

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

**TW**

# **ACADEMIC REVIEWS 2016 REPORT**

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## **PREFACE**

In 2012 I was named Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning in the Graduate School. With this new position I was charged to oversee the Academic Program Reviews. Some in the University see these program reviews as a necessary nuisance and a required but time-consuming activity, the utility of which is unclear. However, having been involved with the program review process for four years, I am fully convinced that not only are they incredibly valuable to the individual academic units but the university as a whole.

A few years before I took over of the program reviews, the Graduate School made a significant change in purpose and spirit of the reviews. Instead of asking academic units to chronicle an exhaustive overview of the past 10 years, we shifted the focus to being forward-looking. Of course, while we still want programs to provide information on what they had accomplished since their last review, the greater balance of the review is towards the future. Where do the units want to be in 5 to 10 years' time? What questions would they like to have the review committee consider on their behalf?

This shift has proved to be instrumental in helping academic units take full advantage of the opportunities for strategic planning made available through the academic program review process. It has also provided the institution a means to identify future trends, common strengths and challenges that impact decision making. This report offers an analysis and synthesis of those trends, strengths and challenges of all academic program reviews conducted between September 2009 and June 2015.

The report tells us that not only that the University of Washington academic programs are strong, but, that those charged with overseeing them—faculty, staff, and deans—are dedicated to their ongoing excellence.

Because all academic programs are reviewed on a 10-year cycle, review committees and members of the Graduate School Council (the governance committee that makes the final recommendations) are able to draw from previous review recommendations and mark the progress an individual academic unit has made. In fact, in a recent Graduate School Council meeting, one Council member reflected on the tremendous improvements a department had made in the 10 years by acting on the recommendations of the review committee. Academic Program Reviews contribute to our commitment to continual improvement!

In short, Academic Program Reviews provide an important lens into the University's central work of making a difference through teaching, research and service. Collectively they tell the story of how an institution maintains excellence as it navigates new market needs, new technologies, and new challenges.

I want to thank the Office of the Provost for providing financial assistance with the preparation and writing of this report. To the staff at the Office of Academic Affairs and Planning and the Office of the Provost, and the Office of Communications and Marketing in the Graduate School for helping to shape and guide the report. And, a special thanks to Haley Kennard, who sorted through years of program reviews, coding for themes, and taking the lead on the writing.

—Rebecca Aarenud

# **I. INTRODUCTION**

The academic program review process is a systematic, independent, and future-oriented assessment of all undergraduate and graduate degree programs at the University of Washington. For individual units that undergo such assessments, academic program reviews provide a significant opportunity for better understanding their strengths, identifying opportunities for growth, and thinking strategically about the future. For the UW, these reviews offer university leadership invaluable feedback about the quality of programs across the three campuses, the value of a UW degree, and the extent to which the unit advances the mission of the university. Academic program reviews ultimately foster a greater understanding of trends, challenges, and opportunities, and provide leadership with information for evidence-based and holistic decision-making. Indeed, the information gleaned from academic program reviews plays a key role in the assessment process required for university-wide accreditation.

This report provides an overview of the academic program review process and highlights key themes and trends of reviews completed since 2009. Paralleling the review process itself, the report focuses on 1) the key questions and concerns on which units seek assessment (“unit-defined questions”); 2) common strengths across UW units; 3) chief challenges across the units; 4) salient recommendations offered by review committees.

## **SAMPLE SELECTION AND METHODOLOGY**

The analysis in this report is based on a review of all 65 academic program review reports submitted between September 2009 and June 2015 (see Appendix for the complete list). All documents related to the reviews were analyzed and coded for themes and trends, some of which had been identified by the staff of the Graduate School who organize and participate in the review process, while others emerged during the examination of the documents.

# **II. HOW DOES THE ACADEMIC REVIEW PROCESS WORK?**

Academic program reviews at the University of Washington are stipulated by Executive Order No. 20.4 of the UW Policy Directory (see Appendix for exact wording). Conducted at least every 10 years of all academic units, including their undergraduate- and graduate-program offerings, these reviews are designed to elicit key points of information. They should not only generate a clearer understanding of the unit’s quality of instruction, research, and public service, but also illuminate its contributions to students’ general education and preparation for society. They also should highlight the unit’s resource requirements, its future objectives and how they can be attained, and its effectiveness at fulfilling its role within the UW.

From start to finish, the academic program review process typically spans 18 months and unfolds in the following manner.

## **1. LAUNCH OF THE REVIEW PROCESS**

The Office of Academic Affairs and Planning in the Graduate School, which oversees

academic program reviews, launches the review process by charging the academic unit with two tasks. The first is to identify key questions the academic unit want addressed by the review. These “unit-defined questions,” often unique to a unit given its work and foci, are shaped by conversations with deans, directors, and chancellors, and provide a starting point for the review committee’s work. Second, units are asked to identify names of potential review committee members and possible dates for the site visit. The review committee typically includes two UW faculty, one of whom chairs the committee, as well as two faculty from peer institutions.

## 2. CHARGE MEETING

After the unit-defined questions have been received and after the review committee has been constituted, the Graduate School holds a charge meeting that includes representatives from the academic unit and relevant dean’s or chancellor’s office, the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, the Graduate School Council, and the review committee. During this meeting, participants review the unit-defined questions and agree upon any possible revisions. The review committee has the opportunity to ask clarifying questions of the unit’s leadership at this point.

This meeting results in two formal charges — one to the academic unit and one to the review committee.

First, the academic unit is formally charged to write its self-study (see detailed instructions in the Appendix). In this 25-page document, units must articulate their mission and organizational structure, summarize their budget and resources, and present data related to diversity among their faculty and students. Units must also address their teaching and learning efforts — their student learning goals and outcomes, instructional effectiveness, and teaching and mentoring outside the classroom. In addition, units must describe their scholarly activity and impact, and discuss the directions in which they plan to advance. Units may exercise discretion in writing the self-study, but they must minimally accomplish three tasks: 1) respond to the required questions common to all reviews conducted at the UW; 2) address the unit-defined questions identified in conversations with administrators and the review committee; 3) provide data in the form of appendices. Self-studies are due typically a few quarters before the review committee’s site visit.

Second, the review committee is formally charged with assessing the quality of the unit’s undergraduate and graduate programs and providing faculty with constructive suggestions for strengthening the programs. Guiding questions for the review include: Are the unit doing what it should be doing? Is the unit doing it well? How can it do things better? How should the UW assist them? (See sample charge letter in Appendix D.)

## 3. THE SITE VISIT

The purpose of the site visit is to allow the review committee to interact with and glean information from all constituents and key stakeholders. Typically, the site visit includes meetings with students, faculty of all ranks, postdoctoral researchers, staff, and academic unit leadership. It can also include meetings with alumni and advisory boards, if the committee and/or unit so desires. (See Appendix E for a sample agenda.)

Academic program reviews of units on the Seattle campus also include feedback from the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS). The GPSS surveys current graduate

students in a unit about a broad swath of issues (e.g., the unit's strengths; the quality of its faculty; course offerings; unit support for their work; academic advising and mentorship) and submits an independent report of these findings to the Graduate School. This report is made available to all parties that participate in the review process.

The site visit concludes with a meeting of all individuals who were present at the initial charge meeting and a representative from the Office of the Provost, although other unit representatives may attend. During the first half of this meeting, the review committee shares its initial findings and recommendations. During the second half of this meeting, central administrators and the review committee meet in executive session without any member of the academic unit present.

