

## **Student Affairs Unit Comprehensive Program Review**

### ***Definition***

Program review is a collaborative process designed to provide an in-depth, comprehensive study of departments and programs at Minnesota State University. This process involves administrators, staff, students, faculty and external consultants in:

1. Gathering information about a department/program
2. Reviewing and analyzing that information
3. Making judgments about overall department/program quality
4. Making recommendations for department/program improvement
5. Monitoring department/program accountability for improvement
6. Supporting the department/program in implementing recommendations.

### ***Purpose***

Program review serves the primary purpose of providing an opportunity for focused reflections, studying and gathering of information which supports on-going department development and improvement. It also provides a consistent means of evaluating departments/programs and how well they are achieving goals of effectiveness and fulfilling University mission and goals. Such mission-aligned review also serves external purposes of satisfying Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Board, Higher Learning Commission and national associations' performance standards and educational policies.

### ***Review Cycle***

For departments/programs not accredited by external accrediting agencies, the University has established a cycle of program review. For externally accredited departments/programs on a five-year accreditation cycle or less, the accreditation self-study and the external consultant's report will satisfy program review requirements.

### ***Four-Step Program Review Process***

**Self-Study** – the department prepares a self-study using:

- The Council for the Advancement of Standards guidelines, standards, and self-assessment guide;
- Standards and/or review process from a professional organization; or
- The self-directed process.

**Campus Review** – the dean commissions a campus review team to review the self-study and make recommendations.

**External Review** – the dean commissions an external consultant(s) to review the self-study and recommendations of the campus review team, complete an on-campus visit, and make recommendations.

**Action and Assessment Plan** – the department develops and implements an action plan based upon the self-study and recommendations from the campus review team and external consultant(s). In addition, the department submits a revised/new five-year assessment plan.

### *The Self-Study*

Each department will establish a program review committee comprised of administrators, staff, students and faculty as appropriate. This committee will lead the department in the self-study option selected.

- The self-study should be initiated twelve to nine months prior to the external review site visit.
- Each program/service offered by the department should be addressed within the self-study.
- The completed self-study document will be forwarded to the dean at least one month prior to the initiation of the campus review process (five months prior to the external site visit). The dean will review the document with the department director to assure its readiness for campus and external review.

At least one month before the external review site visit, the dean will forward the self-study document and campus review document to the external reviewers. An attached cover letter may identify specific areas for reviewers' focus.

### *Option 1 - Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) process*

Using CAS guidelines, standards, and a self-assessment guide, the department prepares a self-study that includes the following topics:

Mission

Program

Leadership

Organization and Management

Human Resources

Financial Resources

Facilities, Technology, and Equipment

Legal Responsibilities

Equal and Access

Campus and External Relations

Diversity

Ethics

Assessment and Evaluation

### *Option 2 - Professional organization standards or review process*

Using the standards and/or review process from a professional organization, the department prepares a self-study.

### ***Option 3 - Self-directed process***

The department prepares a self-study that includes the following minimal topics:

#### Departmental History and Purpose

- History
- Mission statement
- Central functions performed for the university
- Learning outcomes and/or service objectives
- Annual goals

#### Organization

- Leadership
- Staff and responsibilities
- Organizational chart
- Training
- Decision-making processes, departmental teams
- Campus relations

#### Programs and Services

#### Diversity, Equity and Access

#### Ethical and/or Legal Issues

#### Evaluation and Assessment

- Profile and tracking of students or clients
- Assessment plan, data, and results

#### Resources

- Budget
- Facilities
- Equipment and technology

#### Future Plans and Recommendations

### ***Campus Review***

Seven months prior to the anticipated external review site visit, the department director will visit with the dean to recommend and discuss a list of potential campus review team members. No less than five months prior to the external review, the dean will appoint the campus review team.

The campus review team will be expected to examine critically the department's self-study report; to gather any additional evaluative information; and to prepare a brief written report assessing the department for strengths, limitations, and opportunities for improvements. The campus review team will submit to the dean a written report at least six weeks prior to the scheduled external review site visit.

### ***External Review***

Seven months prior to the anticipated external review site visit, the department director will visit with the dean to recommend and discuss a list of at least five potential reviewers. No less than

six months prior to the external review, the reviewers will be selected and commissioned by the dean and invited to participate in the program review.

The external reviewers will be expected to examine critically the department's self-study report and the campus review report prior to conducting their formal on-site visit; to utilize the on-site visit to gather additional evaluative information; and to prepare a written report assessing the department for strengths, limitations, and opportunities for improvements.

During the external review site visit, the reviewers will meet with department/program staff, the dean, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs when possible, and key constituents such as other administrators, staff, students, faculty and professional community representatives (if appropriate). Within one month following the external review site visit, the reviewers will submit to the dean a written report assessing perceived department/program strengths, limitations and recommendations for making improvements.

Two to three external reviewers are recommended for the external review site visit. Funding to support the external review process will come from the department engaging in the program review. If adequate funds can not be provided by the department a request for supplemental funds should be made to the dean at least seven months prior to the external review site visit.

### ***Action and Assessment Plan***

Within one month following receipt of the external reviewers' written report the department will provide a response to the campus review and external reviewer reports and prepare a set of recommendations for department improvement. The department director will then meet with the dean and appropriate supervisor(s) to examine the findings of the program review and discuss the recommendations. The department (with appropriate supervisors) will together plan implementation strategies and develop an action plan. In addition, the department will establish/revise and submit a five-year assessment plan.

### ***Documentation of Program Review***

At the conclusion of the comprehensive program review process the dean will submit two copies (one to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and one to the Office of Institutional Planning, Research and Assessment) of the department self-study, campus review team report, external review report, department action plan, department five-year assessment plan and dean's letter of support.