UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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Co-curricular Program Review Guidelines

AY 2014-2015

Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support

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Review and Assessment of Co-curricular Units:
Guidelines for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Program reviews of co-curricular units are essential to the institution's assessment process. Within the context of administrative and/or service units on campus, assessment involves collecting data and other evidence pertinent to key administrative functions and processes (e.g., effectiveness, quality and efficiency) that support a culture of inquiry and continuous improvement.

At USF, all programs – academic degree, co-curricular, student support and/or service programs - are expected to have an assessment plan that clearly articulates student learning outcomes. The assessment processes and plans in each Unit are central to the program review process, described in detail in this section. As such, staff or faculty members are responsible to develop meaningful and measureable student learning outcomes aligned with USF's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and when relevant, with WSCUC Core Competencies.

These outcomes shall be designed to provide an accurate representation of what students will have learned, can do and value as a result of utilizing the services. Administrative Units can guide this process of assessment by framing their inquiry processes around five key questions:

(1) What is the Unit trying to do?

(2) How well is the Unit doing it?

(3) How can the Unit improve?

(4) What and how does the administrative Unit contribute to the development, learning and growth of students? And,

(5) How can the learning experience be improved?

It is the responsibility of the Unit head or his/her designee to maintain the Unit's assessment plans and to communicate with the Office of Assessment and Accreditation Support. The primary responsibility for implementation of these guidelines resides within the Division of Academic Affairs under the leadership of the Senior Vice Provost.

Statement of Procedures

A Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan (SLOAP) for the Administrative or Service Unit will include, at a minimum, the following elements:

- About the Program Section (Co-curricular, Service Units): Program mission, program goals, program learning outcomes (PLOs) aligned with Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs), and curriculum maps/matrices that clearly identify program learning outcomes and how these are embedded in key functions and assessment activities hosted by your Unit. This map establishes links between PLOs, main activities or Modules (if relevant), ILOs and WSCUC Core Competencies.

- Assessment of Student Learning Section: Staff and/or faculty associated with the service/support Unit will identify a minimum of two direct (e.g., testing, writing samples, reports, activities) and one indirect (e.g., exit surveys, customer satisfaction surveys) measure as the foundation of the assessment plan.

- Data Collection/Analysis Section: This section describes data collection processes used. It also provides quantifiable results for the measures used to report attainment of student learning outcomes.

- Continuous Improvement Section: Data from periodic assessment activities, review of assessment evidence/data, identification of weaknesses through data collection and analysis will be used to meet the University's standards concerning continuous assessment, review, and improvement of administrative processes or Unit services.

- Five Year Action Plan Section: In this section, the Unit describes how it intends to assess every PLO/ILO at least once every five years.

- The Unit head or a designee will systematically review student learning outcomes and the data generated by their respective assessment plans, and make recommendations for assessment plan revisions and/or program modifications based on the evidence from assessment activity. At a minimum, Units should devote at least one formal meeting per year to review their assessment results and planning for curricular refinement.

Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC)

The Institutional Assessment Committee will review and implement changes to policies and procedures for assessment processes as needed. For detailed information about the mission and responsibilities of committee members, please use the following URL:

http://www.usfca.edu/assessment/University_Academic_Assessment_Committee/

Co-curricular and Service Unit Program Reviews

I. Overview

Administrative assessment focuses on processes and/or support services provided to students throughout the institution with the goal of promoting student success. The administrative assessment processes revolve around clearly articulated goals for which measurable outcomes are identified and are systematically and periodically assessed by the Unit. Each administrative/support Unit will complete a comprehensive review every 5 years. These guidelines apply to all co-curricular and service units in the absence of program or unit specific guidelines.

The basic purpose is to examine, assess and develop support services of the highest quality by identifying strengths and weaknesses so that priorities can be established for improvement and modification. The ultimate goal is to promote and maintain academic excellence, and to also ensure that co-curricular activities, services and administrative processes are being efficiently administered and working in ways consistent with the University's mission and values.

II. Components of the Academic Program Review Process

The co-curricular program review process has three major components:

1. Administrative/Service Unit Self-Study

This is a comprehensive report addressing every aspect of the Unit. It should contain the Unit's vision, mission and goals, and make recommendations for improvement and development based upon an overall analysis of data and other evidence. The self-study allows the Unit *to tell its own story* to the external review team and the university administration. The document is posted on the university assessment website.

Please note that the Assessment Plan discussed above is an integral part of this self-study.

2. External Review

The external review team provides an objective outsider's perspective on the quality, effectiveness, and/or productivity of the Unit. After reading the self-study and making a campus visit, the external review team will compile a report that provides an evaluation. The Unit head or designee summarizes the external reviewers' report in the executive summary. The summary is also posted on the university assessment website.

