

Goucher College

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW GUIDELINES

(Adapted from the guidelines of Franklin College, George Washington University,
Nazareth College, and Washington College)

Fall 2007

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I. ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW CYCLE

OVERVIEW

These *Guidelines* have been developed in order to establish a consistent framework for regular Academic Program Reviews. Program review should not be an empty exercise carried out simply to satisfy some bureaucratic imperative. Rather it should lead directly to the improvement of the curriculum and instruction at Goucher by clearly identifying the mission of each Department and Program (hereafter simply, “Department”) and by the periodic review of programs by departmental faculty and external observers.

Because the purpose is the improvement of the curriculum and instruction, it is essential that Departments, on the one hand, and the Curriculum Committee and Budget and Planning Committee, on the other, make appropriate use of the results. Program review, typically scheduled for all Departments on a five-year cycle, should be used in strategic planning and should inform the institutional budgeting process.

The purpose of the Academic Review is threefold: 1) to assess the current state of the Department; 2) to determine its short-term and long-term objectives; and 3) to set a realistic timetable and resource acquisition strategy to meet these objectives. In all cases, but particularly in the third stage, consultation and collaboration with the Provost’s Office and other relevant Committees should be a priority.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW CYCLE Department/Program Yearly Timeline

Typically, the Academic Review Cycle will proceed as follows:

February The Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs notifies Departments that it’s time to conduct its Academic Program Review (APR) and provides the Academic Review Guidelines. Institutional Research (IR) provides the Department and Associate Dean the Department’s Program and Course Goals (developed previously).

February-
March The Department reviews its Program and Course Goals and revises them as appropriate. The Associate Dean meets with Departments to discuss the APR timeline as well as alternative approaches for assessment of student learning and success in light of the Program and Course Goals. For example, the Department may identify 2-3 classes (introductory and senior level required) for learning outcomes assessment.

March-April	The Department may confer with the IR to ascertain what data can be provided to the department to assist with assessment (beyond the Standard Data Report). The Department meets with the Associate Dean to finalize its plan for assessment of student learning and success. (The plan must ultimately meet approval of the Provost.)
April-May	Institutional Research will provide a standard data report to the Department to assist in the APR.
June	Course goals and learning outcomes are matched to class learning opportunities, assessment methods, and rubrics. An Assessment Plan for each course (and/or other program elements as appropriate) will be finalized. Plans and rubrics for assessment are provided to the Provost, the Associate Dean and IR.
Late August-September	The Department conducts a Pretest (if appropriate) of courses to be assessed, using rubrics.
September	Pretest data and rubric results are provided to the Associate Dean and IR. The Department begins assessment data collection for methods other than pre and post-test.
October	The Department submits recommendations for external reviewers to the Associate Dean and the Provost's Office. The Department continues assessment data collection.
November	Dates for external reviews are scheduled.
November-December	Post-test data and rubric results for all methods are provided to the Associate Dean and IR.
January	The completed self-study (i.e., the Academic Review Portfolio) is submitted to the Provost's Office. It includes a section on assessment of student learning and success. Assessment data is provided as an appendix.
February	External reviewer visits campus.
March	External reviewers' reports are due.

- April **Departmental Response** to the external reviewers' reports is due along with the finalized Academic Review Portfolio. This should include the final draft of the Department's five-year strategic plan, complete with a timetable for achieving these departmental objectives, and a projected request for all necessary resources. All Portfolios will be kept on file in the Provost's Office for future reference and assessment.
- May Final recommendations made by the Curriculum Committee, including the Provost, and sent on to the Chair of the Faculty and the Budget and Planning Committee.
- September Results of the program review and five-year strategic plan are reported to the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee.

In the years during which a Department is not engaged in its Academic Review process, it should be actively engaged in fulfilling the objectives set for itself in its previous Academic Review.

As a way of managing this process, which will continue to evolve after the review, is completed, each Department is expected to provide an **Interim Report**. The purpose of this Interim Report, which should be integrated into the Department's annual report at the end of the second year, is to assess new critical needs that may arise after the review process is completed, to realistically reevaluate the timetable for achieving the strategic objectives of the Department, and to give Departments an opportunity to formally request additional resources to meet unanticipated or underestimated needs.

Finally, as a critical component of the Academic Program Review process, the successes and failures of a Department's previous Review Cycle will be assessed in the next cycle, thereby measuring the efficacy of the Department's strategic plan.

II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM SELF-STUDY

OVERVIEW

The self-study is a key element of the Academic Program Review Process. A thorough and thoughtful self-study will candidly assess a program's past and present efforts and will outline a realistic course for the program's future. The self-study provides the basis for the entire review process. Therefore, it is of particular importance that the self-study be comprehensive and that it pays special attention to issues and measures of quality.

