

UCLA

Student Affairs

Program Review Guidelines 2016-2017

Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO)
B-52 Student Activities Center
Mail Code 132406
(310) 206-8470

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UCLA Student Affairs Program Review Guidelines

Introduction & Purpose

The 2006-09 Student Affairs Strategic Plan established the goal of developing an evaluation process that ensures Student Affairs programs and services are ready and able to meet the needs of an ever-changing student body. As an organization committed to continuous programmatic improvement, Student Affairs must systematically assess, acknowledge, and appropriately respond to new challenges, identify potential opportunities, and routinely strive to enhance our programs and services. The implementation of the program review guidelines detailed in this document are important steps towards achieving Student Affairs' organizational evaluation objectives. In addition, the program review process provides a powerful vehicle for answering public calls for increased organizational accountability and providing documentation of Student Affairs' valuable contributions to student learning and development outcomes.

Key Guiding Principles

First, the Student Affairs Program Review process is a formative assessment tool designed to enhance organizational performance via the systematic review of data pertaining to department activities, service delivery and use, resource management, and contributions to the advancement of the Student Affairs mission and strategic plan.

More specifically, the purposes of program review are to:

- Facilitate systematic reflection and documentation within Student Affairs departments on organizational performance with respect to objectives, university priorities, and the Student Affairs mission, aspirations, and strategic goals;
- Provide evidence of the excellence and effectiveness of the department's programs, activities, services, and operations for all constituents;
- Foster a contemporary understanding of UCLA students' characteristics, needs, and experiences;
- Assess the department's effectiveness with respect to contributing to student learning and development outcomes and/or business and service outcomes;
- Engage in strategic thinking about the department's plans for the future to ensure that it is positioned to provide effective and relevant services in the years to come;
- Define ways, primarily within existing resources, that a department can continue to improve in the quality of its programs, services, activities, and operations; and

- To develop an action plan to guide the department's continued progress toward effective and excellent performance.

Second, the program review guidelines outlined in this document are informed by and serve to advance the unique mission, values, and aspirations of UCLA Student Affairs. In particular, the Student Affairs mission statement, aspirations, and strategic plan provide the foundation for the Student Affairs Program Review process.

UCLA Student Affairs Mission Statement

Student Affairs supports the academic success of all UCLA students, fosters their intellectual, personal, social and professional development in preparation for the entirety of their lives, and contributes to enhancing the quality of campus life, the educational environment, and their relationship with the broader UCLA Family, including alumni.

Student Affairs Strategic Priorities

- I. Ensure student welfare: a focus on diversity and campus climate; and a focus on health and wellness.
- II. Meet students where they are: focus on leadership development and professional readiness, supporting the development of our future global leaders.
- III. Support the academic enterprise and institutional goals: a focus on enrollment management
- IV. Steward Student Affairs resources: focus on Student Affairs' human, fiscal, IT and space resources.

Consistent with the mission and priorities reprinted above, the program review process provides an opportunity for Student Affairs staff members to systematically review organizational efforts directed towards enhancing the academic and educational experiences of UCLA students; listening and responding to the experiences, needs, and interests of students and constituents from all backgrounds and communities; cultivating respectful and learning-centered professional environments; maximizing technological efficiencies; and serving as responsible stewards of institutional resources. Beyond merely providing a means to systematically survey department activities and management practices, the program review process facilitates the translation of assessment data into strategic action plans focused on ensuring the continuous improvement of organizational performance and the advancement of mission-critical activities. (A copy of the strategic priorities is provided in Appendix A.)

Third, the program review guidelines also reflect the values that have historically guided Student Affairs assessment activities. More specifically, the guidelines outlined in this document:

- demonstrate a respect for students from all backgrounds and communities;
- highlight the importance of including student voices in the process and products of assessment;

- underscore the value of identifying and assessing student learning and development outcomes;
- promote the effective use of organizational resources;
- prioritize the development of quality programs that meet students' ever-changing needs; and
- maintain a focus on connecting Student Affairs activities to the broader institutional mission and strategic priorities.

Thus, the primary reason for conducting program reviews is to ensure the continuation of high quality programs and caring, comprehensive services in Student Affairs and to make sure that our offerings are central to the role and mission, priorities, and strategic goals of Student Affairs and the University.