#### 4. FINAL REPORT, RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATION

Within four weeks after the site visit, the review committee submits its report to the Graduate School. This report is distributed to all participants including the unit, its dean/chancellor/vice chancellor, Graduate School Council representatives, and the Office of the Provost. The unit under review then has one month to respond to the report; this response is submitted to the Graduate School, and is made available to all parties involved in the academic program review.

Within one academic quarter after the unit's response to the review committee's report, the Graduate School Council will review all documents generated during the review process and, if necessary, ask clarifying questions of the unit and/or review committee. At the end of this review, the Graduate School Council makes a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School, who in turn forwards a summary of the review, along with any recommendations, to the Dean, Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of the unit under review (with a courtesy copy to the Provost and the Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs). The unit's director or chair, all members of the review committee, the Graduate School Council, and the GPSS President (for UW Seattle graduate programs only) also receive a copy of this letter.

### **III. COMMON UNIT-DEFINED QUESTIONS**

Unit-defined questions provide an opportunity for academic programs to highlight to the review committee issues they deem pressing or critical. In other words, what do units hope to learn from the review? After all, as a panel of experts and peers, the review committee is familiar with the discipline at large, best practices, and how to best plan for the future. Between 2009 and 2015, the majority of the unit-defined questions addressed six broad areas related to: defining program identity and success; maintaining a cutting-edge research profile; maximizing curricular impact; responding to resource availability; improving partnerships and collaborations; and planning for the future.

#### 1. DEFINING PROGRAM IDENTITY AND SUCCESS

Many self-studies included at least one unit-defined question related to overall program identity and success. Concerns regarding program identity and success emerged in various ways. Some units sought feedback on how to "forge one identity," while others wanted "a review of the conceptual framework and statement of goals" and assistance with "communicating [its] brand." Academic units also looked to the review process to define

what sets them apart from similar programs at other universities. Unit-defined questions also included queries regarding how to effectively communicate this identity and how it should be maintained or shaped as research becomes increasingly interdisciplinary. For interdisciplinary programs or programs whose physical spaces on campus are relatively spread out, units sought advice on how to foster a shared sense of community.

Concerns about program identity and success also emerged when units asked the review committee to evaluate how they compare to other programs, or when they requested advice on how to improve and expand their reputation regionally and nationally. Defining and evaluating program goals was another common unit-defined question. Units asked whether their mission and goals are clear, sensible, and strategic, and how to properly define success vis-à-vis these goals.

“Do we have clear strategic goals? Are we who we say we are?”

—School of Drama, 2013-14

## 2. MAINTAINING A CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH PROFILE

Many self-studies also included unit-defined questions related to research and the faculty engaged in research. Departments sought advice from the review committee on how to define and pursue strategic research areas, maintain excellence in existing programs, and increase student exposure and participation in research. One unit asked, “How do we maintain excellence in research given the evolving nature of [the field]?” Another requested feedback on whether to broaden or focus the scope of its faculty research. Specific questions ranged from issues of the applicability of current research, to enhancing collaborative research, to evaluating the impact of research and innovation. Academic units clearly wished to tap into the review committee’s expertise and engage with an outside perspective on how the field is evolving and how to remain on the cutting edge of research.

Some units also expressed concerns about maintaining strong research programs in the face of decreased federal funding and looked to the review committee for advice. Closely tied to these research-related questions were issues of how to hire productive and innovative faculty to conduct this research. Some questions specifically addressed faculty recruitment and development, while others focused on optimizing existing faculty resources and providing support to faculty in balancing research with mentoring and teaching.

“How do we enhance collaborative research and impactful large-scale innovation?”

—Department of Electrical Engineering, 2011-12

## 3. MAXIMIZING CURRICULAR IMPACT

The majority of the programs reviewed in 2009 to 2015 included a unit-defined question related to evaluating and improving their curriculum. For some units, these questions were very specific (e.g., “Are courses and mentoring sufficiently rigorous, skill-based and experiential?”). Unit-defined questions asked the review committees to examine specific aspects of their curriculum and reflect on areas where the curriculum could evolve to meet changing needs and foci of the field, particularly related to increasing interdisciplinarity.



Many units requested both an evaluation of the existing curriculum and recommendations for updating and improving it going forward. In general, these questions highlighted the unit's concern that its curriculum adequately prepares students for the current job market.

"How to transform our undergraduate curriculum to better reflect the interdisciplinary nature of psychological research?"

—Department of Psychology review, 2013-14

#### 4. RESPONDING TO RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

Not surprisingly, academic units are concerned about how decreased state and federal funding will affect the strength of their programs. In putting forth their unit-defined questions, a number of academic units expressed concerns about resource availability. They specifically sought advice from the review committee on how to buffer the impact of decreased funding on: maintaining programmatic and research excellence; the continued ability to recruit and fund leading faculty and top students (through competitive awards, TA, and RA positions); and improving facilities and space. Some programs, particularly newer programs, asked for an evaluation of the long-term sustainability of their resources or of the specific impacts of decreased funding.

"How should our graduate programs change in order to weather these tight times of declining federal and state funding?"

—Nutritional Sciences Program, 2014-15

#### 5. IMPROVING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Many self-studies included a unit-defined question seeking guidance on how to expand, deepen, or create partnerships and collaborations. Units clearly understood the importance and potential benefits of these partnerships, and often raised this question in the context of extending program reach and improving their national rankings.

Units were interested in partnerships and collaboration both within and outside the university. For example, one department asked the review committee to articulate how its program might interact with units across the university, and another inquired how it might "embrace responsibility for practice" within its college and more broadly at the UW. Outside of the university setting, unit-defined questions addressed how to initiate or enhance partnerships with local industry and the Seattle community, as well as with potential regional or national partners. Overall, units frequently sought evaluations of their current collaborations as well as guidance on where and how to strategically initiate partnerships.

"How can [we] expand our engagement with the University, city, region, nation, and world?"

—Evans School of Public Policy and Governance, 2013-14

#### 6. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Many unit-defined questions revolved around planning for the future. Some units asked the review committee to objectively evaluate their success in achieving previous goals, and

whether these goals are still relevant as the department moves forward. While some planning and vision questions tended to be broad (for example, “How do we grow and improve in the most effective way in the future?”), others specifically referenced planning for the next decade. The forward-looking nature of these questions demonstrates how unit-defined questions (and the program review process more broadly) can shape strategic planning and the department’s vision for the future. In general, units wanted the review committee to speak to: how the field would evolve; how these changes would impact current and new faculty; the ideal structure of the department; and how the department’s vision aligns with college-wide strategic plans and visions. For example, one department asked about strategic planning specifically related to “leveraging opportunities for faculty growth and for increasing resources.”

What has been the trajectory in the past decade of our classroom and research programs, both in quality and quantity? What is the realistic vision for [...] 2020?”

—Department of Chemistry, 2011-12

## IV. KEY STRENGTHS

In their assessment of academic units, review committees are asked to identify key strengths. Identifying and documenting academic unit strengths helps the leadership of a unit recognize and build upon them. At the institutional level, a broad understanding of the common strengths of UW academic units informs decision-making and highlights areas for interdepartmental learning and information sharing.

Across the academic program reviews conducted between 2009 and 2015, six key strengths emerged: outstanding faculty research; competitive students and educational programs; high-quality leadership and governance; dedicated staff; collegial units; and strong collaborative initiatives.

