

**A Practitioner's Guide to
Academic Program Review
&
Self-Study Preparation**

Timelines and Suggested Procedures

by

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Effective program review is infused with “a constant awareness of the relationship between any specific programmatic activity and the overall mission, goals, and objectives of the program and the institution....[The] program review process will contribute important information to the institution’s short- and long-range planning processes and will result in the improvement of the academic experiences of the students.” (p. 3)

Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Programs (2001 rev.)

“...[Departmental] assessment that takes place in a climate supportive of quality improvement, that enhances organizational motivation by treating the department as a collective, that gives departments maximum flexibility to identify and answer their own evaluation questions, and that takes seriously issues of data quality and credibility will be both effective and growth-producing.” (p. 32)

Wergin, J.F., & Swingen, J.N. (2000). *Departmental assessment: How some campuses are effectively evaluating the collective work of faculty*. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education.

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Dear Colleagues:

The State University of New York has established a five-to-seven-year cycle* for academic program review and assessment of student learning in the major. (See Appendix A.) This practitioner's guide summarizes the program review process and focuses particular attention on the self-study, an integral component of that process. In the pages that follow you will find definitions, questions and answers, suggested action steps and timelines, content recommendations, and suggestions for assessment activities – all of which are meant to assist you, as department chairs and program directors, in preparing your self-study and successfully completing your program review. Realizing that some faculty have extensive assessment experience while others do not, we have written the guide to be broadly accessible and user-friendly. We have drawn upon a variety of resources, copies of which are included in the appendices.

This document is in no way prescriptive. The information presented here is intended to be useful and adaptable to any review and to allow departments ample flexibility to tailor the details of the process to their diverse, and often unique, programs. (See Appendix B for a link to *Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Programs*, 2001 rev., pp. 4-5.)

Assessment is about *process* – about carefully examining what happens to students in college and evaluating the extent to which they are learning. Outcomes assessment has become a major concern throughout all facets of education and is associated with accountability to an institution's constituencies. Some constituencies are external, including SUNY Central Administration, accreditation and governmental agencies (e.g., Middle States, state and federal departments of education), and various marketplaces that rate institutions of higher education and promote competition among them. We also have internal constituencies including students, their parents and families, faculty, and administrators. Although there is some overlap in the concerns and demands of external and internal constituencies, it is to the latter that we are truly accountable.

* Programmatic accreditation that includes assessment of student learning satisfies SUNY's requirement for program review and assessment of student learning in the major *if* (1) the accrediting agency is recognized by the Commission on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the U.S. Secretary of Education and (2) the assessment cycle is ten years or less.

Accrediting agencies may have their own guidelines for preparing a self-study document. In such instances, this *Practitioner's Guide* may be considered a supplemental resource. Regardless of whether the program review is conducted according to SUNY guidelines or those of a recognized accrediting agency, a SUNY Summary Report (see Appendix G) must be completed and submitted to the Provost's Office no later than August 15.

Of equal importance for *all* programs, including those which are accredited, is annual assessment of student learning outcomes and ongoing evaluation of programmatic effectiveness.

This is the context within which you are asked to formally review your department's program(s) and prepare the self-study, though it means diverting time and energy from other important duties and responsibilities. It is my hope that the experience will provide you an opportunity to reflect on the mission(s) of the program(s) in your department and to examine your department's role within the wider SUNY New Paltz community. Further, it is my hope that the self-study will demonstrate the level of students' intellectual and personal growth as a result of their educational experiences in your department's program(s). I anticipate that the review process will highlight areas in your program(s) that you should celebrate as well as areas that need attention and improvement.

Please feel free to contact the Provost's Office at any stage of the planning, assessing, and/or reporting process.

Sincerely,

Laurel M. Garrick Duhaney
Associate Provost

Timetable for Program Review Process

This timetable is an approximation – the dates provided are benchmarks to work toward. All components of the program review process are included, as are the tasks needed to complete them.

The dates given are associated with two consecutive academic years:

AY1 = Academic year *prior to* that in which the self-study and site visit are completed.

AY2 = Academic year in which the self-study is completed and the site visit takes place. The self-study document and external reviewers' report are due to the Provost's Office by **August 1**; the SUNY summary report (Appendix G) is due by **August 15**.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TASKS</u>
Mid-January, AY1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deans notify department chairs of upcoming program review
Spring semester, AY1 (i.e., beginning 18 months before the review process is to be completed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize working group(s). To the degree possible, involve <i>all</i> department/program faculty. • Define working group members' responsibilities
Fall semester, AY2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working group(s) conduct self-study, consulting students and others outside the working group(s) at appropriate times in the process. Complete draft by December 1.
<i>Meanwhile:</i>	
Early November (AY2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair submits to dean the names, contact Information, and vitae of five potential external reviewers
November 15 (AY2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean reviews department's recommendations and forwards three names and vitae to provost
December 1 (AY2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provost selects two or three external reviewers (depending on department size and number of programs) and notifies dean; dean notifies chair; chair invites reviewers to visit campus
Early December (AY2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair submits self-study to faculty for review; document is revised as necessary
December 15 (AY2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair submits revised self-study to dean for review • Chair confirms external reviewers, finalizes site visit dates, and sends confirmation letter
January 15, AY2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean reviews self-study and returns it to department for additional work or forwards it to provost for review

**February 15, AY2
(or 4-5 weeks prior to site visit)**

See Appendix H for financial guidelines for external reviewer visits.

- Provost reviews self-study; if acceptable, he/she authorizes sending copies to the external reviewers
- **If external reviewers are NYS employees,** all necessary forms related to stipend payment must be submitted to the Provost's Office at least 4 weeks prior to the reviewers' arrival on campus.

March/April, AY2

- Site visit takes place
- **Immediately after the site visit,** all remaining external-review expenses must be submitted to the Provost's Office. Required forms include stipend requests for **non-NYS employees** and requests for reimbursement of all eligible travel, lodging, and meal expenses.

