

Section Five - Academic Program Review

Approved by the Program Review and Academic Planning Council (PRAP) March 9, 2005.

In a university dedicated to becoming an effective teaching and learning organization, all academic programs and units engage in self-assessment and continuous improvement. A program review is a periodic report to the University on these activities underway in academic programs and units. Program review looks not only back at what has occurred since the last review, but also provides the context for future planning by the faculty and staff members of the program or unit.

In the following pages, the relevant section of the Academic Senate policy on program review appears first in bold, followed by additional information on implementation of each section.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Inquiry is a driving force in higher education. It motivates the work of individual scholars as well as the endeavors of academic programs. Applying inquiry at a program level is essential for the university to become a learning - as well as a teaching - organization.

This policy acknowledges that no process of program review that is merely a periodic, isolated response to external demands can be successful. Program review will be useful only to the extent that it is a systematic, developmental, ongoing process of inquiry conducted by academic programs for their own improvement. A continuous process that focuses on helping students to meet learning outcomes can also aid academic programs in planning for both the short and long range, in developing curricular offerings, in documenting successes, and in substantiating resource needs. It is in this context that the following policy on Program Review has been crafted.

2.0 PROGRAM REVIEW RESPONSIBILITY

2.1 Institutional Structure: All programs and units in the Division of Academic Affairs must be reviewed. Program review is a shared responsibility of the Division of Academic Affairs, Academic Senate, and the Faculty.

2.2 Degree-granting Programs: Review of degree-granting programs is conducted by the Program Assessment and Review Council of the Academic Senate, the College, and the Division of Academic Affairs. A degree-granting program is defined as an academic program that leads to a baccalaureate, masters, or joint doctoral degree.

2.3 Non-degree Units: Review of non-degree units is conducted by the Program Assessment and Review Council of the Academic Senate and the Division of Academic Affairs. A non-degree unit is defined as a unit within the Division of Academic Affairs that supports student learning.

The responsibility for program review will be coordinated for the Division of Academic Affairs by the appropriate administrator in the Office of the Provost and the Coordinator of Assessment and Program Review; for the Academic Senate by the Program Assessment and Review Council; and for the colleges by the dean and faculty council of each college.

Programs are defined as granting bachelors, masters, or joint doctoral degrees; units are defined as non-degree-granting entities within the Division of Academic Affairs that support student learning.

3.0 FREQUENCY OF PROGRAM REVIEW

3.1 Degree-granting Programs or Non-degree Units with Accreditation: Normally, the cycle of program review for degree programs or non-degree units with nationally recognized accreditation will coincide with the accreditation period but not to exceed ten (10) years.

3.2 Degree-granting Programs and Non-degree Units without Accreditation: Normally, the cycle of program review for degree-granting programs and non-degree units without nationally recognized accreditation will occur once every seven (7) years.

3.3 When circumstances warrant, the frequency of review may be extended or reduced by the Division of Academic Affairs in consultation with the College Dean or appropriate administrator and the Chair of the Program Assessment and Review Council of the Academic Senate.

Program reviews should occur not less than once every seven years (unless the program is accredited); however, they may occur more frequently. For accredited programs, the frequency should coincide with the accreditation cycle, but not to exceed ten years. If circumstances warrant, for example, if a unit gains or loses accreditation for its degree program(s), the frequency of program review may be extended or reduced by the Division of Academic Affairs in consultation with the college dean or appropriate administrator and the Chair of the Program Assessment and Review Council of the Academic Senate.

The intent is for all degree programs within an academic department, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, to be reviewed at the same time, unless the program requests otherwise and the college dean approves the request. Both accredited and non-accredited degree programs within an academic department may be reviewed at the same time, unless the program requests otherwise and the college dean approves the request.

All requests for adjustments to the frequency of program review should be initiated by the program or unit and addressed to the college dean or appropriate administrator. If the dean or administrator approves, the request should be forwarded to the Division of Academic Affairs, which will consult with the chair of the Program Assessment and Review Council of the academic senate, and render a final decision.

4.0. COMPONENTS OF PROGRAM REVIEW

4.1 The degree-granting program or non-degree unit shall address the components of program review according to the guidelines in the CSULB Curriculum Handbook. These include: the proposal; the self-study; the review; the University Program Review Committee report; the memorandum of understanding; and the annual report.

