

Southern Connecticut State University

Academic Program Review

Approved May 8, 2008

In order to promote academic excellence and the continuous improvement of academic program quality, Southern Connecticut State University is committed to the periodic, systematic, and comprehensive review of academic programs. All academic programs are reviewed on a 5-year cycle.

The **program review**¹ process also meets expectations of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, our regional **accreditation** body, the Board of Trustees of the Connecticut State University System, the Connecticut Board of Governors for Higher Education and the Connecticut General Assembly.

The centerpiece of **program review** is a systematic **self-study** completed by the department responsible for an academic program. The foci of program review are the assessment of student learning, as well as assessment of other indicators of quality and productivity. During the self-study, the department engages in a thoughtful and in-depth self-evaluation of its programs on a common set of indicators. A self-study report is prepared by the department following an outline described later in this document. This report is forwarded to the dean.

As part of the process, one or more examiners external to the university review the self-study document and complete a site visit. Both the **self-study** and the examiner's reports identify areas of strength, areas for improvement, and recommendations. The Program Review and Assessment Committee (PRAC) of the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum (UCF) reviews each program based upon the self-study report and the external review submitted and makes a determination as to whether the quality indicators have been "met" or "not met" along with any recommendations. Following the review process, PRAC will make a recommendation to the UCF regarding the status of the program. The result is communicated to the department, the dean, and the Provost. A plan to address recommendations from the review will be developed collaboratively by the department and the dean. Specific procedures for the review process are described later in this document.

Procedures and standards for the **program review** of undergraduate academic programs are implemented and monitored by the Program Review and Assessment Committee (PRAC) of the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum (UCF), with the approval of the full UCF. Coordination of assessment activities and technical support to departments scheduled for assessment are provided by the Office of Assessment and Planning within the Division of Academic Affairs.

Components and Schedule for Academic Program Review

¹ Terms in **bold** are defined in the glossary in Appendix A.

The following academic programs are subject to program review:

- Undergraduate academic programs based in academic departments for which degrees or certificates are granted;
- Minors housed in academic departments*;
- General Education requirement components;
- Degree programs in Liberal Studies;
- Honors College program;
- Cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary programs, including minors not housed in academic departments*;
- Graduate program reviews are coordinated by the Graduate Council.

* During the first cycle of program reviews, for departments that house both majors and minors, the focus will be on the major program(s). Departments will be expected to address all programs in subsequent cycles.

Schedule for Program Review

Academic programs will be reviewed on a 5-year cycle. Each year, the Office of Assessment and Planning will publish and disseminate the program review schedule to deans, departments, and the Provost. Suggested benchmarks for the 5-year cycle are provided below to assist departments in planning.²

Semester 1: Department identifies self-study committee; participates in training workshop with PRAC/ Assessment Office. Department identifies goals and objectives, **student learning outcomes** which are aligned with and tied to the university's mission.

Semesters 2 and 3: Department identifies measures to be used and the rationale for the particular measures/instruments selected. The department submits the assessment plan outline and rationale to PRAC, dean, and Office of Assessment and Planning. The department begins pilot use of assessment measures and begins data collection. This should include the collection of data from student, faculty, and alumni (e.g., surveys, focus groups, interviews). The Office of Assessment and Planning provides any needed technical assistance to departments. The department makes a plan for the external review, identifies potential external reviewers and submits at least three names to the Office of Assessment and Planning.

Semester 4: Department prepares preliminary report, finalizes external review plan (with assistance from the Office of Assessment and Planning), sends report to reviewer with a copy to the dean.

² The 5-year cycle is based upon the existing Graduate Council 5-year cycle (dated May 2007). Because final reports will be due throughout the academic year, the term, "semester" is used broadly to indicate a 4-6 month period which may, or may not, correspond to the traditional fall and spring semesters.

Semester 5: Site visit; report from reviewer; response by department; finalize departmental report.

Semester 6: Submit report to PRAC, dean, and Provost. PRAC reviews self-study and makes recommendation to the UCF; UCF recommends approval, conditional approval or non-approval to the Provost. The department and dean collaboratively develop an action plan to address recommendations from the **program review**. (See further discussion about recommendations later in this document.)

Semesters 7-10: Implementation of action plan developed by department and dean; use of data to improve program; closing the assessment “loop.”

- Throughout the cycle, departments will report on their progress annually to the dean in the departmental annual report. This annual reporting provides evidence that program reviews and assessments have resulted in substantive and continuing improvement.

Relationship Between External Accreditation and SCSU Program Review

Accredited Departments

Whether or not departments utilize a formalized external **accreditation** process, they are nonetheless expected to comply with the university’s requirements for **program review**.

External **accreditation** assesses a program’s **curricular coherence** and resources in relation to the standards of a particular discipline. The SCSU **program review** assesses a department’s **curricular coherence** and resources in relation to the standards of the university. Depending on the accrediting body, these two sets of standards may overlap to a greater or lesser extent. Disciplinary accreditors are typically interested in the quality of the major, while the university’s interests in quality are broader, extending to all programs in a department, including minors and general education courses. Because these two sets of standards are overlapping yet somewhat distinct, those departments who utilize an external **accreditation** process must also complete university **program reviews**.