**April/May, AY2
(within one month of site visit)**

- External reviewers submit report to department

May/June, AY2

- Self-study working group reviews external reviewers' report in conjunction with department self-study
- Dean and department chair discuss external reviewers' report in conjunction with department self-study; chair develops response for dean's and provost's review
- Department conducts follow-up meeting(s) to address concerns and recommendations and to develop an action plan

August 1, AY2

- Chair submits self-study, external reviewers' report and response to Provost's Office

August 15, AY2

- Chair submits SUNY "MAJOR-2" form (*Program Review and Assessment of Student Learning in the Major: Summary Report*; see Appendix G) to Provost's Office

September 1, AY2

- Provost's Office files self-study, external reviewers' report, response, and summary report for System review upon request

Ongoing, with annual reports

- Department implements improvements and submits annual reports of improvements to dean and provost

Assessment is Central

Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, the publication in which Middle States presents its accreditation standards, notes [p. 64] that the accreditation and assessment processes are designed to answer the same fundamental question: “Is the institution fulfilling its mission and achieving its goals?” Assessment is essential to gauging effectiveness at all levels – course, program/department, and institution – and assessment of student learning is a fundamental component. Carefully planned assessment based on clearly defined and articulated goals will yield results that inform decisions about programmatic priorities, resource allocation, and strategies to improve teaching and learning.

Assessment is not a “one-shot deal.” It is an ongoing process that requires a shared commitment at all levels of the institution. The process is dynamic rather than static, and assessment methodologies must be reviewed and refined regularly to maximize their effectiveness and to ensure their continued relevance and validity.

“Assessment is not an event but a process that is an integral part of the life of the institution, and an institution should be able to provide evidence that the assessment of student learning outcomes and use of results is an ongoing institutional activity.” [Characteristics of Excellence, p. 64]

As you prepare your self-study, keep in mind that assessment is a central aspect of this process.

Preparing the Self-Study

The first major component of the program review is the self-study – the department’s evaluative summary of its programs, students, faculty, and services and its assessment-based plans for improvement. The self-study will cover all undergraduate and graduate programs offered.

Although formal program review happens every five to seven years, departments and programs are continually engaged in a self-study process. Data are regularly collected, analyzed, reported and acted upon, informing and shaping curricular content, structure, and delivery to better meet students’ educational needs. To facilitate the process of preparing the self-study, it is wise to build on existing resources (such as departmental annual reports and assessment plans) and to draw upon data routinely collected by the department and the college.

Self-Study Working Group(s)

An important first step in the program-assessment process involves organization. The department needs to create a working group (or more than one, if department size warrants) committed to the completion of the self-study. The size of the group(s) must be appropriate to the task – not so large as to be unwieldy, nor so small as to be overly burdensome for a few individuals.

To the extent possible, working group members should represent a cross-section of the department and its programs. Taken as a whole, the group(s) should bring to their task the in-depth knowledge and experience needed for comprehensive assessment. This does not preclude the participation of junior faculty. New colleagues may offer a fresh perspective that leads to innovative approaches and creative solutions.

One important function of the working group(s) is to tap into the collective knowledge, experience, and insights of all department members. Colleagues who are not working group

members can support members' efforts by suggesting data sources, sharing program-specific information, and reviewing drafts of the self-study or sections thereof.

Questions and Answers:

Q: Why do we need a working group?

A: It is important to have diverse perspectives, especially in the development of the stated mission of the department and the learning outcomes associated with its program(s).

Q: Who does what?

A: One faculty member should take the lead role and serve as coordinator of the working group. This individual may or may not be the department chair; if not the chair, he/she will serve as liaison to the chair. The leader/coordinator will remind group members of deadlines, provide feedback on each task, and ultimately serve as the lead author of the self-study.

Group members, working individually or in pairs, can be assigned specific areas on which to focus. Assignments may be determined by individuals' interests or particular strengths. Once tasks are assigned, meetings with all members of the working group will be relatively rare and can often be conducted via e-mail.

Action Steps

1. Identify working group leader/coordinator and members.
 - a. The department defines how the leader will be selected (e.g., chair extends a personal invitation or calls for volunteers; working group chooses a leader from among its members, etc.)
 - b. The leader may or may not be the department chair
 - c. The leader may be selected before or after working group members are identified
 - d. If selected first, the leader (in consultation with the department chair) may identify potential working group members and personally invite them to participate. Alternatively, the chair may extend the invitations.
 - e. It is important to thoughtfully consider who is invited to participate in the working group and to be forthcoming about the time commitment. Hint at the internal benefits of the task as well as the potential long-term benefits for the department and for those who serve as working group members.
2. Once the working group has been created, divide tasks in terms of individuals' strengths or areas of interest. For example, a faculty member with extensive experience in assessment could take an active role in examining institutional research data and developing research instruments. Within specific programs, those who teach required courses could take the lead in defining their program's mission, goals and objectives, and student learning outcomes, and could provide detailed information about the curriculum.
3. Participation in the self-study process is not limited to the chair, leader, and working group members. It is important that *all* faculty are aware of the process and invited to take part by providing information, reading drafts, and offering feedback at appropriate times in the process. Input from students, administrators, and colleagues in other departments is also important.

The Self-Study Document

The following outline, drawn from the *Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Programs* (University Faculty Senate, 2001), presents the general components of the self-study document. Incorporated into each section of the outline are relevant descriptions, discussion points, and action steps that explain more clearly the contents of each component.

It will be useful for the dean and department chair to discuss these components in advance and to identify those that should be emphasized in the self-study as well as those that may be less relevant. Once the areas of emphasis have been determined, it is important that the chair communicate them to the working group leader so that he/she can effectively guide group members' work.

Components

A. Curriculum

1. Mission, goals, and objectives

- a. Program mission statement: Outline the mission of the department/program and how it relates to the institutional mission**
- b. Delineate program goals and objectives**
- c. Define quality as it relates to the program**
- d. Identify learning outcomes students should demonstrate**

The mission, goals, and objectives of each academic major must be clearly understood and articulated; these are the starting points for assessment of each program.

The program's mission can be understood as the guiding principle that describes in a general way "what the program is all about." In most cases, a mission statement already exists and can be found in the undergraduate/graduate catalog, departmental website, assessment plan, or past departmental or programmatic reports and self-studies. Review the current mission statement for accuracy and completeness: Does it clearly describe the current purpose of the program? Identify any necessary modifications. Be sure to relate the mission of the department/program to that of the institution – the part to the whole, so to speak. (See Appendix D, *Mission Statement and Central Elements of Our Vision for New Paltz*; see also www.newpaltz.edu/about/mission.html and www.newpaltz.edu/president/visionpoints.html.)

