

# **UCLA**

**Student Affairs**

## **Program Review Guidelines 2009-2010**

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# **UCLA Student Affairs Program Review Guidelines**

## **Introduction & Purpose**

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The 2006-2009 Student Affairs Strategic Plan established the goal of developing an evaluation process that ensures Student Affairs programs and services are ready and able to meet the needs of an ever-changing student body. As an organization committed to continuous programmatic improvement, Student Affairs must systematically assess, acknowledge, and appropriately respond to new challenges, identify potential opportunities, and routinely strive to enhance our programs and services. The adoption and implementation of the program review guidelines detailed in this document are important steps towards achieving Student Affairs' organizational evaluation objectives. In addition, the program review process provides a powerful vehicle for answering public calls for increased organizational accountability and providing documentation of Student Affairs' valuable contributions to student learning and development outcomes.

## **Key Guiding Principles**

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First, the Student Affairs Program Review process is a formative assessment tool designed to enhance organizational performance via the systematic review of data pertaining to department activities, service delivery and use, resource management, and contributions to the advancement of the Student Affairs mission and strategic plan.

More specifically, the purposes of program review are:

- Facilitate systematic reflection and documentation within Student Affairs departments on organizational performance with respect to objectives, university priorities, and the Student Affairs mission, aspirations, and strategic goals;
- Provide evidence of the excellence and effectiveness of the department's programs, activities, services, and operations;
- Foster a contemporary understanding of UCLA students' characteristics, needs, and experiences;
- Assess the department's effectiveness with respect to contributing to student learning and development outcomes and/or business and service outcomes;
- Encourage strategic thinking about the department's plans for the future;
- Define ways, primarily within existing resources, that a department can continue to improve in the quality of its programs, services, activities, and operations; and
- Identify obstacles that inhibit the department from achieving its desired goals and develop an action plan for managing these obstacles.

Second, the program review guidelines outlined in this document are informed by and serve to advance the unique mission, values, and aspirations of UCLA Student Affairs.

In particular, the Student Affairs mission statement, aspirations, and current strategic plan provide the foundation for the Student Affairs Program Review process.

#### UCLA Student Affairs Mission Statement

Student Affairs supports the academic success of all UCLA students, fosters their intellectual, personal, social and professional development in preparation for the entirety of their lives, and contributes to enhancing the quality of campus life, the educational environment, and their relationship with the broader UCLA Family, including alumni.

#### Student Affairs Aspirations

- I. Supporting the academic enterprise and institutional goals
- II. Ensuring student welfare
- III. Developing a responsive staff
- IV. Making the most of technology
- V. Respecting financial and budgetary considerations

Consistent with the mission and aspirations reprinted above, the program review process provides an opportunity for Student Affairs staff members to systematically review organizational efforts directed towards enhancing the academic and educational experiences of UCLA students; listening and responding to the experiences, needs, and interests of students from all backgrounds and communities; cultivating respectful and learning-centered professional environments; maximizing technological efficiencies; and serving as responsible stewards of institutional resources. Beyond merely providing a means to systematically survey department activities and management practices, the program review process facilitates the translation of assessment data into strategic action plans focused on ensuring the continuous improvement of organizational performance and the advancement of mission-critical activities. (A copy of the 2006-2009 Student Affairs Strategic Plan is provided in Appendix A.)

Third, the program review guidelines also reflect the values that have historically guided Student Affairs assessment activities. More specifically, the guidelines outlined in this document:

- demonstrate a respect for students from all backgrounds and communities;
- highlight the importance of including student voices in the process and products of assessment;
- underscore the value of identifying and assessing student learning and development outcomes;
- promote the effective use of organizational resources;
- prioritize the development of quality programs that meet students' ever-changing needs; and
- maintain a focus on connecting Student Affairs activities to the broader institutional mission and strategic priorities.

Thus, the primary reason for conducting program reviews is to ensure the continuation of high quality programs and services in Student Affairs and to make sure that our

offerings are central to the role and mission, priorities, and strategic goals of Student Affairs and the University.

