Lewis & Clark College Guide to Preparing for a Departmental or Program Review

(Rev. 6/24)

Overview

A departmental or program review is scheduled periodically, approximately once a decade, for all departments and programs in Lewis & Clark's College of Arts and Sciences. Policy and procedural guidelines are provided in Appendix 7 of the Faculty Handbook. This document is designed to provide specific guidance to departments about how to carry out their review.

The review process consists of four components:

1. a departmental or program self-study
2. a campus visit by a team of disciplinary experts
3. a written report by the review team
4. a response from the department/program to the experts' review.

The goal of every review is to engage the faculty of the department/program in reflection about their history, accomplishments, challenges, and future aspirations, and to provide advice to the department/program and College about how the department/program can be improved. The Associate Dean is responsible for coordinating the process in consultation with the Dean, Faculty Council, and Curriculum Committee.

The CAS Dean's Office maintains records of which programs are due to undergo reviews and will notify the department or program chair in the academic year prior to that in which the review is scheduled in order to allow adequate time for preparation.

The Self-Study[1]

The review process allows members of the department/program to receive advice from disciplinary experts on how best to sustain and strengthen the program. Thus, in preparing for a review, the members of the department/program should meet to discuss its situation and jointly prepare a written record of those discussions—the self-study. The self-study and supporting documents will be provided to the external reviewers about a month in advance of their visit to campus, to allow them to understand the department or program and to identify the issues on which they will focus during their visit.

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[1] This section adapted with permission from a guide for departmental reviews by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

The self-study comprises evidence-based inquiry and analyses that are documented in a comprehensive report. Much of the data departments will need will be provided by the Associate Dean so that departments may focus on interpretation. The information below is intended to help you organize your self study and may, in consultation with the Associate Dean, be adapted to meet program or department specific needs.

Introduction/Context
Begin with a section that provides context for the review. In contrast to the rest of the self-study report, this portion is primarily descriptive and should address:
•   The internal context. For example: How does the department/program relate to others in the College? Does it contribute to (or draw from) others? How does it support the general education program? Are there concentrations within the major?
•   The external context. How is the program responsive to the needs of the discipline?
•   If relevant to understanding current challenges, it may also be useful to include a brief history of the program or a description of changes made in the program since the last review.

Mission of the Program
The review is an opportunity to look up from the details and demands of running our departments/programs and to think about broader goals and objectives. Some departments will have written some learning objectives several years ago; if you have them, this is a useful time to revisit them, but feel free to interpret "Mission" at a level of abstraction that is most useful for your department. It is important to think about your program's contributions in relation to the strategic plan for Lewis & Clark College (which, at the time of this revision, is still being updated). While you may not contribute equally to every part of the strategic plan, it is useful to identify those areas in which your department has particular strengths.

Analysis of Evidence About Program Quality & Viability
Most of the self-study report consists of a presentation and analysis of evidence about the quality and viability/sustainability of a program. This portion of the report addresses the extent to which program goals are being met by using evidence to answer key questions related to those goals.

The Associate Dean will request from Institutional Research the following data for the past 10 years:
● student credit hours taught in a department or program;
● number of majors and minors in a department or program;
● enrollment percentage (class size / course cap) for departmental courses;
● ratio of total departmental FTE (loads of all departmental TT, instructors, visitors/adjuncts) to course enrollment;
● average number of advisees per faculty member;
● courses per year contributing to general education / interdisciplinary programs

If desired, a department may also work with the Dean's Office and Institutional Research to develop a survey of senior perceptions of their time at LC

The Dean's Office will provide the following:
- operating budget and expenditures for the past 10 years
- a profile of students in the major and minor (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, first generation, PELL eligible)
- data about first jobs and longer-term careers for majors

Departments are responsible for preparing the portion of the self-study that documents the following:

(1) Evidence of program quality. Please address the following topics:

- **Students** – Describe the profile of students in the program, including students' gender, ethnicity, GPA (from the data provided). IR may be able to provide other kinds of data relevant for your specific program and you can incorporate additional data of your own if you wish. The idea is to characterize what may be distinctive strengths and challenges of the students you serve.

- **The Curriculum and Learning Environment** – Describe the program's curriculum, both the requirements for majors/minors and the offerings that serve non-majors. If relevant, describe other learning experiences such as internships, research experiences, study abroad or other international experiences, community-based learning, etc, including how many students participate in those experiences. Assess the strengths and challenges of your curriculum as currently configured. For example, you might comment on how current the curriculum is, on its breadth and depth of offerings, on the sequencing of courses and movement of students through requirements. If relevant, describe how your curriculum compares with standards or recommendations in your discipline. (e.g., the American Chemical Society's Committee on Professional Training).