Under this general statement of purpose, specific programmatic goals and objectives must be defined – i.e., the means by which the program accomplishes its stated mission. These, too, may already be available in print and/or online. It is important that working group members review established goals and objectives for accuracy and continued relevance: Do the goals still reflect the program's priorities for teaching and learning? Do the objectives clearly articulate how best to achieve program goals?

Success in achieving program goals is linked to a clear understanding of what constitutes "quality" within the context of each program. What features or distinctive characteristics best convey the overall excellence of the program? How do the curriculum, faculty, and students reflect the quality of the program? Conversely, how does the quality of the program influence and inform curriculum development; faculty selection and support; and student enrollment, performance, and retention?

Finally, articulate clear, demonstrable learning outcomes. Identify several (e.g., five to seven) overarching results of students' participation in the program: What are they expected to have mastered upon completion? Then, under each of these general outcomes, generate three or four action verbs (e.g., "describes," "applies," "distinguishes," "evaluates") that are demonstrable, measurable, and reflect what students should have learned as a direct result of their intellectual and personal experiences in the program. Here is one example that may be applied to many disciplines:

1. Understand methods of inquiry in the discipline
 - a. Describes the differences between primary and secondary sources
 - b. Generates, tests, and evaluates hypothesis statements
 - c. Compares similarities and differences of...

Questions and Answers

Q: Can we include all programs in one document?

A: Yes. However, each program should be reviewed separately since each will have its own mission and outcomes. Similarly, undergraduate programs will differ from master's or certificate programs. Taken together, the individual program reviews will represent the full range of academic programs offered by the department.

Q: When writing the learning outcomes, should we worry about how the outcomes are assessed?

A: Yes and no. The learning outcomes truly come from the mission of the program and should not be encumbered by how you assess them. At the same time, learning outcomes must be *measurable*, so assessment should be in the back of your mind when writing the verb statements.

2. Program design

- a. **Degree requirements for major programs**
- b. **Congruence between course and program goals and national standards and expectations in the discipline or profession, as appropriate**
- c. **Congruence between course and curricular goals, courses, and prerequisite patterns**
- d. **Balance between breadth and depth**
- e. **Methods used to ensure comparable learning outcomes among multiple sections of a course**
- f. **Efforts made to assure that required courses and electives are offered on a schedule to meet the needs of various student constituencies**
- g. **Internship opportunities, rationale for assigning credit**
- h. **Departmental procedures (including student participation) for developing, reviewing, and evaluating courses**
- i. **Advisement procedures; how the department assesses advisement effectiveness**

If the mission, goals, objectives, and learning outcomes describe what the program is "all about," then the program design section describes the elements that make the mission possible. This section provides the heart of the story and allows the reader to see in one place how the program looks – i.e., the academic and personal experiences to which students are exposed in the program.

Two overarching questions will be addressed: (1) What are the component parts of each program? and (2) What special or unique aspects of the program can be highlighted as “best practices” in the discipline? First, tell the reader what the program offers undergraduate and graduate students and then tell the story of students’ experiences in the program. Think about what happens to students as they enter the program, progress through it, prepare to graduate, and graduate. Clearly describe all opportunities and aspects of the program that speak to program quality and/or that are distinctive in the discipline.

It may be helpful to divide this section into “areas” and have working group members write on the areas with which they are most familiar. For example, Area 1 might include items a, d, and i from the outline above; Area 2 might cover e, f, g, and h; Area 3 might include b and c. Group the items in the way that makes the most sense for your program, and feel free to add items or areas that speak to distinctive aspects of your program (current and planned distance learning courses and/or program initiatives; opportunities for student-faculty or undergraduate-graduate interaction and collaboration; graduate school preparation and career development/ placement services, etc.).

3. Assessment

- a. **Analyze the effectiveness of the program in achieving its goals and objectives *in the discipline*. Describe the procedures, criteria and methods used for this assessment.**
- b. **Analyze the effectiveness of the program in achieving its goals and objectives *in general education*. Describe the procedures, criteria and methods used for this assessment.**
- c. **Analyze the effectiveness of the program in achieving its goals and objectives *for intellectual growth*. Describe the procedures, criteria and methods used for this assessment.**
- d. **Describe discipline-, college-, and community-related student activities and how the program promotes and supports faculty and student involvement and effort.**
- e. **Describe how the program responds to the needs of the community, if applicable.**
- f. **Provide follow-up data on student placement for the last five years, indicating year(s) of data collection and number of student responses.**
 - (1) % employed in the field
 - (2) % employed elsewhere
 - (3) % seeking employment
 - (4) % continuing education
- g. **Describe the results of any alumni follow-up surveys that reflect the student outcomes.**
- h. **Describe how the results of the program review will be disseminated to appropriate constituencies.**
- i. **Describe the planning processes, including those to be used to formulate and implement changes based on program review analysis.**
- j. **Describe the most recent evaluation of the program, what was learned, and what improvements resulted.**

In this section, you will examine the extent to which students are learning, the extent to which students *perceive* they are learning, and the extent to which students believe the program to be effective in their academic and personal development. In addition, you will include follow-up information related to alumni (Where are they, and how do they assess the value of the program, now that they've graduated?) and previous program reviews (What did you learn the last time the program was reviewed? What changes were made as a result? How do you plan to follow up on the current review?).

The department's assessment plan* (see shaded note, below) identifies several approaches to and types of assessment and will serve as an essential reference as you prepare this component of the self-study. Since different types of assessment serve different purposes, it is important to include a variety of assessment measures to elicit the information needed. (See Appendix F for a list of various types and examples of assessments.) This section will rely primarily on formative evaluation data and on direct and indirect assessment of learning outcomes.

Data gathered via formative evaluation can lead to improvements in program quality for current students and for those who are admitted in the future. When presenting such data, include a detailed description of how the information is used to examine the process of teaching and learning in your program. All assessment activities should be framed in a way that provides the reader with information about the state of "x," followed by a plan to improve on "x."

