

University Committee on Educational Policy

Survey Summary: Undergraduate Program Review Practices and Issues

June 2008

1. Are undergraduate and graduate program reviews conducted separately or combined?

Three campuses – Davis, Riverside, and San Diego – conduct their undergraduate and graduate reviews separately. Four campuses – Irvine, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz – combine reviews. At Berkeley, departmental reviews combine programs, while graduate groups and stand-alone undergraduate programs are separate. San Diego conducts undergraduate reviews the year following the graduate review, when feasible.

2. Is there a long-term schedule for reviews? How many years ahead does the schedule cover? What is the interval between reviews? Are there early review provisions, if deemed necessary?

Most campuses have a recurring review cycle that is between six and eight years long. Reviewing agencies may recommend which departments/ programs should be reviewed one to two years in advance. Some campuses have specific provisions in place for an early or extra review, if necessary, usually when there are special concerns, or depending on findings and recommendations of the prior review. An early review may occur at the request of the department or Senate.

3. Who initiates and oversees the review process?

At Irvine and Riverside, a Senate entity has primary responsibility. At Berkeley, Davis, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Santa Cruz, the responsibility is shared by the Senate and the Administration. At Santa Barbara, it is initiated by the Administration and overseen by faculty.

4. What office/ committee is responsible for the program review process guidelines?

At Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Riverside San Diego, and Santa Barbara, the Senate has primary responsibility. It is an administrative responsibility at Berkeley (after vetting by a joint committee) and Santa Cruz. Most campuses have a process of consultation among the Senate, Administration, and other entities.

5. What office/ committee is responsible for the self-review guidelines?

The responsibilities generally follow the same form as #4.

6. What data are required in the review process? Who collects and makes them available to the program? Does the department collect and analyze additional data independently?

Usually an administrative office or entity – the Office of Planning and Budget, Student Affairs Research and Information, vice provost, associate vice chancellor, etc., – provides data relating to faculty and student demographics, faculty workload; curriculum and course enrollments, grade distributions; funding and support; student instructor ratings; degree requirements; number and type of majors and degrees awarded; retention/time to degree; student and alumni satisfaction; and previous program review data. Usually, the unit under review may also collect and assess data they deem applicable and pertinent. Units may also provide extensive relevant data in the self-study.

7. Must departments state educational objectives for programs and courses and provide information about assessing success in meeting those objectives? In what form?

At most campuses, the self-study or developmental plan template asks the unit to state its educational goals and objectives as well as the effectiveness of the program in meeting those objectives. This step is not required at Irvine. At San Diego, units complete the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) *Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators* form.

8. Who provides staff support for the review process?

Staff support usually comes from the entity that initiates and oversees the review process with assistance from multiple other sources, which may include the Senate, Administration, and the unit under review.

9. Who funds extraneous costs associated with the review (e.g., external reviewers, unusual needs)?

Usually the Administration either provides funding or allocates funding to the Senate for travel, honoraria, and other costs. Sometimes the unit under review is asked to cover minimal expenses such as lunch.

10. How is the dean's office involved? Do internal review team members meet with the dean?

Deans participate and provide input into the review process on every campus. Deans usually have a chance to meet in person with the External Review Committee during at least one stage of the visit, at the beginning of the process, at an exit interview, or both. They may also have opportunities to comment on the charge to the ERC and respond to the final ERC report and/or the department response.

11. Who proposes and selects members of a review or ad hoc committee? Is there a member from the Undergraduate Council or the Educational Policy committee?

Usually, the entity or entities that initiate and oversee the program review process propose and select the members of the review committee or ad hoc. At Berkeley, there is a Senate liaison to the ERC who writes a separate report, and the Berkeley CEP and four other committees have delegates who meet with the ERC at the beginning and end of the visit. At San Diego, Los Angeles, and Davis, the review or ad hoc includes an Undergraduate Council or Educational Policy committee member, but does not at Santa Barbara. The Committee on Committees participates in the process at Davis and San Diego.

12. Is an external review committee (ERC) involved in program reviews? Who selects the external reviewer(s)?

All campuses have a separate External Review Committee except Davis, which has no ERC. At Santa Cruz and Irvine, the entire review team is external. San Diego includes one external UC faculty member on its ad hoc Review Subcommittee, and Riverside has three external reviewers on its CEP review team. At Berkeley and Los Angeles, units to be reviewed nominate ERC reviewers. At Santa Cruz, the dean in consultation with the department selects them. At Irvine, they are selected by the main program review committee. At Riverside, the CEP subcommittee, which includes the vice provost for undergraduate education (VPUE) and the associate dean of the department's college, chooses. At San Diego, a list of potential external reviewers is developed in consultation with the Committee on Committees. At Santa Barbara, members are selected by the Program Review Panel (PRP) in consultation with the department.

