

Appendix E: Overview of an Academic Program Review Self Study Report

The program review is intended to be an opportunity for reflection on current performance in achieving student learning outcomes and visioning for the future. The expectation is that Academic Unit faculty, staff, students, alumni, advisory board, and others with an investment in the program will be engaged in continuous, ongoing data collection about student learning, student satisfaction, program effectiveness and student success. Current and former students should be involved in all aspects of the program review and take a key role in shaping the program to achieve student learning outcomes.

The program review is the time when the Academic Unit to pause and make an in-depth analysis that most often leads to a major program redesign and/or revision of programs and services. The process is characterized by the following components: (1) an academic program Self Study with action plan, (2) external reviewers report, (3) Program Review committee's Findings and Recommendations report, and (4) a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The Academic Unit Self Study is the heart of the two-year program review process. This Program Review Self Study template is to be used as a suggestive guide not a prescriptive requirement. Each Academic Unit is invited to adjust the template in ways that best meet their unique needs. The Academic Unit is asked to submit the Program Review Self Study document with appendices to the College Dean, Provost (or designee) who serves as chair of the Program Review Committee. In addition, a hard copy of the Self Study with appendices should be provided to each member of the Program Review Committee.

Academic Program Review Self Study

1. Alignment of the program to the University mission, core values, strategic plan, and learning outcomes. A review of the clarity, power, and appropriateness of the Academic Unit's mission, learning outcomes, and planning processes.
2. Educational effectiveness of the academic program including assessment plans, curriculum, retention, graduation rates, student services, faculty effectiveness, and community engagement.
3. Capacity and resources currently available including financial, budget, facilities, technology, and personnel.
4. Comparative position with national standards for best practices, unique features, trends, etc. The program review is focused on continuous improvement for the future. It should be visionary and inspiring.
5. Summary internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities.
6. Themes for future inquiry are interesting questions that the program review identified but beyond the scope of the current program review analysis.

SELF STUDY REPORT

Introduction

The introduction includes a brief summary of the program and a description of changes made in the program since the last program review. The academic program leadership may want to provide internal context including a summary of majors, minors, centers, and other features important to assessment. The Self Study introduction may also include an external context such as the constituencies served beyond the immediate campus. The Program Review Committee and the College Dean maintain a schedule of the Program Review cycle for all academic programs.

The introduction provides the context for the program review. It is a descriptive overview of the Academic Unit, majors offered, concentrations, Academic Unit's mission, unique aspects of the department, specific objectives of the faculty, etc. This section sets the stage for the Self Study that follows.

1. Name of Academic Unit, Program(s), and Center(s)

The program review document should begin with a list of the programs and centers to be reviewed including graduate and undergraduate, undergraduate majors, minors and concentrations. At this point the Academic Unit will need to decide if they will write a single Program Review Report for all of their programs and center(s) or if they will write a separate report for each program and/or center(s).

It is assumed that the Academic Unit (department or school) will conduct a program review of all their programs and center(s) at the same time. If the faculty prefers to conduct sequential program reviews over multiple review cycles the Academic Unit leadership should contact the Provost and Program Review Committee with their request.

2. Program Overview

The description should orient the reader to your program, including items such as highlights, general education courses, and service courses and programs. Describe major events in the academic program including formation of new centers, addition of internships, new service opportunities, specialized accreditation, new affiliations, etc.

3. Summary of Recommendations from Previous Program Review

Include as an attachment previous program review and discuss actions taken and program improvements since last program review. Include a discussion of the past three to five annual assessment reports and findings, APC/GSC actions, new courses, program revisions, added support services, etc.

4. History, development, and expectations of the program (Dickeson Model, Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services, Criteria No. 1)

It is important to understand the history of an Academic Unit and the evolution of programs within that unit to serve external demand, internal demand for courses such as in general education or a minor, and expectations of majors is very important to understanding the movement and direction of the programs and why and how certain programs evolved. For example, a program may have been created to respond to student needs, or around a specific professor's research interests or other driving forces which will change over time.

For each of the programs the Academic Unit and faculty should address the following issues:

- Why was the program established?
- What are its academic antecedents?
- How has the program evolved over the years?
- What were the institution's original expectations?
- How have those expectations changed?
- What were the origins of initial support?
- What is the degree to which the program has adapted to meet change?
- What is the degree to which the program has adapted to the changing demographic characteristics of the institution's students?