Direct assessment of learning outcomes maps specifically onto the learning outcomes you included in the first section of the self-study. Someone could literally look at Learning Outcome One and determine whether or not your direct outcome assessment method (e.g., papers in your capstone course) truly measures the extent to which students are meeting the stated learning outcome.

On the other hand, indirect measures of learning outcomes involve students' and/or employers' *perceptions* of the extent to which students have met the stated learning outcomes. Typical indirect measures include surveys, focus groups, and interviews focusing on whether students think they "possess" a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities as a result of their education in the program. Still another type of assessment involves the indirect measure of program effectiveness and student satisfaction with the program. These are usually assessed by surveys, focus groups, or interviews as above, but the questions focus on students' satisfaction with the various aspects of the program.

End this section by discussing how previous reviews have led to program improvements and how the results of the current review will be shared and used to enhance program quality. This is an opportunity to discuss how you intend to "close the loop" – i.e., how you will progress from data collection to analysis and

* Your department's assessment plan should identify the types of assessment to be conducted each year. For example, this year you might address student learning outcomes, indirect data on time to graduation, retention, student achievement, etc. Additionally, you might pilot a survey, make a concerted effort to collect contact information on graduating seniors in order to improve alumni information, and/or develop a plan for assessing student academic advising in the program.

interpretation (determining what the data mean, how they will be used, and what changes they suggest) to action and further assessment (defining and implementing changes and measuring their impact). The loop is, of course, continuous and represents on-going assessment, analysis, action and follow-up. You are not “done” once the self-study is completed!

Questions and Answers

Q: How much assessment should we do?

A: That depends on how many learning outcomes you have defined and the extent to which it is reasonable to measure them this year.

Q: Do we have to measure everything, every year?

A: No. A carefully developed assessment plan will, over time, address all learning outcomes and provide feedback on students’ perceptions of program quality. You need only assess a reasonable number of learning outcomes each year. The specific number will vary from program to program.

Q: What about reliability and validity issues with “home-grown” instruments?

A: Ideally, every instrument would go through a rigorous process to ensure adequate types of validity (construct, content, and test criterion) and reliability (test-retest, inter-rater, and equivalent forms). Consult with Institutional Research as you develop your instruments (surveys, interview protocols, etc.).

B. The Faculty

1. Mastery of subject matter

- a. **Faculty summary (number, diversity, full-time, part-time)**
- b. **Credentials (Bachelor’s, Master’s, Doctorate)**
- c. **Experience (# years)**

2. Effectiveness in teaching

- a. **Describe faculty hiring procedures: Formulating the job description, publication of the position, search committee composition, responsibility for final decision, faculty vitae**
- b. **Explain how faculty training and interests contribute to breadth of program’s mission; indicate areas in which greater strength would be beneficial**
- c. **Analyze teaching loads and how they are distributed among faculty**
- d. **Highlight faculty innovations in teaching**
- e. **Describe the program’s procedures for evaluating effectiveness in teaching**

3. Scholarly ability: Describe recent scholarly and creative contributions of the program faculty that are important to program goals

4. Effectiveness of University service: Describe faculty’s committee work, administrative work, public service and other activities that contribute to the fulfillment of the program’s mission in relation to the university and the community

5. Continuing growth

- a. **Identify steps taken to assure that faculty members maintain currency in their disciplines**
- b. **Identify activities that result in the continuing growth of the faculty**

- c. **Describe the relative weight of criteria 1-5 (mastery of subject matter, effectiveness in teaching, scholarly ability, effectiveness of University service, and continuing growth) in the consideration of rewards**

Here you have an opportunity to describe the faculty and brag about their contribution to the quality of the program. This section includes a profile of full- and part-time faculty and addresses hiring procedures, scholarly activities, teaching innovations, university service, and information about tenure and promotion.

Begin by summarizing current faculty demographics, credentials and experience. Enter the information on a chart, distinguishing full-time and part-time faculty. (See Appendix E.)

Describe the procedures for hiring a new faculty member in your department, from job description to final hiring decision. Include copies of faculty vitae in the appendix of the self-study. Be sure to mention special faculty interests or training that enrich program quality and add to the depth and breadth of the curriculum. Likewise mention curricular areas that could be strengthened.

Summarize the responsibilities of faculty members (teaching load, research, committee assignments, consulting, etc.). Include information about service to the program, the department and school, the college as a whole, and the larger community. Discuss teaching and recent scholarly activity in the program, highlighting innovations, products of research, successful grant applications, and other contributions to the field. Describe opportunities for faculty members' continuing education and professional development in their discipline. Finally, summarize tenure and promotion policies and criteria.

C. The Students

1. Student profiles

- a. **Annual cohorts for the last five years: Total number of majors (full-time and part-time) by year; number of graduates by year**
- b. **Describe program strategies used to recruit students**
- c. **Identify program minimum requirements for admitting students**
- d. **Explain acceptance ratio**
- e. **Compare the student diversity of the program to that of the institution, other institutions, the region, the state**
- f. **Analyze enrollment patterns over the last five years**

2. Student needs

- a. **Describe the goals of students entering the program**
- b. **Describe the financial needs of the students enrolled**
- c. **Describe the academic needs of native and transfer students**
- d. **Describe the special needs of groups of students (e.g., nontraditional students, international students, students with disabilities, underprepared students)**
- e. **Explain any academic placement procedures**
- f. **Describe the diverse learning styles of the students and strategies for engaging them**
- g. **Describe any orientation activities designed to introduce students to the program**

- h. Analyze attrition patterns and describe efforts to improve retention**
- i. Analyze the time students take to complete degrees**

Like the Faculty section, this section provides an opportunity to reflect and brag a little about the quality of the students entering your program. Most information will come from data provided by the Office of Institutional Research.

Basically, this section describes how students apply for and are admitted to the program (including any minimum requirements they must meet), the characteristics of students entering the program, the number of students enrolled in the program, and the program's graduation trends. (It may be useful to create a table for the latter.) Data on program retention and honors or awards students achieve may also be included here. For graduate programs, provide information about students' prior institutions and degrees earned and their test scores.