- **Student Learning and Success** – Assess how well students are learning what you wish them to learn and how well you are preparing them for life after LC. At a minimum, please address your department's strengths and challenges in student satisfaction, student learning, and post-LC endeavors.

- **Faculty** – Describe the instructional staff, including tenured, tenure track, and with term faculty as well as recurring visitors and instructors. For each, provide a bio that includes their rank/appointment (e.g., "Assistant Professor" or "Faculty with Term"), years at Lewis & Clark, and specialties within the discipline (and how those align with the program curriculum). For tenured, tenure track, and with-term faculty, please provide an up-to-date CV that includes education; employment; research/creative work; internal and external funding; courses regularly taught at LC; and service to the campus, community, and discipline. Please comment on

the particular strengths and contributions of your faculty as well as staffing challenges or gaps.

(2) Evidence of program viability and sustainability. This section addresses the degree to which resources are allocated appropriately and are sufficient in amount to meet student demand and maintain program quality. Please address the following topics:

- **Demand for the program.** Provide an interpretation of the data IR has provided on student enrollments, majors/minors, advising, and course demand. Contextualize this within an understanding of trends at peer institutions and in your discipline at large.

- **Resources for Faculty.** Please describe faculty workload and the support that is available for faculty teaching, research, and service. A description of faculty review and evaluation processes and support for teaching and research that are available to all faculty is included in the Appendix to this document. Feel free to cut and paste and/or revise and supplement this text with information specific to your department. If relevant, comment on library and IT resources to support pedagogy and research.

- **Resources for Students.** A description of resources that are available to all students (e.g., academic advising, career advising, tutoring and supplemental instruction, financial aid, support for engagement in the campus community, counseling and accessibility support) is available in the Appendix to this document. Feel free to cut and paste and/or revise and supplement this text with information specific to your department. If relevant, comment on library and IT resources to support student learning.

- **Facilities**. Describe classroom spaces, instructional labs, research labs, studio or rehearsal spaces, office space, student study space, access to instructional technology, access to spaces designed for alternative learning styles/universal design.

- **Staff**. Describe clerical and technical staff who support your program.

Summary Reflections
This portion of the self-study report interprets the significance of the evidence you've presented on program quality, viability, and sustainability. It is the opportunity to assess the program's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.

Reviewers are likely to ask the following kinds of questions, which departments and programs can anticipate and address in the self study. In each case, point to the evidence on which you base your answers:

- Are the curriculum, practices, processes, and resources properly aligned with the goals of the program?
- Are department/program goals aligned with student needs and the goals of the broader campus?
- Is the level of program quality consistent with the college's expectations? Are program goals and student learning outcomes being achieved?

Future Goals and Planning for Improvement
Self-study reports conclude with a section devoted to future planning and improvement. Formulating a plan for the future and for improvement is the main purpose of a periodic review—allowing the department or program to reflect on and articulate its future goals and to use disciplinary experts to provide commentary and guidance about them. Findings from all prior sections of the report serve as a foundation for building an evidence-based plan for strengthening the program. Questions you should address include:
- What are the program's goals for the next few years?
- How is the program addressing weaknesses or challenges identified in the self-study?
- How will the program build on existing strengths?
- What internal improvements are possible with existing resources (through reallocation)?
- What improvements can only be addressed through additional resources?
- Can the formation of collaborations with our law and graduate programs or with other colleges in the region (such as the Northwest Five Consortium) improve program quality?

The Campus Visit

When external reviewers are a part of the review process, the Dean's Office will ask the department for recommendations and will confer with the Faculty Council to identify suitable candidates. Normally the review team will consist of two faculty members from liberal arts colleges comparable to Lewis & Clark. Reviewers are invited by the Associate Dean for Faculty Development, and the department should not contact them directly.

Reviewers should be selected early in the review process, several months before the scheduled campus visit. In order to assure that they have adequate time to read and review the self-study, **reviewers should receive the self-study document a month in advance of their visit to campus**.

Division of Labor: The Dean's Office will work with the department to schedule the visit of the review team, taking account of the availability of department members, the Dean of the College, and the reviewers themselves. The on-campus visit is scheduled over two days (ordinarily Monday/Tuesday or Thursday/Friday). When possible, reviewers may arrive in Portland the night before and have dinner with the Dean; scheduled on-campus activities should wrap up in the afternoon of the second day. The Dean's Office will make

travel arrangements for the reviewers and will pay for all costs of the review, including travel, meals, lodging, and honorarium expenses.