Those departments with external **accreditation** systems endemic to their disciplines are encouraged to obtain and maintain their accredited status as one measure of program assessment.

To avoid overlapping and scheduling issues, the university is sensitive to and will work with departments to see that program review efforts can be dovetailed whenever possible. Departments are encouraged to incorporate information from external **accreditation** self-study documents as much as possible. For example, instruments used and data collected on **student learning outcomes** for an external **accreditation** report, such as NCATE, should be used as documentation for the SCSU program review. The most recent

disciplinary accreditation site visit will serve as the external review for the SCSU program review.

Departments bear the responsibility of communicating their schedules for external **accreditation** to the Office of Assessment and Planning. In the event a department loses its accreditation for any reason, the university **program review** process is still required to be completed as scheduled.

The university encourages those departments that have and maintain accredited status to use data from the external accreditation documents when compiling the undergraduate program review report.

In addition to external **accreditation** data, departments are required to document how their program(s) cohere with the overall university mission, outcome objectives and other areas about which external accreditation may be silent or inapplicable.

Assistance will be provided by the Office of Assessment and Planning to assure that external and internal reviews cover all areas of assessment.

Non-accredited Departments

Departments that opt not to become accredited; do not maintain accredited status; or that do not have an external accrediting body, are obligated to comply with the university's full internal **program review**. Assistance for internal reviews covering all areas of concern will be provided by the Office of Assessment and Planning.

Program Review Standards and Areas to be Addressed

1. The department/program's mission supports the university's mission.

What is the department/program mission? How does this mission support the University's mission?

2. The department/program has clearly stated program goals and objectives

Statement of general **program goals** should be provided in this section. Goals are broad general statements that are not measurable. The goals should support the department's mission as described in Standard #1.

Goals should be stated in terms of what the **program** intends to do. Some examples are:

The goal of the communication disorders program is to provide pre-professional education that prepares the undergraduate learner for life-long inquiry, leadership, and adaptation to change through exposure to state-of-the-art instructional techniques which embrace critical thinking, interaction, assessment, and communication.

A goal of the biology department is to provide non-science majors with a quality coverage of biological concepts and to develop in students the ability to think critically

about general topics in biology by dealing with the inquiry and learning methods of the science of biology specifically and those applicable to science in general.

Additional outcomes or objectives sought by the program should also be identified. These may include, but are not limited to, service to the University, school, discipline, and community.

Examples of additional program outcomes/objectives:

Faculty will develop and apply knowledge and skills to formulate and implement policies, services and programs in the university and community that advance social and economic justice and support the development of human capacities.

Faculty will promote and participate in partnerships between the university and community that enrich the quality of community life and enhance professional opportunities for students.

3. The department/program has clearly stated program-level expected student outcomes and methods for measurement

What are students expected to learn as a result of majoring, minoring, or taking general education courses in your department? What methods and/or measures does the department use to document the quality of student performance in the undergraduate major, minor, or general education courses?

- a. List the outcomes that are expected for graduates of your program. These should be stated in measurable terms, and there should be a statement of how they are measured. Measures may be quantitative and/or qualitative depending on the discipline and the nature of the outcome to be measured.
- b. List the outcomes that are expected for students who minor in your program. These should be stated in measurable terms, and there should be a statement of how they are measured. Measures may be quantitative and/or qualitative depending on the discipline and the nature of the outcome to be measured.
- c. If your department/program offers general education courses, list the outcomes for these courses and describe how they support the goals of Southern's Liberal Education Program (February 2005).

Indicate how these outcomes were derived (e.g., consensus of the faculty, requirements of external **accreditation** agencies.). Outcomes should be stated in terms of what the **student** will be able to do. Examples of program-level **student learning outcomes** include:

Humanities:

Advanced students in history will demonstrate effective research writing skills by producing a significant research paper making extensive use of primary source material.

Students will be able to identify, classify, and distinguish information from a wide variety of authentic documents in French, German, Italian, or Spanish both through listening (radio, television, lectures, etc.) and reading (journals, newspapers, literature, etc.).

Fine and Performing Arts:

Upon graduation, Studio Art students will demonstrate a developed and refined visual sensitivity that goes beyond mere observation.

Students in Theatre Arts will demonstrate ability to prepare a production competently by designing, technical directing, production managing and/or providing significant craft support for a theatre piece of significant length (from WCSU).

Sciences:

Students in biology will be able to apply the scientific process, including designing and conducting experiments and testing hypotheses.

Students in the Earth Sciences major will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the interrelated physical, chemical, and biological processes operating in the Earth system

Social Sciences:

Students in psychology will demonstrate effective writing in the discipline.

Students graduating with a degree in sociology will possess an understanding of the key theoretical approaches and insights that inform the discipline of sociology.

