

Program Review Procedures Guide

2020-2021

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM REVIEW

As an institution, Northwestern University has had a longstanding commitment to continuous improvement, and Program Review is an important mechanism towards that goal. The purpose of Program Review is to assess each unit's quality and effectiveness, to stimulate planning and improvement, and to encourage strategic development in ways that further the unit's priorities, as well as those of the schools and the University in general. Program Review provides valuable insight to University leadership on unit performance and the outcomes serve as key inputs to University-wide strategic planning and decision-making.

The reviews are an important source of external feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of units and serve as a constructive base for future improvement; they are intended to be a catalyst for the unit to chart and seek change. The reviews cumulatively provide input to University-wide priority setting and also serve as an important tool for the Deans and faculty for school-level planning. They are also a pivotal means of communication and accountability within the unit, with the Dean/line Vice President, with central administration involved in Program Review (President, Provost, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, Vice President of Administration and Planning, Vice President for Research, Dean of The Graduate School, Vice Provost for Academics, and Vice Provost for Administration), and with the Board of Trustees.

The benefits of Program Review include the following:

- **Providing units with opportunities for self-study, strategic planning, and change**
Program Review ensures that each unit systematically takes time to step back from everyday challenges to evaluate its strengths, weaknesses, and progress in order to create a strong foundation for the development of future strategic plans and priorities.
- **Facilitating continuous improvement**
The specific recommendations culminating in the Implementation Agreements help units benchmark progress in critical areas.
- **Collecting information utilized in area-wide and University-wide strategic planning and decision-making**
Program Review creates a base of knowledge and shared understanding that provides a critical backdrop to school and University decision-making processes, including the setting of priorities, hiring plans, budget setting, space allocations, fundraising priorities, and program sizing.
- **Strengthening communication and collaboration**
Program Review is designed to foster communication both within the unit as well as between the unit, Dean/line Vice President, and central administration.

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM REVIEW

- **Providing candid assessment by external experts**
Program Review provides a mechanism for rigorous evaluation and feedback by experts in the field that are valued by both the unit and the administration. (In some cases, the unit has used the panel of outside experts for continuing consultations after the review.)
- **Facilitating increased external visibility**
External reviewers often note the unanticipated strengths or comment on the deepening of their respect for the institution as a result of their visit. The Program Review process also fosters dialogue amongst exemplary peers about the most effective ways to assess the quality of a university.
- **Encouraging interdisciplinary understanding and connections**
Faculty and administrators frequently remark on the improved understanding among related units due to participation in reviews. A similar benefit is seen in faculty-administration relations as a result of faculty participants gaining a deeper understanding of the administrative operations of the University, and administrators learning more about the academic enterprise.
- **Fostering appreciation of the complexity and diversity of the University**
Whether it is the variance in governance between departments or the details of what drives excellence across varied fields, Program Review makes these differences more visible and helps the University strategically address these variations in constructive ways.
- **Ensuring transparency to the Board of Trustees**
Each year, summaries of all reviews are provided to the Board of Trustees. (A complete set of all materials is available to the Board of Trustees upon request). To monitor progress in the years following a review, an update at the one-year interval is also provided. The candor and commitment of this effort provides an important assurance to the Board that the University is evaluating itself and continually striving for improvement. The Board's support for this process is also evidenced by its own request to be reviewed at the end of each cycle.

HISTORY OF PROGRAM REVIEW

Program Review is the systematic review of all academic and administrative units at Northwestern. All academic departments, major research centers, and administrative units are reviewed once approximately every ten years through the Program Review process.

Program Review at Northwestern began in 1985 as a faculty initiative to achieve and maintain the highest standards and best practices within all academic and administrative units of the University. The central administration and General Faculty Committee (now the Faculty Senate) collaborated to create a systematic review process that has been continually adapted to the changing needs of the University.

Since it began, more than four hundred academic and administrative unit reviews have occurred, and over seven hundred faculty and administrators have participated in the process as members of the Program Review Council or internal reviewers. In addition, more than seven hundred highly regarded experts from other universities and organizations have visited Northwestern to serve as external reviewers.

