HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES

Department and Program Review Procedures

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Prepared by the Provost's Office, in consultation with COAA, COFAC, and the Student Learning Assessment Committee
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I. PURPOSE

Department, program or division reviews have long been conducted at the Colleges, providing valuable information to the divisions, departments and programs, to the Committee on Academic Affairs and the Committee on the Faculty, and to the Provost's Office. Periodic reviews at Hobart and William Smith Colleges are a principal means through which we assess and improve the quality of our academic program. They provide a regular mechanism for in-depth evaluation of the effectiveness, progress, and status of a department or program. They create an occasion for departments and programs to highlight their strengths and achievements, to identify areas in need of improvement, to develop long-range plans for meeting these needs, and to plan for emerging changes in the discipline or interdisciplinary field. The primary purpose of the review is to assist the department/program in meeting students' educational needs, supporting faculty scholarship and service, and planning for the future. In addition, the review assists both the department or program and the Provost in determining resource needs.

To place the review in context is to understand it as one piece of an overall institutional assessment plan that takes place at many levels and in many sites, such as assessment of student learning in individual courses; reviews of departments and programs; assessment of student learning in relation to the Eight Goals; reviews of various offices and programs, both inside and outside academic affairs; and accreditation reviews through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The Provost's Office will help departments focus their efforts to avoid redundancy and to increase the usefulness of their work.

Regular department and program reviews candidly evaluate:

- the ways in which mission and goals of the department/program contribute to the Colleges' mission and goals;
- the curriculum through which the department/program implements its mission and goals;
- the extent to which student learning fulfills the department/program's aspirations for students;
- the contributions of faculty and staff to the department/program and to the Colleges;
- the resources and facilities available to or needed by the department/program.

The following sections describe:

1) the review process, its timeline, and responsible agencies;
2) the conduct of the self-study that lies at the heart of the process;
3) the procedures and guidelines for the selection of external reviewers;
4) the guidelines for the site visit and subsequent external report;
5) the follow-up and implementation of recommendations arising from the review.

The process is defined generically, and it is understood that modifications may be necessary to allow for the unique circumstances of some departments/programs. Such modifications must be worked out in advance with the Provost's Office.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

Provost

As the Colleges' chief academic officer, the Provost has overall responsibility for reviews of departments and programs. The Provost consults with the department/program, the Committee on the Faculty, and the Committee on Academic Affairs to determine the schedule of reviews. S/he meets with departments/programs scheduled for review to discuss any features unique to the department/program, to confirm the timetable for the review, and to finalize any costs associated with the review. The Provost may also meet with the department/program during its preparation of the self-study report.

The Provost is responsible for assembling and charging the external review team and mailing its members the self-study report materials in advance of their visit. Finally, the Provost provides written comments on the self-study report, on the external reviewers' report, and on the department/program response.

Department and Program Chairs

The chair of the department or program undergoing review is responsible for convening a review committee comprising all, or a subset of, the faculty in the department/program. The department or program chair is also responsible for overseeing the conduct and assembly of the self-study, assisting the Provost in the selection of the external review committee, and scheduling the agenda for the on-campus site visit of the external reviewers. The chair is responsible for ensuring full and appropriate participation by all department/program members in the process.

Department/Program Review Committee

The review committee and its chair, in consultation with the department/or program chair (if the two chairs are not the same person) are responsible for conducting the self-study, preparing materials for the external reviewers, conducting the site visit, and preparing a written response to the external reviewers' report.

External Review Committee

The external reviewers are responsible for reading the self-study, meeting with students, faculty, and administrators during their visit, and touring the facilities and other physical resources of the department/program. Based on the self-study report and the visit, the external reviewers submit a written Review Report to the department/program chair and the Provost by the agreed-upon deadline. The chair of the external review committee is also responsible for presenting an oral preliminary summary to the department and program and to the Provost before leaving campus.

