**Academic Program Review: Self-Study Guidelines**

The self study report components found below should be considered a minimum and sufficient standard for this departmental self-appraisal. Please use these Guidelines as a template for your report and respond to the topics raised, consulting with the EPC chair and/or internal review group with questions as they arise. Departments may decide that additional issues are important and also need to be addressed in order to represent programs fully.

Keep in mind that you are addressing multiple audiences: most immediately, your faculty colleagues on the EPC and internal review group and the academic administration, but also peers from other institutions (your reviewers), the president’s office, and the Board of Trustees. Your readers are both internal and external, and many will not be in your discipline. So give full explanations and produce as professional and readable a document as you can, with any substantial tables, charts, etc. placed in an appendix. Remember that your job is not just to present facts but to analyze and interpret information, guiding your reader with your point of view. In all drafts and in the final version, please indicate a revision date and include page numbers.

While the self study is the primary vehicle by which the external reviewers learn about you and your programs, the document should not be viewed narrowly as a report to them. Similarly, the review process as a whole should not be treated as satisfying an outside “audit.” The internal review group represents the College faculty and administration as an initial audience. Departments should try to use the review and report to their advantage, making it serve the purpose of disclosing and discussing their teaching, scholarship, and experiences with student learning in a critical and constructive way – and a celebratory way where called for. At any given point, readers want to know the ways in which your programs support and advance both a liberal education and the expectations of the disciplines in which they participate.

**Introduction**

State what the document is and the timeframe it covers and briefly describe the department or programs under review, stating all major and minor degree and certificate offerings and interdisciplinary collaboration with other departments and programs.

**Focus One: Program Mission and Competitiveness**

**Topic: Connection to Mission**

*Focus Question:* What is the connection of the department’s mission and programs to the College’s institutional mission statement and strategic planning goals? Make explicit reference to Albright’s approved goals. The department may need to discuss and articulate goals.

*Resources:* College Mission and Strategic Plan (web or Academic Affairs)

**Topic: Competitiveness of Program**
Focus Question: How do the department’s programs make Albright competitive among peers and a contributor to higher education in this field? The answer to this question must include a comparison with programs at peer institutions with respect to curriculum and may include other aspects that are accessible and that you deem relevant (e.g., enrollments, facilities and equipment, staffing, etc.).

Resources: Institutional Research will provide the current listing of peer institutions; the data template will have Albright enrollments and staffing.

Focus Two: Demand for the Program

Topic: External Demand
Focus Questions: What are the national statistics on the demand for this concentration over the past five years and projected for the future? How has the department adapted to trends affecting the quality or quantity of the student population in the discipline?

Resources: Data is available from disciplinary associations on student demand. Institutional Research and the EPC chair or dean can suggest data sources from the U. S. Department of Education and elsewhere for additional enrollment projections for the discipline.

Topic: Internal Demand
Focus Questions: How many students are being served and in what capacities (general education, concentrators, co-concentrators)? Is the trend in student demand increasing or decreasing?

Resources: The data template includes enrollment information.

Focus Three: The Educational Core

Topic: Departmental Faculty
Focus Questions: Is the department’s faculty experienced enough in the profession and at Albright, and of a sufficient level and diversity of rank, to participate fully in all aspects of academic life needed to ensure a quality department (e.g., curriculum planning and scheduling, advising, scholarship, and service)? What are the credentials of the faculty and their approaches to teaching? What evidences their currency in knowledge of the teaching and scholarship of the discipline? What are the department faculty’s contribution to innovative, collaborative, and experiential teaching and learning approaches (e.g., IDS, service learning and internships), faculty governance and administrative functioning (e.g., committee participation, admission recruitment).
Resources: The data template includes information about faculty teaching and advising loads. Note – current faculty curriculum vitae should be included in the report’s Appendix.

Topic: Students
Focus Questions: Does the program recruit and retain students who have a likelihood of being successful in the program? Describe and characterize efforts made by the department and Admissions office to attract desirable students? What retention programs or academic support are in place? What are the post-graduate outcomes of the students, e.g. employment and graduate school? Are students, alumni, and other stakeholders satisfied with the program?

Resources: The data template includes graduation figures. Outcomes on standardized graduate or pre-professional testing of students (GRE, LSAT, MCAT) may be relevant if available. Institutional Research can advise on appropriate student and alumni survey measures and assist in survey processes. For post-graduate career information, consult the Career Planning and Placement Services and/or the Alumni Office if the department does not track its own graduates.