The reviews have been conducted in cycles lasting seven to ten years, with the first cycle taking place from 1985-1991, the second from 1992-1999, and the third from 2000-2009. Northwestern is now in the fourth cycle of the review process (2013-2023). After the completion of each cycle, a hiatus year is taken during which the process itself is reviewed, and, per its request, the Board of Trustees is also reviewed.

First Cycle of Program Review (1985-1991)

In the first cycle, each unit prepared a comprehensive Self-Study that described its history and identified strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities in the context of the University's mission. The process included a review by an internal subcommittee, as well as by a team of visiting external experts. Based on these reviews and the resulting external reviewers' report, each subcommittee developed a report on behalf of the Program Review Council that, along with the external reviewers' report, was presented to central administration, the line administration, and the unit. Recommendations and plans for implementation were discussed with and agreed to by the Deans or Vice Presidents and department chairs or directors. Two years after the review, a follow-up report from the unit was requested to document the unit's progress in implementing the recommendations.

Second Cycle of Program Review (1992-1999)

After a review of the first cycle, procedures for the second cycle were modified to allow these reviews to build directly on the results of the first review. Units were asked to develop a list of Key Issues emanating from their previous review and from significant changes in the unit or emerging in the field since that review. An analysis of these issues then became the primary focus of the second cycle unit report. Other aspects of the process, such as the internal subcommittee review, the visit by external experts, and the follow-up administrative meetings, remained in place for the second cycle. Units were not necessarily reviewed in the same order

HISTORY OF PROGRAM REVIEW

as in the first cycle; a number of factors, such as the extent of problems identified in the first review of the unit, significant changes within the unit, schedule of accreditation visits, and the desirability of reviewing related disciplines or functional units in the same year influenced the scheduling process. Near the end of the second cycle, the follow-up process was changed from a two-year to a one-year timeframe to better gauge the unit's efforts in implementing the recommendations and to provide assistance where needed.

Third Cycle of Program Review (2000-2010)

Since the majority of the units reviewed during the third cycle were reviewed in the first and/or second cycles, the purpose of the third cycle was to ensure that the unit had established and was working toward clear strategic improvements and addressing specific issues that grew out of the prior reviews or had arisen since the unit's last review. In this way, the third cycle continued the spirit of the previous two cycles.

Fourth Cycle of Program Review (2013-2023)

The evaluation of the Program Review process following the third cycle made several specific recommendations for further refinements for the fourth cycle. While some of the recommendations confirmed existing procedures, others resulted in specific changes to the process. The major changes to the process include more systematic use of data, the elimination of the internal subcommittee report, and an increased emphasis on implementation follow-up.

Data profiles, faculty/staff surveys, and customer surveys are now standard components of the review process. The Data Profile is a compilation of key performance indicators for the unit. Faculty/staff surveys are used to solicit the perspectives of all members of the unit, and the aggregated results are included as review materials. For administrative units, customer surveys are administered to gather feedback from the unit's business partners and constituents.

In addition to expanded data usage, another major change has been streamlining the interviews and final report. Per the Third Cycle Review Committee's recommendations, the internal reviewers now conduct interviews alongside the external review team. Further, the internal reviewers provide input to the external review team in the writing of the report, rather than submitting a separate internal report. The Committee also recommended adjusting the structure of the Program Review Council to be more fluid: rather than assigning Program Review Council members to internal review teams, the internal reviewers are chosen in consultation with the Dean/line Vice President and unit head to ensure relevance to the unit undergoing review. The final major change to the Program Review process is an increased emphasis on follow-up with participation from Deans and line Vice Presidents.

PROGRAM REVIEW COUNCIL

The Program Review process is overseen by the Program Review Council, an appointed group of senior faculty and administrators. The Program Review Council reviews all reports, meets with the internal reviewers after the site visit, and develops an actionable Implementation Agreement for each unit reviewed. As the Program Review Council presides over all reviews, the Council calibrates external reviewer recommendations across reviews. The Program Review Council is representative of the various disciplinary and administrative interests within the University (though not all areas are represented every single year).

The Chair of the Program Review Council is appointed every two years from among the senior members of this group, while the Associate Vice President for Program Review serves as the Vice Chair on an ongoing basis.

