

# **UCLA**

## **Student Affairs Program Review External Review Guide 2016-2017**

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## Introduction

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Thank you for volunteering your time and expertise as an external program reviewer for the UCLA Student Affairs Organization. The external review is a vital component of the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review process as it provides the division and department staff with a valuable external perspective on the unit's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. In conjunction with the findings of the department's self-study, the external review panel's candid insights and recommendations for addressing key issues will inform the department's strategic planning activities and provide a constructive base for future improvements. As an external program reviewer, you play an important role in helping Student Affairs realize its commitment to continuous programmatic improvement. On behalf of the students and staff who will benefit from your participation in the Student Affairs Program Review process, thank you again for the valuable contribution of your time and knowledge.

This guide contains information on the external review panel's roles and responsibilities. For a detailed discussion of the entire program review process, please review the *UCLA Student Affairs Program Review Guidelines* available on the UCLA Student Affairs Program Review website: [http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program\\_review.html](http://www.sairo.ucla.edu/program_review.html) or the short Executive Summary document included in your packet.

The Student Affairs Program Review process is co-coordinated by the Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO) and the specific department undergoing review. If you have additional questions about the program review process or your responsibilities as a member of the external review panel, please contact SAIRO (310-206-8470) or the program review coordinator for the department you are reviewing (contact information provided in your packet of department materials).

## Overview of Student Affairs Program Review

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The 2006-2009 Student Affairs Strategic Plan established the goal of developing an evaluation process that would ensure that Student Affairs programs and services are ready and able to meet the needs of an ever-changing student body. The adoption and implementation of a systematic program review process represents 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 and contribute to substantive improvement.
- 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).

Guided by the principles outlined above, the departmental program review process ensures the continuation of high quality programs and services in Student Affairs and makes sure that the department's offerings are central to the role and mission, priorities, and strategic goals of Student Affairs and the University.

Student Affairs department reviews occur on a six-year cycle. Program review is a sixteen month process that includes the following five steps:

*Step 1: Pre-Review Preparation* – Selection and recruitment of self-study panel members, identification of the self-study protocol, an audit of departmental and organizational assessment data of relevance to the department's program review, and a review of best practices and emerging trends that may impact the department in the future.

*Step 2: Department Self-Study & Report* – Preparation of a self-study report organized according to the selected protocol format. Identification of external review priorities.

*Step 3: External Program Review* – External review panel site visit (approximately 2-3 days) and submission of external review report.

*Step 4: Action Plan* – Development of a departmental action plan that addresses the issues and recommendations outlined in the self-study and external review reports.

*Step 5: Implementing the Action Plan* – Evaluation of department action plan progress via updates included in the department’s annual planning processes.

### **Selection of External Review Panel**

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At the beginning of the program review process, department staff members are asked to identify individuals who possess outside expertise in the specific programmatic area(s) under review and are therefore ideal candidates for the external review panel.

Specifically, the department is asked to nominate individuals who lead highly efficient and effective units, provide leadership in the field, and/or who are recognized for implementing best practices. The list of potential external review panel members is submitted to the Executive Management Group (EMG) of Student Affairs for approval. The EMG, department director and department program review coordinator collaboratively select 2-3 individuals from the list and extend invitations to serve on the external review panel.

### **Roles & Responsibilities of External Review Panel**

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One of the primary strengths of the program review process is the involvement of non-university personnel who have expertise in the specific programmatic area(s) undergoing review. The external reviewers are asked to evaluate the department within its national and institutional contexts, provide recommendations for improvement, and offer insight on trends and issues of particular relevance to the department.

In addition to participating in a 2-3 day site visit, external reviewers are responsible for collaborating on the development of an external review report which highlights the department's strengths, opportunities for improvement, and the reviewers' perspectives on the issues and questions articulated in the department's self-study report and issues statement. It is the expectation that the reviewers will be critical and constructive in their review, providing the department with substantive ideas and suggestions for how to improve the work of the department in the future. Please see Appendix A for a suggested report outline. The final draft of the external review report is to be submitted to the department director within 4 – 6 weeks of the site visit.

## **Site Visit**

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Once the external review panel has been selected and confirmed, the department undergoing review will work with the external reviewers to coordinate the details of the site visit.

