College of Arts and Sciences
Guidelines for Department/Program Reviews
Revised March 22, 2017

Purpose

The departmental review process provides a mechanism by which the departments and programs in the College of Arts and Sciences can reflect on their performance over the past several years and, with the help of the administration and external consultants, plan for improvements in the future. The review is also designed to ensure the strategic planning and institutional effectiveness required of all institutions accredited by the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges.

An important goal of the review is to look for ways in which current resources can be used most effectively. The department must critically examine whether current resources of all kinds can be reallocated more productively before making requests for additional resources.

The review process is a cooperative and collegial enterprise between the department and the College. It is the goal of the Dean's Office to make the process as streamlined as possible and to ensure that only important issues are considered. The organization of the review may be modified to take account of special features of the department or program being reviewed, such as whether some or all of a department's programs are subject to accreditation, whether important service or outreach components should be given special attention, and in the case of some inter-departmental programs, how to apply certain elements of the self-study to the program's organization.

It is important to the success of a departmental review that the department/program faculty take ownership of the process; full participation by the faculty in all aspects of the review is highly desirable. The most successful reviews take a critical look at the past work of the department and reach an understanding with the Dean regarding realistic plans for the future. The review should result in broad plan about the development of the department over the coming seven years, especially with regard to improvement in the quality of programs and to the efficient use of limited resources.

Overview of Review Process

The major components of the review are as follows.

1. The department receives a profile from the College and Office of Institutional Research with five years of data that document different activities and trends in key areas (e.g. enrollment, retention, graduations rates, instructional productivity, resource allocation, research fellowships, grants, and contracts etc.).
2. The department writes a self-study report that is informed by a review and analysis of the data in the profile. The self-study should follow the outline presented below.
3. External consultants visit the department and prepare a report with recommendations based on the profile, self-study, and their visit.
4. The department prepares a response to the report of the external consultants.
5. The Dean and the Head prepare a Memorandum of Understanding that looks forward to the next seven years and identifies actions to be taken by the department and the College, with an

acknowledgement of the resource needs that will be considered for inclusion in the College's next annual budget request to the Provost

Schedule for Review Process

The review typically begins in the fall of one academic year and concludes with the Memorandum of Understanding the following spring. Early in the process, the department head meets with the Dean and the Associate Dean responsible for coordinating the review to discuss the overall aims of the review and agree on the general timeline that will be followed. The discussion may identify specific issues that either the Dean or the department believe merit special attention and that will be incorporated into the department's self-study.

Self-Study Outline

Consultants and other readers will be given access to the materials electronically at the appropriate times.

When the self-study is completed, provide a 1-3 page Executive Summary at the beginning.

1. Context for the Review

   This section provides an introduction to the self-study, including a brief description of the department, its programs and purposes. Any major changes in the department since the last review should be briefly noted. Before the review begins, the department should ensure that its website is fully updated (consult with the College webmaster for assistance).

2. Undergraduate Major(s**)**

   Profile data (Fact Book information in italics will be requested by the Associate Dean from Institutional Research):

   - Published descriptions of the major(s), both print and on-line
   - *Undergraduate 1st and 2nd Majors by School, Department, and Class*
   - *Undergraduate Enrollment by School, Department, Major, and AOS Code*
   - *Student Credit Hours Produced by College and Dept.—Upper Level Undergraduate*
   - *Undergraduate Degree Recipients by Term* (and AOS codes)

   Questions:

   1) What is the rationale for the structure of the curriculum for the undergraduate major(s)? Does the curriculum appropriately balance breadth and depth of study? Does the number of hours required at the various levels conform to similar degree programs at UNCG, in the UNC system, and/or peer institutions? Is a particular sequence of courses required or recommended? Why or why not? Do you require a culminating experience such as a capstone course? Why or why not?

   2) If there are concentrations, what benefit for students do they provide and what detriment to graduation might they pose? Are they adequately justified by disciplinary standards, the number of students enrolled, and the sizes of the required classes?