3. Action Plan

The Division head or designee meets with staff or faculty to create the action plan. The action plan structures the implementation of the recommendations in the self-study and the external review report according to a reasonable timetable. There is a follow-up meeting 3

years after the development of the plan.

III. Co-curricular Program Review Timeline

Typically, the program review will follow the timeline outlined below, but changes can be made based on Unit needs:

March-May (one semester before scheduled program review):
The Unit staff and/or faculty is contacted by the Unit head about the program review to discuss expectations and procedures. The Unit begins updating webpage information (faculty, and/or staff profiles, service or key function descriptions, etc.), if necessary. The Unit begins the selection of their list of six external reviewers and nominees that will be submitting to the Division head.

March-May and August-October:
The Unit plans and holds meeting(s) and/or retreat(s) to discuss and plan the self-study and external reviewer nominee list.

September 10th:
This is the last day a department/program can submit a list of six nominees for the external review team to the Division head without negatively impacting his/her ability to obtain a reviewer (or reviewers) from the department's list.

October 15st:
This is the last day for the Unit to submit a draft of their self-study document for comments from the Division head or designee.

October-November:
The Unit meets with the Division head or designee to discuss the first draft. Final draft is expected by December 1st.

February 1st:
The Unit's self-study is due to external reviewers.

February-April:
The external review team visits the campus, usually for two days.

May-August:
The Division head receives the external reviewers' report and forwards it to the Unit. The self-study, the external reviewers' report, and an executive summary of the reviewers' report are sent to the Senior Vice Provost. The Senior Vice Provost forwards the information to the executive summary to the Academic Affairs Committee or another relevant committee of the Board of Trustees. The self-study and executive summary of the external reviewers' report are posted on the University Assessment website.

The Unit will also be sent a copy of the executive summary.

May-December:
The Unit meets with the Division head to discuss the report's recommendations and to formulate the action plan that includes a timetable for implementation. The Unit may submit a separate response to the external reviewers' comments as part of the action plan. The action plan is sent to the Senior Vice Provost of Academic Affairs. The Division head or designee discusses the entire program review with the Provost and/or Provost Council.

IV. Selection of External Reviewers

One of the first issues that the program will need to consider is the list of potential external reviewers. The external review team will normally consist of three members from other recognized and accredited colleges and universities. Each unit under review will be asked to nominate *at least six candidates* for the external review team. The nominees can have *no conflicts of interest* regarding the program under review (e.g., not a former employee, co-author, dissertation advisor, relative or close friend of current staff or faculty member, etc.). In general, the external reviewers should:

- Hold the highest degree appropriate to the Unit under review.
- Have a record of distinguished professional experience appropriate to the unit under review.
- Be recognized as an active member of professional societies appropriate to the Unit under review.
- Be currently employed at a recognized university or college. Be responsive to institutional and departmental mission.

At least one reviewer should:

- Have current or prior experience at the level of department head or higher at an institution of comparable size and reputation to the University of San Francisco.
- Have prior experience relevant to the accreditation process, assessment, and/or co-curricular review process.
- Hold an appointment in a prestigious and nationally recognized program or a program that the Unit wishes to emulate.
- If possible, hold an appointment at a Jesuit University.

The Division head assembles a team. The Division head shall inform the department/program of the composition of the external review team in writing. The chair or director may request a meeting, in writing, with the Division head within 10 days of receiving notification, if the Unit wishes to discuss the external review team membership.

V. The Self-Study

The purpose of the self-study is to allow staff, students and administration to consider not only a Unit's recent accomplishments and challenges, but also to engage in a forward-looking planning process.

The self-study is a comprehensive written document prepared by the co-curricular unit that is

scheduled for program review. A thorough and thoughtful self-study will candidly assess a Unit's past efforts and will outline a realistic course of action for future development. The self-study provides the basis for the entire review process so it is crucial that the report covers all key functions and processes of the Administrative/Service Unit. The most useful self-study is a thorough but succinct, honest assessment of the co-curricular unit. An incomplete self-study may lead to reviewers feeling confused about the Unit and/or many unnecessary questions during the visit.

The self-study must be a product of the Unit staff members. They are in the best position to raise and respond to any significant strategic and operational issues being faced by the Unit and also to use the results of the review to improve the Unit. Department heads and directors should ensure that there is full participation in the preparation of the self-study.

There is an enormous variety of programs within the University and the following guidelines will be useful to many when they write their self-study; however, some items are likely to be irrelevant to any given Unit. There is no need to explain why certain items are irrelevant – they may simply proceed past them. If there is a need to go beyond the topics outlined in the guidelines in order to give a more accurate picture of the Unit and its services to the external reviewers, they should feel free to do so.