13. With what persons or committees do the external reviewer(s) meet (not including department faculty, students, etc.)? Do meetings occur before, during, or after the process?

- [B] They meet with the vice provost, dean, and unit head on the first day, with the program review oversight committee and Senate Liaison the second day, and with the Program Review Oversight Committee (PROC) and dean again on the final day for an exit interview.
- [I] Separate meetings are held with the Senate leadership and dean; with the provost and vice provost; and with the dean of the school under review.
- [LA] External reviewers report preliminary findings to Council chairpersons, the dean, and the vice provost for undergraduate and graduate education in an exit meeting on the day of the review, and they prepare and submit a formal report to both councils within a few weeks of the close of the review. The internal review incorporates these comments in their prepared report to the Councils.
- [R] The external reviewers meet with the review subcommittee, dean, and associate deans at the beginning of the review on the first day, with the CEP subcommittee, including the VPUE and associate dean, at lunch the second day, and with the subcommittee including the VPUE, EVC- Provost, and dean at an exit interview. They also meet with program and campus staff advisors (program advisors and career advisors).
- [SB] The ERC meets with the Program Review Panel chair; the EVC; the vice chancellor for research; the associate vice chancellors for academic personnel and diversity, equity, and academic policy; and the relevant deans; and with chairs of Senate reviewing agencies and select administrators for a working lunch at the end of the visit.
- [SD] The Review Subcommittee (including the external reviewer) holds an exit interview that includes the associate chancellor-chief of staff, associate chancellor-chief diversity officer, divisional dean, associate vice chancellor for undergraduate education, and academic affairs support staff.
- [SC] The External Committee meets with the dean and VPAA when it first arrives and again at a wrap-up meeting. A final exit interview includes the VPAA and EVC, but not the dean.

14. Is there a separate external reviewer report? Are specific guidelines given to external reviewers for this report?

The ERC writes a separate report at Berkeley, Irvine, Riverside, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz. At UCLA, each external reviewer writes a narrative report in addition to a preliminary oral exit report delivered on the last day. At UCSD, the external reviewer provides input directly to the Review Subcommittee chair.

At UCB and UCSB, the ERC is asked to address a specific list of issues. UCSC gives the ERC a detailed charge. UCI gives external reviewers a charge that covers both the undergraduate and graduate programs. UCR provides suggested questions, but does not require a specific format.

15. Do external reviewers receive an honorarium?

- [B] \$1,500
- [D] N/A
- [I] \$1000 per member and generally \$1500 for the ERC chair
- [LA] \$500/day (excluding day of travel to the site) + expenses
- [R] \$1k for chair; \$750 for other two members; (UCR is seeking to increase this to \$1250 for chair; \$1k for other members.)
- [SD] \$500 honorarium and full reimbursement for travel expenses
- [SB] Amount unknown

[SC] Deans cover travel expenses and honorariums that range from \$500-\$750 for members and \$500-\$1,000 for chairs.

16. What type of student input is included in the review materials?

All campuses solicit and include input from student in the review materials. Several campuses make use of data from the UC Undergraduate Experiences Survey (UCUES). Other campuses survey current undergraduates for their views about the success of their major. Others make use of graduate student exit surveys, alumni surveys, and instructor ratings.

17. Are students involved in the review committee? Are there limitations to their participation?

Most campuses give students studying in the unit an opportunity to meet with external reviewers or other primary review teams during the visit. Some campuses allow students to request individual or small-group meetings during the unscheduled portion of the visit. Some allow undergraduates to help gather information for the self-study. Students are also involved as CEP or Undergraduate Council representatives, where they are participate, usually as non-voting members, in discussions about reviews and the final reports. At UCSC, students do not participate in the closure meeting.

18. Does the review committee or ad hoc conduct a site visit? Who is invited to these sessions?

The review process at all campuses except Davis involves a site visit. Usually, the visit occurs over the course of two to three days and involves the ERC, which meets in various settings with administrators, faculty, and students. The visit often lasts all day and involves a shared breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner with various constituencies. The ERC may also meet with individual members of any of these groups. At Berkeley, the Senate Liaison joins the ERC in visiting the unit under review.

19. Briefly describe the review process chain. Beginning with the self-study, what offices or committees review the departmental report and write a review report? Who reviews or comments on the final recommendation?