4.2 For programs or units with nationally recognized accreditation, documents prepared for accreditation, visits from the accreditation body, and reports from the accreditation body shall normally be accepted as satisfying these components in whole or in part, as stipulated in this policy.

There are six major components of program review: the proposal; the self-study; the review; the University Program Review Committee report; the memorandum of understanding (MOU); and the annual report. These components are described below and examples are provided in the Appendix.

Each year in the Spring, the appropriate administrator in the Office of the Provost will conduct a workshop for programs and units that will be writing their self-study and/or undergoing program review in the following academic year.

5.0 PROGRAM REVIEW PROPOSAL

5.1 In consultation with the Division of Academic Affairs and the College Dean or appropriate administrator, the Chair of each program or Director of each unit undergoing a program review shall prepare a proposal that addresses program or unit performance, assessment of student learning outcomes, and additional relevant topics to be included in the self study.

5.2 The College Dean or appropriate administrator approves the proposal from the program or unit and forwards it to the Division of Academic Affairs.

All programs and units undergoing program review must write a proposal. The proposal is a brief (1-3 pages) document describing the major themes or topics to be addressed in the self-study written for the program review. The program or unit, in consultation with the Division of Academic Affairs and the college dean or appropriate administrator, develops the proposal as a basis for the self-study, in the spring semester prior to the self-study year.

In the proposal, the chair of a program or the director of a unit with national accreditation may request of the college dean or appropriate administrator that a self-study prepared for accreditation be accepted as satisfying the requirement for a self-study; that a visit by the accreditation body be accepted as satisfying the requirement for an external review; and that an accreditation report be accepted as satisfying the requirement for a University Program Review Committee report.

Each year, the appropriate administrator in the Office of the Provost may designate one or more major themes or topics to be addressed in all proposals and all self-studies. The appropriate administrator in the Office of the Provost will make the list of themes or topics known to all departments or units in the spring semester prior to the self-study year. A sample list of required topics can be found at:
http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/grad_undergrad/senate/councils/prap/self_studies/.

The college dean or appropriate administrator may also designate additional themes or topics to be addressed by all proposals and all self-studies prepared in that college or unit. The dean or administrator will make the list of themes or topics known to all departments or units in the spring semester prior to the self-study year. The college dean or appropriate administrator may also designate specific themes to be addressed by individual self-studies prepared in that college or unit.

The program or unit may also propose additional themes or topics to be addressed in its self-study. The program or unit should make these topics or themes known to the college dean or appropriate administrator in the proposal for the self-study. The program or unit should also specify the type of data needed from other university units, such as Institutional Research, and make its request known at this time.

6.0 SELF-STUDY

6.1 A self-study shall be prepared in accordance with the agreed-upon program review proposal and the guidelines in the CSULB Curriculum Handbook.

6.2 For programs or units with nationally recognized accreditation, the self-study prepared for accreditation shall normally be accepted by the College Dean or appropriate administrator and the Division of Academic Affairs for satisfaction of this requirement in accordance with the approved program review proposal.

The self-study is a document prepared by the program or unit addressing the themes or topics agreed upon in the proposal. The self-study is a collaborative effort of all the members of the program or unit under review. The entire personnel of the program or unit, including faculty, professional staff, and students, should participate in some aspect of the self-study process. The program or unit must allow faculty and professional staff members to review and vote on the self-study before forwarding the self-study to the college dean or appropriate administrator.

The program or unit gathers suitable information on the themes identified in the proposal, as well as past program review reports, memoranda of understanding, and annual reports, and analyzes the information. All programs or units collect information on the goals for student learning outcomes, the assessment of student learning, and how the program or unit has used assessment data to make improvements. Information supplied by the Office of Institutional Research or other campus units should also be analyzed.

The self-study should address all of the academic offerings of the program or unit. If a program offers both graduate and undergraduate degrees, both should be addressed in the self-study. Other offerings of the program, such as minors, certificates, credentials, or general education courses, as well as distance learning, should also be included in the self-study. It is assumed that all academic degrees offered by a program will be reviewed at the same time, unless the program requests otherwise and the college dean approves the request.

The body of the self-study report should not exceed 40 single-spaced, one-sided pages for a program with one degree under review, or 50 single-spaced, one-sided pages for multiple degrees under review (not including appendices). The self-study for non-degree units should not exceed 30 single-spaced, one-sided pages.