III. PROCESS OVERVIEW

Beginning with academic year 2008-09, departments and programs offering majors will

undertake periodic reviews on approximately a six- to eight-year cycle. Review of any minors offered in those departments/programs will take place at the same time. Programs offering only minors may be reviewed at the suggestion of the program, CoAA, and/or the Provost, or possibly in conjunction with closely allied departments or programs that do offer majors. The Provost will schedule the cycle of reviews in consultation with the departments, CoAA, and CoFac. In conjunction with the Provost, departments/programs with unique or unusual circumstances will tailor a plan for review that meets their particular needs.

In order to accommodate the number of departments and programs at HWS, approximately five departments/programs will be reviewed each year. This schedule will ensure that institutional strategic planning, resource allocation, and accreditation are based on adequate and current information.

It is helpful to think of the review as a process. In the first phase (which normally lasts a semester), the department or program prepares the self-study report and works with the Provost's Office to identify and select external reviewers. In the second phase, the external reviewers undertake their site visit (normally over a two-day period), and submit a report to the department/program chair and Provost. In the third phase, the department or program and the Provost respond to the external report and begin to implement appropriate recommendations arising from the process.

In addition to these three periods of heightened activity, successful reviews depend upon the continual collection of information such as syllabi, faculty CVs, enrollment data, data concerning assessment of learning outcomes, budget information, and staffing reports. Some of this information will be collected on the Colleges-wide level, but some will be the responsibility of the department or program. The work of the self-study will be greatly eased and enhanced if, between reviews, the department or program keeps careful records of relevant information and regularly reflects on its work. At the outset of the review process, departments/programs are encouraged to conduct focused meetings or retreats in order to clarify central issues facing them and to examine any emerging trends within the discipline or interdisciplinary field. Such issues and trends would figure prominently in the self-study. Department and program reviews are primarily concerned with the effectiveness with which they meet their majors' and minors' needs, but should also evaluate the department's support of interdisciplinary programs and the general curriculum. Reviews must address how the department/ program fits into the Colleges' delivery of an HWS education and how the department/program contributes to student learning as articulated in the Eight Goals.

The Provost's Office will cover reasonable expenses associated with the review in consultation with the department or program.

IV. THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

The self-study process is the heart of the review, and should be the culmination of a process in which there is broad and deep participation. In order to ensure that reviews truly serve the department/program and the Colleges, it is important to devote substantial effort to the preparation of this document.

The list below contains a sampling of the range of topics suitable for inclusion in the self study. Not all these topics would be appropriate for every department or program, of course, and there may be topics not included below that are especially pressing for particular departments or programs. We recommend that the document address the questions of what the department can do over the next five years to reach the level of excellence characteristic of the best departments at small liberal arts institutions, given the resources it has or that it can reasonably expect to receive. Such a document would outline the challenges to your department or program, and your plans to meet those challenges. In the interest of efficiency, we recommend that you concentrate your thinking on the most important challenges. You might limit yourselves, for example, to the three or four most important challenges and responses. Each department/program will know best what would advance its mission, whether the challenges are in the area of curriculum, in shaping the major, in faculty development, in special programs, in facilities and technology, or in other areas.

Mission & History

- Department/program history
    - Mission & goals, including goals for student learning at the course and department/program level
    - Actions under way or planned to reach major goals
    - Review of recommendations from any previous review and progress since then

Academic Program

Description of curricular offerings, including syllabi

- Analysis of major & minor; any proposed changes in structure
    - Role in general education, first-year programs, service courses for other departments, off-campus programs
    - Analysis of enrollment trends

Assessment of the quality & currency of the curriculum

- Identification of program needs, curricular lacunae
    - Pedagogical approaches and strengths (e.g., use of instructional technology, service learning, undergraduate research, internships)
    - Special program offerings and opportunities
    - Assessment of the quality of student advising

Student Outcomes

- Profile of majors & minors
    - Measures of student success (e.g., numbers of students pursuing graduate work and/or employment and review of placements, surveys of alumni/ae, national fellowships, scores on standardized tests for admission to graduate work)
    - Assessment of student learning in relation to HWS Eight Goals and department/program goals
    - Adequacy of the department/program's assessment plan
    - Description of alumni/ae connections (e.g., contacts between faculty and alumni/ae, opportunities for internships)

Diversity, Gender & Climate Issues

- Student and faculty profile with regard to diversity & gender
    - Opportunities for contributions to diversity at the Colleges and assessment of contributions
    - Classroom climate issues

Staffing & Personnel

- Staffing array & needs, including projections of retirements, sabbaticals, leaves
    - Use of part-time and/or temporary faculty
    - Collegial interactions (e.g., departmental dynamics, mentoring relationships, faculty development opportunities within the department/program)
    - Support staff, including administrative assistants, technicians, etc.

