

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

I. INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of Program Review is to enhance academic quality. Program Review gives university faculty an opportunity to examine the current condition of an existing program, to review its objectives, and to make decisions about its future.

Program Review also provides the university with a framework for collecting information on resources (facilities, finances, personnel) and outcomes. Program Review serves as an important component in a planning process that contributes to making rational resource allocation possible.

Programs are reviewed in a seven-year cycle, under the direction of the Provost and the Faculty Senate. Program Review focuses on a program (e.g. a major) as such, not on a department or unit. When a department or unit consists of more than one program of study, a thorough review of *each* of its constituent programs should be made; however, the chair or director may request of the Program Review Committee that individual programs within the department or unit be reviewed separately. These programs may also be reviewed in separate years if the Committee agrees. Deans, chairpersons, or program directors may request that their units be moved up or delayed in the cycle, with such request to be granted or refused by the Program Review Committee.

In scheduling programs for review, the Program Review Committee shall attempt to secure a mix of programs from across the university and within each college; to take into consideration changes in administrative staff such as deans or chairs; to review together, whenever possible, related programs; and to follow-up on perceived and reported problems in units.

Aspects of a program to be reviewed include:

- Mission, goals and objectives
- Curriculum
- Faculty
- Students
- Program support
- Assessment
- Improvement plans
- Summary

The fundamental issues in the review process are those of *value*, *quality*, *market*, and *effective use of resources*.

Value considers the role of the program in the primary mission of the university. Attention is given to the nature and importance of the program's goals as they are related to the needs and goals of Seton Hall students, the university, the Catholic Church, and

those segments of society that the university strives to serve.

Quality is assessed by determining the extent to which a program achieves its goals. Quality depends on the strengths and weaknesses of a program resulting from the qualifications and performance of the faculty in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service to the University, community, and profession. Quality also depends on the effectiveness with which a program is administered. However, the ultimate criterion for determining quality is the degree of intellectual and personal growth in the case of undergraduate students, and the degree of intellectual and professional growth in the case of graduate students. Such an evaluation requires evidence that the graduates of the program possess knowledge and skills consistent with the graduates of other institutions offering comparable programs. In other words, the program review should attempt to show that graduates of the program are as competent as their degrees would indicate.

Market denotes that there are students in sufficient number to validate the mission and necessity of the program. An extension of this is evidence that the program offers potential for adequate future enrollments as well.

Effective use of resources requires that the program review establish the appropriateness of the allocation and organization of human, fiscal, and physical resources. When this has been determined, decisions can be made as to whether the program should be strengthened, maintained at present level of operation, reduced, redirected, or discontinued.

II. PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEES

A. The Program Review Committee:

- Consists of the chairs of the Educational Policy Committees of each college and the university library;
- Makes recommendations based on analysis of the review documents, reports of the subcommittees and feedback from chairs and program directors;
- Reports its decisions to the Faculty Senate, the Provost, the appropriate deans, and the program directors/chairs;
- Updates and interprets the Program Review guidelines as needed;
- May invite the testimony from any member of the university (faculty, administration, students, alumni) whose opinions the committee considers important for its consideration. The Committee may also solicit statements from relevant parties outside Seton Hall.

B. The Program Review Committee Report should address each aspect of Program Review covered in the self-study report (mission, goals and objectives; curriculum; faculty; students; program support; assessment; improvement plans), in particular:

- whether the mission, goals, and objectives are coherent, commensurate with discipline norms, and with the Seton Hall mission;
- whether the curriculum is coherent and commensurate with discipline norms at peer institutions;
- whether faculty scholarship is adequately supported by the institution and whether the faculty is productive; whether teaching loads and service are commensurate with discipline norms;
- whether enrollments, majors/minors are in growth, holding steady, or in decline over the period under review;
- whether administrative and physical plant support are adequate to meet program needs, in particular regarding faculty lines, faculty scholarship, office and technology needs, and department/program administration;
- whether the program has adequate student assessment protocols in place to establish the relative success or failure of the program to meet its stated goals in regard to educating its students and preparing them for their futures; if so, analysis of the data provided by those assessment protocols; if not, recommendations for improved assessment;
- whether the program has appropriately stated goals for future improvement and growth. What would help the program meet its goals and objectives within the university's fiscal and strategic constraints and objectives? Have the allocation of any new resources been solidly justified? Have alternative funding or organizational approaches been considered?
- Priority and significance of this program; likelihood of continued success
- Recommendations for changes/additions, if any.

III. ANNUAL CALENDAR FOR REVIEW OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

By April 15 of Review Year

Determination of programs for review: Program Review Committee, provost, deans. Notification of programs to initiate Program Review by Provost's Office. Self-study committees of academic departments and programs shall be constituted (faculty, students, alumni, at the discretion of the department).

May 1 – Dec. 1

Creation of the self-study document, which is presented to department, internal reviewer, and external reviewer upon completion by October 1. Contact initiated with internal and external reviewers to schedule observations.

