

## UNC Co-Curricular Academic Program Review Guidelines

Program review at the University of Northern Colorado is intended to support, develop, and maintain high quality co-curricular and student support programs. It is a collaborative process, involving program personnel, academic administrators, and students, that respects the diversity of disciplinary missions and cultures while also recognizing the primacy of institutional mission. The program review process involves collecting and synthesizing program information to evaluate quality, identify opportunities, and make recommendations on actions and resources necessary to realize desired levels of excellence. Program review outcomes are used to promote campus goals and objectives, support strategic planning and decision-making, and inform budget and resource allocation.

The primary process through which program review is conducted at UNC is the comprehensive self-study. The self-study provides program employees, academic administrators, and the Provost an opportunity to reflect on the role and outcomes of the program, evaluate current program strengths and weaknesses, and strategically plan for the future of the program. These guidelines are intended to provide a consistent framework for conducting the self-study and presenting the findings. While the processes through which programs conduct the self-study are left to the discretion of the program employees, programs should address each of the topics identified within the guidelines following the report format described herein. These guidelines represent the institutional requirements for program review.

### *Definition of a Program*

A co-curricular or student services program is defined as an organizational and budgetary unit that is responsible for delivering services, specialized programs, and/or courses that do not lead to a degree or credential (minor, certificate, licensure). For purposes of program review, personnel within each Academic Affairs division, working collaboratively with the division head<sup>1</sup>, identify what programs exist within their respective division. This collaborative process provides flexibility to organize the review process so that it produces meaningful contributions to budget and strategic planning decisions.

### *Timeline*

Each program should complete a comprehensive review every five years. Division personnel and the division head should prepare a review schedule for each ten-year period between regional HLC accreditation. For professionally accredited programs, the schedule should align UNC program review to accreditation timelines wherever possible.

### *CAS Standards*

UNC has selected the CAS Standards to serve as the framework upon which co-curricular and student services programs will be reviewed. The CAS Standards consist of twelve components identified by the national Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) that together comprise essential characteristics of high-quality programs. These standards address the following:

- |                            |                                |                         |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| -Mission                   | -Ethics                        | -Financial Resources    |
| -Program                   | -Law, Policy, & Governance     | -Technology             |
| -Organization & Leadership | -Diversity, Equity, & Access   | -Facilities & Equipment |
| -Human Resources           | -Internal & External Relations | -Assessment             |

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant/Associate Provost, Assistant Vice President, Dean

Programs should use the guidelines and rating scale developed by CAS to assess program strengths and weaknesses. Documentary evidence to support the evaluation of services and demonstrate program efficacy should be maintained in an electronic portfolio.

#### *Alternative Standards*

Programs that are professionally accredited or those that operate under other nationally recognized standards may substitute those standards for the CAS Standards. Programs seeking to use alternative standards must seek approval from the Assistant Provost for Academic Effectiveness and their division head prior to initiating the self-study. For accredited programs, the accreditation review team's report may serve as the external review report, and the accreditation self-study, including any supporting documents, may substitute for the self-study narrative described below. Programs seeking to use an accreditation report are required to provide an executive summary of the report that includes the following: (1) a brief description of the program; (2) outcomes of goals from the last program review; and (3) an action plan as outlined on page 3 of this document. Non-accredited programs approved to use standards other than CAS should complete the self-study narrative described below, substituting the approved standards where appropriate.

#### *External Review*

External review of programs is expected and may be fulfilled through either of the following options:

- External accreditation site visit/review; or
- Program-area expert external to the University

Programs should consult with their division head to determine the appropriate option for conducting the external review. It is the responsibility of all involved to avoid conflicts of interest that would prevent an objective review of the program. Programs should avoid selecting reviewers with any of the following characteristics: (1) former employees or program participants; (2) individuals with a financial interest in the outcomes of the review (vendor representative, for example); or (3) individuals with a personal relationship to any employees in the program. Upon approval of a reviewer, programs should issue a scope of work agreement and a contract using the University's Independent Contractor Procedures.

Reviewers should provide the program with a written evaluation of the program's strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for improvement within 30 days of completion of the review. Funding for the review is available through the Office of Assessment in the amount of \$1,000. To the extent possible, programs are encouraged to conduct the review virtually through document sharing and virtual meetings. Programs that choose to conduct on-site reviews are responsible for travel expenses that exceed the funding available from the Office of Assessment. Payment to reviewers may not be issued until the reviewer's report has been received by the program.