Once travel arrangements have been made by the Dean's Office, the department chair (or program director) and administrative assistant are primarily responsible for scheduling the team during their campus visit. Please collaborate closely with the Associate Dean as you work out the details of the visit. **The Dean will approve the schedule before sending to the external reviewers.**

General Instructions for the Schedule: You should reserve a room (e.g., a conference room) for the reviewers to use throughout the review, and ask faculty and staff to meet with them there. This optimizes the reviewers' time on campus because they do not lose time traveling between offices. Provide them with beverages and fruit and/or other snacks. Be sure to allow some time between meetings for them to stretch their legs, and schedule 15 minute breaks every couple of hours to allow them to confer with one another.

Meetings to Schedule: The schedule should include the following meetings. Unless the department/program is too large to permit it, reviewers should meet as a team with those listed below, rather than being split up to meet separately with different individuals or groups.

- The reviewers' first meeting is with the Dean and Associate Dean of the College, either for dinner the evening before the visit begins (if travel schedules permit) or for breakfast on the first day of the review.

- The reviewers should meet with each tenure line member of the department/program individually. Depending on the number of faculty involved, meetings can be scheduled for between 45 minutes and an hour.

    - When possible, the chair should be the first individual to meet with the reviewers to provide an overview of the department/program and answer questions about the self-study.

    - Some reviewers may wish to meet the department/program as a whole early in their visit. It may be possible to accommodate this with a breakfast meeting (if the Dean has met them the previous evening) followed by a meeting with the chair.

- Faculty with Term should also meet the reviewers for at least 30 minutes. Whether they meet individually or jointly (if there are more than one) will depend on the time available in the reviewers' schedule.

- Reviewers should meet with the heads of other departments/programs whose activities are affected by the department/program under review. For example, if that department/program regularly contributes to interdisciplinary programs (e.g., Asian Studies, Gender Studies, etc.) or General Education, heads of those

programs should meet reviewers. Again, whether these meetings are individual or joint will depend on the time available in the reviewers' schedule. In addition, if applicable, the reviewers may meet with the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, if the review includes (or potentially includes) significant curricular reform.

- If the department/program has professional staff whose activities are essential to its operations (e.g., technical support personnel), they should also be given the opportunity to meet the reviewers for 30 minutes.

- On the first day of their campus visit, reviewers should have lunch with 8-10 students, chosen by the department/program. The Dean's Office will cover the cost of the lunch, but the department/program is responsible for securing a room and arranging food service.

- On the second day of their campus visit, arrange a lunch for reviewers alone to allow them to confer and generate a preliminary report.

- When facilities are an important part of the department/program's curriculum (e.g., theater, art, music, science departments with laboratory courses, etc.), a tour of the facilities should be included. A faculty member can take the reviewers on the tour as part of his/her interview time with them to use time efficiently.

- The final two items in the reviewers' schedule (which take place on the afternoon of the second day) are (1) a one hour exit meeting with department faculty at which the reviewers can give preliminary feedback and receive answers to any remaining questions they may have, followed by (2) a 60-90 minute exit interview with the Dean of the College, who may be joined by members of the Faculty Council, if available, or the Associate Dean. This exit interview with the Dean takes place in Albany 201.

It is possible that reviewers may ask for changes to the schedule after they have reviewed the self-study and before the visit, or during the visit. Please be flexible in accommodating their needs and questions.

The Reviewers' Report

Reviewers are given a charge (developed jointly by the department/program and Faculty Council) that asks them to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the department/program under review, to evaluate the appropriateness of the curriculum and student outcomes, and to recommend to the department/program and Dean ways in which it can be strengthened. Reviewers are asked to provide a written report of their assessment and recommendations within 30 days of the campus visit, although it often takes longer to receive it. The report is sent to the Dean's Office, which then distributes it to the department/program and Faculty Council and/or Curriculum Committee, depending on the nature of the recommendations. Often the report contains both recommendations for the department/program (regarding curriculum, operating procedures, etc.) and the

administration (regarding resources available to the department, etc.), and planning for the future will require consultation between these entities.

The Departmental Response

The department/program has 45 instructional days (roughly a semester) to submit to the Dean a written response to the external review. However, if it is possible to submit a response sooner, this aids the Dean, relevant committees, and the department/program in formulating a plan to address the reviewers' recommendations.

The department/program response should:
- Identify areas of agreement (and, if relevant, disagreement) with the reviewers' assessment and recommendations.
- Identify a reasonably detailed action plan that includes next steps for the following time frames:
  - What will the department plan to do in the next six months?
  - In the next year?
  - In the next three years?