The internal reviewer is chosen by the department; three names of potential external reviewers are submitted for the dean's choice by Oct. 1. It is recommended that the department/program establish a schedule for completion of the various components of the self study and reviewer evaluations. External reviewer visits the university and evaluates

the program upon interviewing faculty, students, and administration; internal reviewer evaluates the program, interviewing faculty and students.

Internal and external reviewers submit reports to the department/program.

December 1

Department/program submits complete self-study report, internal reviewer's report and departmental/program response, external reviewer's report and departmental/program response to dean.

December 15

Dean's response to the program review document is due.

Jan. 15

All Program Review materials submitted to the Provost's Office: the self-study report, the external review and departmental/program response, the internal review and departmental/program response, the dean's assessment and departmental/program response. The Provost's office will make suitable copies for the Program Review Committee

March 15

Program Review Committee sends recommendations to the Faculty Senate and departments.

April/May

Faculty Senate votes on Program Review recommendations, submits recommendations to Academic Affairs, Provost, Board of Regents, and University Planning and Budget Committee. Following Senate approval of Program Review recommendations, department chairs and program directors will have an opportunity to meet with the Provost's representative as needed.

IV. THE SELF-STUDY

A. Upon notification of inclusion in Program Review, the program director or chair should set up self-study committee(s) whose purpose is to identify and evaluate the program's mission, goals and objectives, strengths, weaknesses, and needs; collect the necessary data to support claims made in the self-study regarding discipline norms, faculty production, student assessment and satisfaction; make recommendations as to the program's present success or failure to achieve stated goals and future plans for growth and improvement. The self-study review process has two purposes:

- to increase the awareness of the program participants concerning the present and future state of their program;

- to provide a basis for later steps in the process by communicating, through a written report, facts about the program and the perceptions of participants.

B. The size and composition of the self-study committee(s) depends upon the program(s) under study. However, in all cases, both faculty and students involved must be members of, and participants in, the program. For instance, a department may want to set up a self-study committee to evaluate a graduate program, consisting of graduate faculty and graduate students, in addition to an undergraduate self-study committee. The department chairperson or program director is an important resource *but should not dominate the process*. In the event that the program involves an entire college, the Provost should approve the composition of the self-study committee(s).

C. An analysis of problems and proposed solutions forms the heart of the review process, and the unit should demonstrate its ability to be honest and candid about itself, as well as creative and realistic. The assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the unit follows from, and is based upon, the information and data provided by the self-study report. Each unit should employ comparative standards that show its performance in relation to other units in the university and to comparable units in the same discipline in other universities. Professional standards from federal or state funding agencies, accrediting agencies, or professional associations within the discipline should be used if available. Assessment of the unit's performance over the time under review (since the last program review) is required. The report should proceed from general recommendations to specific plans for improvement and growth (as appropriate) in each relevant area of the academic unit, such as curriculum, faculty, program support, etc. These plans must be realistic and take into consideration the financial resources of the University.

D. Data, documentation, and consultants' reports used for accreditation review *in the year of Program Review or in the preceding year only* may be used; however, accreditation reports cannot be submitted as the Program Review self-study document. The format for the self-study must be followed precisely, as delineated below and in the Appendix.

E. The program or unit as a whole should formally approve the self-study report before sending it to the dean and the Program Review Committee. If the document is inadequate or insufficient it may be returned by the Program Review Committee to the unit for revision; if the document is revised, the unit should formally approve the modified version before resubmitting it.

F. Funds up to \$100 are available to each program undergoing review to support the costs of copying and dissemination of the self-study and other documentation. Application must be made to the chair of the Program Review Committee.

G. See the Appendix for detailed guidelines for the preparation of the self-study report. The written format of the self-study report should follow these guidelines precisely. It should provide tangible, cumulative data in easy-to-read narratives and tables as supporting evidence wherever appropriate.

V. INTERNAL REVIEW

A. The internal reviewer is a faculty member from another department in the university, one without apparent bias either in favor or against the program. The internal reviewer is chosen by the department chair or program director based on the suggestions of departmental or program faculty. Program representatives should avoid any perceived conflicts of interest when selecting the internal reviewer. Reciprocal reviews are not permitted.

B. The department chair or program director should notify the appropriate dean(s) once the internal reviewer has been selected and agreed to participate.

C. The internal reviewer should read the self-study report and all pertinent documentation; should interview program faculty, students, and staff; and should then submit his or her review in writing. The internal review is then submitted to the department chair or program director for inclusion in the final self-study document forwarded to the Program Review Steering Committee and to the dean.

D. The internal reviewer's report should correspond to, and comment upon, each of the seven areas in the Appendix delineating the format and guidelines of the self-study report: mission, goals and objectives; curriculum; faculty; students; assessment; program support; problems and proposed solutions.