### **Program Review Budget**

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The Student Affairs Program Review process will require a commitment of time and resources from everyone involved. It is assumed that the financial support for all steps in the program review process will be absorbed at the department level. As such, cost efficiency should be a consideration (although not necessarily the deciding factor) with respect to selection of external review panel members. If the program review process causes financial hardship for a department, the Director should submit a program review budget and request for funds to the member of the Executive Management Group (EMG) that supervises the department slated for review. An External Review Funding Proposal template is provided in Appendix B. Budget requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Program Review Cycle**

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Student Affairs department reviews will occur on a six-year cycle. The Director of the Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) in consultation with the members of the Student Affairs Executive Management Group develops this schedule (Appendix C). When possible, the schedule is coordinated with other review and accreditation activities. It is important to note that accreditation reviews are conducted for other purposes and do not take the place of the Student Affairs' Program Review. However, elements of and preparation for these reviews may overlap and therefore coordination of these reviews will occur to eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort. Further, when possible, any University-wide functional reviews that involve Student Affairs departments will be scheduled to coincide with the Student Affairs review of that department.

The six-year cycle is flexible and may be revised by the Director of SAIRO in consultation with members of the Student Affairs EMG. A department may request a program review at any time. If human and fiscal resources are available, this request will be accommodated. When circumstances warrant, a request to extend or postpone a scheduled program review may be submitted in writing to the Director of SAIRO who will forward this request to EMG along with an analysis of the implications associated with the schedule change request and a revised program review calendar if necessary. EMG will review this request and respond to the Director of the department and SAIRO. In situations where the program review findings indicated very serious problems in the department, the department may be added back into the schedule for re-review on an accelerated basis to ensure that the identified problems have been addressed.

The Student Affairs Program Review Calendar is presented in Appendix C.

## **Program Review Process and Timeline**

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The Student Affairs Program Review process consists of five steps: 1) Pre-Review Preparation, 2) Department Self-Study and Report, 3) External Program Review Site Visit and Report, 4) Developing the Department Action Plan, and 5) Implementing the Department Action Plan. The guidelines for each step are outlined in this section.

The Student Affairs Program Review protocol should take approximately 16 months to complete. A suggested program review timeline is provided in Appendix D. The program review cycle begins in May when the department receives written notification that they are scheduled for review and ends in August of the following year with the submission of the department's action plan. Departmental pre-review preparations will likely begin well in advance of the program review cycle, however, as many units engage in the periodic collection and analysis of assessment data. Although the suggested 16 month timeline is intended to structure and standardize the review process, the actual time needed to complete each program review step may vary according to the department and the unique needs of each review. If a department needs to extend their review process more than one month beyond the 16-month timeline, they must submit a notification and explanation of the extension in writing to the Student Affairs EMG and provide copy of the communication to the Director of SAIRO.

The suggested Student Affairs Program Review timeline is as follows:

### **Step I: Pre-Review Preparation** (3 - 4 months)

#### **I. Notification in Writing to Department(s) Scheduled for Review**

Using the established six-year review calendar (Appendix C), departments that are slated for review in the coming academic year will be formally notified in writing via a letter from the Director of SAIRO. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the member of the Student Affairs Executive Management Group who supervises the department undergoing program review. The letter of notification will include a copy of the Program Review Guidelines and other specific information regarding the review process. Additional copies of the Program Review Guidelines may be downloaded from the SAIRO Program Review website ([http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program\\_review.html](http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program_review.html)).

#### **II. Selection of Program Review Coordinator**

SAIRO will ask the department director to identify a program review coordinator. Responsibilities of the program review coordinator include: 1) serving as SAIRO's primary department contact regarding all program review matters, 2) developing and implementing the program review timeline, 3) coordinating the self-study process and as well as the development of the self-study report, and 4) organizing logistics of the external review site visit. The coordination of the program review process is a time- and labor-intensive responsibility (previous coordinators have likened it to serving as the chair of a large department committee or task-force) so

it is recommended that directors take time commitment expectations into consideration when selecting a program review coordinator. Additional qualities of a successful program review coordinator include: the ability to facilitate group discussions, solicit input from staff working in diverse organizational roles, integrate multiple perspectives, and synthesize information in a concise manner; familiarity with the department's assessment efforts; strong writing and project management skills; and the professional autonomy necessary to interpret the program review guidelines and design a program review process tailored to the department's unique mission and structure.