An academic program or unit with national accreditation may request that a self-study prepared for the purpose of accreditation be accepted, in whole or in part, in accordance with the approved program review proposal, as fulfilling the requirement for the self-study for University program review. The request will normally be approved by the college dean or appropriate administrator and the appropriate administrator in the Office of the Provost. However, the program or unit may be required to submit additional information to address the topics or themes designated by the university or college for this cycle of program review.

After the self-study has been approved by the program faculty or unit professional staff, the self-study is forwarded to the college dean or appropriate administrator for approval. The dean or administrator approves the self-study and notifies the program or unit to send out the required number of copies. There should be a total of seven (7) printed copies, distributed as follows:

Four (4) copies delivered to the Academic Senate:

- one (1) copy retained in the Academic Senate, then forwarded to University Archives
- three (3) copies distributed to members of the University Program Review Committee

Three (3) copies delivered to the Division of Academic Affairs:

- one (1) copy for the appropriate administrator in the Office of the Provost
- two (2) copies for external reviewers

Printed copies of the self-study should be submitted in three-ring, loose leaf binders. This includes copies of self-studies originally developed for accreditation in a different format but accepted for program review. All binders should have a table of contents. Self-studies should be printed on standard white paper, with one-inch margins, 12-point font, and numbered pages. An executive summary (maximum of 3 pages) should also be included. The binder should also contain the previous university program review report and external reviewers' report (and accreditation report if applicable), as well as the last MOU and any annual reports since the last program review. All these materials should also be available from the department or unit in electronic format.

7.0 UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE

7.1 The Committee for degree-granting programs shall be comprised of three (3) members: Two (2) members shall be selected by the Program Assessment and Review Council from its current members who are not from the College of the degree-granting program being reviewed, with one serving as Chair of the Committee, and one (1) member shall be selected by the appropriate College Faculty Council. Faculty from the degree-granting program being reviewed are not eligible to serve on the Committee.

7.2 The Committee for non-degree units shall be comprised of three (3) members: Two (2) members shall be selected by the Program Assessment and Review Council from its current members, with one serving as Chair of the Committee, and one (1) member shall be selected by the Program Assessment and Review Council from the Faculty or professional staff at large. Faculty or professional staff from the non-degree unit being reviewed are not eligible to serve on the Committee.

Appointments to the University Program Review Committee are initiated by the Chair of the Program Assessment and Review Council of the Academic Senate. For degree-granting programs, the council chair designates two members of the council to serve on the review committee, with one designated as committee chair. The Chair of the PARC also contacts the college dean to obtain one additional member designated by the college Faculty Council. Members of the program under review are not eligible to serve on the University Program Review Committee.

For non-degree-granting units, the Chair of the PARC designates two members of the council to serve on the review committee, with one designated as committee chair, and the PARC designates a third member of the review committee from the faculty or professional staff at large. Faculty or professional staff from the program or unit being reviewed are not eligible to serve.

The University Program Review process consists of the appointment of a University Program Review Committee and one or more external reviewers for each program or unit being reviewed; the careful reading and analysis by all members of the review committee (including external reviewers) of relevant documents provided by the program or unit being reviewed; a visit to the program or unit coordinated between university reviewers

and external reviewers; and the completion of an evaluative report. Visits for the University Program Review Committee should include meetings with the College Dean or appropriate administrator, the program chair or unit director, faculty, staff, and students; meetings with other groups, as appropriate (e.g., employers, advisory boards); and visits to campus facilities (e.g., library, laboratories, classrooms) as appropriate.

The University Program Review Committee should conduct as many of these meetings as possible in conjunction with the external reviewer(s). The external reviewer(s) may have additional meetings apart from the University Program Review Committee, e.g., with the Provost and/or the appropriate administrator in the Office of the Provost. A sample visit schedule for external reviewers can be found in the Appendix. Time should be set aside for the University Program Review Committee to meet and confer with the external reviewers, both at the beginning and at the end of the campus visit.

8.0 EXTERNAL REVIEW

8.1 External reviewers will be selected by the Division of Academic Affairs in consultation with the College Dean or appropriate administrator and the Chair of the degree-granting program or Director of the non-degree unit.

8.2 For programs or units with nationally recognized accreditation, the visit of the program or unit conducted by the accrediting body shall normally be accepted by the College Dean or appropriate administrator and Division of Academic Affairs as satisfying this requirement.