Business and Professional Programs:

Students in the computer science major will effectively and professionally communicate, collaborate, and present computing solutions using current technology.

Students completing the preprofessional program in communication disorders will have established a core set of professional behaviors and values that form a foundation for high quality professional practice.

Management graduates will demonstrate their ability to think critically about business and managerial problems from a multi-stakeholder model.

Examples of assessment measures that can be used to gather data about student learning include:

Direct measures:

- Course-embedded tests or projects
- Portfolios
- Standardized tests/ certification or licensure examinations
- Performance-based assessment (e.g., artistic performance, internship performance)

Indirect measures:

- Alumni surveys
- Student satisfaction surveys (e.g., Course information surveys)
- Graduate school acceptance rate
- Job placement

More examples and resources are available from the Office of Assessment and Planning.

Assessment of general education courses

For multiple sections of a core course, please describe how outcomes are documented (e.g., a common final exam or assignment, standardized test, portfolio review by faculty team). Note: This section will be expanded once new general education program is implemented.

4. The department/program actively uses data about student learning to improve its programs.

Once the department has articulated learning outcomes, identified assessment measures/methods, and collected data on student learning, it is essential to demonstrate how these data are being used for program improvement. Describe how data about student learning are analyzed and used in the improvement of your program. How are data used by students and faculty to improve their performance? How are data used to discuss or initiate program changes on a regular basis? What data-driven changes have occurred over the past three years? Provide recent examples to illustrate.

For example, Barbara Walvoord (2004) recommends at least one annual meeting of faculty in which all available evidence about student achievement of learning outcomes is examined. In this meeting, successes are noted and celebrated, and areas needing improvement are identified. An action plan of 1-2 items is developed. Progress as well as need for additional data or need for alternative action are reported.

5. The department/program provides evidence of quality of instruction and teaching effectiveness.

5a. Evidence of quality of instruction:

Describe how the department assures quality of instruction. Discuss methods used and how the information is used for program improvement.

Documentation for this standard must include minimally:

(1) Discussion of how assignments in the program directly relate to expected **student learning outcomes**. Examples of assignments and tests, assessment **rubrics**, and the student results can be included to illustrate this standard.

(2) Provision of at least five (5) sample syllabi from different courses. Syllabi should include course objectives and student outcomes in measurable terms.

(3) Provision and discussion of the summarized ratings of on-ground and online courses based on the university end-of-semester Course Evaluation Form. Summarized ratings will be generated for departments undergoing review by the Office of Management Information and Research.

Additional evidence for this standard may include:

- Peer ratings of instructors.
- Statements of teaching philosophy and methods from instructors.
- Results of surveys of current students and faculty.
- Evidence that the department encourages faculty to continue professional development in teaching.
- Involvement of faculty in Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) activities.

5b. Evidence of teaching effectiveness:

Please provide results of data collected regarding key **student learning outcomes** (in Standard #3) and discuss implications for teaching effectiveness.

6. The department/program provides evidence of a coherent and current curriculum.

Curricular coherence assures that progression through the program is not fragmented and random. How does the department ensure that its curriculum is coherent and current? Describe how current thinking in the field is reflected in courses and how courses are periodically reconsidered and/or updated.

Provide rationales for and evidence of complementarity among courses.

Provide evidence for the presence of current discussions in the field in appropriate courses.

Curriculum mapping (e.g., matrix) may be useful in demonstrating how the curriculum covers the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that students are expected to master.

6a. The department clearly describes the relationship between graduate and undergraduate programs.

If the department also has graduate program(s), please address the relationship and interdependence between the undergraduate and graduate programs. How do expectations (curriculum, courses, assignments) differ? How are resources distributed?

7. The department has an appropriate number of qualified faculty, students, and staff.

Faculty

List both full-time and adjunct faculty associated with the program, indicating the amount of time each commits to the program being reviewed and the relevant courses typically taught by each member. The list should also include degrees (with year obtained) and colleges/universities attended, rank, year of appointment, and tenure status, and specialty area of each faculty member affiliated with the program. Include brief CVs in the appendix. Templates for the faculty list and CVs are available in the appendix of this document.

How are faculty course assignments made? Discuss the match between faculty expertise and course content.

Data from Faculty Annual Activity Reports (FAARs) can be used as one source of evidence to complete this section.

Students

How does the department recruit, retain, and graduate majors? Discuss any selection standards the department uses for the major. How does the program recruit students? Are there any programs aimed at retaining students in the department? What is the graduation rate?

Provide student demographics for past five years – including number of students, gender, ethnicity, disability status, full-time/part-time status. This information will be provided to departments by the Office of Management Information and Research in a template ready for insertion into the program review document.

List any special awards/distinctions earned by faculty and students.

Support staff

Describe and comment on the support staff for the department (secretarial help, student workers, graduate assistants, etc.).

Implications of data presented

The rationale for the optimal number of faculty and students in the department is discussed. Include a discussion of enrollment trends and projections, marketplace and demographic trends, workforce needs, opportunities and challenges, unmet student needs, etc.