SAIRO does not recommend that department directors assume the program review coordinator role given the significant time commitment associated with this task. Although directors of small departments with limited staff resources may find it necessary to fulfill the program review coordinator responsibilities, whenever possible, SAIRO encourages directors to delegate this responsibility in the interest of providing a staff member with a valuable professional development opportunity.

Please see Appendix E for detailed summary of program review roles and responsibilities.

### **III. Department Review Orientation Meeting Scheduled/Held**

SAIRO staff will meet with the department director and program review coordinator in order to discuss the review process, answer questions, and help create a participatory process of program review in which all staff members are engaged and involved. Please see Appendix F for a copy of the UCLA Program Review Executive Summary document that will serve as the discussion guide for the orientation meeting.

### **IV. Identification of the Self-Study Protocol**

The program review self-study protocol is selected by the Director of the department in consultation with the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the member of the Student Affairs EMG who supervises the department undergoing program review. The Director and staff of SAIRO are also valuable resources in this process. Following are the four primary choices with respect to the self-study format:

A. Any mandated or optional professional accreditation processes: Program review is intended to provide Student Affairs departments an opportunity to evaluate their programs and services to ensure that they are ready and able to meet the needs of an ever-changing student body. However, certain departments are required or encouraged to participate in accreditation procedures specific to their functional area. In an effort to reduce unnecessary duplication of effort and help ease the overall workload of preparing for agency accreditation, the self-study / department profile and/or external review components of an accreditation process may be used to fulfill some or all of the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review expectations. During the program review

orientation meeting, the SAIRO Director and department program review team will review the accreditation protocol and the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review Guidelines and collaboratively develop the department's program review process and timeline.

**B. Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS):** CAS “has been the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs since its inception in 1979. For the ultimate purpose of fostering and enhancing student learning, development, and achievement and in general to promote good citizenship,”<sup>1</sup> CAS provides a set of industry-approved standards and self-assessment guidelines for 34 functional areas (see Appendix G for a full list of programs for which CAS provides standards and self-assessment guidelines. This appendix also includes a sample CAS Self-Assessment outline). Please note that SAIRO owns the print and electronic versions of the most recent CAS Standards & Guidelines, Frameworks for Assessing Learning and Development Outcomes (FALDOs), and Self-Assessment Guidelines and will make them available to any departments undergoing program review.

1. Those Student Affairs departments for which CAS standards and guidelines exist may choose to utilize the CAS Self-Assessment Guide as the frame for the self-study review process and report.

2. If the department has completed a CAS self-study within the academic year prior to their Student Affairs Program Review cycle, it may use that CAS self-assessment process as the foundation for the program review self-study report.

3. It is important to note that although the CAS Self-Assessment Guides include worksheets and overview questions intended to facilitate the compilation of reviewer ratings for each of the CAS criterion measures, these completed worksheets and short answer responses do not fulfill the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review self-study report expectations. Rather the information and insights gleaned from the CAS self-assessment process should inform the development of a comprehensive and coherent self-study narrative that addresses the thirteen organizational domains outlined in the CAS Standards and Guidelines (Please see Appendix G for a list of the thirteen self-assessment domains and a sample self-study report outline).

**C. Industry Standards and Guidelines for Self-Study:** If there is a set of standards and/or guidelines that are published by a representative, governing body, or professional association for the department's area of Student Affairs or for the types of services that the office provides, the department may

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<sup>1</sup> Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. Retrieved July 10, 2007, from <http://www.cas.edu>.

propose them as the protocol for the self-study portion of the department's program review process. Please submit the complete description of standards and guidelines for self-study to the Director of SAIRO for consideration.

