

### **SECTION 3: DEPARTMENT REVIEW**

The effective evaluation of student learning within department program(s) should provide the foundation for decision making within a department, serving to identify strengths and challenges, inform requests for additional resources (such as FTE positions; classroom, lab space, and other facilities; library material, or computing equipment), and guide planning efforts. Consequently, the process of department review will build upon the on-going program assessment process.

Department review will be an integral part of faculty governance through the Department Review Subcommittee (DRS), a permanent subcommittee of the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) responsible for conducting all local department\* reviews. The purposes of department reviews are: 1) to provide each department a formal mechanism to evaluate and communicate to appropriate decision makers the department's strengths, challenges, and needs; 2) to garner collegial support and perspective for meeting the department's needs; and 3) to evoke a commitment from administration concerning continuation of the department's program(s) and/or intent to address the identified needs. The goal will be to review the programs within each department every ten years according to the "Reporting Cycle for Assessment and Department Review" drafted by the associate vice chancellor for teaching, learning, and academic programs and approved by the AAC.

\* Here, "department" is defined to include departments, divisions, and schools depending on the college involved, or in some cases, interdisciplinary programs. In the case of the College of Natural Resources, "department" refers to the entire college excluding the Department of Paper Science and Engineering.

#### **THE DEPARTMENT REVIEW PROCESS**

Department review is intended to be a collegial and formative process that will take place in the following steps:

1. The faculty and staff of the department under review engage in critical analysis of the department's activities. This "self-study" is an evaluation of the department's activities, strengths, challenges and needs. The department communicates its findings in a written Self-Study Report, using the format described below. The department must send copies of the Self-Study Report as an electronic file to its dean, the provost, the chair of the DRS, and the chair of the Assessment Subcommittee.
2. The department prepares a list of five candidates from other institutions who have credentials sufficient for a tenured appointment in the department to review the Self-Study Report and conduct a site visit to evaluate the department. The dean, in consultation with the provost, will select at least two of these five candidates to comprise the Site Visit Team. One of the Site Visit Team members

must be from a UW System institution and one must be from outside of the UW System. The dean will formally invite the team to campus, arrange travel, and facilitate an appropriate honorarium. Travel costs and honoraria will be paid by the provost's office.

3. The department sends the Self-Study Report to the approved Site Visit Team members and, in consultation with the dean, will arrange a schedule for a one- or two-day site visit. The Site Visit Team will be given at least the following instructions:
  - a) They are to review the Self-Study Report document carefully before the site visit. They may use any other sources of information they deem appropriate and collegial in their review of the department; their final report must list all sources used in the review, including names of individuals with whom the team has materially conferred.
  - b) Their goal is to help the department improve its programs and its academic stature. They are specifically to evaluate the department's efficiencies in discharging its stated mission, the currency of the curricula for departmental programs, and the appropriateness of the scholarship and service of the personnel.
  - c) While on campus, they will meet with appropriate administrators, as requested by the dean. They must submit a single written report to the dean that evaluates the department's strengths and weaknesses and its ability to meet its mission. The report should make specific recommendations to campus decision makers concerning ongoing support to the department.
  - d) The Site Visit Team should orally report their preliminary findings to the department before leaving campus. The written report is to be submitted within two weeks of concluding the site visit.
4. Upon receipt of the report, the dean will immediately forward copies to the department and the DRS. The department will write a response to the Site Visit Team's report. The departmental response may include corrections of fact, rebuttals to conclusions, or simple concurrence and elaborations. The dean will also comment on the department's Self-Study Report and the Site Visit Team report. Both the departmental response and the dean's comments must be submitted to the DRS within two weeks of receipt of the Site Visit Team report.
5. The DRS will review the Department Self-Study Report, the report of the Site Visit Team, the department response, and the dean's comments and write an evaluation that includes its recommendations to the department and the administration. The evaluation should also address the quality of the faculty, the curriculum, students, library and other educational resources and facilities, and the academic reputation of the program among its peers. The committee will compile this material together into a single Summary Report to be submitted to the department, the dean, and the provost.
6. A meeting of the provost, the dean, department chair, and chair of the DRS will be the final formal discussion of the DRS Summary Report. The provost will then provide a written comment on the department review, to be appended to the DRS Summary Report. The dean will have the option of appending a second response to the Summary Report as well.
7. The DRS will then forward the final Summary Report to the Academic Affairs Committee (AAC). The AAC will verify that all procedures of this section have been properly followed and the committee minutes will specifically note any delinquencies or irregularities in the review. Following acceptance by the Faculty Senate of the AAC minutes, the provost will write a second response to

the department review, which will include a final decision regarding the continued support of the department and each degree program offered under the department's auspices. This will conclude the review of the department.