7.a. Program Viability: Faculty Participation

Document that at least three qualified, tenure track faculty are teaching in the program on a regular rotation; no faculty member teaches a majority of the courses (excluding thesis and IDS) in a typical students' program.

8 The department provides high quality student advisement and maintains adequate tracking procedures of its students.

Describe how the department ensures that students receive accurate and timely information about university requirements and requirements for specific programs. How

does the department facilitate or encourage students' development of independence and self-advocacy?

Describe how students are assigned to advisors, the number of faculty who advise undergraduates, and the approximate student-advisor ratio. Show that the advisement office hours (1) are sufficient to meet the general university requirements, and (2) are of times that the majority of students in the program would find convenient.

Describe how the students' programs translate into a semester-by-semester sequence. What method is used to assist the student to know what courses to take in what sequence? Include an example of a typical program sequence. Explain how students' progression through the program is tracked. Describe policies or procedures related to retention and dismissal of students.

Describe how the department ensures that students are provided with information concerning applicable departmental policies and procedures. Increasingly, programs are establishing a student handbook for majors that contain all important policies and procedures; this could be included as an appendix to the review document. The development of student handbooks specific to the department/program is strongly suggested.

8.a. Undergraduate Program Direction

How does the department ensure that all administrative functions related to the coordination of the undergraduate program are assigned and carried out? Document that a member of the faculty is responsible for the following functions: course scheduling, responding to requests for information from potential students, approving transfer credit, etc.

9. The department offers an appropriate number of courses and sections to meet the needs of students. Statistical data concerning admissions, graduations, courses offered and cancelled, and other relevant statistics are provided and analyzed.

Statistical data will be provided by the Office of Management Information and Research in a common template ready for insertion into the report.

Provide documentation that a three to five year course rotation plan is published and followed. Provide evidence that sufficient courses are scheduled each semester to permit a matriculated student to follow his or her planned program of full or part time. An analysis of the data regarding admissions, graduations, number of courses offered, and cancellations should be provided.

If the department offers general education courses, a sufficient number of sections should be offered to meet demand, and a varied schedule provided to meet the needs of part-time and full-time students.

10. *The department/program demonstrates a climate of intellectual/professional curiosity and achievement among faculty and students.*

Documentation for this standard can include descriptions of the professional development activities of faculty members, and the extent to which students are involved in faculty research, presentations, etc. Examples include: students attending regional/state/national conferences and presenting a professional paper along with a faculty member, joint publication efforts between faculty and students.

Discuss any departmental efforts related to research, scholarship, and/or creative activity (e.g., collaborations with other universities, department-sponsored colloquia).

Describe any co-curricular activities, clubs, and student organizations that are supported/sponsored by the department.

Data from Faculty Annual Activity Reports (FAARs) can be used as one source of evidence to complete this section.

11. *There is evidence of faculty and student research, scholarship, and/or creative activity.*

Present a summary of recent research, scholarship, and/or creative efforts by faculty members resulting in paper presentations, publications, exhibitions, etc. Describe how students in the program are involved in research, scholarly, and creative projects. A summary/overview of faculty scholarship can be taken from *curriculum vitae*. Data from Faculty Annual Activity Reports (FAARs) can also be used as a source of evidence to complete this section.

12. *The department/program has adequate library resources to meet its needs.*

This standard should include discussion of print as well as electronic library resources that are relevant to each program. Reference the results of surveys or other measures regarding student satisfaction with library holdings for each field of study.

Describe the adequacy of library holdings from the point of view of the faculty for both student reading/research assignments and more demanding faculty research.

Provide the number requests for texts/journals to be purchased within the last several years, and the number actually filled by the library.

13. *The department/program has adequate facilities and non-print resources, such as audio-visual, computers, labs, practica to meet its needs.*

Describe the adequacy and condition of facilities and other resources available to the department. This should include consideration of space, technology (audio-visual, computer, laboratory, high-tech classrooms), and any unique program components (practica/internship, satellite clinics, etc.) that enhance the quality of the program. Indicate how they enhance (or how the lack of them detracts from) the program.

14. The department periodically engages in review and evaluation.

To what extent does the program engage in review and evaluation of its quality during the time between program reviews? Examples include reviews by outside accrediting agencies and professional review boards, benchmarking peer institutions, consulting with an advisory board, and the use of data collected from alumni, employers, current students, and faculty.

14a. The department regularly and systematically collects information from alumni and employers, and this information is used to improve the program.

Present a description of the process used to obtain information from alumni and employers, the frequency of the follow-up, a summary of results, and how the information collected is used to improve the program. Methods used can include mail surveys, focus groups, or phone interviews. Include a copy of the survey or questions posed. Programs can obtain names and addresses of alumni from the Alumni Office. Some programs also maintain their own databases.

