

Five-Year External Academic Program Review College of Arts and Sciences



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INTRODUCTION

This document sets forth the process to be used throughout the College of Arts and Sciences to conduct the five year review of academic programs. There will be a thorough review of the program review process at the end of each five year cycle.

PURPOSE OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Above all else, the purpose of periodic program review is to provide a mechanism to ensure the improvement of academic programs on a continuous basis. Program review is a process for monitoring the status, effectiveness, and progress of academic programs; recognizing and responding to program strengths and weaknesses; identifying important directions in the disciplines or professions that need to be addressed; responding to the directives and incentives of the Board of Regents; the Texas Legislature and other external agencies; assessing the relationships among and contributions to other academic programs and the overall mission of the university; selecting among the opportunities and options available to the programs; and recognizing the implications of the choices made. Thus, program review is a process by which the future directions, needs, and priorities of academic programs can be identified. As such, program review is inextricably linked to strategic planning, resource allocation, and other decision-making at the program, department, college, and university levels.

The final outcome of program review is a plan for academic program improvement that is explicit, action-oriented, and includes a specific time frame. The program review process should focus on improvements that can be made using institutional and extramural resources currently available to the program. Consideration may be given to proposed program improvements and expansion requiring additional institutional resources; in such cases, the need and priority for additional resources must be clearly specified.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONDUCTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS REVIEW

The primary responsibility for overseeing the review of an academic program lies with the dean who has administrative responsibility for the program. It is anticipated that that the most common unit for review will be a single academic discipline, or a single interdisciplinary program.

Program review is considered to be a collective responsibility of the faculty in the unit. The unit being reviewed is responsible for preparing a self-study. The dean will work with the department chair and/or coordinator to ensure that the self-study is completed in a timely manner.

The unit will be responsible for preparing some of the data from department records. Other information will be provided by the Library, by the Information Resource Division, the Registrar's Office and the Office of Institutional Research. The following data tables will be provided by the Office of Institutional Research.

1. Faculty Resources
2. Graduate Assistant Resources
3. Staff Resources
4. Students enrolled
 - A. Majors (undergrad only)
 - B. Minors (?)
 - C. Graduate students
5. Degrees conferred
6. SCH, FTE, and budget data
7. ACT scores for undergraduates; SAT scores for undergraduates
8. HS GPA for undergraduates
9. GRE scores for graduates students
10. Undergraduate GPA for graduate students
11. Section size

SUGGESTED OUTLINE AND CONTENT FOR THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

The self-study need not be long to be effective. Organization, focus on program planning, and coherence of the document as a whole are essential. The major sections of the self-study are designed to lead up to and *emphasize* the section on Unit Planning.

The connections among the elements of the self-study should be planned carefully. The strengths and weaknesses of the program should unfold out of the data, and the specific recommendations of the plan should follow from the strengths and weaknesses. Thus, in a tightly structured self-study, the data are an integral part of the developing plan. The result should be a relatively brief main document in the range of 25 to 40 pages including appendices.

Suggested Self-study Outline

A. Introduction: Mission and history

1. Mission, philosophy, and focus of the unit
2. Brief, recent history of the unit, focusing on developments during the last 5 years. Include the recommendations resulting from the last program review, and provide a detailed account of actions taken by the discipline in response to each recommendation.

B. Description of the unit, its programs, and relevant policies (Note: section B is descriptive in character; evaluation of the program is to be saved to a later section)

1. Program identification (identify any discrete programs, centers or institutes to be included in the self-study; also describe participation in inter-unit programs as appropriate)
2. Description of programmatic and curricular offerings, including majors, minors, graduate programs, distance education, and instructional service provided to other areas of the institution, (e.g. General Education courses).
3. Description of faculty resources
 - a. From department/ program records, provide a semester-by semester account of faculty workload assignments (include detail within teaching, service, and research; e.g. courses taught, number of students advised, committee assignments, research projects, etc.) for the past two years.
 - b. Include the following documents as appendices:
 - i. short vitas (2-4 page) for all faculty
 - ii. the unit's tenure and promotion criteria
4. Description of graduate assistant resources
5. Description of staff resources
6. Description of students in the program; advising and other student support services; for graduate programs, number of graduate students, listing of undergraduate institutions attended and performance on graduate admission tests (e.g., GRE, GMAT)
7. Student credit hour production per fall semester in total for the past five years; SCH/FTE faculty member.
8. Description of recruitment and retention efforts.
9. Description of facilities and equipment/instrumentation (available campus-or college-wide, as well as those dedicated to the program)
10. Description of information resources and services
11. Financial resources (e.g., budget by funding source; student scholarships and fellowships; sponsored funding received, and number and percentage of faculty with external funding)

C. Self-evaluation of programs, for each program identified in Section B.1 above. The self-evaluation should include an explicit statement of program strengths and areas of concern/weakness.