Program Review Budget

The Student Affairs Program Review process will require a commitment of time and resources from everyone involved. It is assumed that the financial support for all steps in the program review process will be absorbed at the department level. As such, cost efficiency should be a consideration (although not necessarily the deciding factor) with respect to selection of external review panel members. If the program review process causes financial hardship for a department, the Director should submit a program review budget and request for funds to the member of the Executive Management Group (EMG) that supervises the department slated for review. An External Review Funding Proposal template is provided in Appendix B. Budget requests will be considered by the EMG on a case-by-case basis.

Program Review Cycle

Student Affairs department reviews will occur on a six-year cycle. The Director of the Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) in consultation with the members of the EMG develops this schedule. When possible, the schedule is coordinated with other review and accreditation activities. It is important to note that accreditation reviews are conducted for other purposes and do not take the place of the Student Affairs' Program Review. However, elements of and preparation for these reviews may overlap and therefore coordination of these reviews will occur to eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort. Further, when possible, any University-wide functional reviews that involve Student Affairs departments will be scheduled to coincide with the Student Affairs review of that department.

The six-year cycle is flexible and may be revised by the Director of SAIRO in consultation with members of the EMG. When circumstances warrant, a request to extend or postpone a scheduled program review may be submitted in writing to the Director of SAIRO who will forward this request to the EMG along with an analysis of

the implications associated with the schedule change request and a revised program review calendar if necessary. EMG will review this request and respond to the Director of the department and SAIRO. In situations where the program review findings indicated very serious problems in the department, the department may be added back into the schedule for re-review on an accelerated basis to ensure that the identified problems have been addressed. The Student Affairs Program Review Calendar is presented in Appendix C.

Program Review Process and Timeline

The Student Affairs Program Review process consists of five steps: 1) Pre-Review Preparation, 2) Department Self-Study and Report, 3) External Program Review Site Visit and Report, 4) Development of the Department Action Plan, and 5) Implementation of the Department Action Plan. The guidelines for each step are outlined in this section.

The program review process should take approximately 16 months to complete. A suggested program review timeline is provided in Appendix D. The program review cycle begins in May when the department receives written notification that they are scheduled for review and ends in August of the following year with the submission of the department's action plan. Departmental pre-review preparations will likely begin well in advance of the program review cycle, however, as units engage in the periodic collection and analysis of assessment data to guide programming. Although the suggested 16-month timeline is intended to structure and standardize the review process, the actual time needed to complete each program review step may vary according to the department and the unique needs of each review. If a department needs to extend their review process more than one month beyond the 16-month timeline, they must submit a notification and explanation of the extension in writing to the EMG member that supervises the department and provide copy of the communication to the Director of SAIRO.

The suggested Student Affairs Program Review timeline is as follows:

Step I: Pre-Review Preparation (3-4 months)

I. Notification in Writing to Department(s) Scheduled for Review

Using the established six-year review calendar (Appendix C), departments that are slated for review in the coming academic year will be formally notified in writing via a letter from the Director of SAIRO. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and the member of the EMG who supervises the department undergoing program review. The letter of notification will include a copy of the Program Review Guidelines and other specific information regarding the review process. Additional copies of the Program Review Guidelines may be downloaded from the SAIRO Program Review website (http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program_review.html).

II. Selection of Program Review Coordinator

SAIRO will ask the department director to identify a program review coordinator. Responsibilities of the program review coordinator include:

- serving as SAIRO's primary department contact regarding all program review matters,
- developing and implementing the program review timeline,
- coordinating the self-study process and as well as the development of the self-study report, and
- organizing logistics of the external review site visit.

The coordination of the program review process is a time- and labor-intensive responsibility (previous coordinators have likened it to serving as the chair of a large department committee or task-force) so it is recommended that directors take time commitment expectations into consideration when selecting a program review coordinator. Additional qualities of a successful program review coordinator include: the ability to facilitate group discussions, solicit input from staff working in diverse organizational roles, integrate multiple perspectives, and synthesize information in a concise manner; familiarity with the department's assessment efforts; strong writing and project management skills; and the professional autonomy necessary to interpret the program review guidelines and design a program review process tailored to the department's unique mission and structure.

SAIRO does not recommend that department directors assume the program review coordinator role given the significant time commitment associated with this task. Although directors of small departments with limited staff resources may find it necessary to fulfill the program review coordinator responsibilities, whenever possible, SAIRO encourages directors to delegate this responsibility in the interest of providing a staff member with a valuable professional development opportunity.

Please see Appendix E for detailed summary of program review roles and responsibilities.