3) If a significant number of freshmen who declare the major do not continue in the program in their sophomore year, what evidence can you provide to explain the lack of retention? How has the department addressed any identified problems with retention? If a significant number of majors do not graduate within six years, how might the department address this issue? (*For information about retention rates and number of years to graduation, consult the Fact Book PDF, Reports (top toolbar), First Time Freshmen Cohorts.*)

4) How does the department provide opportunities for students to engage in disciplinary research, Honors, internships, service learning, or other "high-impact" experiences as defined by the AAC&U and as appropriate to your discipline? How could these opportunities be enhanced?

3. Graduate Program(s)

Profile data:

- Admissions data on GRE scores, selectivity, and yield from requested by Associate Dean from Graduate School
- *Graduate Enrollment by School, Department, Major, and AOS Code*
- *Student Credit Hours Produced by College and Dept.—Graduate Level*
- *Certificate Recipients By Term*
- *Masters/Specialist Degree Recipients By Term*
- *Doctoral Degree Recipients By Term*

Questions**:**

1) What is the rationale for the structure of the graduate program(s)?

2) If there are different concentrations within the degree program, are there sufficient disciplinary reasons and enrollment to maintain them?

3) Are admissions appropriately selective and are top applicants successfully recruited and retained? If necessary, what steps could be taken to improve quantity and quality in applications and yield?

4) If an increase in graduate assistantships and/or tuition waivers is requested, what evidence suggests that these increases would improve the recruitment and retention of outstanding students?

5) How do graduate assistants (GA, RA, TA, STA) contribute to the instructional program of the department? If not to the instructional program, how else do they contribute?

6) What opportunities does the department provide for professional development of graduate students in teaching and/or research, scholarship, and creative activity?

7) What percentage of students fails to complete the program? What are their reasons for withdrawal?

8) Provide evidence of the success of your alumni in attaining appropriate employment and/or recognition in their field.

4. Instructional Productivity, Class Sizes, and On-line Courses

Profile data:

- *Delaware 1*
- *Instructional Analysis Reports* (available on the Institutional Research website under Reports)
- On-line course offerings and enrollments

Questions:

1) How do the department's SCH/FTEF compare with similar degree programs in the discipline as measured in the Delaware 1 study? If the department's numbers are low, what steps can be taken to improve them?

2) Are the percentages of total SCH/FTE produced by tenured/tenure-track faculty, non-tenure-track lecturers, and graduate teaching assistants appropriate, given the characteristics of your department?

3) Explain how courses with fewer than 15 undergraduate students or 5 graduate students over the last six semesters are appropriate for your degree program. Can these courses be eliminated or redesigned to attract greater enrollment?

4) What opportunities exist for enhancing the department's contribution to online instruction (e.g., by offering online GEC courses, developing online programs or certificates, or improving or expanding existing offerings)?

5. Contributions to General Education and Special Undergraduate Programs

Summarize the department's contributions to the General Education Curriculum and to programs such as AADS, LIHC, FMS, BLS, ENV, IGS, WGS, service learning, and others during the past five years. Are these contributions appropriate given the department's programs, enrollments and resources? Does the department have plans to change (increase or decrease) its contributions over the coming years?

6. Research, Scholarship, or Creative Activity

Profile data:

- *Sedona Research Report* accessible to department heads
- Submissions and awards information from Research Office

Considering the measures of research productivity as appropriate to your discipline, such as submissions and awards for external funding, the percentage of faculty who regularly published or exhibited their work, the quality of the venues, and the professional recognition through awards, prizes, editorial or professional society appointments, do the accomplishments of tenured and tenure-track faculty over the past five years meet the reasonable expectations in your discipline and for the degree programs in your department? (Note: Faculty vitae will be attached to the self-study, so only a summary of accomplishments with notable highlights is necessary in this section.)

7. External & Internal Relations

   Questions:

   1) Provide a summary of the department's collaborations with departments, programs and units within the University and externally with boards, agencies, institutions and corporations that facilitate learning, research and creative activity.
   2) What efforts have been made to cultivate alumni and friends and to seek financial contributions for departmental programs? How effective are those efforts and how might they be improved?