8.3 Reports from any external reviewer(s) (including reports from accrediting bodies) will be considered by the University Program Review Committee in preparing its final report.

The Division of Academic Affairs, in consultation with the college dean or appropriate administrator, determines the number of external reviewers. The charge of external review is to provide substantive feedback from knowledgeable peers in the discipline being reviewed. For programs or units with nationally recognized accreditation, the program chair or unit director may request of the dean or administrator that the reviewer(s) from the accreditation body be accepted as fulfilling this purpose, and this request will normally be approved. As discussed below, "external reviewers" refers also to reviewers from accreditation bodies.

The Division of Academic Affairs solicits names of potential external reviewers from the program or unit and the college dean or appropriate administrator. The Division of Academic Affairs compiles a list of potential external reviewers and presents the list to the program or unit and the college dean or appropriate administrator. The program or unit and dean or administrator may indicate if they object to any of the names on the list and the reasons for the objection. The Division of Academic Affairs then makes the final choice of the external reviewer and appoints one or more to assist the University Program Review Committee.

The Division of Academic Affairs coordinates with the external reviewers on the extent of their participation in the review. In addition to the meetings undertaken jointly with the University Program Review Committee, the external reviewers will have both a preliminary meeting and a final exit interview with the Provost and the appropriate administrator in the Office of the Provost. External reviewers will also meet separately with the College Dean or appropriate administrator during the initiation and the conclusion of the campus visit.

Ideally, one joint visit will be made to any program or unit by the external reviewers together with the University Program Review Committee. After the external reviewers have been identified, the program or unit will coordinate with the external reviewers on the specific dates of the campus visit, and set up the daily schedule of meetings for the external reviewers. The Division of Academic Affairs will notify the Chair of the Program Assessment and Review Council that a University Program Review Committee needs to be appointed, and will advise the Chair of PARC on the dates of the visit of the external reviewers. The Division of Academic Affairs is responsible for the cost of travel, lodging, and honorarium. The program or unit is responsible for all other costs, such as meals.

Visits by external reviewers are expected to extend over two (2) or two and one-half (2 and 1/2) days. External reviewers are expected to devote the final half-day to the writing, in coordination with the University Program Review Committee, of a preliminary draft of the University Program Review Committee's report, including recommendations (see sample schedule in the Appendix).

In addition to their participation in the writing of a preliminary draft of the University Program Review Committee's report, external reviewers are expected to write an independent evaluative report and transmit it to the Division of Academic Affairs. In the event a time line conflict exists between the University and the Accrediting body, the accreditation time line will prevail. The Division will send copies to the Chair of the University Program Review Committee, the college dean or appropriate administrator, and the program or unit under review. The program or unit will have 15 working days to respond to the external reviewers' report. Any responses should be sent by the program or unit to the college dean or appropriate administrator, the Division of Academic Affairs, and the Chair of the University Program Review Committee.

9.0 UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

9.1 The University Program Review Committee shall prepare a final report.

9.1.1 The Chair of the University Program Review Committee will send draft copies of the Committee's report to the program Chair or unit Director for comments and to the College Dean or appropriate administrator for comments and/or recommendations; comments and/or recommendations must be returned to the Committee Chair within 15 working days.

9.1.2 After the comment period, the Chair and other members of the University Program Review Committee will present the report (and any comments) to the Program Assessment and Review Council in a regularly scheduled meeting. The College Dean or appropriate administrator and the program Chair or unit Director will be invited to attend and to participate in the meeting.

9.1.3 After the presentation, the Chair of the University Program Review Committee will finalize the report within 15 working days and send the final report to the program Chair or unit Director, the College Dean or appropriate administrator, the Division of Academic Affairs, the office of the Academic Senate, and the University Archives.

9.2 At the end of each academic year, the Chair of the Program Assessment and Review Council will prepare a summary of all program reviews completed during the year and forward it to the Division of Academic Affairs.

The University Program Review Committee's report is a document that analyzes information, evaluates findings, and makes recommendations for future actions. The report of any external reviewers and/or accreditation visitors will be taken into account when preparing this report. For programs or units with nationally recognized accreditation, the program chair or unit director may request that the report from the accreditation body be accepted as fulfilling this purpose.