### **Comprehensive Program Review Documentation**

The final Comprehensive Program Review self-study consists of a narrative report and supporting documentation. The narrative report should be no more than 25 pages and is comprised of the following sections:

1. Program description (mission, organizational chart, major activities or services offered, students served, etc.)
2. Outcomes for the goals and actions identified in the prior comprehensive review
3. Program's strengths and areas for improvement based on the following criteria:
  - a. Program quality as evidenced by performance on the CAS Standards (or approved alternative standards);

- b. Program outcomes and impact as evidenced by the following: (1) student demand and participation in services; (2) success of efforts to reduce/eliminate equity gaps among students directly served by the program; and (3) attainment of program goals and student learning outcomes.
4. Action plan for next review cycle. The plan should address the following:
  - a. Future actions the program will pursue within the resource structure at UNC and external funding opportunities;
  - b. Alignment with [Rowing, Not Drifting 2030](#);
  - c. Program revisions/enhancements and strategies to improve program quality, impact, and outcomes.

In addition to the narrative report, programs should provide the following supporting documents:

1. Data tables of any relevant program or institutional data used in the self-study (last five years)
2. Completed CAS Self-Assessment Guide (or approved alternative standards if applicable)
3. External reviewer report
4. Supervisor and division head memos with recommendations for next review period
5. Program's assessment plan, learning opportunity or curriculum map, and assessment results from the review period (assessment plan and map templates available from the Office of Assessment)

#### *Program Review Data*

Programs should identify institutional and program-level data necessary for completing the self-study. Any data used should be reported in data tables that include information from the most recent five years.

Program review data to consider include the following:

#### **Activities, Services, and Participation Rates**

- Number of students served by program
- Demographic characteristics of students served
- Number of activities and sponsored events provided by the program
- Retention and graduation rates of students served by program
- Student credit hour production (for programs that deliver credit-bearing courses)

#### **Financial data**

- Personnel costs by employee classification (including student employees)
- OCE
- Travel
- Number and amount of extramural awards

#### **Personnel**

- Number of full-time and part-time classified, exempt, and/or faculty employees
- Number of student hourly/salaried employees, graduate/research assistants, and/or teaching assistants
- Staff awards and recognitions, publications, and/or conference presentations.

### **Comprehensive Program Review Process**

The comprehensive review process involves review by the following individuals and bodies: (1) Division head; (2) External reviewer(s); (3) Assistant Provost for Academic Effectiveness; and (4) Provost.

The steps for completing the comprehensive review process are as follows:

Step 1. Initial meeting with program director/coordinator, division head, and assistant provost. The purpose of this meeting is to clarify the process and establish a schedule for completing the remaining activities associated with the comprehensive review.

Step 2. Select and schedule the external reviewer(s). Programs should work with their division head and supervisor to select an appropriate reviewer.

Step 3. Complete CAS evaluation (or approved alternative standards) and first draft of self-study report. The program director/coordinator is responsible for distributing the self-study draft and external reviewer's report to the division head and supervisor.

Step 4. Review of the self-study document. The self-study document and external reviewer's report will be reviewed by the division head and supervisor. The reviewer(s) will provide written feedback with recommendations for improvement and commendations for program strengths no later than one week prior to the meeting described in Step 5 below.

Step 5. Meeting with the program director/coordinator. Prior to completing the final comprehensive program review report, the program director/coordinator will meet with the division head to discuss the recommendations from the reviewers, agree upon goals for the next review period, and identify any resources needed to improve and/or maintain program quality. **Note: programs that report directly to the Provost will skip this step.**

Step 6. Submission of comprehensive program review report to Academic Effectiveness. Programs should submit a copy of the comprehensive program review report and supporting documents to the Assistant Provost of Academic Effectiveness no later than December 1. Documents should be submitted electronically.

Step 7: Meeting with Provost. The Provost and Assistant Provost for Academic Effectiveness will meet with the program's director/coordinator, supervisor, and division head to discuss the comprehensive review. Following the meeting, the Provost will prepare a memorandum describing the outcome of the meeting, deadlines for any specific actions the program will take as a result of the program review, and any resource commitments.

Step 8. Using the results. Program personnel and division heads should use the results of the comprehensive review to guide program planning, decision making, and requests for resources.