8. Contributions to College and University Strategic Plans

   Summarize the department's major contributions to the University and College's strategic plans over the past five year

9. Resources

   Profile data (for a 5-year period) provided by Associate Dean

- TSR allocations
- OTP budget
- Other budget categories
- Graduate assistantships and tuition waivers (if applicable)

Based on the evidence provided in the responses to the questions in items 1-8, explain the need for further resources in tenure-track or NTT faculty, staff, graduate assistantships, OTP, TSR, or one-time allocations

10. Planning and Projections

    Based on the responses to the above questions (items 1-9) summarize the opportunities and challenges that face the department during the next 5-7 years.

11. Appendix

    The department should append the following documents to their self-study:

- Instrument of Governance
- Workload Policy
- Promotion and Tenure Guidelines
- Teaching Evaluation Procedures
- Mission and goal statement and any appropriate links to discipline-specific professional association's guidelines and standards supporting the mission and goals
- Faculty vitae (limited to 3 pages each)

External Consultants: Selection, Visit, and Report

External consultants play a vital role in the departmental review process. In the best circumstances, they provide an unbiased, professional assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of a department and its programs and offer the Dean and the department a fresh view of the many topics that are included in the review as well as advice and suggestions to aid in our decision-making.They can offer expert opinions on the steps the department may want to pursue in the future. They may or may not agree with the views of the department; either way, they present a valuable perspective.

The consultants are hired by and report to the Dean (via the Associate Dean). Thus, their obligation is to the Office of the Dean, not the department, with regard to their work. Experience has shown that the best consultants not only are accomplished and respected teachers and scholars in their discipline but also have significant administrative experience. We normally expect each consultant to have served as a department head/chair or as an associate/assistant dean; the perspective gained in such leadership positions significantly increases the value of their advice. Typically, the Associate Dean prepares a list of potential candidates for the task and invites the Head to submit a similar list. The Associate Dean then consults with the Dean and the Head before deciding which consultants to invite. The department should have no contact with the consultants prior to their visit. All arrangements for the visit are handled by the Associate Dean, but it is the responsibility of the department to prepare the detailed schedule for their visit.

The consultants' report should reflect their (combined) appraisal of the strengths and weakness of the department, as gained from the self-study and their visit. It should address, preferably in order, the issues discussed in the self-study. The consultants may include comments about issues not addressed in the self-study that arose during discussions in their visit. The report should be succinct, direct, and include recommendations for future action. The consultants will be asked to follow the numbered outline in writing their report.

Typical Schedule for Consultants' Visit. *Note: Please ensure that the schedule includes time for the consultants to get from one meeting to the next (especially if they must go across campus) and that there is some "down time" that will allow them to talk to each other about what they are learning. When arranging meals, keep numbers small enough to permit conversation; $300 will be provided to pay for meals with the consultants organized by the department.*

Day 1

Consultants arrive in Greensboro and are met by the Associate Dean. Dinner with Dean and Associate Dean

Day 2

Breakfast with Head

Meetings with individual faculty, groups of faculty, groups of staff, groups of graduate students, groups of undergraduate students, Provost, Graduate Dean (if appropriate)

Lunch with faculty or students.

Meetings continue

Dinner with faculty

Day 3

Breakfast – this could be alone, to allow time for private discussion before the meetings on the second day.

Meetings continue

Wrap-up session with Head

Private lunch to begin preparation of report

Exit interview with Dean and Associate Dean. Depart campus

Departmental Response to Consultants' Report

The Dean's Office will send the department Head a copy of the consultants' report as soon as it is received. The Dean and Associate Dean will meet with the department to discuss the report, after which the department prepares a response that summarizes its view of the comments and recommendations of the consultants. It should address any of the issues raised in the self-study and in the report that need comment; it may be that some topics need no comment if there is no implication for change or future action. The response should be forward-looking and should consider each issue from the perspective of potential change. The response should explicitly accept or reject the suggestions of the consultants, with commentary as necessary. It need be only as long as necessary to cover the important points; it need not address every issue in the self-study and report of the consultants. The response will serve as a point of departure for a discussion with the Dean and for drafting the Memorandum of Understanding.

Memorandum of Understanding

This document lists the specific steps that the department and the Office of the Dean agree to take in the future. The Dean will identify the resources that will be considered for inclusion in the College's annual budget submission to the Provost. The MOU will be reviewed each year during the annual meeting between the Dean and the Department Head to discuss progress that is being made and consider whether any modifications to the plans contained in the MOU are appropriate.