### 1. OUTSTANDING FACULTY RESEARCH

Review committees made clear that faculty in virtually every UW academic unit are doing sophisticated, nationally and internationally recognized research, and described the quantity and quality of this research as “outstanding.” Review committees also characterized this

“ Faculty members conduct cutting-edge research on the causes, prevention, reduction, and amelioration of social, health, and socio-economic problems and inequities.”

—School of Social Work, 2009-10

research as innovative and cutting-edge, and were impressed not only by the level of extramural funding faculty secured, but also the research centers housed at the UW and the training opportunities they provided for undergraduates and graduates. They spoke about the research renown of UW’s intellectual leaders, those exerting “global leadership in the field,” and many who literally “wrote the book” in a given area. The UW faculty’s intellectual leadership is reflected in prestigious national and international awards and lectureships and membership in groups such as the National Academy of Sciences. UW faculty are recognized by their editorship of leading academic journals and book series, as

well as service on journal editorial boards. The top-notch faculty research contributes to the successful recruitment of competitive students and new hires.

## 2. COMPETITIVE STUDENTS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Review committees also lauded the extremely high quality of UW students and educational programs. Most units maintain high national rankings and are actively engaged in upholding the utmost standards of academic excellence. Review committees' praise of the units in this area centered on four aspects: the recruitment of competitive students; an excellent curriculum; a focus on high-quality teaching; and students' positive assessments of their educational experience.

"Applicant numbers remain strong, and as a world-leading program, [we are] able to fill [our] ranks from just the top 10% of these, of which a remarkable 80-100% enroll."

—School of Aquatic and Fisheries Science, 2013-14

UW academic units recruit top graduate students and provide excellent mentoring, academic, and research opportunities for them. Students were described as hard-working, intellectually rigorous, and productive and innovative researchers. Academic units at the UW strive to provide the best possible learning experiences for their students and UW graduates are highly sought after in various job markets, with excellent placement rates. For instance, the review committee highlighted graduates from one program who "largely went on to prestigious jobs or training opportunities."

Review committees also focused on the outstanding quality of curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate level and on the units' commitment to exemplary and innovative teaching. Instruction at one program was characterized as "innovative, interdisciplinary, well-integrated across the curriculum, and responsive to students' needs." Finally, the review committees pointed out that in both face-to-face meetings during site visits and the GPSS surveys, UW students are generally highly positive about their academic experiences. Student assessments of the quality and value of a UW degree overwhelmingly affirm the excellence of the programs.

## 3. HIGH-QUALITY LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Many academic program reviews highlighted the excellent leadership and governance of academic units, with some reports explicitly identifying individuals by name for their leadership contributions to the unit. Leaders were commonly described as dedicated and hard-working, and were praised for their academic vision and commitment to collaboration and transparency. Review committees recognized that decreased state and federal funding presented a challenging leadership climate and congratulated some unit leadership on their successful guidance through this period. In addition to individual leadership (chairs and vice chairs, for example), some reports praised the strength of other unit-governing bodies (such as executive or advisory committees). High-quality leadership and governance structures and processes were viewed as fundamental to

"Having served three five-year terms, the director is perceived as providing excellent leadership within the university and nationally."

—School of Art, 2009-10

the units' continued success and academic excellence.

#### 4. DEDICATED STAFF

A number of the program reviews highlighted the excellent staff working in the academic units. Like academic-unit leadership, staff were commonly described as hardworking, dedicated, and effective. Numerous review committees indicated that academic unit staff are committed to their programs, highly knowledgeable and effective, and truly enjoy their work. Motivated and effective staff provide needed advising for students as well as administrative assistance to faculty (freeing up more of their time for research and teaching); they also ensure that the unit's operations run smoothly.

Where budgetary concerns had led to a decrease in unit staff, the importance of these invaluable individuals became abundantly clear. For example, one Graduate Program Administrator was described as "indispensable among the leadership" and "doing the work of three people while remaining available, patient, and understanding." Many reviews similarly highlighted outstanding individual staff members and administrative units, and in some cases recommended increased or restored funding for highly dedicated administrative staff.

UW's engaged and high-quality staff is a fundamental part of the overall success of faculty, students, and the academic unit as a whole.

#### 5. COLLEGIAL UNITS

Review committees also recognized many UW academic units for their warm and collegial atmospheres. Such collegiality was emphasized in the committee's meetings with both students and faculty and was often mentioned in conjunction with mentorship of junior faculty and graduate students. Some programs were described as having a strong "culture of collaboration" and "meaningful collegiality," and students from another unit "characterized the learning climate as collegial."

Faculty were commended for their engagement with students, mentorship and support of junior faculty, and integration of different research and curricular branches. Collaboration and collegiality within units are generally strong and contribute positively to the experiences of everyone involved.

"Junior faculty are carrying out cutting-edge research with advice and guidance from more experienced senior faculty. Students work closely with faculty in carrying out their doctoral research. Together they do world-class science."

—Department of Biostatistics, 2012-13

#### 6. STRONG COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

A common strength highlighted by review committees concerned existing and ongoing collaborative efforts. In addition to collaborations within a department or program, many academic units maintain collaborative partnerships with other faculty and units on campus, with off-campus labs, training sites, and other universities. Many units further strengthen their programs through collaborative initiatives with local or regional industry and/or communities, providing unique and practical learning experiences for students.

For example, one program's partnerships with local biotech companies (called "summer

externships”) and local high schools provide these unique experiences, all while deepening positive relationships between the University and the community. These initiatives enhance the interdisciplinarity of a given field while promoting the reputation and expertise of the unit and of the UW within the region.

## V. CHIEF CHALLENGES

In addition to identifying a unit’s strengths, review committees highlight the chief challenges facing a given unit. The academic program reviews conducted between 2009 and 2015 identified six key challenges facing UW units: 1) budget and resources; 2) succession management; 3) workload pressures; 4) diversity; 5) space and facilities; 6) unit cohesion.

### 1. BUDGET AND RESOURCES

Given how higher education as a whole is suffering from decreased state and federal funding, it is not surprising that the most frequently mentioned challenge was budgetary in nature, with emphasis on the availability of funding and resources.

Review committees noted that while decreased funding can significantly impact a unit’s ability to maintain and/or improve its infrastructure, resource challenges will have the greatest impact on people—faculty, students, and staff.

For example, a decreased budget means fewer or smaller raises, lower salaries for faculty and staff, and greater difficulty in funding the start-up costs of labs for new faculty. The potential effects of this situation were highlighted in one review, where the committee commented, “If that situation persists, the flight risk will only increase.”

Furthermore, the inability to hire and fund new faculty may lead to a loss of expertise in a specific research area. Similarly, fewer resources can translate into challenges in maintaining technical expertise; the inability to secure necessary equipment or other research tools may lead to a decline in success rate for research proposals. As one committee noted, “Because success rates for federal funds have eroded over the last few decades, and since there is an increasing emphasis on multidisciplinary solicitations that require large investigator teams, young professors face steeper hurdles on their way toward creating vibrant and sustainable research programs than they likely did in the past.”

For graduate students, budgetary challenges mean fewer and less competitive funding options, particularly fellowships and multi-year support offers. One review indicated that this is a current challenge and as a result, the department’s stipends “are 30-40 percent behind those offered by peer institutions.” In general, a decline in competitive funding is “a critical factor limiting the quality of the Ph.D. program that has impacts on recruitment,

“There is increasing concern that continued reductions in funding and the uncertainties associated with these reductions will endanger the department’s ability to remain competitive in attracting top faculty and students.”