III. Department Review Orientation Meeting

SAIRO staff will meet with the department director and program review coordinator in order to discuss the review process, answer questions, and help create a participatory process of program review in which all staff members are engaged and involved. Please see Appendix F for a copy of the UCLA Program Review Executive Summary document that will serve as the discussion guide for the orientation meeting.

IV. Identification of the Self-Study Protocol

The program review self-study protocol is selected by the Director of the department, in consultation with the member of the Student Affairs EMG who supervises the department undergoing program review. The Director and staff of

SAIRO are also valuable resources in this process. Following are the four primary choices with respect to the self-study format:

a) UCLA Student Affairs Program Review Self-Study Guidelines: The most commonly utilized self-study option is the UCLA Student Affairs self-study guidelines (see Appendix H). This protocol and criteria for self-study developed collaboratively by SAIRO and the EMG are designed to focus on key areas of interest to UCLA Student Affairs. These criteria are intended to provide a structure for the review and should be augmented by whatever information is deemed necessary to create an effective self-assessment.

General areas include:

- Department Mission, Purpose and Function
- Strategic Position and Planning
- Organizational Resources
- Gauging Department Performance and Effectiveness
- Summary of Findings

b) Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS): CAS provides a set of industry-approved standards and self-assessment guidelines for 43 functional areas (see Appendix G for a full list of programs for which CAS provides standards and self-assessment guidelines. This appendix also includes a sample CAS Self-Assessment outline). Please note that SAIRO owns the print and electronic versions of the most recent CAS Standards & Guidelines and Self-Assessment Guidelines and will make them available to any departments undergoing program review.

- Those Student Affairs departments for which CAS standards and guidelines exist may choose to utilize the CAS Self-Assessment Guide as the frame for the self-study review process and report.
- If the department has completed a CAS self-study within the academic year prior to their Student Affairs Program Review cycle, it may use that CAS self-assessment process as the foundation for the program review self-study report.
- It is important to note that although the CAS Self-Assessment Guides include worksheets and overview questions intended to facilitate the compilation of reviewer ratings for each of the CAS criterion measures, these completed worksheets and short answer responses do not fulfill the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review self-study report expectations. Rather the information and insights gleaned from the CAS self-assessment process should inform the development of a comprehensive and coherent self-study narrative that addresses the thirteen organizational domains outlined in the CAS Standards and Guidelines (Please see

Appendix G for a list of the thirteen self-assessment domains and a sample self-study report outline).

- c) Any mandated or optional professional accreditation process: Program review is intended to provide Student Affairs departments an opportunity to evaluate their programs and services to ensure that they are ready and able to meet the needs of an ever-changing student body. However, certain departments are required or encouraged to participate in accreditation procedures specific to their functional area. In an effort to reduce unnecessary duplication of effort and help ease the overall workload of preparing for agency accreditation, the self-study / department profile and/or external review components of an accreditation process may be used to fulfill some or all of the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review expectations. During the program review orientation meeting, the SAIRO Director and department program review team will review the accreditation protocol and the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review Self-Study Guidelines to determine areas of potential overlap and collaboratively develop the department's review process and timeline. Following this meeting, SAIRO will document additional questions to be answered beyond those in the accreditation protocol and communicate this to the department and EMG supervisor.
- d) Industry Standards and Guidelines for Self-Study: If there is a set of standards and/or guidelines that are published by a representative, governing body, or professional association for the department's area of Student Affairs or for the types of services that the office provides, the department may propose them as the protocol for the self-study portion of the department's program review process. Please submit the complete description of standards and guidelines for self-study to the Director of SAIRO for consideration.

V. Data Audit

The systematic review of relevant departmental and institutional assessment data is an integral step in the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review process. More specifically, data and assessment findings fulfill five key program review functions:

- a) Guide program review process – Compiling and reviewing relevant data at the start of program review will guide the self-study inquiry process by allowing self-study members to draw on existing data and assessment results when answering self-study questions.
- b) Set context – Data help departments establish and external reviewers understand organizational context, constituents, needs, etc.
- c) Demonstrate achievement of organizational outcomes – Data should be included in the self-study report as a means to demonstrate effectiveness in achieving articulated learning, development, service, and/or business outcomes.
- d) Document utilization/satisfaction – Data should be used to document patterns of utilization and satisfaction with department programs and services.

- e) Illustrate role of data in organizational decisions/practice – The department should articulate how data and assessment findings are used to inform organizational decisions and improve the student experience.

