

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW  
UNDERGRADUATE  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

February 20, 2002

**NEW MEXICO HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY**

Approved by the Academic Affairs Committee February 20, 2002

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### Acknowledgements:

The following policies and procedures manual is based on material taken from the Arizona State University Policies and Procedures Manual for Academic Review and from the Policy Statement on Academic Review of Graduate Programs as issued by the Council of Graduate Schools.

## Introduction

Regular program review provides each academic program with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. The primary purpose of program review is the improvement of each program by evaluating the following areas:

- the mission of the program and how it relates to the mission of the institution
- the curriculum of the program and how it relates to the program and institution mission
- the contribution of faculty and staff to the mission of the program and the institution
- the assessment of student learning outcomes
- physical facilities
- the comparison of the program to other programs at peer institutions

Academic program review consists of three primary activities: the self-study, the site visit, and the follow-up process. The self-study should be a broad-based examination of the program's strengths and weaknesses, its goals, its plans for improvement, and its strategy for assessment. The plan of action to address the results of the external evaluation constitute the follow-up plan.

**The Assessment of Learning Outcomes.** Outcomes assessment is conducted within the context of the program's teaching, research/creative, and service activities, and is a continuous process. The results of the initial assessment will be applied to future curricular goals and program planning.

## General Procedures

If the program to be reviewed is accredited, the review is usually done as part of the accreditation process. Program review will be performed every 3-5 years.

1. Programs under review, review their programs using the Undergraduate Program Review manual
2. The Dean of the program area given approval to the program review.
3. An Academic Affairs subcommittee is assigned to analyze the program review document and make suggestions to the program regarding revision.

- a. This subcommittee is made up of 3 members of the current Academic Affairs committee: 1 member each from the Schools of Business, Social Work, and Education, and 2 members from the College of Arts and Sciences.
4. The program and Dean meet to address the comments from the subcommittee of Academic Affairs and revise the program review document.
5. The Dean, the program representative and the Academic Affairs subcommittee meet to discuss the revised document.
6. The Academic Affairs subcommittee sends a recommendation to the NMHU Chief Academic Officer regarding the outcome of the program review.

## Reviews of Accredited Programs

The guidelines from the accrediting association usually replace "Section III "Description of the Academic Program" of the outline of the self-study. However, Parts I, II, IV, V, and VI should be included in the self-study report even if they are not required for accreditation. Program reviews are perhaps less quantitative and more reflective than accreditation reviews.

## The Self-Study Report

### Introduction

The self-study is a comprehensive written report that is prepared by an academic program scheduled for a program or an accreditation review. The self-study is an overview of the current status of the academic program based on its programs, activities, and achievements since its last program review. Strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction; student quality; learning outcomes; faculty contributions in teaching, research/creative activities, and service; resource availability and needs; and special features or services provided by the unit. The self-study is also the means by which the academic program maintains an ongoing plan for the future. The self-study should include mechanisms for solving problems, building on existing strengths, and taking advantage of future opportunities.

The department chair or program coordinator of the academic program conducting the self-study initiates the process by submitting a list of the faculty members who will be responsible for gathering the appropriate information, analyzing the data, and preparing the text of the self-study report. The Office of Academic Affairs provides the self-study faculty members with information obtained from the university data bases for the following items:

- data on undergraduate student admissions (number of applicants, number accepted, number enrolled, test scores of accepted versus denied students).
- addresses of undergraduate students enrolled in the program

- budget and enrollment data from the academic program

## **Guidelines for Preparing an Effective Self-Study**

The self-study document incorporates the above-listed items as well as other information that the contributing faculty members think is relevant. Although the allocation of resources is an important consideration, the primary purpose of the self-study is not a budget request. The report is more likely to be viewed as useful if it reflects original and creative thinking about the future of the discipline. The resource allocations are most usefully discussed in developing future budget scenarios. As an example, what could the program accomplish if:

- there was a 3-5% increase in support,
- support remained the same,
- there was a 3-5% decrease in support,
- there was a significant increase in support?

Program reviews have the following characteristics:

- They occur on a five-year cycle (unless accreditation reviews intervene).
- They are evaluative, not just descriptive. They are more than just data collection and meeting minimum criteria; program reviews require academic judgments about the program, students, curriculum, resources, and future directions.
- They are forward looking. While assessment of current status is important, improvements are of greatest concern.
- Units are evaluated on academic criteria - strengths and weaknesses - rather than on financial and political criteria.
- They result in a public and objective process.
- They are independent of any other type of review (although they may precede an accreditation review).
- They result in action.

Following is a list of questions for the self-study committee to consider for program reviews:

- Is the academic program advancing the state of the discipline or profession?
- Is the teaching or training of students useful/effective?
- Where applicable, is the program responsive to local and national demands for personnel?
- Does the program meet the institution's goals?
- Does the program respond to the profession's needs?
- How is the program assessed by the experts in the field; by people in the community; and by students?
- Does the program reflect the national norms in the discipline?

Additional suggestions from Arizona State University *Academic Program Reviews 1997-1998*

- **Documentation.** The report should be data-based. Data should be interpreted and evaluated, not just included in the document.
- **Tone.** The report should be constructive.
- **Objectiveness.** The report should feature an honest examination of the program's status and opportunities.
- **Perspective.** Program needs should be addressed with appropriate attention to priorities and future plans.
- **Accuracy.** Before submission the report should be checked for factual errors by someone other than the author of the document.
- **Utility.** Program reviews are time-consuming exercises; therefore every effort should be made to ensure that the full benefit of the process will be derived from the effort.