D. UCLA Student Affairs Program Review Self-Study Guidelines: UCLA Student Affairs has developed its own protocol and criteria for self-study, which are available in Appendix H. These criteria are intended to provide a structure for the review and should be augmented by whatever information is deemed necessary to create an effective self-assessment. General areas include:

1. Department Mission, Purpose, and Function
2. Strategic Position and Planning
3. Organizational Resources
4. Gauging Department Performance and Effectiveness
5. Summary of Findings

## V. Data Audit

The systematic review of relevant departmental and institutional assessment data is an integral step in the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review process. More specifically data and assessment findings fulfill five key program review functions:

1. **Guide program review process** – Compiling and reviewing relevant data at the start of program review will guide the self-study inquiry process by allowing self-study members to draw on existing data and assessment results when answering self-study questions.
2. **Set context** – Data help departments establish and external reviewers understand organizational context, constituents, needs, etc.
3. **Demonstrate achievement of organizational outcomes** – Data should be included in the self-study report as a means to demonstrate effectiveness in achieving articulated learning, development, service, and/or business outcomes.
4. **Document utilization/satisfaction** – Data should be used to document patterns of utilization and satisfaction with department programs and services.
5. **Illustrate role of data in organizational decisions/practice** – The department should articulate how data and assessment findings are used to inform organizational decisions and improve the student experience.

Each department undergoing review will conduct an audit of all data and information resources available to assist and inform the program review process. This audit will include:

A. An update of the department's assessment inventory. SAIRO will provide you with an electronic copy of your department's most recent assessment inventory. Please reformat and update the inventory using the template provided in Appendix I. The department is asked to submit a copy the updated assessment inventory to the Director of SAIRO as well as include it in the appendices of the self-study report. A summary of the information that should be synthesized in the department assessment inventory is provided below:

1. Please describe any departmental efforts to collect data. This can include any method of data collection, including survey data, focus groups, interviews, utilization counts (e.g., card swipe counts), etc. Further, please be sure to document assessment efforts of any population such as students, other clientele, staff, etc.
2. A review of any external assessment processes (e.g., participation in CAS Standards or industry benchmarking studies) or accreditation practices or mandates.

B. A review of data collected at the organizational (i.e., Student Affairs at large) or institutional levels (e.g., CIRP Freshman Survey, Transfer Student Survey (TSS), University of California Undergraduate Experiences Survey (UCUES), UCLA Graduating Senior Survey) that may provide assistance documenting departmental outcomes and/or provide insight on student needs and experiences, population trends, etc., of relevance to the department undergoing review.

SAIRO will contact the department program review coordinator to initiate the scheduling of a Data Audit meeting. At this meeting, SAIRO staff will review organizational and institutional data that may be of relevance to the department and explain the process for requesting additional assistance from SAIRO in compiling and/or analyzing institutional data. Prior to this meeting, the department program review coordinator will be asked to submit to SAIRO information regarding the department's strategic priorities and specific learning/programmatic outcomes so that SAIRO can make informed decisions about data of relevance to the department.

C. The collection and review of department data relevant to specific questions posed in the self-study protocol. Each of the self-study protocols outlined in Section III require the self-study panel to gather and reflect on information pertaining to a wide range of departmental processes and performance measures (e.g., budgeting, human resources, technology, legal responsibility, etc). After selecting a self-study protocol, the department's program review coordinator

and/or self-study panel should carefully review the protocol, identify the information needed to develop a thorough self-study report, and begin compiling existing data, assessment results, and organizational information that can be used to inform answers to self-study questions.

### **Lessons Learned**

The first in a series of program review recommendations drawn from the experiences of past participants.

- It is easy to lose focus in the data audit phase of program review and find yourself overwhelmed by a mountain of department and institutional data. The key is to carefully review the self-study protocol and identify department data and assessment findings that will help you answer the self-study questions. Don't spend precious energy and time compiling information that doesn't address self-study topic areas.