Appendix 1 contains more specific questions to guide co-curricular units on what can be included within each section of the self-study and it also indicates areas to be covered. There is some redundancy because items may be covered in several places. The Unit may decide the best place to discuss each issue. Additional information may be required in the future in response to changes in University or accrediting policies.

At minimum, the Unit's self-study should address the following areas:

I. Mission
II. History
    a. Gleeson Library
    b. University Ministry
III. Administrative/Service Unit goals
    a. General Overview
    b. List of Goals and Measurable Objectives
    c. Curriculum Map
IV. Quality Assurance
V. Budget and Expenditures
VI. Staff Description, diversity and main job responsibilities
VII. Assessment: Impact on Student Learning and Development
VIII. Guide for the Future
IX. Plans for the Future

VI. External Reviewers Campus Visit

Generally, in the spring semester, the external review team will be on campus to assess the Unit. A successful external review team visit requires careful organization and management of time in order to ensure that the objectives of the review are met. Some flexibility in the schedule (for unanticipated events and meetings) is crucial as is time for the team to deliberate and begin drafting a report. It is important for Units to be aware of the *tentative nature of the initial schedule and of the need for flexibility* as the campus visit proceeds.

Reviewers can, and often do, change the schedule after they arrive on campus.

The Division/Department head or designee will provide much of the information and data that the external reviewers will need to complete their task in addition to Unit self-study (see Appendix 2). In general, the external reviewers will be informed of the role co-curricular program review performs at USF and the expectations we have of them as reviewers. But reviewers have a right to expect:

- the most current data
- timely access to a self-study that contains a comprehensive description of the Unit's evidence that learning outcomes are being met
- a campus visit that gives them free access to any and all information necessary to writing an informed and useful report

Please note that the Department head or designee will handle all the logistical arrangements for the visit, including accommodation and transport.

Prior to the site visit, it is expected that the reviewers will have become familiar with the institution and the Unit based on materials sent to them. They will have carefully read the self-study. They will have developed some preliminary questions about the Unit based upon these materials.

The campus visit normally lasts 2 days. During their time on campus, the external reviewers will meet with Unit staff, faculty (if appropriate), some students and administrators, inspect facilities and examine procedures, read on-campus documents and websites, and, if they wish, observe activities.

External review teams can and do request meetings not originally scheduled and arranged.

A site visit devoted solely to formal presentations by Unit members is unlikely to achieve the review's objectives. The material in the self-study should provide the most essential information and meetings with reviewers should be devoted to highlighting selected issues and concerns that are relevant to an honest assessment of the department.

At the conclusion of the site visit, the external review team will share their preliminary findings with the Division/Department head or designee at an exit interview. Within two months, the external reviewers submit a report based upon the Unit's self-study and the findings and observations made by the external review team during their campus visit. The report will assess

the Unit's strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations for improvement and development. An executive summary of the report will be written and this will be presented to the Provost Council, a relevant Committee of the Board of Trustees and any other campus constituencies deemed appropriate by the Unit/department and the Senior Vice Provost.

VII. Action Plan

Once the external reviewers submit their report, it will be distributed to staff and members. The Unit will have the opportunity to respond to the report's findings. The department head and the Unit will then begin formulating a plan of action for the future.

The action plan is a crucial step in the co-curricular process. It is designed to respond to the findings of ***both*** the self-study and the external review report. The action plan indicates how the Unit plans to address the issues raised during the review process. The most important elements in the formulation of the action plan are:

- Compiling recommendations resulting from the self-study and external reviewers report.
- Identifying and outlining suggested strategies and ideas for responding to Unit goals and reviewer recommendation.
- Prioritizing goals and recommendations.
- Identifying and listing needed resources to support the action plan, clearly differentiating between what can be accomplished by redistributing existing resources and what requires new resources.
- Outlining a timeline for completion and implementation of each item.
- Documenting all actions and providing written reports of progress as scheduled.

The final goal of co-curricular program review is an action plan that not only records accomplishments but also acts as a guide for Unit revision and improvement.

Appendix 1

Elements of a Co-Curricular[1] Program Review

I. MISSION

1. Write an introductory paragraph describing the Unit and support services provided. What is the Unit trying to accomplish?
2. Describe how the Unit's mission is aligned with the University of San Francisco's Mission and strategic priorities.