At least two-thirds of the members of the Program Review Council are faculty. The members of the Program Review Council are appointed by the Office of Administration and Planning based on the recommendations of Deans and senior administrators. Members of the Program Review Council are appointed to serve staggered, three-year terms. Generally, members must have served on at least one internal review team to participate in the Program Review Council.

Deans and University leaders are invited annually to provide their nominations of candidates to serve on the Program Review Council.

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL REVIEWERS

Each visit is conducted by the review team, which consists of two or more external reviewers and two internal reviewers. The external and internal reviewers are responsible for being familiar with the review materials, and will conduct all meetings together throughout the review visit.

External Reviewers

One of the primary strengths of the Program Review process is its history of inviting expert external reviewers to review the units. The role of the external reviewer is viewed as that of a “field expert” with a wealth of knowledge about the issues particular to the discipline or administrative field. The external reviewers are asked to provide insight and feedback on issues and trends particular to the discipline/field, with a specific focus on how the unit at Northwestern can strategically improve their standing in the field. The external reviewers are also responsible for writing the final report and recommendations, which is explained in further detail in the External Reviewer Report section.

Because of their expertise in the specific discipline or field, the external reviewers are relied on by members of the unit to understand the key issues facing the unit in the context of the field. Thus, the external reviewers should take the lead regarding which issues to discuss during the meetings with unit members and stakeholders. They are also highly encouraged to consider issues raised by the internal reviewers, who may have a deeper understanding of organizational and administrative structure of Northwestern.

Internal Reviewers

As a complement to the external reviewers, the role of the internal reviewers is to serve as a resource to the external reviewers and provide a lens on the unique context of the Northwestern environment. The internal reviewers participate in the interviews to provide context on Northwestern and advisory support to the external reviewers.

The internal reviewers are nominated by the Dean/line Vice President or central administration, and are approved by the unit head. The internal reviewers cannot be members of the unit or have courtesy/joint appointments with the unit under review.

REVIEW SCHEDULE AND TIMELINE

Similar to previous cycles, the fourth cycle is scheduled to take place over ten years (2013-2023). The schedule for the complete review cycle is reviewed annually and revised during the cycle as needed (with the most current schedule available on the Program Review website). To build upon interdisciplinary connections, some units are grouped together for review in the same year; these clusters are based on functional compatibility rather than organizational lines (e.g., life sciences, cognitive sciences, business operations, etc.). For the most part, the “unit of analysis” has been maintained across the cycles (e.g., departments in larger schools, smaller schools as a whole, large research centers, individual/small groups of administrative units depending on size). While units are typically reviewed in a similar order relative to the previous cycle, there is flexibility in the order of reviews based on the current needs assessed by the University.

In terms of setting the schedule for each ten-year cycle, the Vice President for Administration and Planning requests input from the Deans and Vice Presidents about their preferred scheduling for their units. Deans and Vice Presidents should consult with their units about scheduling preferences prior to providing feedback and final recommendations. The Vice President for Administration and Planning makes the final determination on scheduling; while most preferences can be accommodated, some shifts may need to occur to balance the number of reviews each year. Where possible and appropriate, the timing of the review relative to accreditation processes will reflect the preference of the Dean. However, while some of the materials required may be similar, the purpose and goals of accreditation are substantially different from those of Program Review, and an accreditation report is not considered a substitute for Program Review.

The Program Review of a unit is conducted over the course of an academic year, beginning with unit notification and orientation the spring before the review year. During the review year, the main departmental deliverables for the review are typically worked on during the fall/winter quarter and the review visit generally takes place in the spring. (An earlier review visit may be possible depending upon reviewer availability [e.g., winter quarter]. Units are asked to notify the Associate Vice President for Program Review of this preference in advance.)