Ideally, the recommendations of the external reviewers will inform these plans, but the action plan should encompass the entire review process, including the department's own insights from the self-study, reviewer report, and process.

The Dean will send copies of the department's response to Faculty Council, Curriculum Committee, and the Associate Dean.

The Dean's office will schedule a meeting with the department chair or program director approximately six months following the response in order to review progress on the action plan. When appropriate, others (Chair of Curriculum Committee, other department members) may be included in the meeting. The timing of the meeting can be adjusted, given academic calendar constraints and other concerns, but should take place between six months and one year upon receipt of the departmental response.

Appendix A: Campus-wide Resources for Faculty and Students

Following are descriptions of resources that are available to all faculty and students in any department. Departments may simply cut and paste this text into the relevant portion of the self-study or may choose to revise and supplement this text with information specific to the department.

Faculty review and evaluation processes:
Faculty at various ranks are reviewed regularly, according to processes and standards documented in sections 3.6 through 3.6.3.2 of the Faculty Handbook.

- Tenure-track assistant professors participate in developmental reviews in their second and fourth year and receive feedback from a three-person faculty committee and from the Dean of the College. Tenure track faculty typically submit a tenure dossier in their sixth year for review by the tenured members of the department faculty, the campus-wide Committee on Promotion and Tenure, the Dean of the College, and the President.
- Tenured and with-term faculty are reviewed every three years based on a dossier they provide to their department chair and by the Dean of the College.
- Visiting and adjunct faculty are reviewed by department chairs after the first term or year of teaching. For those who continue, reviews occur after every two subsequent years in which any teaching takes place; at a minimum, intermittent visitors should expect to be reviewed every five years.

All faculty are expected to demonstrate excellence in teaching (typical teaching load for TT faculty is 3-2). Tenured and tenure track faculty are also expected to demonstrate excellence in scholarship/creative work and service to campus, discipline, and/or community. Faculty with term contracts typically include both teaching and some additional campus service; some also include scholarship or creative work as part of their appointment and evaluation.

Support for teaching and research that are available to all faculty:
Faculty resources for professional development include:
- The CAS Teaching Excellence Program (TEP) provides a variety of programs (e.g., workshops, individual mentoring and consultation, speakers, brown-bag lunches, student partners) to support them in strengthening and expanding teaching expertise.
- The Associate Dean for Faculty Development coordinates workshops, small groups, speakers, and writing retreats to support scholarly productivity and leadership development.
- Pre-tenure faculty may apply for a paid junior sabbatical and tenured faculty are eligible for a paid sabbatical every 12 semesters of full time service, as detailed in the section 3.11.3.A of the Faculty Handbook.
- New, pre-tenured faculty are able to access start-up funds to launch their scholarship and creative work during their first three years at the college. Following that, faculty are eligible to apply yearly for up to $2000 to support travel to a professional conference and up to $1000 yearly to support research (e.g., research assistants, travel to archives or field sites, etc.) Funds to support summer faculty-student research collaborations are also available.

- Our Sponsored Projects and Research Compliance Office (SPARC) provides assistance in securing and managing external funding.
- Watzek Digital and Data Services support faculty teaching and research by consulting on digital archives, statistical computing software, and high performance computing. Faculty may apply for up to $2,500 for Library Educational Technology Funds.
- Educational Technology staff are available to assist faculty with teaching and research, including individual consultation as well as the annual week-long Faculty Technology Institute.

Resources for students:
Our faculty collaborate with several offices and their staff to provide support for students.
- Academic Advising: All students are assigned both a faculty advisor and a College Advising Center advisor. Students are required to meet with their faculty advisor prior to course registration every semester.
- Career Advising: Staff in our Career Center provide information, programming and individual consultation to assist students in exploring majors and careers, securing internships, and preparing for application to graduate school and employment.
- The Office of Student Accessibility provides consultation, accommodations, education, and advocacy for students with disabilities, as well as on-campus and off-campus referrals and resources to support overall mental health and physical health and wellness.
- Tutoring: Our Student Academic Affairs Board provides a free peer-to-peer tutoring program. Additional resources for math, statistics, computer science, economics, biology, chemistry, and physics courses are available at the Symbolic and Quantitative Resource Center. The Keck Interactive Learning Center provides drop-in assistance for all languages taught on campus. The Writing Center provides peer-to-peer writing assistance.
- Financial aid: Our Institutional Research office provides statistics on student financial aid.
- Support for student engagement: Staff in Student Engagement support student organizations and campus activities. The Center for Social Change and Community Involvement facilitates student volunteer and leadership development opportunities locally and globally.