Facilities and Space, Equipment, Budget

- Adequacy of facilities & space
    - Equipment projections & needs, including technology
    - Description and evaluation of library holdings
    - Budget profile (e.g., patterns of expenditure, availability of special restricted funds)
    - Evaluation of budget adequacy

Activities and Publications

- Description and evaluation of curricular and co-curricular events and other sponsored programs
    - Evaluation of department/program web site, handbook, and other publications

At the beginning of the review, the exact form and scope of the self-study report will be determined by the department/program in conjunction with the Provost. (See Appendix A for a suggested format that can serve as a guide.) Except where indicated, responsibility for collecting the data and writing and assembling the report rests with the department/program review committee. The statistical data and, in general, the focus of the review usually span the time since the last review, or about six years. We encourage departments and programs to work closely with the Provost's Office for assistance in

identifying and acquiring appropriate information. Departments/programs will provide an outline and preliminary drafts of their self-study report to the Provost for feedback prior to the final submission.

The department/program submits five copies of the self-study report (with all accompanying materials) to the Provost's Office a minimum of one month prior to the scheduled visit of the external review committee. The Provost is responsible for mailing copies of the report to the external reviewers along with a letter, prepared in conjunction with the department/program detailing the external review committee's charge.

V. THE EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

The process of selecting external reviewers begins with the department, which provides the Provost with the names of at least six colleagues in the discipline or interdisciplinary field whom they deem most qualified. The department and program may also ask the Provost for suggestions of potential reviewers. Potential reviewers should come from institutions that are known to have strong programs in the discipline or interdisciplinary area under review. Reviewers typically come from primarily undergraduate institutions considered to be peers of HWS or to represent a model to which the department or program aspires. Nominations should include the names, titles, addresses, and contact information of all six nominees along with a description of their expertise and standing within the discipline/interdisciplinary field, and a statement of any potential conflicts of interest with department and program members. The Provost selects and invites a minimum of two external reviewers to participate in consultation with the department/program.

VI. THE SITE VISIT AND REPORT

Before the site visit, the external reviewers will have received the self-study report and the charge letter to frame their work. In addition to describing the responsibilities of the reviewers, the charge letter will also detail focal points that the department/program and Provost agree warrant particular emphasis. When on campus, the reviewers typically will: 1) have entry and exit meetings with the Provost, 2) meet with department and program faculty and students (majors and minors in particular), 3) discuss the self-study report, 4) observe classes, and 5) meet with the department and program prior to departure to discuss preliminary findings. Site visits normally last two full days and are conducted during a regular academic semester while classes are in session.

The external reviewers are responsible for writing one report, which should be submitted within three weeks of the site visit. For ease of distribution, the report should include an executive summary of its findings and recommendations. If there is no consensus on a particular issue, all the differing opinions should be stated. The report should respond to the charge letter and the self-study report, identifying strengths, making concrete and constructive suggestions for improvement, and finally, addressing any other issues the reviewers consider important that might have been overlooked in the self-study. The text of the report should preserve the anonymity of individuals within the department/program. The report is submitted simultaneously to the department and

program chair and the Provost by the date specified in the charge letter. The department/program has the responsibility of providing the Provost with a written response to the report.

It is important that the reviewers feel free to arrive at an independent assessment of the department/program, but some suggested questions and format for the report are included as an appendix.

VII. FOLLOW-UP

After the completion of the site visit and receipt of the written report, the department/program is required to provide a written reaction to the report to the Provost. The department/program review committee, department/program chair, and Provost meet to discuss the recommendations of the report and to prioritize any agreed-upon responses to the recommendations. The report and the department/program response will be shared with the Committee on the Faculty and the Committee on Academic Affairs.