II. HISTORY

1. What is the recent history of the administrative and / or service Unit and what are the most noteworthy changes? What changes have taken place since the last program review (if appropriate)?
2. What is the relationship of the administrative/service Unit to academic programs and other administrative units within the University (e.g., interdisciplinary programs, research centers, etc.)?
3. Does the Unit form partnerships with other Units within the university? (e.g., academic or non-academic)? If so, how is the work coordinated within and across the various units?
4. What were the main recommendations of the previous program review? How did the Unit and institutional administration respond to the earlier findings and recommendations? What changed after the last program review?
5. If this is the first program review, discuss the origins of the Unit. Why was the Unit created?

   a. GLEESON LIBRARY

      1. What is the relationship of the administrative/service Unit with the Gleeson library? If so, how is the work coordinated within and across the units?
      2. How do the services offered by the Gleeson Library support the Unit's goals and objectives?

   b. UNIVERSITY MINISTRY

      1. What is the relationship of the administrative/service Unit with the University Ministry? If so, how is the work coordinated within and across the units?
      2. How do the services offered by the University Ministry support the Unit's goals and objectives?

[1] Co-curricular includes administrative and service Units on campus.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE/SERVICE UNIT GOALS

1. List the goals that will allow the Unit to fulfill its mission. Please provide a curriculum map aligning the University Mission, Unit goals, and the services provided.
2. For each goal list measurable objectives (it's not about the number of goals or outcomes but rather about generating evidence that support the Unit fulfill its stipulated mission). That is, what a student should know, do and value as a result of utilizing the services.
3. How do these goals facilitate the Unit's overarching mission geared toward supporting student learning, development and/or academic success?

IV. QUALITY ASSURANCE

1. What services/products does the Unit provide? Whom do they serve?
2. How does the Unit learn about the needs of those served and obtain feedback regarding service delivery?
3. How does the Unit know it is meeting the stakeholder's needs?
4. What are the Unit's planning, decision-making, and evaluation processes?
5. How do stakeholders learn about and access the services/products provided by the Unit?
6. How does the Administrative/Services Units compare with peer institutions in terms of structure, responsibilities, size and budget? Specify the criteria by which these institutions were selected for comparison.

V. BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

1. Provide a budget allocation and expenditure summary for the past three fiscal years.
2. To what extent does the allocation of resources allow the Administrative/Service Unit to meet its goals and objectives? Is there a close alignment between the costs of running the Unit and budgeted resources?
3. What changes could be made to produce greater efficiencies or economics of scale (e.g., reduction, modification, elimination of paperwork, reorganization)? What constraints must the Unit address to achieve these?
4. What improvements are possible through reallocating existing resources?
5. What improvements can only be addressed through additional resources?

VI. ASSESSMENT: IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT, AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Provide a summary of how critical administrative processes and/or the services are assessed or evaluated in the Unit, and the results of those evaluations.
2. List the number of students using the services provided during the most recent academic year, and the Unit's role in tracking their success upon completion of the service.
3. To what degree have you achieved Unit goals and outcomes?
    a. Describe how data gleaned from meaningful assessments have helped the Unit improve critical processes, Unit key functions, stakeholder needs, delivery of services and identification of best practices (continuous improvement).
    b. Describe how data collected are used to inform and support other Academic and Non-Academic Units in the Institution.
    c. Describe how staff/administrator in the Unit analyzes trends of Unit productivity (e.g., students serviced, tracking student success in academic programs, etc.)
    d. Describe changes made to the Administrative/Services Unit using evaluation/assessment data.
4. What factors have facilitated or impeded the Unit's ability to meet its goals and outcomes?
5. How do faculty/staff roles support the Unit's delivery of services? Gaps?

VII. GUIDE FOR THE FUTURE

1. What are the Unit's strengths? What examples of long-term excellence, recent accomplishment, or improvement characterize the Unit's recent history? In what ways could the Unit be considered a leader in its field?
2. What are the Unit's weaknesses? Where could the Unit improve most? What challenges or obstacles make it difficult to overcome these weaknesses? What further challenges does the faculty foresee in the coming years?
3. What changes have occurred in administrative processes and/or services provided over the past five years that have influenced the Unit's view of its role in the University and the field?

VIII. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

1. Describe where the staff would like the Unit to go in terms of services, performance standards, collaboration with other units, synergies, etc.
2. Describe where is the field going based on the literature, professional association meetings, etc. and how the Unit is ready to address those challenges and

improvements.

Appendix 2

Information Provided To External Reviewers

The external review team will be provided with documents and data. The service office staff will compile the information below and will make data available to the Unit. The Unit is responsible for providing evidence/data concerning student activities: student organizations, student accomplishments, etc.

Information provided to external reviewers, either online or in a binder:

University and College

- USF Vision, Mission, and Values
- Department/Unit Mission, Goals, and Strategic Initiatives
- USF General Catalog (URL for)
- USF Fact Book
- Campus Map

Department/Program/Unit

- Self-Study
- Department/Program Website
- Department/Program Budget
- Staff Curriculum Vitae
- Relevant Program Data
- Relevant Student Data

Logistics

- Welcome Letter
- Review Team Information
- Questions for External Reviewers (from overseeing administrator)
- Sample Agenda for Site Visit
- Accommodations, etc.
- Contact Information