Each department undergoing review will conduct an audit of all data and information resources available to assist and inform the program review process. This audit will include:

- a) Departmental Assessment Data. An update of the department's assessment inventory. Please create the inventory using the template provided in Appendix I. The department is asked to submit a copy the updated assessment inventory to the Director of SAIRO as well as include it in the appendices of the self-study report. A summary of the information that should be synthesized in the department assessment inventory is provided below:
 - a. Please describe any departmental efforts to collect data. This can include any method of data collection, including survey data, focus groups, interviews, utilization counts (e.g., card swipe counts), etc. Further, please be sure to document assessment efforts of any population such as students, other clientele, staff, etc.
 - b. A review of any external assessment processes (e.g., participation in CAS Standards or industry benchmarking studies) or accreditation practices or mandates.
- b) Departmental Operational Data. The collection and review of department data relevant to specific questions posed in the self-study protocol. Each of the self-study protocols outlined in Section III require the self-study panel to gather and reflect on information pertaining to a wide range of departmental processes and performance measures (e.g., budgeting, human resources, technology, legal responsibility, etc). After selecting a self-study protocol, the department's program review coordinator and/or self-study panel should carefully review the protocol, identify the information needed to develop a thorough self-study report, and begin compiling existing data, assessment results, and organizational information that can be used to inform answers to self-study questions.
- c) Institutional Data. A review of data collected at the organizational (i.e., Student Affairs at large) or institutional levels (e.g., CIRP Freshman Survey, Transfer Student Survey (TSS), University of California Undergraduate Experiences Survey (UCUES), UCLA Graduating Senior Survey) that may provide assistance documenting departmental outcomes and/or provide insight on student needs and experiences, population trends, etc., of relevance to the department undergoing review.

SAIRO will contact the department program review coordinator to initiate the scheduling of a Data Audit meeting. At this meeting, SAIRO staff will review institutional data that may be of relevance to the department and explain the process for requesting additional assistance from SAIRO in compiling and/or analyzing institutional data, as well as discuss the data inventory prepared by the department and how data can be used in answering self-study questions. Prior to

this meeting, the department program review coordinator will be asked to submit to SAIRO information regarding the department's strategic priorities and specific learning/programmatic outcomes so that SAIRO can make informed decisions about data of relevance to the department.

Lessons Learned

The first in a series of program review recommendations drawn from the experiences of past participants.

- It is easy to lose focus in the data audit phase of program review and find yourself overwhelmed by a mountain of department and institutional data. The key is to carefully review the self-study protocol and identify department data and assessment findings that will help you answer the self-study questions. Don't spend precious energy and time compiling information that doesn't address self-study topic areas.

VI. Formation of the Self-Study Review Panel

The director of the department and program review coordinator will identify/invite people to serve as members of the self-study panel. While the department may determine the optimal size of the Self-Study Review Panel for their assessment needs and objectives, Student Affairs leadership suggests a team of 5-8 members. Below are the Self-Study Review Panel membership guidelines:

- a) External Members: In order to provide a more objective yet informed viewpoint, *one member of the Self-Study Review Panel must be external to the department*. Some suggestions for this member include:
 - a. If an advisory panel/council exists for the department, it is suggested that representation from this group be included on the Self-Study Review Panel.
 - b. In an effort to make the Student Affairs Program review process as collaborative as possible across departments, Directors are encouraged to consider fellow Student Affairs Directors.
 - c. The collaboration between Student Affairs and our colleagues in The UCLA College is a priority for the advancement of the Student Affairs strategic plan and a critical element in our ability to effectively serve students. As such, Directors are encouraged to consider inviting faculty or colleagues from the College, schools, or other academic departments to serve as an external member of the Self-Study Review Panel.
- b) Student Members: UCLA students are the primary constituents of our efforts. Thus, the Self-Study Review Panel must include at least one student. It is advisable that this

student have experience with the department (e.g., frequent user, student employee, intern, etc.).

- c) Internal Members: There are no restrictions on the identification and inclusion of internal members for the Self-Study Review Panel. *However, the members should represent varying areas of the department.*

Lessons Learned

- It is a good idea to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of self-study panel members prior to extending invitations. What are you asking of them? What will they do? What time commitment is expected? These are often the first questions asked when an invitation to participate is extended.