*Travel Arrangements* – All travel, lodging, meals, and other expenses associated with the site visit will be reimbursed. The department undergoing review will make hotel reservations and flight arrangements prior to the visit. Other expenses are reimbursed after the visit upon submission of receipts. Please direct all questions regarding travel arrangements and reimbursement to your department contact.

*Background Information* – In preparation for the campus visit, external reviewers will receive the following information:

- Background information on UCLA, the Division of Student Affairs, and the department undergoing review
- Department's self-study report
- External review issues statement – an overview of the key issues and questions identified during the self-study process that the department and EMG would like external reviewers to discuss during the site visit and address in their final report
- Itinerary and travel information

*Itinerary* – The campus visit will begin with a brief orientation session co-facilitated by SAIRO and the chair of the department’s program review committee and/or the department director. During the course of the site visit, external reviewers will also meet with the department director, the department’s professional staff, the self-study panel, the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and/or Assistant/Associate Vice Chancellor responsible for oversight of the department, as well as campus and community stakeholders (e.g., students, advisory board members, community partners, etc.). Additionally, time will be set aside for the external reviewers to meet privately in order to discuss their initial observations, draft a plan for writing the final report, and prepare for the debriefing session with the self-study team.

Specific goals for a few of these external review meetings are outlined below:

*Self-Study Panel & Department Program Review Committee*<sup>1</sup>: In addition to answering questions posed by the external reviewers, the self-study panel may use this meeting time to elaborate upon the questions and issues raised in the external review issues statement.

*Professional Staff*: Professional staff will be invited to meet with the external reviewers one-on-one or in functional groups. These meetings are an opportunity for staff to discuss issues of interest as well as for external reviewers to explore questions or critical issues identified in the external review issues statement prepared by the self-study panel.

*Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and/or Associate Vice Chancellor*: This meeting is intended to provide external reviewers with an opportunity to become familiar with how the department fits into the larger Student Affairs organization. More specifically, external reviewers may use this meeting to explore how the department’s programs, services, policies, and/or strategic priorities contribute to the advancement of Student Affairs’ broader organizational mission and strategic vision (see Appendix B for the Student Affairs Strategic Priorities 2012-15, and [https://diversity.ucla.edu/strategic-plan/StudentAffairs\\_Report.pdf](https://diversity.ucla.edu/strategic-plan/StudentAffairs_Report.pdf) for the SA Diversity Strategic Plan).

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<sup>1</sup> The self-study panel includes department staff members, students, and at least one university representative from outside the department.

## **External Review Report**

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External reviewers are asked to draft a joint written report that assesses the department's strengths and limitations, operational practices, overall organizational performance, leadership, and opportunities for improvement. Although SAIRO has developed a suggested report outline (see Appendix A), external reviewers are free to modify this outline in the interest of developing a comprehensive report which addresses the questions and issues posed by the self-study panel as well as sheds light on additional matters of interest and/or concern from the perspective of the external reviewers.

A draft electronic copy of the external reviewers' report should be sent to the department director within 4-6 weeks of the site visit. The director will review the report for factual errors and/or necessary content clarification and work with the external reviewers to develop an accurate and complete final report. Upon completion, the final external review report will be submitted to the department director, who will distribute copies to the self-study panel and/or the program review committee, the Director of SAIRO, the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, and the member of the Student Affairs Executive Management Group who supervises the department under review.

## **After the Site Visit**

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*Reimbursement for site visit expenses:* The department contact will provide external reviewers with information regarding the University's reimbursement policies and procedures. Please be sure to keep all site visit receipts as you will need to submit the receipts with your expense report.



## **APPENDIX A SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT**

Drawing upon insights gleaned from the site visit and a review of the department's self-study report, external reviewers are asked to draft a joint written report that provides an assessment of the department's organizational performance as well as offers substantive recommendations for future improvements. Although SAIRO has developed a suggested report outline (see below), reviewers are free to modify this outline in the interest of developing a comprehensive report which addresses the questions and issues posed by the self-study panel as well as sheds light on additional matters of interest and/or concern. SAIRO asks that the external reviewers submit the report directly to the department director within 4-6 weeks of the site visit.