[B]: 1) The self-study and data summary are sent to the ERC and Senate Liaison (SL). 2) The ERC submits its report to the vice provost for academic planning and facilities (VPAPF), which sends it to the unit head for fact checking. The SL also submits a report within two weeks. 3) The corrected ERC report and SL report are sent to the unit for response, which draws on input from faculty, staff, and students. 4) The response is submitted to the VPAPF. 5) All reports are sent to the five participating Senate committees. 6) Their responses are sent to the VPAPF with a cover letter from the Divisional Council. 7) All documents are reviewed by PROC, the dean and the SL and discussed in a wrap-up meeting. 8) An outcome letter is drafted based on the final discussion, and all written reports are circulated to PROC, the SL, and the dean for input. 9) The letter is signed by the EVCP and the VPAPF and sent to the unit head.

[D]: 1) The program is notified about the review. 2) Data are sent to the program. 3) The department prepares the self-review and forwards it to the Program Review Committee. 4) The PRC prepares review and sends it to the department, dean and college executive committee. 5) The department responds. 6) All documents are forwarded to the Undergraduate Instruction and Program Review Committee (UIPRC). 7) The UIPRC prepares a report on each program and cluster and sends it to UGC. 8) UGC forwards UIPRC reports to department, dean, and provost.

[I]: 1) The self-study is made available to the Senate Academic Program Review Board (APRB), the external reviewers, CEP members, the provost, vice provost, and dean of undergraduate education. 2) The external reviewers' report is sent to the dean (with instructions to forward to chairs and

faculty) for response. 3) The CEP provides recommendations on the final report and the school's response, which are sent with the report and school response, to the provost and vice provost.

[LA]: 1) External Reviewers submit individually written appraisals to all administrative parties and the review team chair or co-chairs. 2) The undergraduate and graduate faculty review-team co-author an internal report that incorporates their own assessments and those of the external reviewers. The chair or co-chairs usually author the first draft for committee members. 3) That report is submitted to the UG and Graduate Council chairs, the Senate, and the assistant chief administrative officer. 4) The report is vetted in a series of two or more joint review meetings with UG and Graduate Council chairs and administrative personnel directly responsible for the reviewed unit, and the Graduate and UG Councils (e.g., exit meeting, administrative meetings). 5) The final report is discussed, revised, and voted on separately by the Undergraduate and Graduate Councils.

[R]: 1) The chancellor, EVC-provost, VPUE, CEP subcommittee members, and dean's office receive the self-study. 2) After their site visit, the external review team submits its report, which is vetted by the program for factual errors/misconceptions 3) The CEP subcommittee writes their Findings and Recommendations with input from the vice provost for undergraduate education. 4) The program responds and 5) Based on the response of the program, the CEP may submit its Final F&R and close the review. The CEP, Senate, EVC-P, chancellor, dean, VPUE, department chair and program receive the final report. 6) An Action/Implementation meeting is planned with the program chair, associate dean, VPUE, CEP chair and chair of review subcommittee. 7) Each Spring, the CEP requests an update from programs reviewed the previous year as to their compliance with the F&R.

[SD]: 1) The office of the associate vice chancellor for undergraduate education compiles data, which are delivered with a request for a department self-study. 2) The self-study is forwarded to the Review Subcommittee and campus administrators prior to the review visit. 3) The Subcommittee conducts interviews during the visit and drafts a report that is forwarded to CEP. 4) The program under review and the dean are asked to comment on the report. 5) The draft report and comments are presented to CEP by the Subcommittee chair, and CEP issues its review. 6) A 1-2 year follow-up is conducted to complete the program review process.

[SB]: 1) The department's plan is reviewed by the Program Review Panel, the Committee on Planning and Budget, the graduate and academic deans, the UgC, the GC, and the relevant college executive committee. 2) The ERC reviews the charge and writes a report, which the department comments on. 3) The ERC report and department response are reviewed again by the relevant agencies. 4) The PRP sends a report to the EVC that incorporates the previous reports. 5) The EVC writes a report to the department.

[SC]: 1) Based on the self-study, the dean, Senate committees, and VPAA, VPDUE, and VPDGS, can add questions/ issues to the ERC's charge. 2) After the ERC writes its review, the department, dean and Senate committees (in that order) write responses. 3) All parties meet for a closure meeting (including dean of undergraduate education and graduate dean), after which the VPAA writes a final closure report with recommendations and questions for the department to answer as follow-up.