## **VI. Formation of the Self-Study Review Panel**

The director of the department and program review coordinator will identify/invite people to serve as members of the self-study panel. While the department may determine the optimal size of the Self-Study Review Panel for their assessment needs and objectives, Student Affairs leadership suggests a team of 5-8 members. Below are the Self-Study Review Panel membership guidelines:

A. External Members: In order to provide a more objective yet informed viewpoint, one member of the Self-Study Review Panel must be external to the department. Some suggestions for this member include:

1. If an advisory panel/council exists for the department, it is suggested that representation from this group be included on the Self-Study Review Panel.
2. In an effort to make the Student Affairs Program review process as collaborative as possible across departments, Directors are encouraged to consider fellow Student Affairs Directors.
3. The collaboration between Student Affairs and our colleagues in The UCLA College is a priority for the advancement of the Student Affairs strategic plan and a critical element in our ability to effectively serve students. As such, Directors are encouraged to consider inviting faculty or colleagues from The College or other academic departments to serve as an external member of the Self-Study Review Panel.

B. Student Members: UCLA students are the primary constituents of our efforts. Thus, the Self-Study Review Panel must include at least one student. It is

advisable that this student have experience with the department (e.g., frequent user, student employee, intern, etc.).

C. Internal Members: There are no restrictions on the identification and inclusion of internal members for the Self-Study Review Panel.

### **Lessons Learned**

- It is a good idea to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of self-study panel members prior to extending invitations. What are you asking of them? What will they do?

## **VI. Identification/Formation of External Review Panel and Site Visit Scheduled**

The External Department Review Panel will consist of 2-3 people from outside the University with expertise in the area(s) being reviewed. Although the Department under review may select anyone from other universities, other non-profits, or the private sector who has relevant knowledge and expertise, Departments are strongly encouraged to consider their UC colleagues and counterparts as members of the External Review Panel. Further, since UCLA draws over 90% of its undergraduate students from California, colleagues from other public and private colleges in the state may also serve as valuable members of External Review Panel.

A. The process for selecting members of the External Review Panel will be as follows:

1. The department Director will generate a list of potential external panel participants. This list will include twice the number of names (i.e., 4-6) than there are slots to fill. Sound rationale should be presented for why each person has been nominated. If there is an order of preference, the names on the list must be presented in priority order.

2. This list of suitable panel members will be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs for consideration. Please provide a copy of this correspondence to the member of the Student Affairs EMG who supervises the department undergoing program review and the SAIRO Director. In consultation with the Executive Management Group of Student Affairs and the Director of the department undergoing review, the Vice Chancellor will respond in one of the following ways:

- a. Approval of the list of potential External Review Panel members as submitted.
- b. Approval of the list of potential External Review Panel members in a different priority order.

- c. A request for additional names to be considered for External Review Panel members. If the Vice Chancellor provides this response, the Director of the department under review will repeat processes VI.A.1-2 until they receive Vice Chancellor approval.

B. Invitations to serve on an external review panel may come from the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs or the department director. Please see Appendix J for an external review invitation letter template which can be customized to meet the department's unique needs (e.g., identify specific external review dates, specify amount of honorarium). Once the panel is confirmed, the department is responsible for scheduling the 2-3 day site visit and establishing the agenda. The Director of the department under review must be present for the site visit. When possible, the Department should also schedule the site visit for a time when the member of the Student Affairs EMG who supervises the department undergoing program review and the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs are on campus. For additional information on the external review process, please see the External Review Guide prepared by SAIRO. This document may be downloaded from the SAIRO Program Review website ([http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program\\_review.html](http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program_review.html)).

### **Lessons Learned**

Factors to consider when identifying potential external reviewers:

- Strategic priorities - Who possesses knowledge in a particular area of strategic interest to the department?
- Accountability of reviewers – Who can you count on to submit a quality external review report in a timely manner?
- Budget – What funding is available for site visit expenditures (e.g., airfare, lodging, meals, and honoraria)?

## **Step 2: Department Self-Study/Report (5 - 6 months)**

The department self-study provides the basis for the entire review process. It represents a valuable opportunity for the department to make a candid assessment of itself and to consider future directions and opportunities for improvement that would strengthen the department. Each department undergoing review will prepare a self-study report using as its organizing framework the criteria and questions identified in the protocol selected as part of the pre-review preparation (Step I, Section III above).

