

## ACADEMIC AND/OR TEACHING UNIT REVIEW

### SELF-STUDY GUIDELINES

The self-study report should be factual and explicit. The self-study report should look at strengths as well as weaknesses (focusing on past seven years) and discuss what the unit is doing to address the weaknesses. Bear in mind that the most effective self-study narrative uses data as an integral part of its analysis.

The following outline provides guidelines for areas to be addressed, although each unit will have specific priorities and areas of emphasis. This process should include input from representatives of all constituencies including faculty, staff, students, and advisory groups, as appropriate. OIRA will assist in providing data and working with units in the analysis of data and other information, as needed.

#### **I. Academic and/or Teaching Unit Overview**

- A. Provide a brief overview of the state of the academic field or discipline and how this unit is positioned within the field or discipline. What if any opportunities or challenges arise from where AU's academic and/or teaching unit is situated within the field or discipline?
- B. Address the number of faculty and students in the unit over the past seven years and the expectations for the unit's size in the future.
- C. Evaluate any centers, institutes or interdisciplinary academic programs housed in the unit.
- D. Provide a brief statement on how the unit's mission and vision fit within the School and University's strategic plans.

#### **II. Academic and/or Teaching Unit Self-Examination**

Choose 2-3 aspirational schools whose comparison informs the following analysis.

##### **A. Faculty and Faculty Scholarship**

1. Evaluate the stature and reputation of the faculty with an emphasis on achievement in the past seven years. Include comparative information, where available, on per faculty publications, citations, grants, awards, and other international, national, or regional recognition.
2. Evaluate the scope and quality of faculty teaching.
3. Address faculty contributions to interdisciplinary scholarship, teaching, and other projects in partnership with other AU units, including the Library, and/or outside entities.
4. Address the unit's efficacy in balancing expectations for faculty scholarship with teaching and mentoring of students. To what extent is scholarship linked with improvement of teaching and learning? Identify new opportunities in interdisciplinary teaching and research that could be developed. How do current and potential future activities relate to the new strategic plan?
5. Evaluate the efficacy of unit activities related to recruitment, appointment, tenure and promotion of faculty.
6. Evaluate the efficacy of efforts related to the diversity of the faculty.
7. Evaluate the efficacy of efforts related to mentorship of faculty, and of special efforts made to mentor faculty from backgrounds underrepresented in the field, discipline, or unit.

8. Identify up to three recommendations for the unit related to faculty that do not require new resources from central administration.

**B. Educational Programs – Undergraduate Education** (if applicable)

1. Evaluate foci and quality of the undergraduate curriculum, including distinctive learning opportunities (such as Honors in the major, community-based learning experiences, education abroad, internships). Address significant curricular developments in the last seven years, including measures made to make the curriculum more diverse and/or inclusive.
2. Quality of intellectual environment. Be sure to address availability and diversity of types of lectures, performances, and related undergraduate organizations.
3. Evaluate the overall undergraduate experience, including any insights you have gained from student surveys (such as NSSE, Campus Climate, and the Graduation Census), student focus groups, or unit resources. Do students from different backgrounds (*e.g.*, gender, race) seem to have different experiences with the program?
4. Evaluate the measures taken by the department to create inclusive pedagogical approaches.
5. Evaluate faculty mentoring of students along with retention and graduation rates. Please also evaluate special measures taken on behalf of students from groups underrepresented in the university, the department, and the field.
6. Address increases or decreases in majors and minors over the last seven years and the strategies the unit has for developing demand for the major. Pay special attention to whether you have increased or decreased in the number of students from backgrounds underrepresented in the university, the department or the field, and account for those changes.
7. Evaluate undergraduate student distinctions – awards, external fellowships, prizes, publications, creative works, etc.
8. Address innovations in learning modalities.
9. Address unit's contributions to General Education, University College, and University Honors, and to other units and interdisciplinary academic programs.
10. Address the extent to which your curricular assessment and development is informed by emerging trends in the field and in the job market.
11. Address how the unit assesses student learning outcomes and uses this information in curricular development and revision.
12. Identify up to three recommendations related to undergraduate educational programs that do not require new resources from central administration.

**C. Educational Programs – Graduate Education** (if applicable)

1. Evaluate foci and quality of the graduate program(s) and its relationship to areas of distinction in the academic field. Address significant curricular developments in the last seven years.
2. Evaluate the unit's recruitment of graduate students, including number of applications and percentage of applicants accepted and enrolled. Have there been significant changes in recent years? Address increases or decreases in graduate students over the last seven years and the strategies the unit has for developing demand for the graduate programs.

3. Evaluate efforts to increase the numbers of graduate students from populations underrepresented in the university, the discipline, and the department.
4. Address the quality of the intellectual environment. Be sure to address availability and diversity of lectures, performances, and related graduate organizations.
5. Evaluate the overall graduate experience, including any insights you have gained from student surveys (such as NSSE, Campus Climate, and the Graduation Census), student focus groups, or unit resources. Do graduate students from backgrounds underrepresented in the university, the discipline, and the department have different experiences than other students and if so, what measures have been taken to address any problems that have been identified?
6. Evaluate the current availability and quality of graduate internships.
7. Evaluate faculty and academic advising and mentoring; evaluate data on progression, graduation rates, attrition, and time to degree. Describe any efforts relating to students who identify with groups underrepresented in the university, discipline, or department. How have they affected progression, graduation rates, attrition, and time to degree for those students?
8. Evaluate graduate student distinctions – awards, external fellowships, prizes, publications, creative works, etc.
9. Address innovations in learning modalities.
10. Evaluate graduate placement.
11. Address the extent to which your curricular assessment and development is informed by emerging trends in the field and in the job market.
12. Identify up to three recommendations related to graduate educational programs that do not require new resources from central administration.

**D. Facilities, Staff, and Administration**

1. Assess the strengths and adequacy of physical resources, including labs, studios, offices, and meeting spaces.
2. Discuss the strengths and adequacy of the professional and support staff.
3. Evaluate the unit's governance processes, including unit decision making and procedures for oversight of academic program(s). To what extent are term faculty integrated into unit decision making?
4. Identify up to three recommendations related to facilities, staff, and administration that do not require new resources from central administration.

**E. Summary and Future Directions**

Using the analysis developed in the self-study above and drawing on comparisons with aspirational schools and peers, address the following:

1. The overall self-assessment of the academic and/or teaching unit. Include the existing strengths, challenges, and weaknesses. What are the opportunities to enhance existing strengths and build on academic excellence? What are the unit's aspirations and ambitions?

2. Where does the unit stand with regard to its goals for diversity and inclusion? Please address all areas: faculty, undergraduates (students, pedagogy, and curriculum), and graduate programs (students, pedagogy, and curriculum).
3. The positioning of the unit, particularly within the future direction of the academic field or discipline.
4. What existing school-based resources might be reallocated to build on strengths? Identify improvements that would require additional resources from central administration.
5. Are there other important questions that you would like the external review committee to consider?