Academic Program Review

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The vision of Bowling Green State University as "the premier learning community in Ohio and one of the best in the nation" commits the university to a comprehensive periodic review of all academic programs as an essential part of ongoing strategic planning. The program reviews are to include the instructional (undergraduate and graduate), research/creative activity (including scholarship of engagement), and service endeavors of the units undergoing review. All academic programs of the university are to be reviewed on a regular seven-year cycle. The reviews of academic programs may be scheduled to coincide, or otherwise be coordinated with, other reviews (such as those for accreditation or other external purposes) or to address a special concern about a particular program.

This document sets forth the process to be used throughout the university to conduct the review of academic programs. The colleges or other units that have administrative

responsibility for academic programs may designate additional or more detailed procedures for the review of programs within their administrative jurisdiction, although the common elements for all academic program reviews specified in this document should be met. There will be a thorough review of the program review process at the end of each seven 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 Ohio Board of Regents; 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, school, college, and university levels.

The final outcome of program review is an action 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. They may also identify extramural resources the unit can generate through its own actions. Consideration may be given to proposed program improvements and expansions requiring additional institutional resources; in such cases, the need and priority for additional resources must be clearly specified.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONDUCTING ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

The primary responsibility for overseeing the review of an academic program lies with the dean who has administrative responsibility for the program. In consultation with the relevant department or program executive officers and deans, the Provost will develop a comprehensive program review cycle that will include all academic programs.

It is anticipated that the most common unit for review will be a single academic department, school, or a single interdisciplinary program. However, for various reasons, a separate review may be warranted for a sub-unit of a department; alternatively, related programs that involve or affect more than one department, school, or college may be reviewed together.

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/program chair or school director to ensure that the self-study is completed in a timely manner. The Vice Provost for Academic Programs will be available to provide guidance and assistance to the unit preparing a self-study.

The unit will be responsible for preparing some of the data from department records. Other information will be provided by University Libraries, and by Information Technology Services. 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
8. HS GPA for undergraduates
9. GRE scores for graduate students (and GMAT scores for business students)
10. Undergraduate GPA for graduate students
11. Section size

The university-level Program Review Committee comprises: 1) 6-10 distinguished faculty members from across the University (one for each program being reviewed); 2) the Vice Provost for Research; and 3) the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, who chairs the committee. One of the faculty members of the Program Review Committee will serve as liaison between the Program Review Committee, the unit being reviewed, the dean, and the External Team.

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.

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 7 years. Include the recommendations resulting from the last program review, and provide a detailed account of actions taken by the department 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:
            short vitas (2-4 page) for all faculty
            faculty workload policy for your unit
            the unit's tenure and promotion policy
            the unit's merit policy
    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 semester in total; 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 improvement as well as areas of strength. In addition to other data you choose to include, provide at least:

Number (on a per faculty per year basis) and quality of refereed publications and other work product. Provide an assessment of the <u>*impact*</u> *of faculty's scholarly work on the field or discipline.*

An 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?

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, using the format developed with the Student Achievement Assessment Committee. Include copies of the unit's annual reports and the SAAC's feedback on those reports as appendices, if available.

Statement of student learning outcomes
Unit's assessment methods
Results of assessment and inferences drawn
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

Students served (geographic area, gender and minority status, nontraditional students, etc.)
Program effectiveness, or "value added"
Other programs offered at BGSU 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 BGSU's mission and to the Academic Plan.

     b. Relationship of the program to BGSU's Engagement Initiative. Please address the question, How has your department adjusted it's policies, procedures, and standards (e.g., workload policy, hiring priorities, P&T documents, merit criteria) to be open to engagement activities and the scholarship of engagement?

     c. Please describe the department's activities in the area of engagement.

          engagement activities. This category would exclude service of a general nature (e.g., working in a soup kitchen or reading to the elderly) and would focus instead on expert service (e.g., an accountant providing bookkeeping service to a non-profit organization, or a computer scientist setting up a computer network for a school). Expert service could be donated (pro bono work) or compensated (consulting).

          scholarship of engagement. These activities include "research and creative work done in collaboration with community partners that contributes in significant ways to Ohio's economic development needs, addresses critical social problems, and enhances Ohioans' quality of life" (Report of the Standards Committee on the Scholarship of Engagement, August 1, 2005). More specifically, scholarship of engagement has the seven characteristics described in the Standard Committee's Report.

          service learning. Service learning is a "course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs, and (b) reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility."[1]

     d. Relationship of the program to other programs at BGSU, including overlap or competition.

     e. Are the activities rewarded in the promotion and tenure process directly supportive of and consistent with the unit, college, and university mission?