The self-study should not be the work of the Department Chair alone; it should be the result of the combined efforts of all Department members. It should reflect the results of regular assessment of students and graduates and any curricular or instructional changes resulting from these assessments. In the course of the review process Departments and Programs (hereafter, simply "Departments") will:

1. Conduct a critical evaluation of current activities.
2. Identify specific strengths and weaknesses.
3. Set goals by engaging in a strategic planning process.
4. Determine the actions, time and resources necessary to achieve those goals.
5. Assess the success of the strategic plan [to be conducted at the end of the current five-year cycle, and to be included as a component of the next academic review].

ACADEMIC REVIEW PORTFOLIO

All of the following material is to be collected and included in an *Academic Review Portfolio* binder provided by the College to each Department undergoing its internal review process. These *Portfolios* will be kept on file in the Provost's Office for future reference and assessment.

Executive Summary

The executive summary should summarize issues of greatest concern to the Department and the specific actions by which these issues can be effectively addressed. The emphasis should be on the critical evaluation of the Department and the Department's strategic plan.

Mission Statement

The Department should design its Mission Statement with the College's Mission Statement in mind, and indicate how the Department's mission contributes to that of the College as a whole.

The self-study process provides Departments an opportunity to reconsider (or develop, if necessary) its mission statement.

To be included as Appendix A.

Departmental Programs and Requirements

A list of *all* programs offered by the Department (e.g., undergraduate majors, minors, or concentrations, etc.).

A list of all courses (indicating those courses that meet requirements for the core and those that are electives).

A list of all additional requirements for the successful completion of these programs (e.g., course credits needed at the different levels; required courses in other departments, if any; computer proficiency and writing proficiency in the major; thesis, etc.).

Requirements for achieving honors in the major.

Curriculum Development

Departments should provide the following information concerning their curriculum:

1. Courses added in the last five years.
2. Courses deleted in the last five years.
3. How the course additions/deletions affect the above programs in terms of breadth and depth of coverage.
4. How the department has progressed in internationalizing its curriculum and in developing study abroad and international internship opportunities.
5. How the department supports college initiatives in environmental study/ecological sustainability, multiculturalism, and service-learning.
6. How the department contributes to programs outside of the major.
7. Other significant curricular changes made in the last five years.

Quality of Instruction

Procedures the Department uses to evaluate the quality of its instructional activities in the major (e.g., course evaluations, peer observation, sharing syllabi, etc.) and relevant details such as frequency.

Assessment of Student Learning and Success

This section should include the following:

1. Overall Program and Course Goals (noting any recent revisions)
2. For the 2-3 courses selected by the Department, also include the Learning Outcomes, Assessment Methods, and Assessment Scoring Tools (or Rubrics) used.
3. Other measures or indicators selected by the Department to assess learning and success.
4. Findings from data gathered. (Actual data should be attached as an appendix.)

5. Changes recommended based on the findings.
6. Plans for assessment in future years.
7. Overall conclusions for this section.

Key words and Terminology for this section:

Course Goals: May be selected from the program description in the academic catalog, from Goucher's liberal education goals, from a list of Middle States competencies (e.g., communication, critical thinking, information literacy, scientific or quantitative reasoning). Specific course goals may also be created.

Learning Outcomes: Specific, measurable learning outcomes that tie into course goals. What do you want your students to learn or be able to do upon completion of this course? Different course goals should correspond to different sets of learning outcomes.

Assessment Methods: The methods used to evaluate student learning. These can be direct (e.g., term paper, capstone project, reflective writing, portfolio, exam questions, exhibits) or indirect methods (e.g., employer or alumni surveys or student perception surveys).

Scoring Tool: The rating scale or rubric to be used for each of the learning outcomes.

Library and Instructional Technology

Provide the following information:

1. Assessment of the Library's holdings and services.
2. Assessment of computing support with respect to departmental needs.
3. Ways technology has been used to enhance teaching in the Department in the last five years.
4. Additional ways technology might be used to enhance teaching.

Scholarly Activity

Include the following information:

1. List separately for each full-time and half-time faculty member the refereed publications, books published, presentations at professional conferences, invited lectures, and other important publications or creative works for the past five years.
2. Up-to-date *curriculum vitae* of full-time and half-time faculty. *To be included as Appendix B.*

Describe the organization of the Department's scholarly activities, including:

1. Collaborations among faculty within the Department.
2. Collaborations with faculty in other Goucher College Departments.
3. Collaborations with individuals outside Goucher College.
4. Formal affiliations with agencies (scholarly, research, creative, governmental, etc.) outside Goucher College.

Provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Department in promoting scholarly and/or creative activity:

1. Are there changes in the Department that might enhance its effectiveness?
2. If so, describe them and comment on their potential for implementation.