Surveys can include items such as: evaluation of courses taken (each rated separately with respect to both quality of the course, and importance/relevance to the work the graduate is now doing); how well graduates achieved the student outcomes identified by the program; number of graduates passing professional exams; number employed in the field and their overall level of satisfaction in the field; former students being asked to serve on an Advisory Committee to the program. Samples of alumni newsletters may be included.

Technical assistance in developing, distributing, and analyzing alumni and employer surveys is available from the Office of Assessment and Planning.

14b. The department regularly and systematically solicits feedback from students and faculty, and this information is used to improve the program.

Describe the process used to obtain information from current students and faculty, present a summary of results, and discuss how the information collected is used to improve the program. Methods used can include surveys, focus groups, or interviews. Include a copy of the survey or questions posed.

Technical assistance in developing and distributing student surveys is available from the Office of Assessment and Planning.

To what extent do students have input into departmental policies and direction? Provide examples of student participation.

15. The department's activity in community service and outreach is appropriate to the mission of the program and the university.

Describe any strategic alliances, partnerships, or collaborations with other agencies in the community and how these further the mission of the department. Include information about any service learning projects, internships, etc.

16. The department provides an analysis of program strengths and weaknesses.
Discuss the department's conclusions from the **self-study**. Identify strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats that support or impede achievement of program goals, objectives, and expected student outcomes.

17. The department describes a vision and action plan for the future.
Provide a vision statement of what the department would like the program to be in five years. Discuss how the program will address the results of this review in relation to the stated vision. Present a time-phased list of actions to be taken over the next several years to improve the program. Describe how the program addressed the major points in the action plan from the previous review cycle.

Implementation of some recommendations made as a result of the self-study may be within the purview of the department under review, while some may require action at a higher level. Some recommendations may require minimal or no additional resources, while others would require the infusion of new or additional resources. While program reviews are an important source of information for institutional planning, budgeting, and resource decisions, it should be noted that limited resources may be available to address recommendations, particularly in the short term.

When developing recommendations and plans for the future, consider two categories: (1) those that do not require new resources, and (2) those that require resources from outside the department.

Recommendations and a follow-up will be developed collaboratively by the department and the dean.

THE PARTS OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

Please paginate the document and the appendices.

1. Identification page – Name of department, school, chairperson; brief description of department and programs
2. Brief summary of how the **self-study** was conducted, who was responsible, etc.
3. Executive summary
4. Review and documentation for the standards (1-17)
5. Appendices

External Review Processes and Procedures

External perspectives on the program being reviewed are critical for two reasons. First, external perspectives offer the potential of more objective, “fresh eyes” in assessing blind spots, both in terms of underleveraged strengths and neglected areas in need of

improvement. Second, external perspectives provide a degree of external validation demanded by most regional **accreditation** agencies³.

Sources of external perspectives include feedback from a variety of constituencies, which include, but are not restricted to:

- Members of other departments within the institution
- Qualified representatives of other universities
- Members of accrediting agencies and other professional associations
- Advisory boards
- Relevant government agencies
- Benchmarking data on regional or national performance in applicable areas
- Survey data from alumni, employers, and other external constituencies

Given the wide variety of data potentially collected from a wide variety of external constituents, the department will prioritize gathering external perspectives from constituencies most critical for goal attainment and program viability, as defined by the department. The rationale behind this selection must be clearly articulated. For example:

- Programs stressing research productivity might prioritize feedback from peer reviewers from other research oriented departments in universities with a mission that is similar to ours.
- Programs stressing teaching excellence might prioritize feedback from advisory boards and alumni documenting transformational learning experiences, as well as benchmark data from best practices institutions demonstrating a quality, innovative program design and delivery.
- Programs stressing professional preparation might prioritize feedback from employers, employer associations and benchmarks documenting student learning outcomes in critical professional skill sets.

This in no way precludes inclusion of other sources of external review. This does stress the necessity of selecting data sources that clearly indicate the degree of excellence in goal and mission attainment, whatever those goals and missions might be.

Review Cycles

The frequency of a comprehensive external review will normally be 5 years. Cycles featuring more or less frequent external reviews are subject to approval by PRAC and the Office of Academic Affairs.

External Examiner Selection

External examiners must demonstrate competency as:

- Experts in a relevant field of study
- Experts in program assessment and curricular development, including best practices in comparable institutions

³ The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) is SCSU's regional accreditor. NEASC Standard 2.5 states, "The institution has a system of periodic review of academic and other programs that includes the use of external perspectives."

- Experts in programs pursuing congruent, similar strategic goals and missions. (research versus teaching versus teacher/scholar)

Selection will prioritize reviewers who have:

- Experience in program reviews at multiple institutions, particularly institutions with similar missions as Southern
- Experience as an examiner for a relevant accreditation organization
- A documented track record of programs who have made significant improvements after implementing reviewer recommendations
- Employment outside the state of Connecticut

External examiners will be nominated by the department. The names of three potential examiners along with a rationale for their selection will be submitted to the Office of Assessment and Planning. Any relationship between a potential reviewer and a department member must be clearly stated. The Office of Assessment and Planning will contact nominees to negotiate contract terms and determine availability, and will make the ultimate selection from the approved list. External reviewers shall be paid an honorarium and expenses to review the program. Payment shall be provided from university funds.