D. Student Support Services

- 1. Special student services: What provisions are made in this program for the following groups of students with special needs?**
 - a. Nontraditional students**
 - b. International students**
 - c. Students with disabilities**
 - d. Students who need special remedial or tutorial services**
 - e. Nonresidential students**
- 2. General student services: What provisions are made for all students, such as in the following areas?**
 - a. Orientation**
 - b. Diagnostic evaluation and placement**
 - c. Library and media resources**
 - d. Computer resources**
 - e. Health and counseling services**
 - f. Career advisement**
 - g. Job placement**
- 3. All student support services**
 - a. Describe student and faculty satisfaction with services that support the program**
 - b. Describe the general campus environment and climate; explain their impact upon student performance**
 - c. Describe how student affairs and academic affairs are coordinating efforts to contribute to student success**

As noted in the *Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Programs*, "The academic and student services of the campus provide important support to the instructional efforts of the faculty. Furthermore, support services should contribute directly to the richness of students' academic lives." (p. 8)

Some of the information in this section will focus on services provided to "special" students, broadly defined. Services provided to accommodate students with a disability, fulfill a language or other communication need, or otherwise provide

students with greater access to your academic program will be discussed here. In addition, technological services that support student learning – such as library, computer, and media resources – as well as health-and-wellness services and career resources will be addressed. Student Opinion Survey (SOS) data from Institutional Research will be most useful here.

E. Administrative Support

- 1. Explain the effective ways in which the administration encourages program review**
- 2. Explain how the leadership helps to create an environment and a climate for academic excellence**
- 3. Analyze the fairness of the reward structure of the institution and the program**
- 4. Describe the ways by which the administration empowers faculty and students**
- 5. Explain how budget decisions reflect the concern for quality programs and support academic robustness**
- 6. Provide an organizational chart that shows the relationship of the program to the rest of the institution**
- 7. Explain how the program is represented in the institution’s governance bodies and planning processes**
- 8. Describe faculty development and support efforts by administration in the program area**

Here, you will discuss matters related to institutional support, including budgetary support, and campus administration’s commitment to your program’s continued academic excellence. This is essentially your “state of the program” address – your report of the current state of affairs of the program and the support received and required from campus leadership to ensure program quality. The information is best communicated in both narrative and tabular form.

Include the following:

- (1) A three-year budget summary that differentiates sources of revenue and shows expenditures by major categories (professional staff salaries, non-professional staff salaries, equipment, supply and expense, temporary service, graduate assistantships, fellowships, etc.);
- (2) A description and evaluation of the adequacy of departmental facilities (offices, class labs, research labs, graduate assistantships, fellowships, etc.);
- (3) Suggested amounts and types of resources (including staffing) and facilities that are needed to accommodate present and anticipated program changes/developments and/or enrollment growth;
- (4) A clear statement of the impact of such resources on program quality, including how they will support the program’s mission and/or help students meet the learning outcomes associated with the mission.

Questions and Answers

Q: What do we do about shared resources or areas that are not clear-cut?

A: When you can, indicate the parties sharing resources and provide the best estimate of funds utilized in your program.

Q. How specific should we be with our plans?

A. That is up to you, but take into account the current condition of New York State higher-education funding. Focus on the most reasonable direction for the program, and offer a realistic statement of the resources needed to support it. Prioritize the areas of greatest need. For example, once you have identified the adequacy of the current facilities and the types of new resources desired, rank-order them. Consult with others (purchasing, human resources, facilities, etc.) to develop realistic cost estimates and identify sources of funding.

F. Graduate programs: Information about graduate programs may be included with undergraduate program information or presented in a separate section of the self-study. Follow the outline above and apply the stated guidelines as appropriate.

G. Moving forward

1. The future of the department/program

a. Identify 3-5 goals for the next five years

- (1) Describe any new academic initiatives planned (new programs, conferences, or publications to be launched, faculty development opportunities, student internship opportunities, etc.)**
- (2) Describe any anticipated faculty changes: new hires, tenure awards and promotions, retirements, workload, etc.**
- (3) Describe any significant organizational or procedural changes planned**
- (4) Integrate the role of assessment in all of the above**

It is in this section that you will share your vision for the program, identifying your primary goals for the next five years and summarizing your plan for achieving those goals. Describe any anticipated changes in curriculum, faculty, students, and support, and the expected impact of the changes on the program as a whole. Highlight planned initiatives and new opportunities for enhancing program quality. Incorporate assessment plans into your discussion, specifying the learning outcomes you plan to assess, the assessment measures you will employ, and how you will use the data you collect. Include any plans to evaluate overall program effectiveness and/or satisfaction (student or alumni surveys, for example).


H. Supplemental comments: Add any additional information relevant to the self-study.

I. Conclusion

The conclusion of the self-study document, like a discussion section in a research article, provides your department with an opportunity to review the process you have undertaken, report the strengths and weaknesses found, and present highlights of the program. Be sure to discuss the direction of the program, starting with current status and looking into the future. This can be accomplished in a series of horizon statements that envision the program 5 years and 10 years out.

Appendix A

SUNY POLICY: ASSESSMENT OF THE MAJOR

 <p>Category: Academic Affairs</p> <p>Responsible Office: <u>Academic Affairs</u></p>	<p>Policy Title: Assessment of the Major</p> <p>Document Number: 1152</p> <p>Effective Date: September 01, 2009</p> <p>This policy item applies to: Community Colleges State-Operated Campuses</p>
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Summary

This policy governs the process for program review and assessment of learning outcomes in the undergraduate major at the State University of New York.

Policy

Program Review and Assessment of Student Learning in the Major

Each campus, following existing curriculum and governance procedures, is responsible for overseeing program review and the assessment of student learning in academic majors. Campuses and programs have maximum autonomy in the development of assessment plans for academic majors, but it is recommended that plans reflect input from faculty, professional staff and students. The assessment of student learning outcomes is only a part of the comprehensive program review process academic programs should undergo on a regular basis in order to stay current and provide the best possible education to their majors.