VII. Review of Emerging Trends Impacting Department

As a component of the pre-review preparation, the department will review emerging trends, issues, and needs (e.g. national trends, best practices in the field, changes in student population) that are likely to directly or indirectly impact the department in the future. The findings from this review will be summarized for discussion at the Pre-Review Meeting with EMG (discussed below). The summary should cover the following:

- Overview of major trends/issues
- Discussion of anticipated impact of these trends/changes on the department
- Discussion of how this information will be considered in the self-study process

VIII. Pre-Review Meeting with EMG

Before embarking on the self-study process, the departmental director and program review coordinator will meet with the EMG to discuss the following aspects of their process:

- Plans for self-study; including the self-study protocol selected and rationale, and how they plan to involve and engage staff in the program review process.
- Data audit and how they will be utilizing metrics/data in the self-study to demonstrate departmental and/or SA strategic priorities.
- Major challenges and weaknesses to be addressed in self-study; including discussion of emerging trends and issues that will influence the department in the future.
- Ways in which departmental activities map to current SA strategic priorities.
- EMG expectations for the scope of the review.

Step 2: Department Self-Study/Report (5-6 months)

The department self-study provides the basis for the entire review process. It represents a valuable opportunity for the department to make a candid assessment of itself and to consider future directions and opportunities for improvement that would strengthen the department. Each department undergoing review will prepare a self-study report using as its organizing framework the criteria and questions identified in the protocol selected as part of the pre-review preparation (Step I, Section III above).

The purpose of the Department Self-Study Report is to:

- Outline the department's objectives, priorities, resources, programs and strategic plans as well as its position within Student Affairs and the University.
- Provide a critical self-reflection on how well the department performs in relation to its mission, goals and strategic plans, as well as the mission and strategic priorities of Student Affairs.
- Define ways, primarily within existing resources, that the department can continue to improve in the quality of its programs, services, activities, and operations for all constituents.
- Provide evidence of the excellence and effectiveness of its programs, activities, services and operations for all constituents.
- Identify priorities and key questions for external review.

Self-Study Process Guidelines

The departmental program review coordinator, in consultation with the departmental director is responsible for developing a process for collaborative discussion and report writing that fits with departmental needs and structure and also attending to the following guidelines:

- The self-study team should include representatives from various areas of the department.
- The process, and ultimate report, should reflect input from all staff. The self-study committee should ensure that broader input is solicited when developing responses to self-study questions. At a minimum, all staff should have the opportunity to comment on the draft report.
- External and student committee members must be fully involved in discussion and development of the report, not just brought in at the end to review findings.
- There should be regular and ongoing communication with the EMG member who oversees the department during the self-study process regarding the process and findings.

It is suggested that departments make use of staff retreat time and ongoing departmental meetings to ensure that the staff have time for engagement and reflection on the questions posed. It is critical that departmental leaders ensure that the self-study team has adequate time for reflection and discussion of the content to be included.

Self-Study Report Guidelines

The self-study narrative and supporting documentation should fulfill the purposes outlined earlier in the section. The specific format and content of the report will be determined by the particular self-study framework selected by the department director and program review coordinator. Regardless of the self-study protocol selected, the self-study report should include the following:

- Table of contents
- Process executive summary – an explanation of the department self-study process
- Department contextual info – If not explicitly called for in the self-study protocol, please provide a brief introduction to the department history, organizational structure, and/or other unique contextual conditions that frame the self-study report.
- Summary of findings – What are the primary strengths of the department? What aspects of the department need the most improvement?
- External review issues statement - A 1-2 page statement that clearly outlines the key issues and questions identified during the self-study process that the department would like external reviewers to address during the site visit and in the external review report.

While the director of the department under review has latitude with respect to decisions regarding the preparation of the self-study report, the final report should represent the input of all members of the Self-Study Review Panel. As such, the department is encouraged to create a system in which the panel is able to provide feedback on a draft of the document. Please list the names of the Self-Study Review Panel members on the title page of the self-study report.

While there is no firm limit with respect to the length of the report, it would be challenging to address fully the criteria of most self-study protocols in less than 15 pages of narrative (exclusive of appendices).

Departments are asked to submit a final draft of the report to SAIRO for review of completeness prior to submitting the final report to the EMG and the External Review Panel. SAIRO will review the report to make sure it meets program review expectations and provide detailed constructive feedback if revisions are necessary. Departments should allow at least two weeks for this review. The EMG supervisor for the department will be copied on SAIRO's feedback and is responsible for ensuring that the final report appropriately incorporates the revisions. Once the EMG supervisor for the department has determined that the self-study is complete, a copy of the final draft of the report should be shared with the EMG and a meeting scheduled with the EMG to

discuss the report, preliminary findings, and external review issues. At this meeting the EMG and department director and self-study coordinator will collaboratively develop the content of the external review issues statement.