20. At what stage does the department provide a response letter?

[B] Units are asked to respond to issues raised in the letter in a strategic plan 6 to 9 months after the review concludes. All units are asked to report on progress in addressing issues raised in the review for the 3 to 5 years following the review in letters to the dean requesting search authorizations for the coming year.

[D] After the college review committee completes its report

- [I] Within six weeks of receiving the external reviewers' final report
- [LA] The unit is appraised at every step of the review. The unit and its respective administrators respond to the final report and are apprised of any further compliance required by the Councils.
- [R] The department is asked first to report any misconceptions or factual errors and then to comment on a first draft of the *Findings and Recommendations* and provide an action plan. The F&R are finalized in the CEP and distributed to the department and administration.
- [SD] The program is asked to respond prior to the report's presentation to CEP.
- [SB] After receiving the ERC report
- [SC] Right after the ERC report

21. What is the outcome of the review? Is an action plan developed and monitored? Is there a timeframe for follow-up? What form does the follow-up take; when is it done; and by whom?

- [B] Deans monitor units' progress in addressing issues identified in the letter, and they report on that progress in annual proposals for search authorizations. The VPAPF's office also sends the outcome letter to the vice chancellors alerting them to issues in their purview.
- [D] The department response is included in materials forwarded to the Senate Undergraduate Instruction and Program Review Committee of the Undergraduate Council. In the next review, the self-study is required to address outcomes of the last review.
- [I] Depending on the issue, an action plan may be developed based on the CEP recommendation. A formal follow-up report from the unit is requested by the Senate Academic Program Review Board after three years. CEP reviews the follow-up report.
- [LA] A positive review leads to re-review eight years later. Conversely, an appraisal conveying significant concerns that directly affect students could lead to suspension of admissions to a major. There are a variety of in-between actions. Any requirement resulting from the review is provided in writing to the unit. The timeframe is clearly outlined. The follow-up timetable is determined in advance and the file is not closed until all requirements are completed. The Senate staff and the UG and Graduate Council chairs are responsible for oversight.
- [R] The department chair, associate dean, vice provost, CEP chair, and subcommittee chair meet to develop an action plan. Each spring, the CEP chair meets with program chairs to discuss progress.
- [SD] CEP outlines the strengths and challenges of the program, suggests a course of action, and schedules a 1-2 year follow-up. At such time, a progress update is requested from the program and is presented to CEP by the chair of the Review Subcommittee.
- [SB] The department's response is monitored in one and three-year follow-ups. The EVC requests updates on the recommendations, which the department must respond to by a given date. Senate agencies review these documents and have the option to respond if specific concerns have not been sufficiently addressed.
- [SC] The department submits a follow-up report typically within 2 years of the closure report that addresses issues in the review. Apart from this, specific actions are planned as needed. Based on this, the VPAA, in consultation with the Senate, may extend the review cycle from the normal 6 to an 8-year cycle.

22. Does one type of reviewer provide a better overall critique and perspective?

Many campuses remarked that each reviewer provides distinct and valuable perspectives of equal value. One campus cited the self-study as being particularly valuable, as it requires the faculty to reflect on objectives and achievements, to compare them to similar majors, and to identify complimentary strengths, as well as gaps, overlaps, and common issues of concern. Several campuses cited the overall critique provided by the review team as being a valuable distillation of all information gathered from participants within and associated with the reviewed unit. Also mentioned was the valuable perspectives brought to the process from the Senate, in the form of the Senate Liaison at Berkeley, CEP, and other Senate entities.

23. In an attempt to identify “best practices,” what about your review process is especially helpful?

Santa Barbara and **Berkeley** cite the collaborative nature of the process. Berkeley notes that “At each step, we encourage interaction between the various players and welcome all questions and feedback. We’ve also been told that we are unique in providing a cover letter with the OPA data summary and unit self-study sent to the ERC. The ERC members who take advantage of the letter find it very useful in organizing the material provided to them and in organizing their response.” The Berkeley CEP also reviews and provides input into the draft charge to the review committee, which helps raise the profile of undergraduate curriculum in the review.

UCLA points to the perspective voiced by external reviewers, who are chosen because of leadership in a specific field, and who bring professional organizational recommendations and reports to the table. They also say that internal reviewers who are not members of the unit under review often have expertise in other areas that complement the review process – e.g., educational instruction.

Irvine says combining undergraduate and graduate program reviews provides an opportunity to review each component, as well as the interconnections between the two.

Davis hopes its new system of reviewing programs in disciplinary clusters will prove to be a best practice.