—Department of Biostatistics, 2012-13

time to degree and morale.”

Most of the budgetary challenges were fundamentally related maintaining excellence and competitiveness and having the resources and recruit top students and faculty.

## 2. SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT

According to the review committees, another common challenge for academic units is planning for and dealing with pending retirements. Retirements “have enormous implications” for a program as they threaten the sustainability of excellence in some field within a unit.

The reviews highlighted how faculty retirements are particularly challenging when they occur simultaneously or in areas of traditional programmatic excellence. One review committee indicated that without serious attention to succession planning, upcoming retirements in the program may leave “unfilled gaps in both the core and instructional research programs.” These gaps might translate into reduced grants and research opportunities and a reduced ability to recruit competitive graduate students. Many review committee reports emphasized the need for succession and leadership planning, sustained mentorship of junior faculty, and effective implementation of the unit’s curriculum.

“Faculty positions in Child Language, a former area of strength, must be re-filled. Eighty percent of graduate applicants want to work in pediatrics [...]; only two recently hired junior-level individuals will be left in the Child Language interest area after senior faculty members retire in the next two years.”

—Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences, 2012-13

## 3. WORKLOAD PRESSURE

Related to the issue of faculty retirements, although much broader in scope, is the challenge of workload pressures. Review committees noted the tendency of programs to simply try to do more and more — which can lead to burnout, loss of good faculty, and challenges in recruiting new faculty. As one report noted, “Assistant professors clearly exemplify the pressure and tensions felt by faculty in the program as a whole with many competing demands on their time for new program development, new course design and offering, student advising, pressure to build a research portfolio and so on.”

Of course, workload pressures do not operate within a vacuum; they often work in tandem with budgetary constraints and faculty retirements. The review of one program indicated that some junior faculty are “stretched thin” and “feeling somewhat overwhelmed,” sentiments echoed in a number of reports. While faculty are certainly subject to demanding workloads, program review reports also mentioned how this challenge can affect students (particularly teaching and research assistants) as well as staff.

“The numbers and diversity of graduate course offerings are limited by the faculty teaching loads in undergraduate courses. The faculty reported that stress levels are elevated on graduate students because of elevated workload on TAs.”

—Department of Chemistry, 2011-12

#### 4. DIVERSITY

A number of the program reviews included a reference to the lack of gender and ethnic diversity within academic units at the UW. Common critiques were of the lack of women and underrepresented minorities — in both faculty and leadership positions — and an inability to attract a diverse pool of students. Seattle and the University of Washington are vibrant and diverse communities and review committees wanted to see more of this diversity reflected in academic units.

“As noted by the School of Aquatic and Fisheries Sciences in its self-study the faculty is not diverse — whether in gender, race, discipline or pedigree.”

—School of Aquatic and Fisheries Science, 2013-14

Particularly for units with a cultural, equity, or justice focus, a lack of diversity has negatively impacted research, teaching, and mentoring. One committee noted how “[this program] has managed to attract a very socio-culturally diverse student body and both traditional and non-traditional students. The same cannot be said for faculty and administration, which remains rather homogeneous (e.g. in racial terms, distinctly white).”

Review committees pointed to behaviors ranging from a systematic lack of planning to address diversity to general avoidance of diversity issues. While diversity was an issue mentioned in a number of programs, many review committees noted how academic units are actively engaged in improving diversity among their students and faculty.

#### 5. SPACE AND FACILITIES

Many program review reports identified space and facilities concerns as challenges for the academic units. This specific challenge generally fell into one of two categories.

The first, particularly common with interdisciplinary programs, was a lack of a cohesive and designated on-campus space. Review committees indicated that the absence of a shared common space acts as a barrier to unit cohesion, collegiality, and focus. In conversations with students in one interdisciplinary program, the review committee noted the universal desire for a meeting space or lounge area where they could gather informally, ultimately to promote collegiality and intraunit communication.

The second challenge regarding space and facilities challenge related to buildings which no longer meet the needs of the academic unit — either because they are old and outdated or are no longer adequate for a growing student population. For example, one review indicated that a department’s current facilities “severely limit its ability to grow” and another unit is housed in a building which is not ADA-compliant.

Crowded classrooms and outdated labs diminish teaching quality, research opportunities, and constrain program growth. Limited space also prevents hiring of new faculty and expansion of current faculty labs and may hinder the ability of the academic unit to embrace new opportunities.

#### 6. UNIT COHESION

Finally, a small but significant number of review committees identified as a challenge the unit’s general lack of agreement, cohesion, collective mission, and focus. Phrases such as

“divergence in visions of the department’s future” or reports that students “largely remain isolated in their sub-disciplines” were indicative of this issue.

This particular challenge might also be understood as arising from a variety of other challenges: All units perceived to lack cohesion were also included in at least two other challenge categories noted above — this does not occur in a vacuum. Space issues, key faculty retirements, budgetary constraints, often exacerbated by poor intraunit communication, can create an unfocused or siloed program with distinct visions and motivations for the department. Strategic planning, recommended by the review committee to the majority of these programs, may help overcome this challenge.

## **VI. REVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

In assessing units, review committees provide constructive suggestions for how to strengthen the programs. Some suggestions are relatively detailed (e.g., updating a unit’s website), while others are more large-scale (e.g., rethinking the curriculum for an entire degree program). Although some recommendations were highly program-specific, reviews frequently included recommendations around three specific focal areas, all of which are tied to the aforementioned challenges: vision and strategic planning; communication; and diversity.

### **1. VISION AND STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The most common review committee recommendation was the creation of a strategic plan to articulate key goals, guide decision-making, and set priorities. Review committees consistently urged units to recognize changing external and internal conditions (e.g., funding; disciplinary shifts; broadening of social or industrial needs and interests; changes in higher-education priorities) and think deeply about how to respond to them.

At the broadest level, review committees addressed the need for vision. As one committee put it, “The vision must be based on an explicit set of values and principles that can be used...to set priorities as to what it must do (as well as what it won’t do). It should also provide a parallel thinking for facilities and infrastructure... Although support for higher education and research may look bleak at the moment, the [unit] should develop a vision for what it will be after the storm passes.” Schools, colleges and departments should have “a focused discussion with the aim of reaching a consensus about what they want to be. Then they need to develop a plan for getting there.” Moreover, “this plan should have clear objectives and benchmarks for measuring progress toward those objectives.”

A plurality of recommendations related to vision and strategy planning, however, focused on specific aspects of the unit under review. Units were encouraged to identify their program strengths and identity; address faculty hiring and governance; assess their curriculum; increase support for their students; and creatively leverage opportunities.