The final self-study report should be submitted in electronic format. If electronic copies of all materials are not available, unbound print copies of those documents should be submitted. A copy of the self-study report should be submitted to:

- a) Each member of the External Review Panel at least two weeks prior to their visit
- b) The Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs
- c) The member of the Student Affairs EMG who supervises the department undergoing program review
- d) The Director of SAIRO

Lessons Learned

Facilitating the Self-Study Process

- Developing a detailed and realistic self-study timeline is a critical step towards ensuring the self-study process is completed in a timely manner.
- The department director and program review coordinator play important roles in creating a climate of inquiry that promotes critical reflection and constructive self-criticism.
- The department director and program review coordinator need to work collaboratively to design and facilitate a program review process that engages the entire department. As one external reviewer noted, “There is a difference between [the staff] being aware of program review and being engaged in program review.”
- Student members may initially be intimidated or hesitant to offer candid feedback. Make sure to intentionally engage them in the process.

Writing the Self-Study Report

- Be sure to write the report for an external audience (e.g., external reviewers, Executive Management Group, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs) who are likely not familiar with organizational context, departmental acronyms, etc.
- Please include detailed organizational info (e.g., budget, org structures, etc.) to help external reviewers understand the scope of the organization and daily operations.
- Integrate assessment results and data in self-study narrative to demonstrate the role of assessment in informing organizational decisions and practice.
- To ensure the development of a concise yet comprehensive self-study report, it is important to be intentional regarding the inclusion and organization of supporting documentation and data (e.g., strategic use of appendices).
- Given that the development of the self-study report can be a time consuming task for one person, SAIRO encourages the department program review coordinator to distribute responsibility for drafting the self-study narrative among self-study panel members.

Step 3: External Program Review Site Visit and Report (2-3 months)

I. Identification/Formation of External Review Panel and Site Visit Scheduled

The External Department Review Panel will consist of 2-3 people from outside the University with expertise in the area(s) being reviewed. Although the Department under review may select anyone from other universities, other non-profits, or the private sector who has relevant knowledge and expertise, Departments are strongly encouraged to consider their UC colleagues and counterparts as members of the External Review Panel. Further, since UCLA draws the majority of its undergraduate students from California, colleagues from other public and private colleges in the state may also serve as valuable members of External Review Panel.

The process for selecting members of the External Review Panel will be as follows:

- a) The department Director will generate a list of potential external panel participants. This list will include twice the number of names (i.e., 4-6) than there are slots to fill. Sound rationale should be presented for why each person has been nominated. If there is an order of preference, the names on the list must be presented in priority order.
- b) This list of proposed panel members will be forwarded to the EMG supervisor for the department who will share with the EMG for consideration. The EMG will respond in one of the following ways:
 - a. Approval of the list of potential External Review Panel members as submitted.
 - b. Approval of the list of potential External Review Panel members in a different priority order.
 - c. A request for additional names to be considered for External Review Panel members. If the EMG provides this response, the Director of the department under review will repeat processes VI.A.1-2 until they receive EMG approval.
- c) Invitations to serve on an external review panel may come from the EMG supervisor, Vice Chancellor, or the department director. Please see Appendix J for an external review invitation letter template which can be customized to meet the department's unique needs (e.g., identify specific external review dates, specify amount of honorarium). While invitations to participate as a reviewer may be sent simultaneously with the work of the self-study committee, the external review dates should not be finalized until a draft of the report is completed to ensure enough time for review of the self-study draft by SAIRO and the EMG prior to sending to the external reviewers.
- d) Once the panel is confirmed, the department is responsible for scheduling the 2-3 day site visit and establishing the agenda. The Director of the department under review must be present for the site visit. When possible, the Department should also schedule the site visit for a time when the member of the EMG who supervises

the department undergoing program review and the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs are on campus. For additional information on the external review process, please see the External Review Guide prepared by SAIRO. This document may be downloaded from the SAIRO Program Review website (http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program_review.html).

Lessons Learned

Factors to consider when identifying potential external reviewers:

- Strategic priorities - Who possesses knowledge in a particular area of strategic interest to the department?
- Accountability of reviewers – Who can you count on to submit a quality external review report in a timely manner?
- Budget – What funding is available for site visit expenditures (e.g., airfare, lodging, meals, etc)?