Site Visits

Examiners will spend one to two full days meeting with program faculty, chair/coordinator, students and other constituencies associated with the program. Examiners will assess the success of the program in defining and meeting its stated objectives, and consider recommendations generated in the self study. A preliminary, oral report of findings and recommendations will be provided at an exit meeting at the conclusion of the visit. Members of the department, the relevant dean, and representatives from Academic Affairs, PRAC, and the Office of Assessment and Planning are invited to attend the exit meeting.

Each visit will include:

- A welcome meeting with PRAC, administrative personnel, and program faculty
- Meetings with program faculty
- Meetings with students in the program
- Meetings with administrators (usually the dean)
- Meetings with representatives of at least one key external constituency, as prioritized by criteria for program goal and mission attainment (see above).
- A tour of facilities, including the library, computing areas, and any facilities dedicated to the program
- An exit meeting with PRAC, administrative personnel (including dean), and program faculty

A subsequent written report will document all findings. Departments are responsible to collect and communicate any additional data requested by the external examiner prior to the submission of the final report.

Role of PRAC and UCF in the Program Review Process

The Program Review and Assessment Committee (PRAC) of the UCF is the appropriate body charged with implementing undergraduate **program review**.

Because of the increased responsibilities, the membership of PRAC should be enlarged to a recommended size of 12-15 members, with representation from each academic school. Efforts should be made to ensure continuity on the committee and to select UCF members with interest and preferably expertise and experience with assessment, program evaluation, and/or accreditation. As with any standing committee of the UCF, the Chair of UCF retains the right to assign or dismiss PRAC members.

Because of the responsibilities of the PRAC chairperson, there should be some reassigned time available for this office.

PRAC will review each program based upon the submitted self-study report and report of the external consultant(s). The department submitting the report will have an opportunity to meet with PRAC, generally one week after it has forwarded its report to the Committee, and before the Committee has concluded its evaluation. Within one week after having completed its review, PRAC will submit a narrative response and summary to the department, indicating which standards/indicators have been judged as “met” or “not met” along with any additional recommendations PRAC deems important to convey involving program integrity and quality.

The department which submitted the written program report shall address the concerns of PRAC within one week following the PRAC review meeting. If, in the opinion of the Committee, those concerns have not been addressed satisfactorily, the Committee may, at its discretion, modify its original evaluation and recommendation to the UCF.

In general, recommendation from PRAC regarding the department/program being reviewed shall be on the UCF agenda at the second full UCF meeting following the review (or at least three weeks following the PRAC review). The full self-study as well as the report from PRAC will be available online for review by UCF members. A 1-2 page synopsis/executive summary to be provided by the department as well as the report from PRAC will be disseminated to the UCF members two weeks prior to the meeting in which a vote on PRAC’s recommendation will be taken.

Following the review, PRAC will make one of the following recommendations to the full UCF:

- (1) Continuing approval of the program;
- or
- (2) Conditional approval of the program.

If a department does not submit the appropriate written report according to the timeline, PRAC will so advise the UCF, which will then grant conditional approval of the program. The Chairperson of PRAC will provide written notification to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, dean of the appropriate academic school, chairperson of the department, and coordinator(s)/director(s) of the program(s) to request a meeting to outline a schedule for and aid in the successful completion of the review process.

By a majority vote, the UCF will accept, reject, or table the recommendation from PRAC. The factors leading to continuing approval, or the conditions leading to conditional approval, and the action of the UCF shall be communicated by PRAC to the respective department chairperson, program coordinator(s)/director(s), appropriate academic dean and Provost/Academic Vice President. The minutes of the UCF meeting shall serve as a written record of the vote.

Any program granted conditional approval will have up to eleven months from the published date in the Program Review Schedule to address the conditions cited and provide PRAC with a written interim report. During this period, technical assistance will continue to be available from the Office of Assessment and Planning, and the department may consult with PRAC.

The interim report addressing the cited conditions will be reviewed by PRAC. The department submitting the report will have an opportunity to meet with PRAC one week subsequent to the submission of the report before the review is completed. No later than one calendar year after previous action by the UCF, PRAC will make one of the following recommendations to the UCF:

(1) Continuing approval of the program;

or

(2) Because of continuing serious deficiencies in meeting the standards/indicators, PRAC cannot recommend continuing approval. In this eventuality, a representative of the affected department will be present at the meeting to present an alternative perspective on the recommendation.

If continuing approval of a program is denied by a majority vote of the UCF, the UCF will forward to the dean of the academic school and to the Provost/Academic Vice President, the action of the UCF to deny continuing approval of that program with a description of the deficiencies found and recommendations for corrective action.

The dean and the Provost/Academic Vice President will be requested to report their actions regarding the affected department to the full UCF within four academic weeks.