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[1] Bringle, R. G. and J. A. Hatcher, 1995. *A Service-Learning Curriculum for Faculty*. Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, **2**: 112-122.

f. 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

5. Doctoral programs should prepare a separate section that addresses all of the quality standards (summarized below) described by the Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study's (RACGS). When the same material is called for in two places in this outline (e.g., C.1.a and C.5.a both call for evaluation of faculty productivity), doctoral programs should include the full account in this section – other parts of the report can refer to this section rather than repeat the same information.

    a. **Program Faculty.** The level of faculty productivity (publication, grants, professional recognition) "shall be required commensurate with expectations of a doctoral program faculty."

    b. **Program Graduates.** Graduates of the program express satisfaction with the program. The degree completion rate and time-to-degree are appropriate. Provide detailed data to demonstrate that employment of graduates is in fields consistent with the mission of the program. Periodic surveys of graduates demonstrate career-long learning and continuing scholarly productivity.

    c. **Program Vitality.** Program vitality is evident through a high level of interaction within the program and between the program members and the larger academic community. The "curriculum has been updated during the period under review" and reflects advances in the discipline. Resources essential to the discipline are provided. Degree requirements are appropriate.

    d. **Program Demand.** The program should demonstrate sufficient demand, enrollment, and selectivity in admissions. The program should serve community, regional, and state needs and be responsive to societal demands.

    e. **Program Interactions.** The program has "interactions with and in collaboration with similar programs at other universities and organizations." The program provides access to assets (facilities, expertise, funding) outside the program.

    f. **Program Access.** The program "has established or seeks to establish an appropriate level of diversity among its faculty and its graduate student body."

    g. **Student Outcomes Assessment.** The program should demonstrate "an enhanced recognition of the uses of outcomes assessment." RACGS expects that outcomes assessment will be implemented, and that the

assessment data produced will be used for continuous quality improvement of the program."

    h. **Program Revisions from Previous Reviews.** Provide documentation of changes resulting from previous reviews.

D. Unit planning (next 7 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 seven 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.

The plan referred to in this section should be the unit's previously developed plan. The plan provided in the context of program review should be the SAME plan the unit has developed for other purposes at the university. The report should include at least the following elements:

1. A description of the planning process in the unit
2. Goals and strategies
3. Timetable and implementation plan
4. Relationship to the Academic Plan
5. Relationship to the Scholarship of Engagement
6. 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. 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 Bowling Green State University.

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

The review team will comprise recognized peers from distinguished programs at other universities and, where appropriate, from the professional sectors. The unit chair or director will provide names of potential reviewers. Working from this slate of potential reviewers, the chair/director, the dean, and the Vice Provost for Academic Programs

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 Vice Provost for Academic Programs 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 Vice 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 department (individually, if possible), department chairs or school directors of related programs, 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 1 1/2 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 Vice Provost for Academic Programs should provide the following to each member of the review team. Copies of this material should be available to the unit undergoing the review and to the Program Review Committee.

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 BGSU. It is submitted to the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, who distributes the report to the unit and the Program Review Committee. The unit should call factual errors to the attention of the Vice 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 pedagogy and research/creative work?
- An evaluation 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 seven years. Are the 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 PRC REPORT

The Program Review Committee is responsible for writing a report, which synthesizes the information in the self-study and the external report, and is informed by and responsive to input from the unit and the dean. The focus of the report is a set of concrete, action-oriented recommendations cast within a specific timeline. These recommendations are guided by the PRC's understanding of:

1) the quality and importance of the unit to the mission of the University and to the Academic Plan;
2) the contribution of the unit to the University's Strategic Future Directions, as identified by the UPC;
3) the unit's strategic plans, as submitted as part of the University's Strategic Planning process (initiated in spring, 2000) and described in the planning section of the self-study;
4) and for doctoral programs, the "Guidelines for the Review of State University Doctoral Programs" as published by OBR.

THE UNIT RESPONSE

Following receipt of the PRC Report, the Chair/Director writes a "Unit Response" to the PRC report, within two weeks, and forwards this response to the Dean and the Vice Provost for Academic Programs. The Unit Response should focus on the recommendations in the PRC 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 PRC 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 PRC Report as written; it could commit to only specified parts of the PRC 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.

Annual reports by the units will be based on the recommendations in the Dean's Response and, by reference, to recommendations in the PRC report.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES AND ACTION PLANS

Following consultation with the Provost, the dean will meet with appropriate representatives from the unit to discuss the program review. In addition to consideration of the Program 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 relate 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

Bowling Green State University's academic program review process should be reviewed every seven years. The reviews are used to determine if the program review process is functioning as intended and to incorporate appropriate changes into the process when necessary.