Topic: Curriculum
Focus Questions: Is the curriculum appropriate to the breadth, depth, and level of the discipline? Is it coherent and integrated? Is it dynamic (i.e., changing in format and approach in response to advances in the field and in teaching)? How successfully is the program integrated into the general studies program of the College? Does it foster independent exploration and scholarship such as honors work, independent studies, undergraduate research, and study abroad? Does it incorporate experiential learning opportunities such as internships or service learning?

Resources: Course syllabi must be sent to the Curriculum Committee for review; arrange this with CC chair. It is advised also to prepare a hard-copy set for the external reviewers to refer to. Course requirements for concentration and combined major must be consistent with Catalog copy. For data on your faculty’s participation in various programs, consult your faculty and department resources where relevant or contact the relevant program committee or office: Experience, general education, undergraduate research (ACRE and independent research), and CELAR (Center for Experiential Learning and Research).

Topic: Student Learning
A. Focus Questions: State your department’s student learning goals for its concentrators and co-concentrators. If your department’s learning goals have yet to be formally articulated, this review is the occasion to collaborate as a department to begin doing so; assistance is available from the internal review group and/or assessment staff. Present your goals in the context of peer and aspirant programs and/or standards from a relevant disciplinary organization.
B. **Focus Questions**: Discuss your students’ success in meeting expectations with respect to any assessment of general education and disciplinary or interdisciplinary learning goals. Describe any actions you took, or plan to take, to improve student learning. For example, did your department make curricular changes (added or revised courses, changed pre-requisites, etc.), and if so how was that change a constructive response to perceived learning needs? Include any supporting evidence (qualitative or quantitative) in the report’s Appendix.

*Resources*: Department student learning goals, assessment plans and data; department meeting minutes; consultation with assessment staff.

**Focus Four: Supporting Resources**

**Topic: Library and Instructional Technology**

Early in the self-study semester, or earlier if the Department desires, the Department should schedule a meeting with the Director of the Library to initiate a consultation with the Library so that information in support of the focus questions below can be provided and so the Library and Department can engage in dialogue about needs and resources. The Library will provide the Department with a written report containing (1) information requested in these Guidelines that is relevant to the Department and (2) other analysis resulting from the consultation process. The Library report will become part of the portfolio of review documents available to internal and external reviewers. In the text of the self study, the Department should summarize and respond to the Library’s report to whatever extent it deems appropriate.

**Focus Questions**: Please provide your analysis, supported by data from the department or Library or IT as appropriate, of the following aspects of support for teaching, learning, and scholarship in your department:

1. **Library collections** – acquisition activity and holdings regarding books, journals, electronic resources, or other resources particular to your disciplines, including reference materials. Support information should distinguish between support for department curriculum and teaching needs and support for faculty research and professional development.

2. **Instructional technology** - How has the program taken advantage of technology to enhance student learning? Are the technology, web resources, and software available to the program sufficient, both in currency and availability?

3. **Responsiveness and communication** – contact between the department and designated library liaisons and contact between your students/faculty and the library generally; contact with others regarding instructional technology.

4. **Instruction/Information Literacy** – availability, use, and usefulness of library instruction for faculty and for students at different levels on bibliographic, reference, research, or information literacy methods or resources.
5. **Special circumstances** – if any for your department, such as satellite or other special collections.

*Available Resources:* The consultative process should answer these questions; if not, consult further with the Library for information on acquisitions and expenditures on print and electronic books, serials, and media and instructional sessions offered. Consult with the Library or IT, as appropriate, on instructional technology resources relative to needs expressed in #2.

**Topic: Facilities**

*Focus Questions:* To what extent are the facilities, faculty offices, teaching spaces, student working space, communication support, and software that are available sufficient to support a quality learning experience for your students?

**Focus Five: Financial Assessment**

**Topic: Revenue**

*Focus Question:* Does the department have any independent revenue streams, e.g., ticket sales, research grants, independent consulting? *(Add to the template any such revenue not included there.)*

**Topic: Costs**

*Focus Questions:* What demonstrable efficiencies have been implemented in the program? What are the instructional and operating costs associated with your department, and how do they compare with the college at large and with costs at peer schools? What new resources will be required to improve the program in the future?

*Available Resources:* The data template includes revenue and cost data and comparisons. Research grants, fundraising, equipment grants, gifts, bequests, endowment, and financial relationships with other institutions should be noted in the report. All yearly budgets must be presented as documented and available on the I-Drive. IR and/or Controller to supply cost information.