain. Do you have a plan or procedure for tracking your students' professional progress after graduation? Provide any evidence you have of the quality of your graduates, including national awards or fellowships.
- III.a Faculty Competencies:** Describe the main areas of competency of your faculty within their field(s). What strengths do they exhibit? Do they offer expertise on the "cutting edge" of their discipline? Are there any glaring gaps or omissions in their expertise?
- III.b Faculty Workload and Responsibilities:** Describe the workload of your faculty. Is work within the Department fairly evenly distributed, or do a few members carry a disproportionate share of the load in terms of advising, course enrollment, committee work, etc. Do your faculty receive load credit for any work beside teaching?
- III.c Teaching Quality:** Describe the quality of teaching delivered by your department. What evidence do you have that your faculty members are good teachers? How often do you conduct peer evaluations of teaching in your department? Are peer evaluations limited strictly to junior/untentured faculty members, or do tenured faculty members also regularly undergo peer evaluation? Describe the efforts of your faculty refine and improve their teaching. Does your faculty routinely employ technology in the classroom? What kinds of teaching formats does your department employ (lecture, discussion, laboratory, studio, etc.). List any teaching awards that your faculty members have won.
- III.d Faculty Scholarly Productivity:** Describe the major accomplishments of the faculty in terms of its scholarly output, ongoing professional development, and disciplinary engagement on the regional, national, and international scale. Have your faculty members demonstrated commitment to ongoing scholarly activity? Does each faculty member have a research agenda? Describe any significant research grants or funded projects by your faculty. To what degree does the faculty research in your department engage undergraduate students? What roles, if any, have your faculty members played in professional organizations or associations in your discipline? What is the record of your faculty in attending disciplinary conferences?
- III.e Faculty Evaluation:** Describe the efforts in your department to evaluate its faculty. How do you prepare faculty members for tenure and promotion? How do you evaluate and mentor junior faculty? Do you have written departmental standards for tenure and promotion to associate professor? To full professor? Once faculty members are tenured, to what degree do you evaluate their work? What have these evaluations shown recently?
- III.f Staffing Levels:** Describe the current number of faculty members in your department. Has this number been steady in the past few years, or have you experienced a reduction or

increase? Would you describe your staffing level as sufficient or insufficient for delivering your curriculum? If insufficient, based on what measure or evidence?

- IV.a Program Requirements:** Provide an outline of the credit and course requirements of each major and minor program you offer, including tracks or concentrations within the major.
- IV.b Course Offerings:** Describe the breadth and depth of your course offerings. How often do you offer your courses? How do you select which faculty members teach which courses? Do you routinely have under-enrolled courses or cancelled courses? Do you routinely have courses with waitlists that you cannot accommodate?
- IV.c Faculty Review of Curriculum:** Describe how your faculty reviews your curricular offerings. To what degree do you believe you offer a coherent curriculum in step with the best practices in your field? Is your curriculum innovative or out of date? Is your curriculum specialized in some way, or does it strive to provide broad coverage across many areas of your discipline? As a department, do you routinely review the syllabi of your various courses, or are individual faculty left to develop and revise their own courses independent of their colleagues' review and input?
- IV.d General Education:** Describe your department's general education course offerings. What role does your department play within our general education program? Do all of your faculty members teach equally in your general education courses, or do only a few faculty members serve in this way?
- IV.e Graduate Education:** Describe your department's involvement with, or contributions to, graduate education on campus. Has your department been heavily involved in developing and offering graduate courses/programs, or have you not yet found an opportunity for this?
- V.a Budget and Resources:** Describe the budget and resource situation of your department. Has your budget been adequate to support your department's stability and performance, or are there areas where you can document inadequate resources? Has your budget kept pace with rising costs for supplies and services? Has your budget been adequate to procure and maintain essential pieces of equipment or technology? Beyond annual budget lines, what other forms of support, if any, has your department obtained (external grants, internal grants, Dean's Annual Fund, departmental endowment, department gift fund, etc.)? How have you used these funds? Does your department have the technology it needs to achieve its mission?
- V.b Facilities:** Describe the current state of your department's facilities. Does your department occupy a building or portion of a building with both classrooms and offices, or does your faculty largely teach courses in general/shared classroom spaces? Does your department have specialized facilities needs, such as scientific labs, performance spaces, equipment storage, or computer classrooms? Are the spaces you have for these needs adequate and well maintained, or not?
- V.c Support Staff:** Describe the current level of support staffing in your department. Does your department have its own administrative assistant, or does it share an assistant with another program? Do you have other, specialized support staff for laboratory, studio, or technology functions? Is your current level of staffing adequate to support your program(s)?
- VI. Critical Self-Assessment:** Discuss what your faculty members consider to be the Department's main strengths and weaknesses.
- VI.c Contributions to the University:** Describe your department's contributions to the University and our campus community. What committees or governance bodies have your faculty and staff members served on? Beyond academics, does your department provide the campus with

any other service, such as extra-curricular programming, training, leadership, coordination, etc.? In what ways are your faculty and staff serving as good “campus citizens”?

VI.d Department Health: Describe the working atmosphere in your department. Is your department a “healthy” department, or are there recurring/durable tensions between faculty members or between faculty members and staff? Does your department run smoothly? Has your department benefitted from good leadership, or is selecting a department chair a regular challenge? How would you describe the morale of your faculty and staff?

Last revised: January 15, 2017