In carrying out their assessment plan, all programs shall:

- complete one cycle of assessment every five to seven years, or on a cycle of programmatic accreditation of ten years or less;
- include measures of student learning outcomes;
- seek review of their final assessment report by an external review team, including a campus visit and report to the chief academic officers; and
- include a strategy for measuring, specific to designated learning outcomes, change in students' knowledge and skills over time.

Programmatic accreditation by an accrediting agency recognized by the Commission on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the U.S. Secretary of Education that includes assessment of student learning satisfies the requirement for program review and assessment of student learning in the major.

A campus shall assess every academic major during each cycle, except that the chief academic officer may decide not to assess:

- majors that have no or very low enrollment (e.g., less than 10 students);
- new majors that are not yet due for assessment in the cycle; and
- majors that are scheduled for assessment after the current cycle ends due to a programmatic accreditation cycle or other scheduling reasons.

External Review

The purpose of the external review is to provide programs and academic leadership with an objective critique of programs to provide the basis for improvement. While issues related to funding levels may have some relevance, the focus of the review should be on the academic enterprise and on steps that could and should be taken to improve the program within available funding levels. Given the importance of good governance, it would also be appropriate for the external review team to examine the effectiveness of program leadership and the level of functional collegiality.

Many programs are reviewed regularly for re-accreditation purposes. Usually the professional accrediting body determines the membership of the review team. The membership of external review teams for all other programs should be discussed between the program/department being reviewed, the dean (where applicable) and the campus chief academic officer or designee. The campus chief academic officer should make the final determination.

In general, external review teams should consist of not less than two individuals who have no academic, professional or other significant relationship to full-time faculty in the program/departments, no previous significant or formal affiliation with the institution, and who come from academic or professional institutions belonging to a peer or aspirational peer group (equivalent to being in the same Carnegie class and having similar program size, scope and statistical, or perceived reputational, ranking). However, two-year programs may include one Advisory Board member as part of each review team. In addition, the chief academic officer may use professional judgment to determine whether one reviewer would be sufficient to achieve the goals of external review.

The report from the external review team should include:

- The date of the campus visit and a list of the people whom the team met during the visit;
- The team's assessment of the program, including major strengths and weaknesses; and
- The team's recommendations to the chief academic officer for program improvement.

Definitions

Program – for the purpose of SUNY assessment in the major, an active, registered program that is on the State Education Department's Inventory of Registered Programs and that leads to an undergraduate degree or certificate awarded by a SUNY campus

Criteria – the evidence collected as markers of quality

Standards – the benchmarks against which the evidence is compared

Measures – the methods used to collect the evidence

Appendix B

GUIDE FOR THE EVALUATION OF UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

See http://www.suny.edu/facultysenate/files/Program_Review.pdf

Appendix C

**DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENT:
How Some Campuses Are Effectively Evaluating the Collective Work of Faculty**

Jon F. Wergin & Judi N. Swingen

See ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), Document ED451739:
www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/f0/f6.pdf

Appendix D

MISSION STATEMENT

(See also www.newpaltz.edu/about/mission.html.)

Mission

In the proud tradition of SUNY, the State University of New York at New Paltz is committed to providing high quality, affordable education to students from all social and economic backgrounds. We are a faculty and campus community dedicated to the construction of a vibrant intellectual/creative public forum which reflects and celebrates the diversity of our society and encourages and supports active participation in scholarly and artistic activity. SUNY New Paltz is an active contributor to the schools, community institutions and economic/cultural life of our region. We are selective in admitting students who show promise of thriving in a learning environment which is challenging, student-centered, and personalized. Our goal is for students to gain knowledge, skills, and confidence to contribute as productive members of their communities and professions and active citizens in a democratic nation and a global society.

Identity

We are the only residential public university in the mid-Hudson region. We offer undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts and sciences which serve as a core for professional programs in the fine and performing arts, education, health care, business, and engineering. Our location in the scenic Hudson Valley midway between the State Capital of Albany and metropolitan New York City provides unique opportunities for enriching our academic programs. We are a diverse faculty of distinguished scholars and artists who collaborate across the disciplines and professional areas to inspire our students to a love of learning, a meaningful engagement with the life of the mind, and an involvement in public service.

Campuswide Goals

We strive to carry out the above philosophy across the campus through:

- Faculty engagement in innovative pedagogy across all disciplines;
- Faculty-student collaboration in research, performance, scholarship, exhibitions and presentations, internships and fieldwork, community service, and international studies and practica;
- Capstone activities through which students can demonstrate expertise in a specialized area;
- Support for risk-taking and innovation in research and scholarly/creative activity;
- Writing intensive courses and seminars;
- Educational and clinical centers that provide professional development and services to the region;
- Library and information technology resources which support the curriculum, independent study, research, and information literacy;
- Lectures, conferences, concerts, gallery shows, theatrical performances (as the largest cultural institution in the Hudson Valley), and other opportunities for life-long learning;
- Leadership opportunities for students in campus and community organizations and college governance;
- A well-rounded program in residence life to support student social, emotional, recreational, and academic needs.

Educational Outcomes

Intellectual: Students are prepared to go on to graduate study or to enter their professional field of specialization through developing:

- Critical thinking, writing, analytical, mathematical, technological, and oral communication skills;
- In-depth exploration of at least one discipline;
- Experience using scientific methods and learning technologies appropriately and critically;
- Knowledge of and participation in the aesthetic experience and the creative process;
- Greater understanding and appreciation for the histories, races and cultures, religions, languages, and customs of our country and those of other nations;
- Knowledge of the rapidly changing political, economic, environmental, and social forces in our world.

Civic/Personal: Students develop the confidence and personal qualities necessary to take their place as citizens in our democracy through cultivating:

- High personal standards of honesty, integrity, and personal ethics;
- The capacity for self-reflection and empathy for others;
- Appreciation for the value of active citizenship and community service;
- Knowledge, interests, and activities that promote health, well-being, and personal responsibility.

To Learn · To Search · To Serve

Central Elements of Our VISION FOR NEW PALTZ

(See also www.newpaltz.edu/president/visionpoints.html.)

Continue to raise the academic quality and selectivity of our students. We shall do this while remaining a very diverse institution in terms of student ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geography, and intellectual interests.