### **Suggested Outline for Program Review Self-Study**

- I. Brief History of the Academic Program Including the Current Mission Statement**

Include previous administrative affiliations, dates new degree programs were established, significant additions to the faculty, and major changes in the orientation or thrust of the graduate program.
- II. Findings and Recommendations Made during the Previous Review**

Specify the date and type of previous review. Briefly outline the major findings and recommendations of the previous review and the unit's responses to them. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the unit? Did the faculty and administration agree with the recommendations? What actions were taken as a result of the recommendations?
- III. Description of the Academic Unit**
  - A. Programs Offered by the Academic Unit**

Name and briefly describe each academic degree program included in the review. Verify against current catalog copy. Include concentrations and areas of specialization offered under the major and the purpose and scope of each program.
  - B. Resources**
    1. Present Personnel
      - a. Tenure-track faculty  
List by rank, including date of hire, tenure status, highest degree earned, graduating institution, and areas of expertise or research interest.

- b. Academic professionals  
Describe how the academic professionals contribute to the unit's mission.
  - c. Nontenure-track full-time faculty (lecturers, instructors)  
Describe the unit's use of visiting faculty and full-time, nontenure-track faculty in the instructional and research programs.
  - d. Part-time faculty  
Describe the unit's faculty associates, part-time faculty, and graduate students in instructional and research programs.
  - e. Staff  
List and describe staff support positions, including administrative or research assistance, secretarial, technical, and student advising.
  - f. Students  
Describe your current students using data such as SAT, GPAs, and retention rates. If available, data from previous years should be included. Give the number of minority versus non-minority students.
2. Program Description
- a. Enrollment in program courses (past four semesters)
  - b. Student credit hours generated (for program courses for the past four semesters)
  - c. Number, gender, and ethnicity (if available) of declared majors (past two fall semesters)
  - d. Number of graduates (average per year for the past 5 years)
  - e. Availability of Faculty
  - f. Cost of Program
3. Physical Plant and Equipment  
Briefly describe classroom and office space, studios, labs AV equipment, libraries, computers, etc., that contribute to the success of the unit.
4. Other resources  
Describe community resources, joint programs, affiliated centers, partnerships, cooperating institutions, etc., that contribute to the unit's programs.
5. Recruitment and retention  
Describe how students are recruited and what kinds of orientation, advising, and mentoring efforts are made to help them to remain in good academic standing.

- Do students have access to computers and to study, office, and lounge space?
- Does the academic program help students obtain financial support such as research or teaching assistantships, tuition waivers, student travel grants, privately sponsored scholarships, or assistantships through funded research?

### **C. Instructional Programs**

#### **1. Curriculum**

Describe the unit's undergraduate degrees and how they differ. Which ones are research degrees? Which ones are professional? State the unit's philosophy of curriculum for each degree and tie it into the description of the undergraduate program in the Undergraduate Catalog. Explain how the unit's philosophy is reflected in the students' programs of study. Demonstrate how the curriculum is related to the unit's specified educational outcomes

#### **2. Effectiveness and productivity**

Use supporting data to analyze the program's success. Demonstrate the degree to which the program's specified educational outcomes are being achieved. The unit could include measures such as academic records of entering students (grade point averages, test scores, etc.), results of a survey measuring the satisfaction of graduates or present students, and comparisons to similar programs offered by peer institutions. Include information on time-to-degree and attrition. Show the number of degrees completed and show postdoctoral and career placements using data from alumni/employer surveys. What kinds of careers are graduates pursuing? Provide information on the achievements of present students and recent graduates. Discuss the success of the program in preparing students for the work place.

#### **3. Interdisciplinary Programs**

Briefly describe any interdisciplinary programs in which the unit participates. How is the interdisciplinary program integrated with the degree of programs offered by the unit? What is the extent of unit participation? How many faculty members are involved? What other resources are contributed by the unit?

### **IV. Faculty Contribution to the Unit and the University Mission**

#### **A. The unit's written statements on policies, procedures, and**

philosophy of faculty assignment and performance evaluation, including the role of teaching, research/creative activities, and service in the unit's overall mission. It is essential to emphasize that the three activities are integrated activities within the overlapping spheres of faculty responsibilities.

- B. Each faculty member should prepare a one-page personal statement describing his or her role within the unit. A five-page (maximum) activity report will be prepared by each faculty describing his or her contributions to the success of the unit during the last seven years or since the last program review. Each unit should have a consistent format for summarizing the teaching, research/creative activities, and service contributions - preferably the one used by the unit during the annual performance reviews.
- C. A departmental report from the program coordinator or departmental chair that summarizes the unit's contribution to NMHU's mission; highlights the national distinctions of the program in teaching, research/creative activities, and service; and explains the role of various faculty in accomplishing these goals. This report should emphasize faculty productivity over the previous seven years.
- D. Résumés should be included as a separate attachment. Faculty should be encouraged to alter the format of their résumés so that teaching and service contributions are documented in a manner analogous to the documentation of publications, grants, and other research activities.

## V. **Goals and Objectives**

### A. **Immediate and Long-Range Problems to Overcome**

### B. **Opportunities for Development**

### C. **New Degree Programs**

Describe undergraduate programs that the unit plans to offer in the future. Indicate whether the program is still in the "idea" stage or whether planning authority has been granted. When would the unit like to initiate the program? Is the program a research-oriented or professional one? How does it complement existing programs? Are necessary resources currently in place or will additional faculty and/or facilities be needed?

### D. **Future Personnel Needs**

Briefly describe the unit's projected needs or desires in each of the above categories. In five years, what would be the ideal mix of students? What would be an ideal number of faculty and staff? Information from a unit growth and development plan or a mission statement could be adapted for this section.

### E. **Long-Range Goals and Strategic Plan for the Unit**

### F. **Specific Activities Leading to Attainment of Goals**

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(approved 2/6/02)

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