REVIEW SCHEDULE AND TIMELINE

TIME	ACTIVITY
Winter	Unit receives notification regarding its Program Review for the upcoming academic year.
Spring	Unit attends orientation meeting to learn about Program Review process and discuss pertinent deadlines.
Spring	Unit provides list of potential external reviewers.
Spring – Summer	External reviewers are finalized based on unit nominations and Dean/line Vice President and central administration input.
Summer – Fall	Data profile and unit survey are completed and used to inform the unit Self-Study and to provide background to the review team.
Fall	Unit (in coordination with Dean/Vice President) identifies Key Issues to focus on in the upcoming review.
Winter	Unit receives Key Issues feedback and writes Self-Study.
Spring	External reviewers visit campus and together with internal reviewers conduct interviews with key unit faculty/administrators.
Spring	External reviewers provide final report and recommendations within two weeks of review visit.
Late Spring	Final report is distributed to unit for fact-checking, and amended final version is then distributed to Program Review Council and central administration for review.
Late Spring	Internal reviewers present on the review visit findings to the Program Review Council, and Program Review Council and internal reviewers make recommendations for the Implementation Agreement.
Summer	Amended final report is made available to all members of unit for review, and the unit head coordinates with unit members on implementation items resulting from the report.
Summer – Fall	Implementation meetings are held between the unit head, Dean/line Vice President, and central administration to develop and finalize Implementation Agreement.
Fall	Program Review Office provides summaries of each review to the Board of Trustees.
<i>One Year Follow-Up</i>	
Summer	Unit provides written report of progress-to-date to Program Review Office, who shares update with central administration and the Board of Trustees.
Fall	Implementation Agreements are updated (in consultation with Dean/Vice President) based on progress-to-date and new developments.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Program Review process includes the following components, which are discussed in more detail below:

- I. Unit Notification and Orientation
- II. External Reviewer Identification
- III. Data Elements
 - A. Data Profile
 - B. Faculty Survey Results (academic unit review) or Staff and Customer Feedback Survey Results (administrative unit review)
- IV. Identification of Key Issues
- V. Self-Study
- VI. Review Visit
- VII. External Reviewer Report
- VIII. Distribution of Final Report to the Unit
- IX. Program Review Council Discussion
- X. Implementation Agreement
- XI. Report to the Board
- XII. One Year Follow-Up

I. Unit Notification and Orientation

Beginning in the winter quarter, the Program Review Office plans the schedule of reviews for the upcoming year. Deans and Vice Presidents are asked to reconfirm with their units that the timing of the review is not problematic, and the schedule is adjusted to accommodate unit needs, as appropriate. Once the list of units to be reviewed has been confirmed, the units are formally notified by the Program Review Office during winter or early spring quarter. The background materials for orientation include information on the unit's previous review and lists the initial unit deliverables as well as the dates by which these materials are due. The Program Review Office holds an orientation session with each unit head to discuss the review process, timing, and deadlines and to answer any questions. Unit heads may identify other individuals from the unit to join this discussion.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

II. External Reviewer Identification

At least two outside experts are asked to review the unit based upon the review materials prepared by the unit, as well as interviews they conduct during the site visit. The expertise and objectivity brought by these external reviewers is often cited by units under review as a particular strength of the Program Review process.

The unit is responsible for nominating eight to ten individuals to serve as external reviewers. These individuals should be eminent leaders in their field and come from highly-reputable peer departments and institutions. Units are asked to avoid any conflict of interest in their nominations and clarify anything that might have the appearance of a conflict of interest. Units may also delineate candidates by their areas of expertise and ask that the team be comprised of reviewers from each group to ensure coverage of sub-fields within the unit, typically providing three to four nominations for each area. Units may request that reviewer from a previous cycle serve again, if appropriate.

The list of potential external reviewers is then reviewed by the Dean/line Vice President and central administration to ensure that there is consensus on the appropriateness of these individuals to serve as reviewers. The final selection of reviewers is the responsibility of the Office of Administration and Planning. Units are encouraged to submit their nominations as soon as possible, which enables the Office of Administration and Planning to extend invitations to reviewers earlier and increases the likelihood that the unit will be able to get their preferred reviewers. External reviewers are selected from unit-nominated lists and individuals are only added with unit approval. If necessary, units may be asked to provide additional nominations.