Hire and retain faculty who are committed to both their scholarship and teaching. New Paltz faculty will be gifted at (and care about) their teaching. But they will also be meaningfully and consistently engaged in scholarship and creative activity that is shared with (and evaluated by) scholars and critics in the broader intellectual community. The pace and volume of such scholarly/creative activity will be more modest than is the case for faculty at a research university, but the quality will still be high.

Teach a curriculum that prepares students for careers and lives. New Paltz students will be taught by faculty who take teaching and learning seriously, beginning with a general education curriculum (the proper focus of one's first years at the college) designed by our faculty to impart content and build competencies grounded in the liberal arts. There will be regular dialogue among faculty about effective pedagogy, and we will use technology and provide access to information that helps teachers teach and students learn. Part of our teaching responsibility is assessing whether students are in fact learning and growing at the high levels envisioned by our curriculum.

Link student intellectual growth with faculty scholarship. Our faculty's excitement about their own research and creative activity should inspire students, both in the classroom and in focused capstone experiences for undergraduates (e.g., joint faculty-student research; faculty-mentored

student research; internships; teaching practica; student shows and recitals). Connections between undergraduate student learning and faculty scholarship will be an important part of what makes New Paltz different from community colleges, research universities and less-distinguished comprehensive and liberal arts colleges.

Our residential character must reinforce our educational goals. Most of our undergraduate students will live on campus and many faculty/staff will live in close proximity to campus. We want to offer a rich and lively co-curriculum that (a) reinforces what students learn in the classroom; (b) responds to students' interests and (c) takes full advantage of New Paltz's extraordinary geographic location. The intellectual and social life of the campus should draw substantial numbers of faculty, staff and students to events during evenings and on weekends. And we must pay more careful attention to the campus' physical appearance and maintenance, which reflect our values and affect our morale.

Meet student needs. Faculty and staff alike must appreciate – and demonstrate through our actions and attitudes – that meeting student needs is vital to the institution's success. We must understand the services that students require to achieve their goals and our administrative processes and policies must help us provide those services.

Address regional economic and schooling needs. We will be a willing partner – and supplier of talent in the form of graduates and faculty expertise – to local business and industry, school districts, and social service agencies. With the exception of our MFA programs that have national reputations, meeting such regional needs will be the principal focus of our graduate programs (whose quality we also seek to enhance).

Be a cultural and intellectual hub for the mid-Hudson region. Our fine and performing arts events, athletic contests and public lectures should be magnets that draw friends and fans to the college. We will proudly proclaim our cultural and economic impact, and aim to be celebrated as a regional resource and gem.

What a New Paltz degree should mean. Students will graduate from New Paltz (typically within four years) with: (a) a solid and substantive liberal arts/general education core upon which their academic major and their preparation for graduate study or a career rest; (b) intellectual confidence and curiosity; (c) a sophisticated understanding of the diversity and complexity of the world in which they will live and work; (d) having worked closely with a faculty member on a capstone experience that demonstrates intellectual maturity; (e) at least one faculty mentor with whom they expect to keep in touch; and (f) a genuine appreciation as alumni that their time here has changed their lives for the better.

Reinforcing our academic quality. Through our faculty's research and creative activity, new knowledge will be created and a richer understanding will emerge of our world and lives. This in turn will raise both the profile and reputation of individual faculty and the stature of the college, which enhances our ability to recruit talented faculty and students.

Appendix E

FACULTY PROFILE

<u>Faculty Summary</u>	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-time</u>
<i>Number of faculty assigned to the program</i>		
Men	_____	_____
Women	_____	_____
Minorities	_____	_____
<i>Credentials</i>		
Bachelor's Degree	_____	_____
Master's Degree	_____	_____
Doctorate	_____	_____
<i>Experience</i>		
0-3 years	_____	_____
4-7 years	_____	_____
8-11 years	_____	_____
12-15 years	_____	_____
16-24 years	_____	_____
25+ years	_____	_____

Appendix F

TYPES AND EXAMPLES OF ASSESSMENT

(This list does not represent all methods of assessment.)

In all types of assessment, be sure to state the specific question you are trying to answer with the data, and be sure that the data you collect will get at it.

Direct Assessment of Learning Outcomes

The following could be considered direct assessments of learning outcomes if the products are reflective of specific learning outcomes defined in the first section of the self-study.

- Capstone courses
- Portfolios
- ETS/GRE items
- Pre-test, post-test program exams
- Licensure exam items
- Performances and presentations
- Comprehensive examinations
- Master's thesis
- Student papers
- GE course assessment data

Indirect Assessment of Learning Outcomes

The following could be considered indirect assessment of learning outcomes if the data collected reflects students or employer perceptions of the extent to which they have met specific learning outcomes defined in the first section.

- Surveys of students in their graduating year/semester
- Focus groups or interviews of students in their graduating year/semester
- Alumni surveys
- Alumni placements in graduate school/career (if stated as learning outcome)
- Employer surveys

Indirect Assessment of Program Effectiveness and/or Satisfaction

The following are examples of indirect assessment of program effectiveness and/or satisfaction but typically should *not* be considered assessment of learning outcomes.

- Program retention and program graduation rates
- Surveys of current students and/or alumni
- Alumni placements in graduate school/career
- Focus groups or interviews of current students and/or alumni
- Time to undergraduate/graduate degree
- Author/co-authorship of referred journal article
- Conference presentations
- Service and contribution to the program and field on behalf of the program
- Participation in program honors programs and/or societies
- Awards and honors

Appendix G



Program Review and Assessment of Student Learning in the Major: Summary Report

Policy. Consistent with SUNY policy, the *Report of the Provost’s Advisory Task Force on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes and Guidelines for the Implementation of Campus-Based Assessment*, starting in 2001-2002, SUNY campuses review undergraduate programs every five to seven years, or on a programmatic accreditation cycle of ten years or less, usually within the framework of the University Faculty Senate’s *Guide for the Evaluation of Undergraduate Academic Programs*, available at <http://www.suny.edu/facultySenate/Publications.cfm>. A program review includes an assessment of student learning in the major and a review of the program’s final assessment report by external reviewers, including a campus visit and report to the chief academic officer. In the case of programs with external accreditation, the chief academic officer generally receives the external team’s report and final accreditation or certification letter.