The program whose interim report receives continuing approval from the UCF will next be reviewed by PRAC five years from the date that it submitted its initial report.

Role of the Office of Assessment and Planning

The administrative portion of **program review** will be supported by the Office of Assessment and Planning. The Office will provide technical assistance and support to faculty and programs as well as handle the logistics and coordination required.

Resources for Program Review

Southern Connecticut State University is committed to academic excellence and student success. Academic program review is an important mechanism in assuring the quality and continuous improvement of programs. The university recognizes that resources are necessary for the completion of meaningful program reviews. These resources include

1. Ready access to important documents and institutional data (e.g., university mission/ vision/ strategic plan; institutional research data re: department demographics such as number of majors, number of degrees awarded, course enrollments)
2. Technical assistance to departments regarding the identification and measurement of student outcomes, survey construction, data analysis
3. Reassigned time for the person who coordinates the departmental self-study
4. Reassigned time for PRAC chair
5. Funding for external reviewer(s)
6. Administrative coordination of logistics (e.g., scheduling and notification to departments regarding reviews, travel plans for external reviewer)
7. Training for PRAC members as necessary
8. Training for departments as necessary
9. Templates to facilitate report writing will be available.

Amendments

Any changes to this document will be made following the policies and procedures of the UCF.

Appendices

Appendix A

GLOSSARY OF ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY

Accreditation: process of external quality review used in higher education to examine colleges, universities and higher education programs for quality assurance and quality improvement (Adapted from: <http://turing.ittig.cnr.it/ifla/home/keyterms.php>).

Assessment of Student Learning: the systematic collection and analysis of information to improve student learning (Stassen, Doherty, & Poe, 2001).

Assessment Loop:

An iterative process consisting of:

- 1) Defining/revisiting/asking questions about learning goals/outcomes, including the ways in which learning has occurred so far.
- 2) Selecting/designing tools and methodologies and collecting evidence for student learning. Value added methods take a look at the gains attributable to the learning experiences offered to students in a program.
- 3) Analyzing and interpreting the collection of evidence in relation to the learning goals/outcomes, and making judgments about the learning that has occurred.
- 4) Using the results in a reflective process to plan and implement changes in teaching and/or the curriculum, with the expectation of demonstrable improvements in student learning.

Culture of Evidence: A collective stance in which continuous reflection about the evidence for learning drives decision making, resource allocation, and daily practice and discourse.

Curricular Coherence: Curriculum in which skills/knowledge are sequenced from basic to advanced; foundational skills are taught first and systematically reinforced in advanced classes to maximize student learning. Consideration is given to a balance between depth and breadth of the discipline. Curricular coherence is achieved by aligning program goals and intended learning outcomes for graduates with the courses and educational activities offered by the department.

Curriculum Map (Matrix): A matrix representation of a program's learning outcomes showing where the outcomes are taught within the program.

Direct Methods of Assessment of Student Learning: Processes employed to assess student learning directly by requiring students to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Examples of direct methods include standardized tests, capstone experiences, home-grown tests and examinations, portfolios, research projects, and performances.

Indirect Methods of Assessment: Processes employed to assess a program and/or student learning indirectly by gathering indirect information related to student learning or

program success. Examples of indirect methods include questionnaires which ask students to reflect on their learning, satisfaction surveys of alumni or employers, graduate school acceptance rates, and employment rates.

Program Review: A process using performance indicators/standards to examine a department's current programming, direction, and capacity; validate its strengths; identify opportunities for improvement; and develop a plan for achieving results. In addition, program review serves as a mechanism for internal and external communication about the department (Adapted from Bresciani, 2006).

Program Goal: Other program outcomes not directly related to student learning, such as student/faculty ratio or program completion rate. For example, "*Faculty in the Department of Social Work will promote and participate in partnerships between the university and community that enrich the quality of community life and enhance professional opportunities for students.*"

Rubric: A scoring tool that lays out specific expectations and criteria for assessing student performance on selected tasks. Rubrics specify various degrees of mastery, holistically or analytically (e.g. statement describing what each score in a 1 to 4 scale means regarding paragraph construction when scoring a writing piece analytically).

Self-Study: Review and evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of an academic program based on standards and carried out by the department itself. Self-studies usually are undertaken in preparation for a quality assurance site visit by an outside team of specialists (Adapted from <http://turing.ittig.cnr.it/ifla/home/keyterms.php>).

Student Learning Goal⁴: A broad, general statement of the knowledge, skill, and/or disposition that students are expected to learn (e.g., problem-solving skills, oral communication). For example, "*Students majoring in history will demonstrate effective writing in the discipline.*"

Student Learning Outcome/ Objective⁵: An identified, measurable action that a student is expected to demonstrate in terms of knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes upon completion of an educational program. For example, "*Advanced students in history will demonstrate effective research writing skills by producing a significant research paper that makes extensive use of primary source material.*"

⁴ A student learning goal is contrasted with a program goal. The former is focused on what a student will do upon completion of the program, while the latter is focused on what the department or program will do.