III. Data Elements

Though data has frequently been part of Program Review materials, the fourth cycle of Program Review introduces a more standardized and complete framework for incorporating data into each review. The data elements included help to frame the review, enhance the Self-Study process, and lead toward a cycle of continuous improvement that will be more relevant to the ever-changing environment of academe. These data elements include a Data Profile and faculty or staff and customer feedback surveys.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

A. Data Profile

For academic units, the Office of Administration and Planning, with support from the Office of Institutional Research, consults with each school to build a core Data Profile of relevant indicators. These Data Profiles are compiled by the Office of Administration and Planning (and/or the school/unit if they have access to the appropriate data). The data may be useful for identifying particular strengths and weaknesses of a unit, though no single data element should be regarded as an absolute metric by which to measure the unit's current status. Rather, these data elements can be used to provide tangible reference points for the unit's Self-Study and strategic planning as well as provide more detailed background for the reviewers to reference.

For administrative units, function-specific performance measures are often needed to objectively evaluate a unit's performance. In cases where they do not exist or the data are incomplete, the University seeks to develop and maintain such measures, not only for Program Review, but also to inform other University processes (e.g., budgeting, strategic planning, etc.). Units should work closely with the line Vice President in the development of these measures. In cases where institutional data is needed, the Office of Administration and Planning works to provide this data; in other cases, the unit identifies or develops the appropriate data and peer comparisons.

B. Faculty/Staff and Customer Feedback Surveys

With support from the Office of Institutional Research, the Office of Administration and Planning administers and analyzes surveys of faculty (for academic units) or staff (for administrative units) to gain a diverse set of perspectives on the current state of the unit and opportunities for future strategic direction. The Office of Administration and Planning aims for a response rate of at least 80% for unit faculty/staff surveys. The addition of a unit survey to the Program Review process serves two purposes. First, it allows the unit to take faculty/staff feedback into account to inform the Self-Study and strategic planning. Second, it allows all unit members to have a voice in the process, as it is not always possible for every member to participate in the interviews with the external and internal reviewers during the site visit. Where appropriate, surveys of undergraduate students, graduate students, and post-doctoral students may also be included. The results are also provided to the unit head, Dean/line Vice President, central administration, and the Program Review Council as part of the review materials.

For administrative units, a customer feedback survey is developed by the Program Review team and the Office of Institutional Research, in conjunction with leadership of the unit undergoing review. The Office of Administration and Planning then administers the survey and compiles the customer survey feedback. The target response rate is at least 25% for customer feedback surveys. The unit head is provided with all survey results, as well as a more concise summary of the survey results by theme. The results are also provided to the line Vice President, central administration, and the Program Review Council as part of the review materials.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

IV. Identification of Key Issues

Each unit identifies a short list of Key Issues, which are the critical issues facing the unit currently and over the next three to five years. The list of issues is provided to the Program Review Office, who distributes it to the President, Provost, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, Vice President of Administration and Planning, Vice President for Research, Dean of The Graduate School, Vice Provost for Academics, Vice Provost for Administration, Dean/line Vice President, and other members of central administration as appropriate. The unit then receives a summary of the feedback received on these issues that may highlight additional issues to be addressed by the unit during the Self-Study process.

This feedback step is an important way to ensure alignment between the Dean/line Vice President and central administration on the Key Issues facing the unit. The initial identification of issues can give a preliminary framework to the review process, although the scope of the review is certainly not limited to these issues. The unit will address each issue more thoroughly in the Self-Study. For additional detail on identifying Key Issues, please see the Key Issues and Self-Study Guidance.

V. Self-Study

The process of creating the Self-Study has been identified by many as the most valuable aspect of the Program Review process. The Self-Study phase of Program Review presents a valuable opportunity for the unit to candidly assess progress and consider mechanisms for how to further strengthen the unit. The Self-Study process enables units to discuss long-term planning and priorities, providing the opportunity to discuss complex and sometimes difficult issues. Many units find the process to be useful for strategic planning within the unit, leading to better decisions about where to focus efforts and how to allocate resources within the unit.

The primary purposes of the Self-Study are as follows:

- Explicate the strategic plans of the unit, in the context of the mission and strategic plans of the unit's school as well as the University
- Analyze the unit's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities
- Analyze the unit's strategic position relative to peers
- Address in detail how to best manage the challenges facing the unit
- Identify ways that the unit can improve using existing resources

PROCESS OVERVIEW

Please note that while opportunities which would require additional resources may be identified during the Self-Study, the document should not be regarded as a tool to persuade colleagues or the administration to allocate additional resources to the program. Every effort should be made to remain resource-neutral, meaning to identify areas from which resources should be reallocated toward a better use (i.e., one that contributes more toward the strategic goals of the unit) and where resources can be leveraged more effectively in conjunction with related units.