E. The department or unit may respond in writing to the internal reviewer's report. Any such response should be included with the final submission of documents to the Program Review Steering Committee for dissemination to the subcommittees

VI. EXTERNAL REVIEW

A. The dean selects the external reviewer from at least three nominations submitted by the program or department faculty.

B. In the selection of external reviewers, the following criteria apply. The reviewer shall:

- be a recognized authority in the field or discipline encompassed by the program he or she is to evaluate, and have some previous experience in a consultative role;

- have no known personal or professional bias either in favor of or in opposition to Seton Hall University, any of its subdivisions, programs, or faculty;
- have teaching experience in the discipline in an institution of higher learning with a comparable program;
- be familiar with the accreditation procedures where they exist in the discipline;
- be as locally based as possible, while meeting the criteria of eligibility, to help keep costs down.

C. An external reviewer is not needed if there has been an accreditation reviewer *in the same year*; however, the accreditation reviewer needs to be informed that his/her review will be used for in-house program review and should therefore respond to the specific guidelines and requirements of this Program Review.

D. Process of external review:

- The chair or program director shall provide the external reviewer, in advance of the visit, with the self-study document and appropriate university documents on Program Review. The external reviewer may also request further information, such as catalogues, syllabi, examples of faculty publications and student work.
- The visit of the external reviewer shall be scheduled for a full day and shall include meetings and interviews with tenured and probationary faculty, students, the dean, and any others involved in the preparation of the report. The external reviewer shall be provided with lunch at the expense of the department or unit.
- Within fifteen days of the visit, the external reviewer shall submit his or her written evaluation to the department or unit, with a copy sent to the dean. The role of the external reviewer's report is to give assistance to the department/unit and administration in developing and improving the department/unit's academic program, in the light of discipline norms and expectations, and of the materials provided by the department/unit in its self-study.
- Funds are provided for payment of external reviewers by the Program Review Committee through the dean's office. Appropriate paperwork should be submitted to allow payment of the external reviewer in a timely manner.

D. The external reviewer's report should correspond to, and comment upon, each of the seven areas in the Appendix delineating the format and guidelines of the self-study report: mission, goals and objectives; curriculum; faculty; students; assessment; program support; problems and proposed solutions.

E. The department or unit may respond in writing to the external reviewer's report. Any such response should be included with the final submission of documents to the Program Review Steering Committee for dissemination to the subcommittees.

VII. Provost's Responsibilities

The Provost's Office shall provide the following information:

- Results of outcomes survey of graduates of program (s)
- Results from Career Services of alumni achievement

VIII. PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. One completed copy of the following are submitted to the Provost's Office, which will then disseminate copies to the Program Review Committee:

- complete self-study document
- external reviewer report
- internal reviewer report
- dean's response to the reports
- department/program responses to reports of the external reviewer, internal reviewer, and dean

B. No changes may be made to the self-study after it has been submitted to the external and internal reviewers, other than information as to whether issues raised by the self-study or the external and internal reviewer reports have been or are being addressed in the interim by either the department or the dean's office. These updates may be incorporated into the department/program responses.

C. The assigned subcommittees submit their reports to the Program Review Committee, which reviews each one and meets with the department chair / program director or the dean as needed. The Program Review Committee then sends its recommendations to the Faculty Senate, with copies to the relevant departments / program directors and to the dean. Recommendations may include expanding, enhancing, maintaining, curtailing, altering, reconfiguring, or discontinuing the program.

E. The Faculty Senate votes on the recommendations of the Program Review Committee, and the secretary of the Faculty Senate communicates the decision to the head of the unit. If the unit wishes to appeal the decision, it must notify the Faculty Senate of its intention to appeal and the basis of the appeal within one month of being informed of the decision.

- F. Following the appeal, if any, and the Faculty Senate response to the appeal, the Faculty Senate communicates its decision to the Provost. At this point, the unit may appeal the Faculty Senate decision to the Provost. Again, notification of intent to appeal and the basis of the appeal must be made within one month.
- G. The Provost communicates his or her decision in writing to the chair of the Faculty Senate, the chair of the Program Review Committee, the dean of the college involved, and the head of the reviewed unit. If the Faculty Senate has not been informed of the Provost's decision within 60 days, it will be the responsibility of the Faculty Senate to inquire about the status of the recommendations.
- H. The Faculty Senate may appeal the Provost's decision to the President; notification of the intent to appeal and the basis of the appeal must be made within one month.

IX. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. The recommendations of the Program Review Committee that have been approved by the Faculty Senate and accepted by the Provost are sent by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to the appropriate university committees for their information and implementation of any recommended changes to the program.
- B. Recommendations for the enhancement of a program, in particular, are forwarded by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to the University Budget Committee and the University Planning Committee.
- C. Responsibility for the implementation of these recommendations resides with the Provost. At the time he or she submits the Academic Affairs budget, the Provost informs the Faculty Senate of the implementation of the Program Review Committee's recommendations.

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