⁵ Although some writers distinguish between learning objectives and learning outcomes, the distinctions are subtle and not practically important. These terms are often used interchangeably. The term "student learning outcomes" will be used as the preferred term at Southern.

Appendix B: FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM REVIEW SCHEDULE (Revised)⁶

2008- 2009 Review Schedule

DATE	UNDERGRADUATE	GRADUATE
October 2008	Journalism	
November 2008	Communication Disorders	Communication Disorders
December 2008	Biology	Biology
February 2009	Nursing	Nursing
March 2009	Psychology	Psychology
April 2009	Media Studies	
May 2009	Political Science	Political Science

2009- 2010 Review Schedule

October 2009	Management/MIS	
November 2009	Art	Art Education
December 2009	English	English
February 2010	Accounting	Business Administration
March 2010	Marketing, Econ/Finance	Counseling & School Psychology
April 2010	Computer Science	Computer Science
May 2010	Music	

2010- 2011 Review Schedule

October 2010	Theatre	Research, Statistics & Measurement
November 2010	Geography	Urban Studies
December 2010	Education	Elementary Education
February 2011	Foreign Languages	Foreign Language/ Ed Foundations
March 2011	Public Health	Public Health/ Bi- Lingual
April 2011	History	History
May 2011	Information & Library Science	Information & Library Science/ IT

2011-2012 Review Schedule

October 2011	Anthropology	School Health
November 2011	Earth Science	Marriage & Family Therapy
December 2011	Mathematics	Mathematics
February 2012	Liberal Studies	Women's Studies
March 2012	Exercise Science	Exercise Science
April 2012	Social Work	Social Work
May 2012	Special Education	Special Education/ Reading

2012- 2013 Review Schedule

October 2012	Communication	
November 2012	Honors College	Educational Leadership/ Ed.D.
December 2012	Chemistry	Chemistry
February 2013	Recreation & Leisure	Recreation & Leisure
March 2013	Sociology	Sociology
April 2013	Physics	Science Ed/ Environmental Ed
May 2013	Philosophy	

⁶ Based on Graduate Council rotation 5/3/07.

Undergraduate-Only Programs (by School):

Arts and Sciences

Anthropology
Earth Science
Geography
Honors College
Liberal Studies
Media Studies
Music
Philosophy
Physics
Theatre

Business

Accounting
Economics/Finance
Management/MIS
Marketing

Communication, Information, and Library Science

Communication
Journalism

Graduate-Only Programs (by School):

Arts and Sciences

Science Education/Environmental Education
Urban Studies

Business

MBA

Education

Counseling/School Psychology
Educational Leadership
Educational Foundations
Research, Statistics, and Measurement
School Health

Health and Human Services

Marriage and Family Therapy

Appendix C

Undergraduate Program Review Form

Department/Program _____ Date: _____

Met	Not Met		
		1	The department/program's mission supports the university's mission.
		2	The department/program has clearly stated program goals and objectives
		3	The department/program has clearly stated program-level expected student outcomes and methods for measurement
		4	The department/program actively uses data about student learning to improve its programs.
		5a	The department/program provides evidence of quality of instruction.
		5b	The department/program provides evidence of teaching effectiveness.
		6	The department/program provides evidence of a coherent and current curriculum.
		6a	The department clearly describes the relationship between graduate and undergraduate programs.
		7	The department has an appropriate number of qualified faculty, students, and staff.
		7a	Faculty Participation: At least three qualified, tenure track

			faculty are teaching in the program on a regular rotation; no faculty member teaches a majority of the courses (excluding thesis and IDS) in a typical students' program.
		8	The department provides high quality student advisement and maintains adequate tracking procedures of its students.
		8a	Undergraduate Program Direction: The department ensures that all administrative functions related to the coordination of the undergraduate program are assigned and carried out.
		9	The department offers an appropriate number of courses and sections to meet the needs of students. Statistical data concerning admissions, graduations, courses offered and cancelled, and other relevant statistics are provided and analyzed.
		10	The department/program demonstrates a climate of intellectual/professional curiosity and achievement among faculty and students.
		11	There is evidence of faculty and student research, scholarship, and/or creative activity.
		12	The department/program has adequate library resources to meet its needs.
		13	The department/program has adequate facilities and non-print resources, such as audio-visual, computers, labs, practica to meet its needs.
		14	The department periodically engages in review and evaluation.
		14a	The department regularly and systematically collects information from alumni and employers, and this information is used to improve the program.

		14b	The department regularly and systematically solicits feedback from students and faculty, and this information is used to improve the program.
		15	The department's activity in community service and outreach is appropriate to the mission of the program and the university.
		16	The department provides an analysis of program strengths and weaknesses.
		17	The department describes a vision and action plan for the future.

References

- Bresciani, M.J. (2006). *Outcomes-based academic and co-curricular program review*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
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- Walvoord, B.E. (2004). *Assessment clear and simple*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.