- a. Program strengths and identity. In vision-related recommendations, review committees asked units to confront a key question: What is your core identity? Answering this question requires some units to acknowledge they cannot do everything, so they will need to define their core identity and strengths. Review commit-



tees encouraged units to clarify their mission and goals, identify their key areas of strength, and build upon them in terms of faculty, research, and curriculum.

b. Faculty and governance. Review committees recommended that units give serious consideration to whether faculty hiring plans aligned with their strategic goals. For instance, in looking at replacement faculty lines, should the unit prioritize depth over breadth? Also, given shifting disciplinary borders, units were urged to think more strategically about new faculty positions — e.g., those that can simultaneously serve specialized needs as well as other thematic needs in the unit or campus. In addition, some review committees raised the need to pay attention to long-term leadership planning and sustained mentorship of junior faculty. Some review committees addressed issues of internal governance, and recommended the creation of an executive committee or community advisory board. Some units were advised to consider flexible organizational structures to allow for increased innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration.

c. Curriculum. Some strategic-planning recommendations naturally revolved around a review of the unit's curriculum. Units were encouraged to assess the extent to which their curriculum reflected their strategic goals, and whether it was forward-looking, flexible, and allowed for room to innovate. More important, faculty were asked to review their curriculum with program mission and strengths in mind. Namely, is the curriculum doing what the faculty think it is doing — and should be doing? Some committees went so far as to make concrete suggestions for restructuring the curriculum, for example, "redesign[ing] the curriculum so that the unit's two major emphases [...] are better integrated."

d. Students. Thematically related recommendations revolved around improving student resources, experience, and preparation for post-graduation placement. Review committees highlighted the need to improve mentorship, professional socialization, and career counseling services for students, particularly in an era of increased market competition. Committees emphasized that student services should be in place "in a way that best supports [the students]." For graduate students, review committees recommended that units incorporate additional teaching opportunities and improved teacher training and experience. They also suggested that units consider ways to anticipate and effectively train graduate students for careers outside of academia.

e. Opportunities. In the face of increased research opportunities yet decreased funding, review committees urged units to increase and deepen their collaborative initiatives across campus, with industry, and with the Seattle and Washington community. These recommendations often provided specific examples of groups or organizations with whom they believed collaboration would be most fruitful. Review committees also advised units to think creatively about a strategic plan that would emphasize revenue generation: "The sustainability of [the program] hinges on the development of revenue, and the most obvious source of revenue is a fee-based professional master's program... The revenue can be used to add faculty lines to further advance [the program] as a research area and as an area of graduation education." Finally, a number of review committees recommended stronger advancement-related efforts that would bolster funding for the unit.

## 2. COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE UNIT AND BEYOND

Beyond recommendations to think more strategically about their overall goals, review committees focused on the improvement of communication within the unit and beyond. Committees recognized that enhanced communication within the unit would enhance transparency, information-sharing, and the flow of critical information to faculty, students, and staff. They noted how enhanced communication of key policies and information ultimately would improve the unit's overall efficiency and atmosphere. Some recommendations were unit-wide (e.g., improving communication from the chair to faculty and staff; holding a retreat focused on departmental culture and effective communication), while others were geared toward specific constituents (e.g., creating fact sheets or FAQ sections for undergraduates that listed key requirements for graduation; communicating curricular changes to graduate students or key policies to faculty).

Review committees also urged academic units to better articulate the value and strengths of their programs both to other departments at the UW and to potential partners, students, and the community. For example, one unit was advised to "open dialog around the issue of communication with other units" to increase collaboration and collectively plan for the future. Overall, communication-related recommendations ranged from increased usability of the program's website to increased collaboration to maximize local and global visibility.

## 3. DIVERSITY

Another common recommendation was for academic units to actively bolster the diversity of their students, faculty, and staff. Encompassing gender and ethnic diversity, this recommendation often focused on the inclusion of women and underrepresented minorities at senior levels within the unit. Review committees emphasized the importance of reflecting the rich diversity of Washington state within all academic units at the UW. This sentiment was particularly strong in reviews of programs with a cultural, equity, or local focus.

But diversity-related recommendations were not relegated to individuals within a unit. Some committees addressed the need to improve diversity in the curriculum, especially given how "ethnic/racial diversity and issues of diversity seem largely absent from the curriculum and pedagogy." One review noted, "[The unit] must enhance the curriculum so it better prepares students both for nuanced and sophisticated conversations in the classroom and for effective careers in multicultural and complex environments."

Review committees recognized current efforts to improve diversity and encouraged ongoing dedication to this crucially important goal. A number of programs were congratulated for their excellent gender and ethnic diversity, perhaps representing an important opportunity for cross-campus learning.

## 4. THE REVIEW COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION

Above and beyond these constructive suggestions to the academic unit, review committees are mandated to make a formal recommendation to the UW regarding the continuance of the degree programs under assessment. These recommendations can range from suspension of study entry into the degree programs to continuing status with a subsequent review in ten years (the default period). Some committees may recommend that programs be reviewed before the default ten-year period.

Only a small proportion of reviews conducted between 2009 and 2015 resulted in recommendations that the next review be conducted three years later (1), five years later (7), and eight years later (1). Eighteen of the 65 reviews required interim reports to be submitted before the next review. It is important to note that a shorter review timeframe or an interim-report requirement signals significant transitions within the academic unit, such as leadership or curriculum change. A shorter timeframe is not to be viewed as punitive; rather, its purpose is to provide timely guidance to enable the academic unit to remain on-track with its goals.

## **VII. WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THIS REPORT AND THE PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS?**

This report cannot understate the value of the academic review process in responding to a unit's academic concerns of the unit, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, and making constructive and detailed recommendations for improvement. While some of the information in the reviews is specific to the individual unit, clear trends exist across the university in terms of unit-defined questions, strengths and challenges, and review committee recommendations.

The high degree of synergy between the unit-defined questions, strengths and challenges, and committee recommendations indicates how academic units are self-aware and proactive in their evaluation of their programs — and that through the academic review process, peer and nationally and internationally renowned experts seriously consider and address these concerns.

Taken together, academic program reviews map out the future of the UW. They provide deans with additional information to think across the academic units within their colleges and schools; they signal where and when innovations generate new ways of teaching and learning; they indicate pressure points, such as those associated with faculty retirements, student financial support, and facility needs. In short, they are a rich resource, essential to the sustained excellence of the University of Washington.

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## IX. APPENDICES

### A. ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS AY 2009-15

Program	Year Reviewed	Campus	College
Law, Societies & Justice Program	2009-10	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Values in Society Graduate Certificate	2009-10	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences	2009-10	Seattle	School of Public Health
School of Pharmacy	2009-10	Seattle	School of Pharmacy
School of Art	2009-10	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
School of Social Work	2009-10	Seattle	School of Social Work
Individual Interdisciplinary PhD	2009-10	Seattle	Graduate School
UW-Bothell Education	2009-10	Bothell	Bothell - Education
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine Physical Therapy (DPT)	2009-10	Seattle	School of Medicine
Department of Comparative Medicine	2009-10	Seattle	School of Medicine
Doctor of Audiology (AuD)	2009-10	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Graduate Certificate in Computational Finance & Risk Management	2009-10	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Graduate Certificate in Public Health	2009-10	Seattle	School of Public Health
Department of Near Eastern Languages & Civilization	2010-11	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Anthropology	2010-11	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
School of Oceanography	2010-11	Seattle	College of the Environment
Department of Atmospheric Sciences	2010-11	Seattle	College of the Environment