Appendix A: Suggested Format for the Self-Study Report

1. Campus Overview [all provided by Provost's Office]

- College's mission statement and goals
    - Organization charts
    - Campus statistical profile
    - Undergraduate degree requirements
    - Department and program review procedures

2. Departmental Profile
    a. Historical overview of department
    b. Department's mission and goals
    c. Information on current faculty, including current CVs
    d. Department/program assessment plan, updated if necessary since submission in 2006
    e. Department/program Standards and Criteria document

3. Summary Self-Assessment
    a. Description of department's strengths and weaknesses
        i. Teaching/curriculum/pedagogy
        ii. Scholarship
        iii. Community Service
        iv. Resources
        v. Overall functioning
    b. Department/program review history
        i. Progress made since last review on review recommendations
        ii. Major goals the department and program has for itself
        iii. Actions underway or planned to reach major goals

4. Undergraduate Student Data
    a. Enrollment trends for majors and minors
    b. Gender and ethnicity of majors
    c. Student-faculty research participation and opportunities

5. Department and Program Curriculum
    a. Catalog description of department, major and minor requirements, course offerings, and declaration/audit sheets
    b. Contributions to campus-wide curriculum (e.g., HWS Goals, FSEM, non-major service courses, etc.)
    c. Contributions to global education and service learning
    d. Frequency of course offerings
    e. Syllabi for all courses offered in the last four years
    f. List of courses withdrawn in the last four years
    g. Class sizes and student- and major-faculty ratios
    h. List of honors theses and independent study titles
    i. Placement data for graduates (jobs, graduate or professional schools) and any information from alumni/ae surveys
    j. Assessment of student learning outcomes: process and data
    k. Description and assessment of department's print and web presence
    l. Position of department and program with respect to trends in the discipline/interdisciplinary area

6. Resources: Staffing, Space, Facilities, and Budget
    a. Staffing needs and rationale
    b. Retirement, sabbatical, leave projections
    c. Use of adjunct faculty
    d. Intradepartmental mentoring
    e. Non-faculty support staff
    f. Facilities and space overview, including technology and instrumentation
    g. Evaluation of library holdings
    h. Most recent department and program budget and assessment of budget and instructional funding adequacy

7. Appendices

Appendix B: Questions for the External Reviewers

1. OVERALL PROGRAM
    a. Comment on the self-study report. Does it accurately reflect the department/program's strengths and weaknesses?
    b. What is your evaluation of the overall quality of this department/program, in the context of liberal arts institutions of comparable quality and type?
    c. Are the department/program's assessment processes comprehensive and productive?
2. FACULTY
    a. How do the department/program's teaching and research specialties compare with trends in the discipline or interdisciplinary area? Is the balance among subspecialties in the department/program appropriate?
    b. Is the number of faculty appropriate in relation to the goals of the department/program and the number of students it serves?
    c. What is your assessment of collegiality and morale among the faculty?
    d. Do you have suggestions for improving the diversity of the faculty?
3. CURRICULUM
    a. What is your assessment of the content and organization of the curriculum? Is it rigorous, contemporary and coherent? Do course offerings adequately reflect current trends in the discipline or interdisciplinary area? Are they appropriate to the needs and aspirations of a diverse student population?
    b. Are the major and minor appropriately structured?
    c. Is the number of majors typical given the size of the faculty and the campus?
    d. Comment on the quality of undergraduate instruction and on the use of adjunct faculty. To what extent is the scholarly or creative work of the faculty integrated into the undergraduate program?
    e. Comment on opportunities for undergraduate research.
    f. How would you assess the overall quality of student learning outcomes?
    g. Is student advising of high quality?
5. DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM RESOURCES
    a. Does the department/program receive adequate support?
    b. Is the budget sufficient to support department/program curricular objectives? Could the budget be restructured without additional costs?
    c. Given the department's support needs, are staff responsibilities allocated reasonably across positions?
    d. Please comment on the facilities, technology and equipment. Are they sufficient to support the goals?
    e. Please comment on the holdings (monographs, serials, and electronic resources) and services available to the department and program from the library.