The External Review Panel, as experts in the field, will be encouraged to evaluate the department in its national context and provide insight and feedback on issues and trends particular to the departmental operations being reviewed. The external reviewers will receive and are asked to study the Department Self-Study Report and supporting documents in advance of their site visit. The program review coordinator should ensure that external reviewers receive materials a minimum of two weeks in advance of their visit. Coordinators should keep this in mind when developing self-study and external review timelines. The site visit should span a 2-3 day period to allow sufficient time for the reviewers to meet with members of the Self-Study Panel, department staff, administrators, faculty, students, and others; to visit facilities; and to meet as a review team to discuss points that will be included in their analysis.

The department and Self-Study Panel are encouraged to solicit insight from the External Review Panel regarding questions and issues they would like to discuss from a viewpoint that is external to the university, that is broader in scope (e.g., from a regional, national or disciplinary perspective), or for which members of the External Review Panel are more qualified to answer. This External Review Issues Statement should be attached to the self-study report and submitted to the External Review Panel prior to their visit. Further, a detailed agenda for the visit should be established well in advance of the site visit to allow for adequate time to schedule meetings, prepare materials, reserve rooms, etc. Copies of the External Review Issues Statement and the schedule/agenda should be provided to all members of the Self-Study Panel, the Director of SAIRO, the member of the Student Affairs EMG that supervises the department under review, and the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.

It is expected that the External Review Panel will adhere to the schedule and address the list of questions and issues provided by the Self-Study Panel. However, it is also anticipated that the background and expertise of the External Review Panel members may help them identify other, related areas and topics of interest during the site visit. As such, all members of the Self-Study Review Panel and External Review Panel are

expected to remain open to the different issues and questions that are raised by all participants in the site visit.

At the conclusion of their visit, the External Review Panel will meet with the Director of the department, selected department staff, and members of the Self-Study Panel to share their initial observations. Within 4 - 6 weeks after their visit, the External Review Panel will be asked to provide a written assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, operational practices, leadership, and opportunities for the department. Appendix K provides a suggested outline for the External Review Report. The External Review Report should be submitted directly to the department Director who will then distribute copies to the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, the member of EMG who supervises the department, the Self-Study Panel, and the Director of SAIRO. For additional information on the external review process, please see the External Review Guide provided by SAIRO. This document may be downloaded from the SAIRO Program Review website (http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program_review.html).

Lessons Learned

- In the interest of avoiding defensive responses to external reviewer questions, it is important that the department director and program review coordinator communicate the purpose and value of the external review site visit and encourage staff to share candid reflections on departmental programs, services, and performance.
- Past external review teams have placed a high value on student interaction. Please take student schedules into consideration when developing the external review site visit agenda.
- Be sure to provide time for the external review panel to meet privately. The reviewers will need this time to get acquainted, develop questions, share reflections, and begin organizing information for the external review report.

Step 4: Developing the Department Action Plan (2-3 months)

Upon receiving the External Review Report, the department staff will initiate the development of an action plan that reflects the information, insights and recommendations included in both the External Review Report and the Self-Study Report. The departmental action plan should specify proposed goals, annual objectives and implementation strategies, responsible parties, and methods of evaluation. If there are External Review Panel recommendations that the department is not in agreement with, the action plan should acknowledge these differences in thinking and where appropriate, present alternative recommendations.

The completed Department Action Plan will be submitted to the EMG supervisor for the department for review and approval. Once approved, the department will be asked to present a final summary of the program review process, findings, and action plan to

the EMG and submit an electronic copy of the action plan to SAIRO. This will represent the end of the active program review process.

For those departments using a CAS Self-Assessment Guide as the framework for the unit's program review self-study, Work Forms A, B, and C are intended to facilitate the development of an action plan. It is important to note, however, that although the CAS work forms do not address the development of action plans related to external review recommendations, the departmental action plan should reflect the findings and recommendations from both the self-study and external review reports.

Please see Appendix L for additional guidance on the development and formatting of program review action plans.

Step 5: Implementing the Department Action Plan (final month and beyond)

Progress on the Department Action Plan will be evaluated via updates included in the department's annual budget report and annual year-end reports. Further, the Department Action Plan will represent the foundation of the pre-review preparation for the next cycle of program review six years later.