1. Quality
 - a. Faculty quality and productivity. Address the questions; Are the faculty competitive on a national basis? On a regional basis? Note areas needing improvements as well as areas of strength. In addition to other data you choose to include, provide at least:
 - i. *Number (on a per faculty per year basis) and quality of refereed publications and other work product. Provide an assessment of the impact of faculty's scholarly work on the field or discipline.*
 - ii. *As assessment of the adequacy of the standards described in the unit's Promotion and Tenure document. If faculty accomplishments are rewarded in the merit process, are they necessarily making good progress toward tenure and promotion?*
 - iii. *Describe the focus or foci of the research/creative enterprise of the unit. How do the unit's strengths help position it to achieve recognition on a national level?*
 - b. Student entry attributes. Address the question: Does your program attract good students?
 - c. Assessment of student learning outcomes, for all undergraduate and graduate programs, including majors, graduate degrees, and general education courses. Describe in detail the units' assessment program. Include copies of the unit's annual Institutional Effectiveness Plans (IEP).

- i. *Statement of student learning outcomes*
 - ii. *Unit's assessment methods*
 - iii. *Results of assessment and inferences drawn*
 - iv. *Actions taken and program changes/improvements resulting from assessment*
 - d. Any additional information on the quality of the curriculum, instruction, and support services.
 - e. Quality and focus of the service component of the unit
 - f. Comparative advantage and program distinctiveness, in terms of
 - i. *Student served (geographic area, gender, and minority status, nontraditional students, etc.)*
 - ii. *Program effectiveness, or "value added"*
 - iii. *Other programs offered at UTPB and at other colleges and universities.*
- 2. Demand (recent trends, current levels, and projections)
 - a. Instructional demand (actual seats enrolled), and breakdown by majors and non-majors or other categories appropriate to your unit.
 - b. Employment demand for program graduates (placement of recent graduates; projections of labor market demand in areas relevant to the program)
 - c. Demand for service programs
- 3. Connection to the mission
 - a. Relationship of the program to UTPB's mission and to the mission of the College of Arts and Sciences.
 - b. Relationship of the program to other programs at UTPB, including overlap or competition.
 - c. Are the activities rewarded in the promotion and tenure process directly supportive of and consistent with the unit, college, and university mission?
 - d. Are the teaching/learning, research/creative, and service missions of the unit related? If "yes," in what way and how closely?
- 4. Financial considerations and adequacy of resources
 - a. Address the question: Does the Unit carry out its teaching, research/creative work, and service activities in a cost-effective way?
 - b. Adequacy of resources

D. Unit planning (next 5 years) Based on the program's mission, its recent accomplishments, the strengths and weaknesses identified in the preceding material, and the perceived opportunities in academia and in the unit's area, **describe the unit's goals and plans for achieving them over the next five years.** The plan should be within the context of currently available university resources. The plan may reference resources that the unit will generate through its own activities.

- 1. The plan referred to in this section should be consistent with any previously developed unit plan. The planning report should include at least the following elements:
 - a. A description of the planning process in the unit
 - b. Goals and strategies
 - c. Timetable and implementation plan
 - d. Questions the department asks the External Team to give particular attention.

E. Appendices

- 1. Tables, charts, and graphs that are referred to in the body of the self-study, but are not included therein
- 2. Relevant catalog materials describing the programs of the unit

3. Institutional Effectiveness Plans (IEP's) for each degree offered by the unit.
4. Copies of other reviews, reports, policy documents, student recruiting brochures, and other items appropriate to the self-study

THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

A. Purpose of the external review

The purpose of the external review is to provide a mechanism for assessment by recognized peers from outside The University of Texas of the Permian Basin.

B. Selection of the external review team and the schedule for the review

The review team will be comprised of recognized peers from distinguished programs at other universities and, where appropriate, from the professional sectors. The unit chair or coordinator will provide names of potential reviewers. Working from this slate of potential reviewers, the chair/coordinator, the dean, and the Provost/Vice will come to agreement on a list of potential reviewers. All parties will be sensitive to issues of conflict of interest at all levels. For programs that are not administered through a college, the administrator to whom the program reports should perform the responsibilities identified herein as those of the dean.