6. DIRECTION OF THE FIELD

In what direction(s) do you believe the discipline/interdisciplinary field will evolve over the course of the next ten years? Is HWS well-positioned to respond to those trends?

7. DIRECTION OF THIS DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM

a. Where does this department/program fit into the field nationally? Does it have a particular niche?

b. Can existing resources be deployed more effectively to increase the department/program's quality and reputation or are additional resources required?

c. Please comment specifically on the department's five-year plan in the context of campus resources.

d. Please comment on the possibility and desirability of greater interdisciplinary collaboration between the department and program and other campus programs with related concerns.

e. Of the changes you have recommended or areas that you have identified as needing attention, which ones will require substantial assistance from the Colleges' administration?

Appendix C: Typical Format for the External Reviewers' Report

Title Page	Name of department and program or program Hobart and William Smith Colleges Members of external review committee Date of external review committee visit Date of report
Table of Contents	
Executive Summary	Summary of key findings Summary of key recommendations
Introduction	Background and context of department/program and of review
Organizational structure, management, planning, and improvement	Findings Recommendations
Human and physical resources and infrastructure, including IT	Findings Recommendations
Courses and curriculum	Findings Recommendations
Teaching, learning and assessment	Findings Recommendations
Engagement in and support for scholarship	Findings Recommendations
Professional and community activities and service	Findings Recommendations
Appendices	Including but not limited to: List of external review committee members with credentials and affiliations Schedule of site visit Any additional documents

Appendix D: Sample Site Visit Format

Time	Meeting	Location
DAY ONE		
8:15 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.	Meet with Provost	
8:45 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Department facilities tour	
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Orientation with Chair and Review Committee	
10:45 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	Meet with Chair	
Noon - 1: 00 p.m.	Lunch with Department/Program	
1:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	Individual faculty interviews (if the department/program is large, the reviewers typically will split up)	
3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Group interviews with undergraduate majors	
4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	All-dept/program reception (including students) followed by committee-only dinner	
Early Evening	Reviewers meet privately	
DAY TWO		
8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Individual faculty interviews (if needed)	
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Interviews with faculty from departments that use cross listed courses	
11:00 a.m. - noon	Meetings with departmental staff	
Noon-1:30 pm	Working lunch with Review Committee	
1:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Reviewers' discretionary time	
3:00pm - 4:00pm	Concluding meeting with the Department /Program Chair and Review Committee	
4:00- 5:00 pm	Concluding meeting with Provost	

Appendix E: Suggested Review Timeline

Semester	Provost & Committees	Department/Program Review Committee	External Reviewers
Pre-Review Year			
Spring	-Provost meets with CoFac and CoAA to determine depts. to review -Provost notifies dept/pgm chairs -Provost meets with chairs to discuss any special circumstances and to finalize review budgets	-Construction of Review Committee -Dept/pgm forwards list of nominees for external reviewers to Provost	
Summer	-Provost begins contacting external reviewers	-Dept/program collects information for self-study report	
Review Year			
Fall	-Provost finalizes external reviewers -creates a formal charge -arranges a site visit date -provides comments on self-study report	-Dept/pgm drafts Self-study report and forwards draft to Provost -Responds to any comments from Provost about Self-study report -Submits final copies of self-study report to Provost	-membership finalized -receives charge from Provost -site visit date set
Spring	-Provost sends external reviewers the Self-study report 30 days prior to site visit -Approves site visit agenda -Meets with external reviewers during site visits	-Creates a detailed site visit agenda -Organizes the site visit meetings -Meets with external reviewers -Prepares written response to external reviewers' report	-**Site visit** -Meets with Provost and Dept/Pgm Review Committee prior to departure -Prepares and sends copies of final review report to Provost and chair ofdept/pgm
Post-Review Year			
	-Meets with dept/pgm to review recommendations -Works to support implementation of recommendations	-Meets with Provost to review recommendations -Begins implementation of recommendations	