In preparing the report, units are encouraged to identify a diverse committee of members to participate. Units are especially encouraged to identify a few junior members of the unit to participate in the Self-Study committee as a means of engaging future departmental leadership. The unit's Self-Study committee should consider the previous Program Review and determine whether previously identified Key Issues have been adequately addressed. The Self-Study also provides an opportunity for a fresh examination of the unit and should be a document that stands on its own in analyzing the current state of the unit and directly addressing critical issues, especially those identified in the Key Issues document. The data elements and survey results should also be utilized as input for analyzing the relative strengths and weaknesses of the unit. The report may include any additional data or performance measures that the unit considers indicators of its progress toward its goals. For additional detail, please see the Key Issues and Self-Study Guidelines.

The Program Review Office maintains guidelines and templates that describe in greater detail what specific elements should be covered in the Self-Study. While there is no required template or standardized process, the final report should be shared with all members of the unit and should represent a good faith effort at reaching consensus. If true consensus is not possible, the report should clearly describe the nature of the different perspectives and how final decisions about priorities were made. Once the unit submits the Self-Study, the Program Review Office may provide additional feedback for consideration.

All materials, including the Self-Study, are considered confidential and are shared with the review team (both internal and external reviewers), the Program Review Council, and members of central administration including the President, Provost, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, Vice President of Administration and Planning, Vice President for Research, Dean of The Graduate School, Vice Provost for Academics, Vice Provost for Administration, and the Dean/line Vice President.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

VI. Review Visit

The review visit is generally two days in length, including dinner with unit leadership and a subsequent day and a half of meetings. The Program Review Office is responsible for all logistical arrangements for the reviewers, and the unit is responsible for coordinating faculty, staff, and student meetings with the review team. The list of individuals participating in the review visit is shared with the Program Review Office and is subject to input from central administration. In preparation for their visit, the reviewers receive responsibilities for the review and all materials for the current review. They are also provided with the reports and recommendations from the previous review, if applicable.

During the visit, the review team meets with the unit's faculty and/or professional staff, students (both undergraduate and graduate), line administration (Dean or unit manager, appropriate Vice President(s), Provost, and President), and others as appropriate, including faculty/staff from closely-related or collaborating units. The external and internal reviewers conduct all meetings together.

VII. External Reviewers' Report

Within two weeks of the visit, the external reviewers are asked to provide a written assessment of the unit's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to the Office of Administration and Planning. There is not a chair or lead of the review team – the expectation is that all external reviewers will participate equally in writing the report and recommendations. Any sensitive information can be placed in a confidential addendum to the report that will be shared with a limited audience. The external reviewers are encouraged to make the report and recommendations as specific as possible. For additional detail, please see the External Reviewer Guidelines document.

While the writing of the report is the external reviewers' responsibility, the internal reviewers should remain available for consultation by the external reviewers if there is any need to clarify the substance of the report. Any differences of opinion that cannot be resolved, either among external reviewers or between external and internal reviewers, should be clearly detailed. The internal reviewers have the option to develop an addendum of issues not addressed.

The external and/or internal reviewers can choose to add a confidential addendum to be seen by a limited audience, if there are sensitive matters to raise for consideration.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

VIII. Distribution of Final Report to the Unit

In the interest of creating a valid report, the unit leader will be given an opportunity to review the report first to ensure that there are no factual errors. If factual errors are discovered, they will be promptly corrected (typically with a clarifying footnote) prior to sharing the report with members of the unit, Dean/line Vice President, and central administration.

The fact-checked final report is distributed to the President, Provost, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, Vice President of Administration and Planning, Vice President for Research, Dean of The Graduate School, Vice Provost for Academics, Vice Provost for Administration, and Dean/line Vice President.