The external review report should address the following topics:

- A. Department mission and key goals:** Briefly discuss insights and observations regarding the department's success in achieving its mission and strategic goals. Comment on the department's contribution to the Division's broader organizational mission and strategic vision.
- B. Strengths:** Identify aspects of the department that advance the organization's capacity for building and sustaining performance excellence.
- C. Limitations:** Identify aspects of the department that hinder the organization's capacity for building and sustaining performance excellence.
- D. Measuring performance results:** Address how successful the department is in determining intended learning and development outcomes, and/or specific business and service outcomes, user satisfaction, financial performance, and other noteworthy performance results related to organizational effectiveness. Discuss the relevance of key performance measures the department uses to track results.
- E. Organizational challenges:** Discuss the key program/service, operational, resource, and campus environment challenges facing the department.
- F. Opportunities for improvement:** Provide specific recommendations for improving upon current strengths, addressing organizational limitations, and increasing the department's effectiveness and efficiency.
- G. Additional insights:** This section can be used to address any remaining questions or concerns raised in the self-study report or site visit that have not been discussed in other sections of the report.
- H. Concluding comments**

## **APPENDIX B STUDENT AFFAIRS PRIORITIES: 2012-2016**

The Student Affairs departments provide programs and services to address virtually every area of our students' needs outside the classroom, from academic and financial support to health to personal development. While the present plan addresses specific institutional priorities and organizational goals for the next three years, it should be understood that the on-going work of every Student Affairs department and every member of our staff is integral to the ultimate success of every UCLA student and the success of our efforts.

As Student Affairs professionals, we have a collective responsibility for advancing Student Affairs' mission. We aspire to be flexible and responsive as an organization, strive to re-examine ourselves continuously and revise staffing patterns and organizational structures appropriately better to serve students, to meet the changing expectations of the campus, and achieve our goals as fully and effectively as possible.

### **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 our students' relationship with the broader UCLA family, including alumni.

As the rapidly changing nature of the world around us is reflected in our student population, the needs and expectations of our students are evolving in dynamic and challenging ways. While UCLA understands the critical importance of progressing along with our students, we also know that any process of evolution must be grounded on enduring ideals, such as the *True Bruin Values* and our *Principles of Community*. The campus area best situated to foster the richness of experience and address these challenges through ongoing interaction with our students is Student Affairs. Our goal is to help our students thrive and address emerging challenges with constructive, open attitudes.

## Student Affairs Priorities

### 1. Ensure student welfare: a focus on diversity and campus climate; and a focus on health and wellness.

#### Diversity and campus climate

UCLA is proud to have an extremely diverse and rapidly transforming student population. While such a student population brings us a wealth of experiences and intellectual creativity, it also comes with inherent challenges.

It is vital that we strengthen and refine our ability to listen to all students from all backgrounds, communities, and nationalities in order to ensure that we hear what they have to say about their needs and interests, and help them articulate their experiences, challenges, and aspirations. Moreover, as the number of international undergraduates on campus increases over the next few years, significant cultural differences will need to be incorporated in our student life. This engagement is the first step towards building a common agenda among students, Student Affairs, and all campus constituencies. Input from students must be gathered, examined and shared at every level of the Student Affairs organization, with the campus, with parents, and with friends of UCLA in multiple and meaningful ways. We must gather information in both formal and informal ways. Survey instruments such as the Diverse Learning Environments survey, the Senior survey, and UCUES will provide excellent broad-based data. At the same time, program reviews, departmental surveys and informal observations from staff in offices, as well as feedback from involved students, are invaluable.

A key concept in the planning process is the belief that the term *diversity* has multiple meanings. In a rapidly changing student-centered landscape, we must remain alert to changes, and provide quick and flexible responses. For the purposes of our work in Student Affairs, the concept of diversity centers on acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These differences can exist along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, immigration status and nationality, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, ability, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies and thought.

Our approach to diversity is about the exploration of these differences in positive and nurturing environments. Further, it is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity shared by each individual, and coexisting in the complex landscape of our campus community. It is important that all members of the UCLA community understand the importance and value of an inclusive climate and are introduced to the UCLA Principles of Community at the beginning of their affiliation with the university. Therefore, our programs attempt to reach a larger and wider cadre of students, especially in their first year at UCLA. These efforts must be undertaken in

partnership with our student leaders and the many initiatives they lead. As a community we must move forward together to realize these goals.