The chair of the University Program Review Committee coordinates the writing of the final report. The committee chair solicits or reviews input from all participants in the review, including from external and/or accreditation reviewers. The chair should share a draft of the final report with the program or unit under review for the purpose of allowing comments on the draft before it is finalized. The program or unit under review will have 15 working days to respond. Any comments not incorporated into the final report should be appended.

The chair of the University Program Review Committee should also share a draft of the final report with the college dean or appropriate administrator for the program or unit under review for the purpose of allowing comments and/or recommendations on the draft before it is finalized. The dean or administrator has 15 working days to respond. Any comments and/or recommendations not incorporated into the final report should be appended.

The report should address the major themes or topics covered in the self-study, including:

1. an evaluation of the program or unit goals for student learning outcomes;
2. an evaluation of the program or unit assessment of student attainment of these goals;
3. an evaluation of the use of assessment data by the program or unit to make improvements.
4. additional topics or themes identified by the Division of Academic Affairs, college, program, or unit in the proposal

The final section of the report should identify best practices employed by the program or unit. Recommendations to be incorporated into the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should also appear in the concluding section of the report.

The chair of the University Program Review Committee submits the report to the Chair of the Program Assessment and Review Council at a regularly scheduled meeting. The Chair of the program or the Director of the unit under review and college dean or appropriate administrator are invited to participate in the meeting and in the Council's discussion of the report. The Chair of the University Program Review Committee then has 15 days to finalize the report.

When the report has been finalized, the Chair of the Council sends copies to the Academic Senate, the Division of Academic Affairs, the college dean or appropriate administrator, the program or unit under review, University Archives, and the external reviewers. The report will form the basis for the MOU between the program or unit, the college dean or appropriate administrator, and the Division of Academic Affairs.

At the end of each academic year, the Chair of the Program Assessment and Review Council will prepare a summary of all program reviews completed during the year along with recommendations for planning and forward it to the Division of Academic Affairs, where it will be serve as the basis for CSU campus accountability, WASC, and other reports as well as for strategic planning.

10. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

10.1 Upon receipt of the final report of the University Program Review Committee, the program Chair or unit Director, the College Dean or appropriate administrator, and the Division of Academic Affairs will have 20 working days to review all reports and recommendations. The Division of Academic Affairs will then call a meeting with the College Dean or appropriate administrator and the program Chair or unit Director to discuss the recommendations and agree on actions to be taken.

10.2 The agreement will be embodied in a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which will be in effect for the duration of the review cycle.

10.3 The MOU will be kept on file in the program or unit, the College, and the Division of Academic Affairs.

Upon receipt of the final University program review report, the program Chair or unit Director, the College Dean or appropriate administrator, and the Division of Academic Affairs will have 20 working days to review all reports and recommendations. The Division of Academic Affairs will then call a meeting with the Dean or administrator and the program Chair or unit Director to discuss the recommendations and agree on actions to be taken.

The agreement on actions to be taken by the program or unit, the college dean or appropriate administrator, and the Division of Academic Affairs during the years until the next review is written in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The actions stipulated in the MOU are to be implemented by the relevant parties during the next review cycle. A sample MOU is included in the Appendix. The MOU forms the basis for the program or unit's annual report. A copy of the MOU will be kept on file in the program or unit, the College, the Division of Academic Affairs, and the University Archives.

11.0 ANNUAL REPORT

11.1 Each year, by June 1, all degree-granting programs and all non-degree units (with or without nationally recognized accreditation) will provide an annual report to the Division of Academic Affairs and the College Dean or appropriate administrator. The annual report will provide a brief summary of the progress made towards accomplishing the actions stated in the MOU as well as relevant changes since the last program review and/or annual report. Within six weeks of receiving the annual report, the Division of Academic Affairs will provide a response which contains at least the ways by which the Division has provided support for the program or unit to achieve progress toward the objectives of the MOU. The Self Study may be substituted for the annual report during the self-study year.

The annual report is a brief report on progress made toward accomplishing the actions listed in the MOU. A sample annual report is included in the Appendix. The annual report is provided by the program or unit each year to the college dean or appropriate administrator and the Division of Academic Affairs. The annual report provides continuity over time. A copy of the annual report will be kept on file in the program or unit, the College, the Division of Academic Affairs, and the University Archives. The response from the Division of Academic Affairs will also be distributed to the program or unit, the College, and University Archives.