Riverside points to the nature of its process as Senate-run. It also notes that programs are given thorough guidelines and ample preparation time.

San Diego says several departments have commented favorably on the self-study as a welcome opportunity to internally assess their program. It also notes that the exit interview, with its involvement of divisional and central campus administration, has led to direct feedback to the chancellor and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs.

Santa Cruz requires departments to identify critical issues facing them as they move forward. This has helped move self-studies away from a compilation of data toward a more thoughtful document.

24. Outside of the self-review, what about the process takes most time and effort?

Three campuses mentioned the time and effort involved in collecting and compiling data. Two others noted the challenge of finding external reviewers who can commit time to the review. One campus mentioned the time involved in formulating the questions to be addressed by the ERC and the department. For reviewers, conducting the site visit and preparing for and participating in the review write-up is time consuming. For the unit, the self-review and responding to and ameliorating areas of concern can be both time consuming and challenging.

25. What changes have had the most positive impact on the review process?

Berkeley notes the establishment of a set schedule of reviews on an 8-year cycle with a goal of completing them in 18 months; providing the data summaries to units to lessen their burden; and promoting collaborative, helpful interactions between all the participants.

Riverside says they have started looking for external reviewers earlier than before.

San Diego points to the addition of an external member to the Review Subcommittee and the involvement of the associate vice chancellor for undergraduate education in coordinating the reviews with CEP.

UCLA believes the review process can lead to the revitalization of departments and majors showing significant problems, the improvement of educational outcomes, and the improvement of student, staff, and faculty morale.

Irvine says the ability to post information on secure websites has decreased paperwork.

Santa Cruz began providing centrally produced data to units about five years ago to ensure campus consistency and lessen departments' burden. Two years ago, the VPAA initiated meetings with departments preparing for reviews to answer faculty questions and improve communication.

26. What changes would make your review process more effective?

Suggestions included engaging alumni and friends in the review process; adding staff FTE to assist in compiling the Office of Planning and Analysis data summaries; more effective collection of review materials for preparing the charge; earlier involvement of CEP in the review process; more participation by Senate faculty in the review process; overcoming departmental hesitation about the stresses generated by the review process; assessment of the assessment process itself, including the opportunity costs of the process and its impact on educational quality; and increasing some of the assessment areas (i.e., service to other majors and comparable programs).

27. What happens if a program is recalcitrant about participating in the review, citing reasons why now would not be a reasonable or possible time for the review?

Campuses are firm about the necessity of proceeding on schedule. Sometimes however, reviews can be postponed for extenuating circumstances. Santa Cruz gives extensions of one or two years for reasonable causes. The San Diego and Riverside CEPs review delay requests and make decisions based on the justification. At Berkeley, if a unit is very small and key players plan to be on leave, they may adjust the schedule, but only by about six months. Los Angeles notes that the most severe last resort outcome might be a vote of *no confidence* and closure of a major to (student) admissions.

28. Do you have programs that are not departmentally based and include faculty from multiple departments? How are their reviews different? Are there special problems or adaptations?

A couple of campuses reported that they review interdisciplinary programs identically to department reviews.

Berkeley is developing a separate review process that will be meaningful and not overly burdensome to the units, proceeding in two phases: 1) a one-time analysis of cross-cutting issues and 2) establishing a schedule of individual program reviews to be integrated into the departmental 8-year review schedule. It probably will not include an external review component.

At **Davis**, interdisciplinary programs may request data customized for a list of faculty most appropriate for their program as opposed to the home department of the program, which is how data for most programs are compiled.

Irvine assembles an external review team that is able to review all the programs in a given school, including departments, inter-departmental programs, and inter-school programs.

Riverside notes that it can be difficult to satisfy the entire faculty in choosing an external review team. At **Los Angeles**, interdepartmental programs are included in the review process. **Santa Cruz** assigns a review schedule to interdisciplinary programs when the degree is approved.

29. What other information do you consider important that might not have been addressed?

The total cost of the review. At Irvine, the cost depends on the size of the School under review and airfare for external reviewers, but it averages out to about \$200 per faculty member in the reviewed unit. For a unit of 100 faculty, it is about \$20,000. One campus noted that it may be helpful to create a UC data set for departments to use when assessing their program (i.e., enrollments, course requirements, FTEs) for cross-campus comparison.

A more detailed compilation of the survey data can be found here:

[http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/committees/ucep/ug.program review.summarydata.pdf](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/committees/ucep/ug.program%20review.summarydata.pdf)