The Provost is responsible for scheduling the travel and lodging arrangements for the external reviewers. Exit interviews with the dean and the Provost will also be scheduled by the Provost. The unit being reviewed is responsible for scheduling and coordinating all other aspects of the external reviewers' visit. Opportunities should be arranged for team members to meet with faculty members of the discipline (individually, if possible), department chairs program coordinators, and a sampling of undergraduate and graduate students. The schedule should be arranged to accommodate the reviewers' need to have time to work individually and as a team. The length of time the team is on campus will vary with the size and complexity of the program; a 11/2 day maximum visit should be sufficient for a review of the programs included in most academic departments.

C. Materials, information, and questions provided to the review team

Well in advance of the scheduled visit, the Provost should provide the following to each member of the review team. Copies of this material should be available to the unit undergoing the review.

1. The unit's self-study report
2. A preliminary schedule for the visit (with the understanding that the team may request additional or follow-up interviews or may otherwise choose to modify the proposed schedule)
3. An information sheet describing the expectations for the focus and content of the external reviewers' report (extracted from section E, below).

D. Focus of the external evaluation

The external review team should focus on the unit's goals and plans for achieving those goals within the context of all information provided in the self-study. In addition, the team should offer its observations and insights about how the unit contributes to the mission and plans of the college, other academic units, and the university as a whole. The Provost and dean have the final responsibility for assessing these aspects of the unit and its programs.

The team's recommendations should focus on improvements that can be made using institutional and extramural resources that currently are available to the program. If

recommendations are made for changes that would require additional institutional resources, the need and priority for additional resources should be clearly specified.

E. Team Reports

The external review team should present its major findings and recommendations verbally during the exit interviews.

The external review team submits a single report, agreed upon by each of its members, within two to three weeks of departure from UTPB. It is submitted to the Provost, who distributes the report to the dean and the unit. The unit should call factual errors to the attention of the Provost as soon as they are recognized.

The External Report should include:

- A brief statement naming the unit being reviewed, the dates of the visit, and a summary of the major events or scope of the visit.
- An evaluation of the completeness and adequacy of the self-study.
- An identification of strengths and weaknesses of the unit. Do the unit's teaching and research/creative efforts reflect appropriate degrees of specialization and comprehensiveness? Is there evidence of innovation in teaching and research/creative work?
- An evaluation of the productivity of the productivity of the faculty in teaching, research and service. Are the faculty competitive on a national scale?
- An evaluation of the leadership, including the climate for work created by administrators.
- An evaluation of the unit's plans for the next five years. Are unit's goals and mission clearly articulated and appropriate? Do these plans reflect creative insights into the potential of the unit to contribute to the discipline and the University? Are the goals of the unit current, realistic and creative, in both teaching and research/creative efforts? Additional findings and recommendations, particularly those that could improve the plan or increase its chances for successful implementation.

THE UNIT RESPONSE

Following receipt of the External Report, the Chair/ Coordinator writes a "Unit Response" to the report within two weeks, and forwards this response to the Dean and the Provost. The Unit Response should focus on the recommendations in the External Report, and specifically to any particular recommendations that do not seem likely to lead to improvements for the program.

THE DEAN'S RESPONSE

The Dean's Response responds both to the External Report and to the Unit Response. In particular, it focuses on points of disagreement between those two documents. The "Dean's Response" commits the College to a course of action. The Dean's Response could endorse the External Report as written; it could commit to only specified parts of the External Report; it could adopt revisions suggested by in the Unit Response; or it could add recommendations overlooked in both documents. This is to be signed by the Dean, with a concurring signature from the Provost.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES AND ACTION PLANS

The dean will meet with appropriate representatives from the unit to discuss the program review. In addition to consideration of the External Review Committee's findings and recommendations, the discussion should include aspects of the review that concern how the

unit contributes to other units of the university and how its activities and goals related to college and university strategic plans. Following this meeting, an implementation plan should be developed by the unit.

The unit is to make annual reports to the dean, recording progress on the specific recommendations produced by the series of documents and endorsed by the Dean's Response.

The annual report should be written as responses to the individual numbered recommendations, and can be cumulative. By the time of the next program review, this file will contain a complete record of annual progress on the recommendations.

EVALUATING AND REVISING THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

The College of Arts and Sciences academic program review process should be reviewed every five years. The reviews are used to determine if the program review process is functioning as intended and the incorporate appropriate changes into the process when necessary.