<b>Program</b>	<b>Year Reviewed</b>	<b>Campus</b>	<b>College</b>
Interdisciplinary Molecular & Cellular Biology	2010-11	Seattle	Graduate School
Department of Astronomy	2010-11	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Computer Science & Engineering	2010-11	Seattle	College of Engineering
Department of Bioengineering	2010-11	Seattle	College of Engineering & School of Medicine
Department of Earth and Space Science	2010-11	Seattle	College of the Environment
Department of Linguistics	2010-11	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
School of Dentistry	2010-11	Seattle	School of Dentistry
Graduate Certificate in Astrobiology	2010-11	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering	2011-12	Seattle	College of Engineering
UW-Tacoma Education	2011-12	Tacoma	Tacoma - Education
Department of History	2011-12	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
UW-Tacoma Institute of Technology	2011-12	Tacoma	Tacoma - Institute of Technology
Department of Landscape Architecture	2011-12	Seattle	College of Built Environments
Certificate in Molecular Medicine	2011-12	Seattle	School of Medicine
Rehabilitation Science PhD	2011-12	Seattle	School of Medicine
Department of Chemistry	2011-12	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Architecture	2011-12	Seattle	College of Built Environments
Foster School of Business	2011-12	Seattle	Foster School of Business
Department of Electrical Engineering	2011-12	Seattle	College of Engineering
Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics	2011-12	Seattle	College of Engineering

<b>Program</b>	<b>Year Reviewed</b>	<b>Campus</b>	<b>College</b>
Department of Pharmacology	2011-12	Seattle	School of Medicine
UWT Nursing and Healthcare Leadership Program	2011-12	Tacoma	Tacoma Nursing Program
Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences	2012-13	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Comparative Literature, Cinema & Media	2012-13	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Runstad Center for Real Estate Studies (MSRE)*	2012-13	Seattle	College of Built Environments
School of Law	2012-13	Seattle	School of Law
Department of Pathology	2012-13	Seattle	School of Medicine
Department of Biostatistics	2012-13		School of Public Health
Department of Psychology	2013-14	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Sociology	2013-14	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
School of Drama	2013-14	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
School of Aquatic and Fisheries Science	2013-14	Seattle	College of the Environment
Department of Bioengineering	2013-14	Seattle	School of Medicine/ College of Engineering
Evans School of Public Policy and Governance	2013-14	Seattle	Evans School of Public Policy and Governance
Interdisciplinary Arts and Science - UW Bothell	2013-14	Bothell	Bothell - Arts and Sciences
PhD in the Built Environment	2013-14	Seattle	College of Built Environments
Masters of Health Administration	2013-14	Seattle	Graduate School
Interdisciplinary PhD in Urban Design & Planning	2013-14	Seattle	Graduate School
Program on Climate Change	2013-14	Seattle	College of the Environment
MS in Biomedical Regulatory Affairs	2013-14	Seattle	School of Pharmacy

<b>Program</b>	<b>Year Reviewed</b>	<b>Campus</b>	<b>College</b>
Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Neuroscience	2014-15	Seattle	Graduate School
Nutritional Science Program	2014-15	Seattle	School of Public Health
Department of Global Health	2014-15	Seattle	School of Public Health
School of Educational Studies	2014-15	Bothell	Bothell - School of Education
Department of East Asian Languages and Literature	2014-15	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences
UW-Bothell Computer Science and Software Engineering	2014-15	Bothell	Bothell - STEM
Oral Health Sciences	2014-15	Seattle	School of Dentistry
Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies	2014-15	Seattle	College of Arts and Sciences

## **B. EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 20.4**

Reviews of all academic units including the graduate and undergraduate degree programs offered by these units are required at least every ten years and are conducted jointly by the Dean of the Graduate School and the Dean of Undergraduate Education in cooperation with the relevant school or college dean. These reviews of individual academic units offering degree programs should be supplemented, also on a ten-year cycle, by comprehensive reviews of overall college or school structures and function. To the degree possible, the reviews of individual academic units should be coordinated with the review of the overall college or school.

Among the outcomes of the above reviews should be a clearer understanding of the academic unit's:

- Quality of instruction, research, and public service;
- Value to students' general education and preparation for society;
- Role within the University and effectiveness in fulfilling that role;
- Resource requirements;
- Future objectives and changes necessary to achieve them.

The reports of these reviews of academic units are public documents and are releasable when final University action has been taken.

<http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/PO/EO20.html#4>



## C. INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING SELF-STUDY

### THE SELF-STUDY STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

#### Self-Study Structure

The self-study has three parts:

**Part A** represents a unit's responses to a set of questions that will provide important background information and context for the review committee. These questions have also been crafted to fulfill the expectations for reviews set forth in the University Handbook, and the standards articulated by the University's accrediting body.

**Part B** represents the unit's core questions it set forth for itself, and negotiated at the charge meeting, as important outcomes for the review. These questions ensure that the review is of unique value to the unit and help guide the review committee's work in best assisting the unit to understand its current strengths and challenges as well as the best path for achieving its future goals. As such, Part B should include any background information the review committee will need to adequately address the core questions.

**Part C** consists of the required appendices for the self-study. The unit may include supplementary material as additional appendices, but it is recommended that these appendices be kept to a minimum.

#### Self-Study Format

The self-study, including all appendices, must be provided in a single pdf document. In addition, units must provide one hard copy bound in a 3-ring binder. It is recommended that the text of the self-study, exclusive of appendices, comprise **no more than 25 single-spaced pages**, using 12-point font and 1 inch margins. Keep in mind that the unit need not provide more information than is relevant for the review committee to conduct a quality review. In our experience, self-studies that exceed the 25-page recommended limit are not necessarily more useful to the review committee.

#### Special Note for Units that Undergo National Accreditation Reviews

These units may exercise discretion in using any elements from their accreditation self-study to fulfill the requirements of the University of Washington's self-study—so long as that external accreditation occurred within the past two years. If there are questions in the University of Washington's guidelines that are verbatim, or similar, to what was asked as part of the unit's external accreditation then the unit can elect to simply cut and paste from their external accreditation self-study. The unit may also wish to use Part B of the self-study to articulate questions that are useful in preparing for an upcoming accreditation.

### **Self-Study Submission Deadlines**

To ensure that the review committee has adequate time to read the unit's materials, the self-study, including all appendices, must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs and Planning by the date included in the program review charge letter. The following dates provide a general timeline for planning purposes:

***September 1 for Autumn Quarter site visits***

***November 1 for Winter Quarter site visits***

***February 1 for Spring Quarter site visits.***

The Office of Academic Affairs and Planning will make all review materials available (via a password protected Catalyst website) to the review committee and other individuals outside the unit who will be involved in the review.

### **Submission Checklist**

- The cover page listing:
  - Name of unit, including name of school/college/campus
  - Official title(s) of degrees/certificates offered by the unit
  - Year of last review
  - Name of chair/director/Lead of Unit
  - Name of Self-study coordinator/author (if different from above)
  - Date submitted
  
- Table of Contents
  
- Part A: Required Background Information
  
- Part B: Supplemental questions generated by unit under review
  
- Part C: Appendices
  
- Submit a complete pdf version of the self-study, including all appendices, and a hard copy in a 3-ring binder to the unit's primary Office of Academic Affairs and Planning contact, either Wesley Henry ([weshenry@uw.edu](mailto:weshenry@uw.edu)) or Augustine McCaffery ([amccaf@uw.edu](mailto:amccaf@uw.edu)).

# SELF-STUDY GUIDELINES

## PART A

### REQUIRED BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR REVIEW COMMITTEE

#### Table of Contents

#### Section I: Overview of Organization (+/- 4 pages)

##### *Mission & Organizational Structure*

- Describe the overall mission of the unit. What does the unit believe in and what are its goals?
- List: (1) undergraduate and graduate degrees offered in the unit, including program options, or majors/minors, and fee-based programs within these degrees; and (2) certificate programs offered, if any. In addition, provide detailed information on enrollment and graduation patterns for each degree program (these data should appear in aggregate form, i.e. no student names).
- How is academic and non-academic staffing within the unit distributed? (Please refer to the organizational chart in Appendix A)
- Describe the manner in which shared governance works in the unit, along with how the unit solicits the advice of external constituents.