The purpose of the Department Self-Study Report is to:

- A. Outline the department's objectives, priorities, resources, programs and strategic plans as well as its position within Student Affairs and the University.
- B. Address how well the department performs in relation to its mission, goals and strategic plans.
- C. Define ways, primarily within existing resources, that the department can continue to improve in the quality of its programs, services, activities, and operations.
- D. Provide evidence of the excellence and effectiveness of its programs, activities, services and operations.
- E. Identify priorities and key questions for external review.

The self-study narrative and supporting documentation should fulfill the purposes outlined above. The specific format and content of the report will be determined by the particular self-study framework selected by the department director and program review coordinator. Regardless of the self-study protocol selected, the self-study report should include the following:

1. Table of contents
2. Process executive summary – an explanation of the department self-study process
3. Department contextual info – If not explicitly called for in the self-study protocol, please provide a brief introduction to the department history, organizational structure, and / or other unique contextual conditions that frame the self-study report.
4. Summary of findings – What are the primary strengths of the department? What aspects of the department need the most improvement?
5. External review issues statement - A 1-2 page statement that clearly outlines the key issues and questions identified during the self-study process that the department would like external reviewers to address during the site visit and external review report.

#### Report Submission Guidelines:

A. While the director of the department under review has latitude with respect to decisions regarding the preparation of the self-study report, the final report should represent the input of all members of the Self-Study Review Panel. As such, the department is encouraged to create a system in which the panel is able to provide feedback on a draft of the document. Please list the names of the Self-Study Review Panel members on the title page of the self-study report.

B. While there is no firm limit with respect to the length of the report, it would be challenging to address fully the criteria of most self-study protocols in less than 15 pages of narrative (exclusive of appendices).

C. Departments are asked to submit a final draft of the report to the Director of SAIRO for review of completeness prior to submitting the final report to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the External Review Panel. SAIRO will review the report to make sure it meets program review expectations and provide detailed constructive feedback if revisions are necessary.

D. A copy of the final draft of the report should also be shared with the member of the Student Affairs Executive Management Group that supervises the department and a meeting scheduled with the EMG supervisor and department director to discuss the report, preliminary findings, and external review issues.

E. The final self-study report should be submitted in electronic format. If electronic copies of all materials are not available, unbound print copies of those documents should be submitted. One copy of the self-study report should be submitted to:

1. Each member of the External Review Panel prior to their visit
2. The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs
3. The member of the Student Affairs EMG who supervises the department undergoing program review
4. The Director of SAIRO

## **Lessons Learned**

### **Facilitating the Self-Study Process**

- Developing a detailed and realistic self-study timeline is a critical step towards ensuring the self-study process is completed in a timely manner.
- The department director and program review coordinator play important roles in creating a climate of inquiry that promotes critical reflection and constructive self-criticism.
- The department director and program review coordinator need to work collaboratively to design and facilitate a program review process that engages the entire department. As one external reviewer noted, “There is a difference between [the staff] being aware of program review and being engaged in program review.”
- Student members may initially be intimidated or hesitant to offer candid feedback. Make sure to intentionally engage them in the process.

### **Writing the Self-Study Report**

- Be sure to write the report for an external audience (e.g., external reviewers, Executive Management Group, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs) who are likely not familiar with organizational context, departmental acronyms, etc.
- Please include detailed organizational info (e.g., budget, org structures, etc.) to help external reviewers understand the scope of the organization and daily operations.
- Integrate assessment results and data in self-study narrative to demonstrate the role of assessment in informing organizational decisions and practice.
- To ensure the development of a concise yet comprehensive self-study report, it is important to be intentional regarding the inclusion and organization of supporting documentation and data (e.g., strategic use of appendices).
- Given that the development of the self-study report can be a time consuming task for one person, SAIRO encourages the department program review coordinator to distribute responsibility for drafting the self-study narrative among self-study panel members.