External Funding

For all requests for external funding submitted during the past five years, provide the project title, the name(s) of the full-time and half-time faculty involved, the agency (e.g., NSF, NIH, foundation) to whom the request was submitted, the amount requested, and action on the request.

An assessment of the degree to which the projects were successful, including documentation of results.

Professional Activities

Summary of the professional activities (e.g., editorships, offices in professional organizations) of the full-time and half-time faculty during the past five years.

College and Departmental Service

Summary of service to the College (e.g., Committees, etc.) by full-time and half-time faculty during the past five years. List each faculty member's departmental administrative assignments (e.g., academic advising and committee service) during the past five years.

Five-Year Enrollment Data

Provide the requested information for each of the **past five years**. Support for obtaining data is available from the Office of Institutional Research and the Provost's Office.

1. Enrollment headcount of majors.
2. Enrollment headcount of minors.
3. Enrollment headcount by class (majors).
4. Enrollment registration for the Department by course and total by semester.
5. Degrees granted each year.

Personnel

Full-Time and Half-Time Faculty

List ALL full-time and half-time faculties by rank and tenure status, including those on contract.

Changes in the faculty: Note all changes (e.g., departures, replacements, and additions) in the faculty in the past five years.

How have these changes affected the Department's programs?

Teaching: For each faculty member, list the courses taught and their enrollments for the past five years.

Part-Time Faculty

For all courses, discussion sections, and laboratories taught by part-time faculty during the past five years, provide the justification for offering each course and the reason(s) it was taught by part-time faculty, rather than a member of the full-time and half-time faculty.

Support Staff

Provide the number and levels (e.g., laboratory supervisor, secretary, etc.) of the staff assigned to the Department.

Facilities

Space

Describe the space assigned to the Department; include the numbers of offices and to whom they are assigned (e.g., full-time faculty, half-time faculty, part-time faculty, staff); the types (e.g., laboratories, seminar rooms, studios); and numbers of dedicated instructional spaces, as well as any other spaces of which the Department has primary use.

Computer Resources

Describe any computer resources of which the Department has primary use other than faculty computers.

Equipment

Describe equipment maintained by the Department for instructional and/or research purposes, and provide approximate date of purchase.

Alumnae/i Survey Data

Survey data from alumnae/i should be included in the program review. Alumnae/i can comment on the relative adequacy of their preparation, especially as they compare themselves to professional peers. With the benefit of hindsight they can also comment on the strengths and weaknesses of their undergraduate major. Sample questionnaires are available from the Provost's Office.

Student Survey Data

Survey data from students should be included in the program review. Sample questionnaires are available from the Provost's Office.

Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges

This section should include a critical evaluation of all of the Department's programs listed above as well as the Department's current five-year strategic plan.

Discuss:

- a. Specific strengths.
- b. Areas for improvement.
- c. Immediate and future opportunities and challenges.

The evaluation should consider any trends in the above data and factors that may account for them. Departmental activities and practices that build community and connect learning to living among the students and the faculty of the Department should be identified. Barriers to building an effective community of learners should also be identified.

Appendix A: College Mission Statement

Appendix B: *Curriculum Vitae* of Faculty

Appendix C: Department Questionnaires for Alumnae/i and Students

Appendix D: Assessment Data

III. ACADEMIC PROGRAM EXTERNAL REVIEW

OVERVIEW

External reviews provide the College with an opportunity to gain feedback from knowledgeable professionals who have some emotional and political distance from the Departments and Programs (hereafter simply, “Departments”) under review.

While it is important that external reviewers have minimal personal investment in arriving at a particular conclusion as a result of the program review, those from other schools should ideally be drawn from institutions similar to our own and that have compatible missions. We would expect that reviewers are able to apply standards of evaluation consistent with the goals, expectations, and educational context of institutions like our own. The reviewers should also be capable of applying discipline-specific standards as they exist on a national level in a manner that is appropriate to a small, private liberal arts college.

PROCEDURES FOR EXTERNAL REVIEW

External reviewers will be chosen by the Provost in consultation with the Department Chair, typically from among a list of nominees provided by the Department that is undergoing review. In nominating persons to perform this function, Departments should specify in writing the persons' qualifications and provide clear reasons why they are appropriate choices. Ordinarily, two external reviewers will participate in this exercise.

Prior to the campus visit, each Department under review must provide the external reviewers with relevant information concerning the current state of affairs in the Department. Pre-visit information will normally include current or recent course syllabi, representative examples of course materials (exams, assignments, and other pedagogical artifacts), the Department's student learning plan and self-study, the current course catalogue, and any other materials that will provide the reviewers with the necessary stock of information for the campus visit.