##### *Budget & Resources*

- Provide an outline of the unit's budget (Please refer to the budget summary in Appendix B).
- Indicate how the unit evaluates whether it is making the best use of its current funding and human resources?
- Describe any fund raising/development plan, or grant/contract-getting strategies used to seek additional funding

##### *Academic Unit Diversity*

- Does the academic unit have a diversity plan?
- Does the unit have a diversity committee and, if so, what is the representation on the committee?
- What is the diversity of the unit's faculty, administrative support services and technical staff?
- Describe how the unit utilizes institutional resources or partners with organizations such as the Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program (GO-MAP) in the Graduate School to conduct outreach and to recruit and retain underrepresented minority undergraduate and graduate students.

- Describe outreach strategies the unit employs with underrepresented minority students, women, student with disabilities, and LGBTQ students to diversify its student body.
- Describe initiatives the unit has employed to create an environment that supports the academic success of underrepresented minority students, women, students with disabilities, and LGBTQ students.
- Describe how the unit utilizes institutional resources such as the Office of the Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement to recruit and retain faculty from underrepresented minority groups.
- What specific strategy has the unit employed to support the career success of faculty members from underrepresented groups, and where applicable, women faculty? To what extent has the unit been successful in diversifying its faculty ranks?

## **Section II: Teaching & Learning (+/- 6 pages)**

### ***Student Learning Goals and Outcomes***

Answer the following questions for each undergraduate and graduate major/degree program/certificate program. There are reports provided by various university offices that may be useful in answering this section, and the Office of Educational Assessment can provide guidance regarding assessment.

- What are the student learning goals (i.e., what students are expected to learn)?
- In what ways does the unit evaluate student learning (e.g., classroom- and/or performance-based assessment, capstone experiences, portfolios, etc.)?
- What methods are used to assess student satisfaction? What efforts are made to gauge the satisfaction of students from under-represented groups?
- What are the findings of the assessment of student learning in each program of study?
- How has the unit used these findings to bring about improvements in the programs, effect curricular changes, and/or make decisions about resource allocation?
- If applicable, note the courses typically taken by undergraduates who will not be majors in any of the unit's programs. Are there specific learning goals in those courses designed to accommodate such "non-major" students? If so, how is student achievement in reaching these goals assessed?

### ***Instructional Effectiveness***

- Including the use of standardized teaching evaluation forms, describe and discuss the method(s) used within the unit to evaluate quality of instruction.
- Please note all opportunities for training in teaching that are made available to any individuals teaching within the unit (including graduate students). These may be opportunities that support teaching improvement, innovation, and/or best practices, for example.

- Describe specific instructional changes you have seen made by instructors in response to evaluation of teaching within the unit.

***Teaching and Mentoring Outside the Classroom***

- Describe and discuss how faculty members are involved in undergraduate and graduate student learning and development other than through classroom teaching (i.e., informal learning, independent studies, research involvement, specialized seminars or workshops, etc.).
- Describe how the unit works with undergraduate and graduate students to ensure steady academic progress and overall success in the program, and any additional efforts to support students from under-represented groups.
- Describe how the unit works with undergraduate and graduate students to prepare them for the next phases of their academic or professional lives.

**Section III: Scholarly Impact (+/- 5 pages)**

- Describe the broad impact of faculty members' research and/or creative work. Feel free to note specific individuals and how their work embodies the unit's mission, or distinguishes the unit from those at peer institutions.
- For undergraduate and graduate students, describe significant awards, noteworthy presentations, or activities that have had an impact on the field while in the program.
- For units in which postdoctoral fellows are appointed, describe their participation in the research and teaching activities of the unit.
- Describe how program graduates have had an impact on the field either academically or professionally.
- In what ways have advances in the field or discipline, changing paradigms, changing funding patterns, new technologies and trends, or other changes influenced research, scholarship, or creative activity in the unit?
- List any collaborative and/or interdisciplinary efforts between the unit and other units at the University or at other institutions, and the positive impacts of these efforts.
- How does the unit work with junior faculty to maximize their success?
- Describe how the unit utilizes institutional resources such as the Office of the Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement to recruit and retain faculty from under-represented minority groups.
- To what extent has the unit been successful in diversifying its faculty ranks?
- What specific strategy has the unit employed to support the career success of, faculty members from under-represented groups?

#### **Section IV: Future Directions (+/- 5 pages)**

Rather than simply addressing this section by reiterating previous sections of the self-study thus far, address this in a way that is constructive for the unit as it thinks about its future.

- Where is the unit headed?
- What opportunities does the unit wish to pursue and what goals does it wish to reach?
- How does the unit intend to seize these opportunities and reach these goals?
- Describe the unit's current benefit and impact regionally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. Given the unit's envisioned future, describe how reaching this future will augment that benefit and impact.

## D. SAMPLE CHARGE LETTER TO REVIEW COMMITTEE



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Box 353770 G-1 Communications Seattle, WA 98195-3770  
Telephone: 206-543-5900 Fax: 206-685-3234 Web: <http://grad.washington.edu>

**Revised:** November 13, 2015

Department of Materials Science and Engineering Review Committee

Gregory Miller, Professor and Chair, UW Department of Civil and Environmental  
Engineering (Committee Chair)

Alvin Kwiram, Professor Emeritus and Emeritus Vice Provost for Research,  
UW Department of Chemistry

Albert Yee, Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science,  
The Henry Samueli School of Engineering, University of California, Irvine, CA

Venkatesh Narayanamurti, Benjamin Peirce Professor of Technology and Public Policy;  
Professor of Physics and Director, Science, Technology and Public Policy Program  
Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

RE: Charge to Committee for the Department of Materials Science and Engineering Review

Dear Review Committee:

Thank you once again for agreeing to serve on the committee to review the Bachelor of Science in Materials Science and Engineering, the Master of Science in Materials Science and Engineering, the Master of Science in Applied Materials Science and Engineering, and the Doctor of Philosophy degree programs offered by the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at the University of Washington. Academic program reviews are conducted in accord with the State of Washington legislative mandate, and in conjunction with the College of Engineering, Undergraduate Academic Affairs, and the Office of the Provost. The Office of Academic Affairs and Planning in the Graduate School will coordinate the review.

As background information, the last review of the Department's degree programs was completed in August 2005. At that time, the Graduate School Council recommended unanimously that the continuing status of the degree programs be reaffirmed, with the next review to occur in the 2014-2015 academic year. Upon request of the department Chair, the review was rescheduled to the 2015-2016 academic year.

Review Committee Charge

In general, the committee's charge in this review is to assess the quality of the undergraduate and graduate degree programs and to provide the faculty with constructive suggestions for strengthening the programs. These reviews provide the University with a clearer understanding of each program's quality, educational value, their role within the academic discipline, role within the University and community, and resource requirements.

For this review, the possible recommendations range from suspension of student entry into the degree programs to a recommendation for continuing status with a subsequent review in ten years. A shorter term can be recommended if you deem it appropriate. Equally important to this

status recommendation, your review can offer the Department and the administration an independent assessment of the “health” of the programs and constructive advice on how they can be strengthened.