## **Step 3: External Program Review Site Visit and Report (2 - 3 months)**

The External Review Panel, as experts in the field, will be encouraged to evaluate the department in its national context and provide insight and feedback on issues and trends particular to the departmental operations being reviewed. The external reviewers will receive and are asked to study the Department Self-Study Report and supporting

documents in advance of their site visit. The site visit should span a 2-3 day period to allow sufficient time for the reviewers to meet with members of the Self-Study Panel, department staff, administrators, faculty, students, and others; to visit facilities; and to meet as a review team to discuss points that will be included in their analysis.

The department and Self-Study Panel are encouraged to solicit insight from the External Review Panel regarding questions and issues they would like to discuss from a viewpoint that is external to the university, that is broader in scope (e.g., from a regional, national or disciplinary perspective), or for which members of the External Review Panel are more qualified to answer. This External Review Issues Statement should be attached to the self-study report and submitted to the External Review Panel prior to their visit. Further, a detailed agenda for the visit should be established well in advance of the site visit to allow for adequate time to schedule meetings, prepare materials, reserve rooms, etc. Copies of the External Review Issues Statement and the schedule/agenda should be provided to all members of the Self-Study Panel, the Director of SAIRO, the member of the Student Affairs EMG that supervises the department under review, and the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.

It is expected that the External Review Panel will adhere to the schedule and address the list of questions and issues provided by the Self-Study Panel. However, it is also anticipated that the background and expertise of the External Review Panel members may help them identify other, related areas and topics of interest during the site visit. As such, all members of the Self-Study Review Panel and External Review Panel are expected to remain open to the different issues and questions that are raised by all participants in the site visit.

At the conclusion of their visit, the External Review Panel will meet with the Director of the department, selected department staff, and members of the Self-Study Panel to share their initial observations. Within 4 - 6 weeks after their visit, the External Review Panel will be asked to provide a written assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, operational practices, leadership, and opportunities for the department. Appendix K provides a suggested outline for the External Review Report. The External Review Report should be submitted directly to the department Director who will then distribute copies to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, the member of EMG who supervises the department, the Self-Study Panel, and the Director of SAIRO.

For additional information on the external review process, please see the External Review Guide provided by SAIRO. This document may be downloaded from the SAIRO Program Review website ([http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program\\_review.html](http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program_review.html)).

### **Lessons Learned**

- In the interest of avoiding defensive responses to external reviewer questions, it is important that the department director and program review coordinator communicate the purpose and value of the external review site visit and encourage staff to share candid reflections on departmental programs, services, and performance.
- Past external review teams have placed a high value on student interaction. Please take student schedules into consideration when developing the external review site visit agenda.
- Be sure to provide time for the external review panel to meet privately. The reviewers will need this time to get acquainted, develop questions, share reflections, and begin organizing information for the external review report.

### **Step 4: Developing the Department Action Plan (2-3 months)**

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Upon receiving the External Review Report, the department staff will initiate the development of an action plan that reflects the information, insights and recommendations included in both the External Review Report and the Self-Study Report. The departmental action plan should specify proposed goals, annual objectives and implementation strategies, responsible parties, and methods of evaluation. If there are External Review Panel recommendations that the department is not in agreement with, the action plan should acknowledge these differences in thinking and where appropriate, present alternative recommendations.

The completed Department Action Plan will be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the member of the Student Affairs EMG that supervises the department under review for review and approval. Once approved, the department will be asked to present a summary of the program review process, findings, and action plan to the Executive Management Group and submit an electronic copy of the action plan to SAIRO. This will represent the end of the active program review process.

For those departments using a CAS Self-Assessment Guide as the framework for the unit's program review self-study, Work Forms A, B, and C are intended to facilitate the development of an action plan. It is important to note, however, that although the CAS work forms do not address the development of action plans related to external review recommendations, the departmental action plan should reflect the findings and recommendations from both the self-study and external review reports.

Please see Appendix L for additional guidance on the development and formatting of program review action plans.

**Step 5: Implementing the Department Action Plan** (final month and beyond)

Progress on the Department Action Plan will be evaluated via updates included in the department's annual budget report and annual year-end reports. Further, the Department Action Plan will represent the foundation of the pre-review preparation for the next cycle of program review six years later.