## **USES OF DEPARTMENT REVIEW**

Department review is intended to provide the primary source of information for administrative decisions regarding the department. All decisions related to structure, budget, and personnel must specifically reference the most recent report. In only rare cases is a decision sufficiently exigent to warrant proceeding without a current department review. A department review is current if the review was completed within the preceding ten years. The reports are intended to be campus resources and will be available to anyone who requests them. The DRS is the custodian of the reports and the reports will be maintained in the Faculty Senate files.

## **RESPONSES TO DELINQUENT REVIEWS**

The department review reports are important planning documents that inform decisions throughout the campus. It is therefore important that the reviews and reporting be completed in a timely fashion. When a department fails to complete its self-study according to the "Reporting Cycle for Assessment and Department Review," it makes such decision making difficult. Therefore, the provost will hold all staffing and budgeting decisions for the delinquent department in abeyance. Extenuating circumstances can relax this policy, at the discretion of the provost, if they are communicated by the dean to the provost and DRS.

## **CONTENT OF THE DEPARTMENT REVIEW SELF-STUDY**

Departments that undergo professional accreditation may use their most recent accreditation self-studies with the agency reports as the basis for their Self-Study Reports. The department must augment the accreditation report to include the content of this section.

The self-study report for the department under review will primarily consist of: 1) a narrative; 2) program-specific information; 3) data tables provided by the UWSP Office of Policy Analysis and Planning; 4) an evaluation of academic advising within the department; and 5) previous assessment reports from the ten-year period under review. This content will be organized in the following manner:

1. **The Narrative.** In this section, typically **10-12 pages double-spaced**, the department under review presents information addressing the following areas. As appropriate, sections 2 through 5 may also be referenced in this section.
  - The mission and values statement(s) of the department, if such statements have been formally adopted by the department
  - An analysis of how the department advances the mission and values of the college and the university
  - Review of successes in accomplishing goals identified during the previous department review

- Discussion of assessment results (from section 5 below) and their implications for the department, including a self-evaluation of strengths and challenges
- A discussion of the academic reputation of the department among its peers
- A brief statement about the strengths of the faculty in the department
- A brief statement about the success of the students after graduation
- An analysis of trends as they pertain to the academic program(s) over the 10-year period
- Goals and plans for the next 10 years
- Evidence of faculty and staff participation in the department review process, including departmental minutes related to the formal acceptance of the Self-Study Report

## **2. Department-Specific Information**

- A list or table of personnel in the department during the review period that provides the following information:
  - Classified staff: title and dates of hire and departure, as appropriate
  - Faculty and academic staff: title with rank; dates of hire and departure, as appropriate; all promotions, tenure, or indefinite appointments; area(s) of teaching responsibility, scholarship, and service (as appropriate)
- A list or table of student research, creative projects, or other student accomplishments, including a descriptive title, dates, and the faculty or staff member who supervised each project
- A statement addressing the adequacy of physical facilities: classroom or lab space, equipment, library resources, etc.
- Discussions and/or lists of contributions to:
  - The General Education Program
  - Graduate education, if applicable
  - Diversity education, including course offerings, curricular requirements, and/or recruiting efforts and accomplishments
- Other significant information about the department

## **3. Evaluation of Academic Advising**

- An explanation of the structure and process of advising within the department.
- Assessment results that give evidence of the effectiveness of advising.
- Suggested improvements to advising that stem from assessment results.

## **4. The Department Planning Profile**

- Provided to departments by the UWSP Office of Policy Analysis and Planning.
- Includes data on enrollment, credit production, resources, degrees granted, and other variables as approved by the Department Review Subcommittee in consultation with the Office of Policy Analysis and Planning.

## **5. Assessment Reports from the 10-Year Period Under Review**