



## Student Affairs Program Review Process

*The Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) is the research and assessment office within UCLA’s Student Affairs organization. The mission of SAIRO is to support the learning and development of the whole student by providing reliable, timely and useful information about students and their experiences; developing the capacity of student affairs and other stakeholders to collect, interpret, and utilize data to enhance the quality of students’ educational experience and environment; and by helping Student Affairs units assess and document the effectiveness of their programs and practices.*

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### Introduction & Purpose

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 summarized in this document provide an important step 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.

### Guiding Principles of Program Review

- The Student Affairs Program Review process is a formative assessment tool designed to enhance organizational performance.
- The program review guidelines are informed by and serve to advance the unique mission, values, and aspirations of UCLA Student Affairs.
- The program review process reflects the values that have historically guided Student Affairs assessment activities (e.g., respect for students, quality programs, effective use of organizational resources).

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

## Program Review Cycle

Student Affairs department reviews occur on a six-year cycle. The Director of Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) in consultation with members of the Student Affairs Executive Management Group (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 Students 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.

### Program Review Process & Timeline

The Student Affairs Program Review process consists of the five steps outlined below:

1. Pre-review Preparation (3-4 months)
2. Department Self-Study/Report (5-6 months)
3. External Program Review/Site Visit/Report (2-3 months)
4. Develop Department Action Plan (2-3 months)
5. Implement Department Action Plan (final month and beyond)

A brief description of each step is provided in this document. Please see the Student Affairs Program Review Guidelines (available at SAIRO's website: [www.sairo.ucla.edu/program\\_review.html](http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program_review.html)) for a complete description of the program review process.

The Program Review process takes approximately 16 months to complete. 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. Actual time for each step may vary according to the department and the unique needs of each review. The 16 month schedule, however, creates a timeline that serves to structure and standardize the review process.

## Program Review Budget

The Student Affairs Program Review process requires a commitment of time and resources from everyone involved. It is assumed that financial support for all steps in the program review process will be absorbed at the department level. Limited funding may be available from the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.

### Step I: Pre-Review Preparation

#### A. Notification in writing to Department(s) Scheduled for Review

Using the established six-year review calendar, 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

#### B. Department Review Orientation Meeting

The Director of SAIRO will meet with the staff of the department undergoing review in order to discuss the review process, answer questions and provide clarification about the process, and to help create a participatory process of program review in which all staff members are engaged and involved.

#### C. Identification of Self-Study Protocol.

A plan for the self-study will be developed by the Director of the department in consultation with the member of the Student Affairs EMG who supervises the department undergoing program review. Following are the four recommended choices for a self-study format:

1. UCLA Student Affairs Program Review Self-Study Guidelines
2. Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment Guide
3. Any mandated or optional professional accreditation process.
4. Industry standards and guidelines for self-study.

#### D. Data Audit

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

1. A review of assessment activities conducted at the department level. The topics and template for this review are located in Appendix I of the Program Review materials (see [http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program\\_review.html](http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program_review.html)). The audit should include a discussion of department-level efforts to collect data as well as external assessment efforts (e.g., participation in CAS self-assessment or industry benchmarking studies).
2. A review of data collected at the organizational (i.e., Student Affairs at large) or institutional levels. This can include survey data (e.g., CIRP Freshman Survey, UCUES) or qualitative data that capture students' experiences with the department or information on those developmental processes that the department intends to foster in students.
3. The collection and review of departmental operational data relevant to specific questions posed in the self-study protocol.

### **E. Formation of Self-Study Review Panel**

The Director of the department will, in consultation with department staff, identify/invite people to serve as members of the self-study team. Student Affairs leadership suggests a team of 5-8 members. Please use the following guidelines in the development of the panel:

1. **External Members:** One member of the Self-Study Review Panel must be external to the department. Some suggestions for this member include:
  - Advisory panel/council representative
  - Director of another Student Affairs department
  - Faculty member or colleague from an academic department
2. **Student Members:** UCLA students are the primary constituent of our efforts. Thus, the Self-Study Review Panel must include at least one student.
3. **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

## **Step 2: Department Self-Study/Report**

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.

The purpose of the Department Self-Study Report should be to:

1. Outline the department's objectives, priorities, resources, programs, and strategic plans as well as its position within Student Affairs and the University.
2. 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.
3. Define ways, primarily within existing resources, that the department can continue to improve in the quality of its programs, services, activities, and operations.
4. Provide evidence of the excellence and effectiveness of its programs, activities, services, and operations.
5. Identify priorities and key questions for external review.

## **Step 3: External Review Visit**

The External Review Panel will consist of 2-3 people from outside the University with expertise in the area(s) being reviewed. The department is responsible for scheduling the 2-3 day site visit and establishing the agenda in consultation with the EMG.

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

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receive and are asked to study the Department Self-Study Report and supporting documents in advance of their site visit. 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. These questions should be 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.

Within six 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.

#### **Step 4: Developing the Action Plan**

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Following consultation with the Self-Study Panel, department staff, and the EMG, the department will develop a plan of action that addresses the recommendations outlined in the Program Review Report prepared by the External Review Panel as well as reflects information and insights included in the Self-

Study Report. The departmental action plan should specify proposed actions, implementation strategies, an action timeline, and responsible parties for carrying out each action. 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 member of the Student Affairs EMG that supervises the department under review for review and approval. The department will also present their action plan to the EMG.

#### **Step 5: Implementing the Department Action Plan**

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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 points and progress on the Department Action Plan will represent the foundation of the pre-review preparation for the next cycle of program review six years later.

Please review the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review Guidelines, available on the Student Affairs Information and Research Office website ([www.sairo.ucla.edu](http://www.sairo.ucla.edu)) for a complete description of the program review process as well as links to all relevant program review documents. If you have questions about the program review guidelines or process, please contact SAIRO at (310) 206-8470 or [sairo@soanet.ucla.edu](mailto:sairo@soanet.ucla.edu).