We also recognize that the parents and families of our students comprise a crucial part of the UCLA “family.” We will expand our outreach and service to parents and families through collaborations and partnerships with Student Affairs and External Affairs. The focus will be both to engage with parents and families during the college selection process as well as tailor our outreach efforts to their diverse aspirations, needs and concerns.

### **Focus on health and wellness**

Student Affairs has been, and continues to be, attentive to the health and well-being of students. Both research and professional experience show that the most productive definition of “health and wellness” in a college campus must incorporate concepts such as campus climate, sense of belonging, and a variety of experiential factors (see 1a. above). In addition, institutional initiatives related to policy design, staff training and creative space planning support individual and programmatic efforts in creating healthy environments<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, Student Affairs can take a leadership role promulgating overall campus awareness and understanding of the health and well-being needs of students.

All Student Affairs units must be attentive to the well-being of our students. While some offices will be responsible for direct services and interventions and others will conduct educational programs, all must be aware of the campus conditions and individual circumstances that affect wellness. Moreover, we will need to know about the resources that exist for students on campus in order to be effective in our interactions with students who may need assistance. It is critical for all staff members that regularly interact with students in distress intervene and make effective referrals to assist students in crisis.

Focusing on evaluation and assessment, Student Affairs will foster the physical and emotional health and wellness of our students through the extensive programs offered by our units. As the campus embarks on the “Healthy Campus Initiative” (currently in development), the success of the initiative will in large part require that all of the campus, including students, to consider healthy choices as a major goal in determining a variety of campus programs, services and policies<sup>3</sup>. Elements of this initiative will include programmatic offerings around healthy decision-making, education of campus staff regarding their role in supporting student well-being, and consideration of health and wellness impacts of space and facilities planning.

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<sup>2</sup> Michael S. Goldstein, *Healthy Campus Initiative*, proposal for the sponsorship group meeting dated January 23, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

## **2. *Meet students where they are: focus on leadership development and professional readiness supporting the development of our future global leaders.***

UCLA has a distinguished legacy of preparing leaders from all backgrounds who have made significant contributions all over the world. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our focus has widened to include top students and future leaders from across the globe. Our programs and services are expansive, and now we must develop a clearer focus and combine efforts within Student Affairs and with campus colleagues. We must develop a strategic direction that links deliberate skill development to the student experience with success at UCLA and beyond.

An exciting new element in our co-curricular programming will emerge as our growing population of international undergraduates offers opportunities for a new, more intentional exposure to cultural differences for domestic students. UCLA graduates will be international leaders in politics, business, the sciences, the arts, the non-profit arena, and more. In Student Affairs, we aspire to provide a landscape of experiences, educational opportunities, formal and informal relationships, and opportunities to establish and solidify values that will prepare our students to lead with integrity, with strong multi-cultural understanding and competencies, and with a sense of responsibility for the future. We must be aware of and responsive to the needs and expectations of our increasingly diverse population of national and international students. Again, we must improve our capacity to listen to our many student constituents to best understand their varying needs and goals. We will use the data collected by campus and national entities to understand and contextualize the aspirations of our students to best determine the types of experiences and interventions needed to assist in both their short-term transition to the university and best to prepare them for their futures beyond the campus.

Student Affairs will look internally for ways to collaborate across units to enhance leadership development for our students. Collaborators will bring together several partners internally and externally to create a set of competencies and experiences for students as well as develop a central website to act as a clearinghouse for all campus student leadership development efforts. Leadership development is critical for workforce preparedness which is increasingly a key component of the student experience. By providing leadership positions, internships, and employment opportunities, student affairs units give students real world experiences in working with others, practicing professional principles, and designing and implementing action oriented solutions to real life problems. Student Affairs programs already provide graduate internships and graduate research positions for students to learn about positions in higher education and contribute to the profession. Many programs empower our students to step in to the world, test their intellectual creativity and leadership skills, and address a variety of challenges on campus and in local communities.