Once the report has been fact-checked, members of the unit receive a communication from the Program Review Office notifying them of the availability of the report and the timing of the upcoming implementation meeting. The report is made available to all unit members for review in the unit head's office. The report is considered confidential and should not be copied or distributed electronically. All members of the unit have the opportunity to provide comments on the report by providing them to the Program Review Office. The responses become a part of the record for the review and will be distributed to the internal reviewers, President, Provost, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, Vice President for Research, Vice Provost for Academics, Vice Provost for Administration, Dean of the Graduate School, and other appropriate line administration.

While the report should be treated confidentially, unit heads always have the option of sharing their report with related unit heads or advisory boards where cross-department or cross-school initiatives would be well-served. As a highly interdisciplinary University, this is encouraged but ultimately remains a unit-level prerogative.

IX. Program Review Council Discussion

The role of the Program Review Council is to preside over all reviews and calibrate recommendations from the External Reviewers' Reports. The Program Review Council reviews each unit's External Reviewers' Report and meets with the internal reviewers for a presentation and more in-depth discussion of the significant elements of the report. At that time, the Program Review Council may request clarification or additional information about the review visit and recommendations. Following this discussion, the Program Review Council creates a draft Implementation Agreement based on the External Reviewers' Report and the Program Review Council discussion, which includes key recommendations for action to be taken by the unit.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

X. Implementation Agreement

The Implementation Agreement is then used to guide the subsequent implementation discussion between the unit head, Dean/line Vice President, and central administration (President, Provost, Senior Vice President for Business and Finance, Vice President for Administration and Planning, Vice President for Research, Vice Provost for Academics, Vice Provost for Administration, and Dean of The Graduate School).

The Implementation Agreement is first shared with the unit leader, who is asked to draft a written response to each of the recommendations. The Implementation Agreement with the unit's initial response is then circulated to those attending the Implementation Agreement discussion, which includes the Dean/line Vice President and central administration.

After this discussion, the unit will then receive a finalized Implementation Agreement that clearly describes the agreed-upon actions to be taken and specifies who is responsible for carrying out each of these actions (e.g., unit, Dean/line Vice President, and central administration). The Dean/line Vice President is encouraged to be explicit about any resource commitments he/she is willing (or not willing) to make and to follow up within the unit to discuss the Implementation Agreement in further detail and outline action steps. The Dean/line Vice President is responsible for ensuring timely response to the action items coming out of the review.

XI. Report to the Board of Trustees

Based on the External Reviewer Reports and Implementation Agreements, the Program Review Office prepares a summary of the review year for the Board of Trustees. In addition, the Board of Trustees receives a report on the progress demonstrated during the annual follow-up for those units reviewed during prior years. In addition to these annual reports, the Board of Trustees can access all program review materials upon request.

XII. One Year Follow-Up

Approximately one year from the finalization of the Implementation Agreement, the Program Review Office requests an update on progress from each unit. The Implementation Agreement provides the basis of the one-year follow-up report, and units receive a template to use to respond to each recommendation. All units are advised to work closely with their Dean/line Vice President in the development of this report, as it is the responsibility of the Dean/line Vice President to monitor the implementation progress. These reports are then shared with members of central administration. Units may receive written feedback on their progress-to-date represented in the report and may be asked to provide additional details based on their progress.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of Program Review is to assess each unit's quality and effectiveness, to stimulate planning and improvement, and to encourage strategic development in ways that further the unit's priorities as well as those of the schools and the University in general.

Recognizing that Program Review is a significant time and resource commitment for the unit, school, and University, the University expects that the process, which provides a dedicated time of introspection, results in quality improvement, growth, and commitment to strengthen both the unit and the University. With this context, the Program Review Office appreciates the collaborative partnership and dedication of all involved parties to successfully undertake and complete the Program Review process.

The Program Review process itself strives for continuous improvement. All external reviewers, internal reviewers, unit leadership, and Program Review Council members receive a feedback survey intended to assess the quality of the process (i.e., if the structure of the process was sufficient in providing meaningful insight for assessment) as well as satisfaction with support provided by the Program Review Office. The Program Review Office greatly appreciates candor in this feedback so that it may continue to refine its processes. Composite results and trends in the evaluations may be used during the review cycle planning process and to improve the process for future reviews and are regularly reviewed by the Program Review Council.