The most important objective of your review is an assessment of the academic and educational quality of the unit. Guiding questions for the review include:

1. Are they doing what they should be doing?
2. Are they doing it well?
3. How can they do things better?
4. How should the University assist them?

#### Self-Study and Site Visit Agenda

The Department will submit its self-study and draft of the site visit agenda by **January 4, 2016**. It will be available for you shortly thereafter on a Catalyst site. In addition to the standard (Part A) questions from the academic program review guidelines, the Department is expected to address the issues it has outlined in the Part B: Unit-Defined Questions of the self-study, which is attached on page four of this letter. Professor Alex Jen may contact the review committee Chair if he has questions about what written documentation would be most useful to the committee as it does its work.

After reviewing the self-study, you may wish to initiate your work before the site visit to ensure a thorough and rigorous review. Based on our experience, we suggest that the external reviewers be relied upon as content experts who can evaluate the quality of the degree programs from a national perspective. They are also likely to be able to comment on recent developments in the field and their incorporation into the Department’s programs. We encourage you to communicate with Professor Jen so that he knows your interests and expectations, particularly for the site visit, and to communicate with other key faculty, if time permits. UW committee members may conduct interviews prior to the site visit as they deem appropriate.

#### Site Visit

The two-day site visit on **February 1-2, 2016**, will culminate with an exit discussion. In this discussion we will request the committee’s formal recommendations regarding continuance of the degree programs. The exit discussion will be divided into two portions. The first portion will include Professor Jen and other faculty he may invite, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning in the Graduate School, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Engineering, the Associate Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, the Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, and two Graduate School Council representatives. The second portion, the executive session, will include only the review committee, administrators, and Graduate School Council representatives.

The Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) participates actively in the program review process. The GPSS will send a survey to current graduate students in the Department. Prior to the site visit they will submit the results of the survey to the Graduate School. It will then be forwarded to the review committee and the Department. A GPSS representative may join the graduate student meeting with the review committee during the site visit. The report will become a part of the formal record of the review. The Department is encouraged to convey to



students the importance of their participation in the survey and to assure broad representation in the graduate student session with the committee during the site visit.

Review Committee Report and Department Response

We request that the committee submit its written report within 4 weeks of the site visit. Specifically, the written report is due **March 2, 2016**. We will request that the Department submit a written response to the report which will be due on **April 2, 2016**. When the response is available, the report and response will be considered by the Graduate School Council. I will then convey in a letter to the Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Engineering the final recommendations on the Department's review for their consideration and action.

Review Documents

Please note that upon completion of program reviews, the primary review documents become public documents and are placed on the UW accreditation web site. The web site and program review documentation are password protected. These documents include the self-study, the review committee and GPSS reports, the unit's response to the report, and my letter on final recommendations on the review to the Deans of the College of Engineering.

Thank you for your time and effort. Please contact Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, at [amccaf@uw.edu](mailto:amccaf@uw.edu) with any questions you may have about the review.

Sincerely,



David L. Eaton  
Vice Provost and Dean

cc: Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs,  
Office of the Provost  
Alex Jen, Professor and Chair, Department of Materials Science and Engineering  
Fumio Ohuchi, Professor and Associate Chair, Department of Materials Science  
and Engineering  
Brian Fabien Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, College of Engineering  
Janice DeCosmo, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs  
Rebecca Aanerud, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning,  
The Graduate School  
Michael Brown, Professor, Department of Earth and Space Sciences; Graduate School  
Council Representative  
Jane Van Galen, Professor, Education Program, UW Bothell; Graduate School  
Council Representative  
Augustine McCaffery, Senior Academic Program Specialist, Academic Affairs  
and Planning, the Graduate School

## **Appendix A**

### **Department of Materials Science and Engineering**

#### **Self-Study Part B: Unit-Defined Questions**

- 1) Are our curricula (BS, MS, PhD) preparing our students to be leaders in diverse positions utilizing Materials Science and Engineering? How can the department improve curriculum topics (fundamental and applied) to improve employment opportunities for our graduates?
- 2) What criteria should we consider in evaluating our program relative to our peers and how do we market to key constituents such as students, alumni, academia, industry and entrepreneurs?
- 3) How do we achieve high research productivity while maintaining excellence in teaching with limited state and federal support?
- 4) How do we effectively compete for funding in major group/center activities that have MSE in leadership roles and are nationally competitive? What research areas should be strengthened and/or contracted by targeted hiring and facilities development in the next 10 years?
- 5) How to establish the MSE department as a vibrant and cohesive “Hub” for material related research, education, facilities, and technology/entrepreneurial translation on the UW campus and region to positively impact societal needs?

## E. SAMPLE SITE VISIT AGENDA

University of Washington  
The Graduate School  
School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences  
Decennial Program Review  
February 5-7, 2014

### Wednesday, February 5

6:00 p.m. Review Committee Executive Session  
Ivar's Salmon House – 401 NE Northlake Way (206-632-0767)

### Thursday, February 6 (all sessions in Fisheries 203)

08:30 – 09:30 Opening Meeting  
André Punt, Director, SAFS  
Tim Essington, Associate Director, SAFS  
Kerry Naish, Curriculum Committee Chair, SAFS  
Kathryn Stout, Administrator, SAFS

09:30 – 10:15 Assistant Professors (*as a group*)

10:15 – 10:30 Morning Break

10:30 – 11:15 Faculty Group I<sup>1</sup>

11:15 – 12:00 Faculty Group II

12:00 – 13:30 Undergraduate Students  
*Pizza and drinks will be provided*

13:30 – 14:00 Break

14:00 – 15:00 Stakeholders / Employers (*NOAA, WDFW, etc.*)

15:00 – 15:45 Graduate Students

15:45 – 16:00 Afternoon Break

16:00 – 17:00 Graduate Students

17:00 – 17:45 Alumni and Affiliate Faculty (*after the SAFS seminar*)

18.30+ Review Committee Working Dinner (*Review Committee Only*)  
50 North – 5001 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE #100 (206-397-3939)

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<sup>1</sup> Faculty groups will be self-selected groupings of faculty. Some of the Assistant Professors may participate in the faculty groups.

**Friday, February 7 (all sessions in Fisheries 203)**

08:30 – 09:00	Administrative Staff
09:00 – 09:45	Research Faculty
09:45 – 10:15	Post Docs and Research Staff
10:15 – 10:30	Morning Break
10:30 – 11:00	Curriculum Committee
11:00 – 12:00	Faculty Group III
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
13:00 – 14:30	Executive Session
14:30 – 15:30	Exit Interview I (with School representatives) Review Committee Rebecca Aanerud, Associate Dean, The Graduate School Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Provost Janice DeCosmo, Associate Dean, Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs Lisa J. Graumlich, Dean, College of the Environment Bruce Nelson, Associate Dean for Research, College of the Environment Joe Cook, Assistant Professor, Evans School of Public Affairs Rheem Totah, Assistant Professor, Medicinal Chemistry David Canfield-Budde, Academic Program Specialist, The Graduate School André Punt, Director, SAFS Tim Essington, Associate Director, SAFS Kerry Naish, Curriculum Committee Chair, SAFS Kathryn Stout, Administrator, SAFS
15:30 – 16:30	Exit Interview II ( <i>without School representatives</i> )
16:30 – 17:00	Committee Debriefing Session ( <i>Committee Only</i> )
17:00	Site Visit Concludes ( <i>or Further Executive Session</i> )