### **3. Support the academic enterprise and institutional goals: a focus on enrollment management.<sup>4</sup>**

An essential purpose of Student Affairs is to enhance the quality in the educational experience of students and complement the academic enterprise from recruitment to graduation. Student Affairs will be measured and valued by how well and how directly it contributes to the broad educational experience of UCLA students and to the achievement of institutional aspirations. Enrollment management is a broad institutional process that encompasses the campus. UCLA has made substantial progress in its efforts to increase the number of both non-resident domestic and international students in order to enrich domestic and international diversity and provide stability to University revenues. These efforts need to be sustained and further enhanced in order to implement the Chancellor's plan fully. In the near term, the enrollment goals stated by Chancellor Block will be an institutional priority (See endnote). Student Affairs departments must work to develop services and programs to meet the needs of non-resident students and assist the campus community to respond to the changing dynamics of our student population. Student Affairs departments will find innovative ways to partner with the academic enterprise to support goals for retention, persistence, and time to degree.

We will design and implement new programs aimed at improving the enrollment yield of the high-achieving admitted first-year students and establish metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of these new programs. We must coordinate internally with outreach programs, recruiters in the academic units, and our marketing colleagues to develop consistent UC messages in the outreach and recruitment of prospective undergraduates. In addition, substantive engagement with underserved populations will remain essential for connecting our overall efforts to the community.

Affordability of higher education is a significant priority for current and incoming undergraduates and their families. Identifying and cultivating opportunities to provide more students with more financial support will address the affordability concerns of students and families. We must focus resources to help students and families learn about the best ways to pay for higher education, assist students with financial concerns, and implement financial literacy programs. In addition, all staff must continue to reach out to students with urgent financial needs and look for opportunities to streamline our processes to extend our services more efficiently.

### **4. Steward Student Affairs resources: focus on Student Affairs' human, fiscal, IT, and space resources.**

The Student Affairs professionals serve our students and our campus colleagues in countless ways and comprise our single most valuable resource. We will extend our efforts to maintain the excellence of our staff through a broad range of educational and training programs and professional development opportunities. Our progress in

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<sup>4</sup> From 2009-10 to 2013-14, 2,400 paying non-residents will be added to the undergraduate enrollment, thereby increasing the number of non-residents from 2,285 in 2009-10 to 4,685 in 2013-14.

achieving increasingly high quality work outcomes, enhancing our standards of performance, and accomplishing our institutional purposes must persist especially in a severely constrained financial environment. Therefore, we must explore, in partnership with students and campus colleagues, extramural resources, fee-for-service options, and grant opportunities whenever sound possibilities present themselves.

One of the greatest assets of our organization is the ongoing improvement of our services through the breadth and quality of technological applications. It will be essential to be on the leading edge in this respect and develop models that balance technological efficiencies with a level of responsiveness that respects individual needs and the value of human interaction. Similarly, it is essential that all Student Affairs staff, regardless of title or department, be responsive to students' needs. Whenever a student approaches a staff member with a question, problem or need, that staff member should provide, or have the information necessary, to refer the student to the proper resources and services. In a very large and complex campus community, each of us has a pivotal role in supporting the success of each of our students. In addition, Student Affairs departments will work with our administration to develop programs that provide staff with new information and skills to engage our increasingly diverse and multi-cultural population.

Our continuing efforts to utilize existing spaces and physical resources and new facilities to the greatest benefit of our students will be informed by the Healthy Campus Initiative, compliance standards, and analysis of student activities and service needs. We will complete the Space Strategic Plan that inventories space assigned to Student Affairs, documents the organization's space priorities, and catalogs future student services space needs. Programs will include planning for new and the renovated facilities to consider space usage for recreation, student housing, and the Unity Center, a recent student initiative to establish a multicultural center on campus.

Technology is an opportunity to provide effective and efficient service to our students. We will employ an enterprise approach to technology to maintain our leadership in the delivery of services and to meet the high expectations set by today's technically savvy population. This enterprise approach will help Student Affairs strengthen and streamline its technology future, deploy modern applications and develop a culture of data driven decision making. In addition, Student Affairs has partnered with other campus IT service providers to streamline our students' web experience at UCLA. The new Integrated Web Experience (IWE) initiative will seamlessly connect online student services, which currently are fragmented along organizational lines.

Finally, student affairs must look inward to recognize its own efforts and to discover new potential and direction to manage the evolution of the student body and the campus environment in innovative and creative ways. We will refine our Unit Review process more clearly to define areas for change and development. We will improve assessment efforts capabilities across the Student Affairs organization through the adoption of Campus Labs Baseline product. Moreover, these review processes we will help us identify training and development needs for our student affairs staff, opportunities for realigning our efforts and redeploy talent and define mechanisms for recognition.