Procedure. For each completed review, chief academic officers shall keep a completed electronic copy of this MAJOR-2 form, or the same information in another format, and associated external review materials. Upon request, the chief academic officer shall submit these materials to the University Provost for periodic audits based on samples of campuses.

a. Name of Institution (and branch if relevant)

b. Registered Program Title(s) Included in the Assessment (or Assessment Group)	SED IRP Code(s)

Campuses can copy and paste from their list of programs on the MAJOR-1 form and add additional rows as needed. Or, campuses may list the Assessment Group reported on their MAJOR-1 form to identify all programs included in the assessment (e.g. Education).

c. Year of Previous Assessment	d. Year of Current Assessment

e. External Reviewers (or Name of Specialized Accreditation Agency)		
Name	Title	Institution

External review reports, and a letter of accreditation, as applicable, should be attached to this Summary Report.

f. Campus Contact Name	Email

1. Program improvements made as a result of the previous assessment of this major:

2. Major learning outcomes for this program:	3. Measures used to assess these learning outcomes:

4. Major findings of this assessment related to student learning:	5. Action to be taken to address these specific assessment findings:

6. What has been learned from this assessment that could be helpful for the next assessment of student learning in this major?

Campuses may add additional pages and information for their own use.

Appendix H

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST/VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS FINANCIAL GUIDELINES FOR VISITS BY DEPARTMENTAL EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Prior to the visit, the Dean shall forward to the Provost's Office the names of the external reviewers who have been selected to perform a review for a department.

Reviewer Stipend and Travel Reimbursement

The Provost's Office will pay an external reviewer \$500 for the work and reimburse him or her for eligible travel expenses associated with performing the review. Travel expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with State and Campus rates and policies. The paperwork is to be prepared by the department and forwarded to the Provost's Office.

► For a reviewer who **is a non-NYS employee**, please use the following forms for both the payment and travel reimbursement:

1. Consultant/Lecturer Reimbursement Requisition
2. Consultant Agreement Attachment
3. NYS Standard Voucher
4. NYS Statement of Automobile Travel, if applicable
5. Original receipts
6. Documentation that provides reason for visit (i.e., copy of agenda, correspondence, etc.)

The above forms can be obtained through Purchasing or Accounts Payable. This paperwork is to be submitted immediately upon conclusion of the reviewer's visit.

► For a reviewer who **is a NYS employee in any agency including SUNY and CUNY**, please submit the following forms to the Provost's Office at least 4 weeks prior to the reviewer's arrival:

- For stipend:
1. Part-time (Adjunct) Lecturer/Instructor Appointment Request Form (ARF)
 2. NYS Dual Employment/Extra Service Approval Form (an individual's primary agency must give signature permission to render service at another State agency even if the individual is only part time at both agencies)
 3. Fee/Extra Service Payment Authorization (only needed when an individual's combined service at the primary agency and SUNY New Paltz exceed 1.0 FTE)
 4. Federal Form I-9 (documents for this form must be reviewed in person; this may be done at the reviewer's primary agency if he or she lives a distance from Campus)

The above forms can be obtained through Human Resources on the Campus H: drive.

- For travel:
1. NYS Travel Requisition
 2. NYS Travel Voucher
 3. NYS Statement of Automobile Travel, if applicable
 4. Original receipts
 5. Documentation that provides reason for visit (i.e., copy of agenda, correspondence, etc.)

The above forms can be obtained through Purchasing or Accounts Payable. This paperwork is to be submitted immediately upon conclusion of the reviewer's visit.

Reviewer Lodging

Should lodging be needed, the department arranges the reviewer's lodging reservations. At the time of this writing, we are aware that *Maplestone Inn (255-6861), Rodeway Inn (883-7373), and Super 8 (255-8865) offer rates within the State per diem for Campus guests. Department personnel should prepare and submit to the Provost's Office a Purchase Requisition no later than one week before the expected stay. If this is not possible, the reviewer may have to pay for lodging and then include the expense and receipt(s) with other travel expenses incurred. A reviewer who will be reimbursed for lodging should be given a tax-exempt certificate to provide to the motel prior to checking out.

**Maplestone Inn may accept the per diem for weeknight stays only (Sunday through Thursday nights), and this rate is based on single occupancy (the reviewer only). A guest of a reviewer will result in additional lodging charges, which the campus cannot pay. Please provide Maplestone Inn with 24 hour advance notice of the reviewer's estimated arrival time at the inn.*

Meals with a Reviewer

The Campus does not allow the use of State operating funds for reimbursement of an employee's meal because he or she is not considered to be in travel status. Only the reviewer's breakfast and dinner may qualify for reimbursement through State operating funds. Therefore, while the reviewer's breakfast and dinner may be reimbursed through State funds, the Provost's Office will use an alternate source of funding to reimburse for the reviewer's lunch and for the employee's lunch and dinner with a reviewer. Since these funds are limited, reimbursement to an employee will be made within the following restrictions:

<u>LUNCH MEETING WITH REVIEWERS</u>	<u>DINNER MEETING WITH REVIEWERS</u>
Maximum in attendance for lunch: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two (2) reviewers; and• Two (2) department members	Maximum in attendance for dinner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two (2) reviewers; and• Two (2) department members
Maximum reimbursable cost per person: \$13	Maximum reimbursable cost per person: \$53

Meals with the reviewer can best be handled by reimbursing one Campus employee who has paid the bill for all in attendance (excluding guests). The Campus employee being reimbursed is to complete and forward the Provost's Office the following forms:

1. NYS Purchase Requisition
2. NYS Standard Voucher
3. Meal Justification Form (available through the Provost's Office).
4. Original receipts

The Provost's Office will determine the amounts to be reimbursed through State funds and non-State funds.

For More Information

SUNY New Paltz Department of Accounts Payable travel information:

<http://www.newpaltz.edu/ap/travel.html>

New York State Office of General Services travel information: <http://www.ogs.state.ny.us/travel/default.html>

Questions about the payment and reimbursement paperwork and procedures for external reviewers may be directed to Joy Simmerman, Administrative Aide for Academic Affairs (x3277 or simmermj@newpaltz.edu).