The Department must include time during the campus visit for:

1. Individual and/or group meetings with all Department faculties (including part-time faculty if possible).
2. Meetings with faculty from closely related Departments.
3. Meetings with students.
4. The opportunity to review departmental resources such as offices, library holdings, information technology, classrooms, labs, etc.
5. The opportunity to examine any additional documents that may not have been included in the pre-visit information packet, but are deemed relevant by the reviewers and/or the Department.

6. Visitations to classes, representative of both lower and upper division course offerings.

The identification of program strengths and weaknesses and its contributions to the college as a whole will be the focus of each reviewer's activities. Reviewers will be directed to evaluate the overall quality of the educational experience provided to students by the Department under review. The team members should consult each other thoroughly on their views of the department and write one common report. Reviewers should submit their first drafts directly to the department to correct errors of fact. This step is not an occasion for debate with the reviewers on their analyses and interpretations. The final written reports should be sent to the Office of the Provost, which will acknowledge receipt and promptly distribute the entire report to the Department Chair for distribution to all full-time and half-time faculties in the department.

The external reviewers should address the following issues:

- I. How does the Department contribute to the liberal arts mission and goals of the College?
 - a. To what extent is the Department fostering leadership and intellectual development through its curricular offerings and related programming?
 - b. How effectively are the faculty integrating teaching, scholarly activity, and service?
 - c. Does the Department engage in interdisciplinary activities and contribute to synergy throughout the College as a whole?
- II. How well is the Department fulfilling its teaching responsibilities?
 - a. Is the curriculum sound and rigorous?
 - b. How sufficient are the number of courses and variety of courses offered?
 - i. Is there an appropriate balance between breadth and specialization?
 - ii. Do course offerings meet student needs?
 - c. Are pedagogical approaches appropriate to the subject matter in question?
 - d. How do measures of student learning outcomes reflect the level of teaching effectiveness in courses staffed by the Department?
- III. Are there adequate resources available to the Department and are the available resources used effectively?
 - a. Is the Department properly staffed to accomplish its teaching responsibilities and goals?
 - b. Are classrooms and/or labs adequately structured and equipped?
 - c. Are library collections and services appropriate to support the Department's program?
 - d. Are resources involving instructional technology sufficient to support the Department's program?
- IV. What issues should be addressed by the Department as a result of this program review?

- a. What issues are in need of immediate intervention? What viable options should the Department consider?
 - b. What issues could be more appropriately addressed through long-term strategies of change? What viable strategies should the Department consider?
- V. Are there needs or opportunities to improve the program that are not covered by the questions above?

FOLLOW-UP

The Provost, the Department Chair, and the Chair of the Curriculum Committee should meet to discuss the report. The Department will review the findings and recommendations of the report and state what will be done in response to them.

In addition, the Department in consultation with the Provost should prepare a new five-year strategic plan, which focuses on the Department's plans for the next five years to develop its strengths, meet challenges and opportunities, and address the areas identified for improvement. It should include a **prioritized** list of the areas to be addressed.

For each of these areas, the following should be noted:

1. Specific goals and objectives.
2. Actions to be taken in order to achieve the stated goals.
3. A schedule for implementation of the actions, including an itemized list of necessary resources.
4. Measures of effectiveness for each of the actions.

The response and strategic plan, along with the self-study and external review reports, will then be discussed by the Curriculum Committee, which may elect to meet with Department members at this time. The committee will respond to the Department with its final comments and recommendations within forty-five days. This response, a summary of which will be shared with the Chair of the Faculty and the Budget and Planning Committee, ends the program review process. The Provost will inform the President of the outcome of the review, including highlights of the Department's new five-year strategic plan and resources required by this plan. The results of the program review and the five-year plan will be reported to the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee.

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There are a number of key role players in assessment and program review. These include the Department Chair, faculty members within the Department, the Curriculum Committee, the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, the Office of Institutional Research, and the Provost.

The Department Chair, or an agreed upon designee, has the responsibility to coordinate program review activities within the Department. Department members must be active contributors. The chair or designee represents the Department in discussions with the Curriculum Committee, the Associate Dean, and the Provost.

The Curriculum Committee provides general oversight, drafts a final response to each Department's program review, and is responsible to the faculty. The Associate Dean serves as a general resource person throughout the process and provides suggestions and relevant examples for learning assessment.

The Office of Institutional Research assists departments with the design of instruments, the collection of data, and the analysis of data. IR also provides expertise in research methods to the Curriculum Committee.

The Provost selects external reviewers in consultation with the Department, is responsible for the academic program review budget, receives the reports of external reviewers, participates in the work of the Curriculum Committee, and reports on assessment and program review to the Board of Trustees Academic Affairs Committee.