Robert C. Dickeson, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services: Reallocating Resources to Achieve Strategic Balance*, 2010 page 71

Using the data set provided by the Office of Institutional Research, Accounting and Finance, and other evidence gathered, describe the enrollment trends, migration to and from major(s) and minor(s), changes in academic profile of students coming into the major, and retention and graduation rates, Academic Unit costs, etc.

PART I: Institutional and Program Alignment of Mission, Core Values, and Learning Outcomes

The focus of this section is on the alignment of the program to the Institution and should provide a check to the faculty if the program has experienced “mission drift.” The Nichols text, *A Practitioner’s Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment Implementation* (see chapter 4 pp. 138 - 171), will assist the Academic Unit in analyzing the programs alignment with the University mission and core values. Faculty should also use this opportunity to review the currency and appropriateness of the program mission/ purpose statement (vision and core values) and how this informs the Program Learning Outcomes.

University Mission

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

School and Program Learning Outcomes and Institutional alignment: The program review is an outcomes-based review that measures educational effectiveness in terms of what the Academic Unit has identified as the important Learning Outcomes. Under the current model, faculty ensures that program and student learning outcomes are aligned with the Institutional Learning Outcomes. Faculty reviews how carefully Learning Outcomes are mapped (curricular map) to signature assignments and whether or not appropriate rubrics are in place for assessment.

Learning, Informed by our Faith in Christ

Outcome: Members of the PLNU community will display openness to and mastery of foundational knowledge and perspectives, think critically, analytically, and creatively, and communicate effectively.

Growing, In a Christ-Centered Faith Community

Outcome: Members of the PLNU community will demonstrate God-inspired development and understanding of self and others; live gracefully within complex professional, environmental and social contexts.

Serving, In a Context of Christian Faith

Outcome: Members of the PLNU community will engage in actions that reflect Christian discipleship in a context of communal service and collective responsibility, serve both locally and globally.

Academic Unit goals: in this section the faculty may include a discussion of other stretch goals related to the curriculum, pedagogy, student and faculty scholarship, student service opportunities, diversity goals and other aspects of quality improvement for academic excellence.

- Statement of program objectives, including relationship to school, college and institutional strategic plan
- Specific goals in the areas of teaching and learning; research, scholarship, and creative activity; and civic engagement (attach all relevant documents and policy statements)
- Reflection on any recent national or global changes in the academic discipline

KEY FINDINGS

Each section of the Self Study should end with a summary of key findings and recommendations. This summary assists the reader in quickly identifying the important recommendations made by the Academic Unit faculty, staff and students. These recommendations form the basis of the Action Plan.

Example

Institutional and Program Alignment of Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Learning Outcomes,	
Key Findings	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department mission, core values and program learning outcomes are consistently aligned with the University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change necessary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

PART II: Capacity and Resources for Academic Quality

The Capacity and Resources section is a summary overview of the program's resources including faculty profile, student profile, diversity profile, faculty load, staff, and budget. Academic Unit should discuss the changes and trends in the program and findings regarding the Academic Unit's efficiency and ability to support the growth or decline in the program. Specifically address diversity goals, student support services, academic advising loads, administrative loads, and scholarship support and enhancements.

WASC Core Commitment to Institutional Capacity

The institution functions with clear purposes, high levels of institutional integrity, fiscal stability, and organizational structures to fulfill its purposes.

The Core Commitment to institutional Capacity enables the Institution to consider resource issues from a holistic perspective, and to consider capacity as an institutional attribute beyond minimum compliance and a review of assets. Looking at itself through a "lens" of institutional capacity enables the institution to reexamine what it is in terms of its capacity to fulfill its aspirations, and to integrate and synthesize findings and recommendations for improvement gained through its self-review under Commission Standards... An important dimension of institutional capacity is the institution's readiness to define and sustain educational effectiveness. This dimension is reflected in the review cycle by the name assigned to the first review, the Capacity and Preparatory Review.

Source: *WASC Handbook of Accreditation, July 2008, page 8*

The question of program viability should include: (1) analysis of enrollment and retention data, (2) discussion regarding changes in the academic discipline or professional standards, (3) increase or decline in student demand for the program, (4) resource allocation including faculty to student ratios, faculty load, external funding, etc., (5) student support services including library, research support, technical resources, career services, and (6) Academic Unit resources including staff, faculty research support, facilities, budget, etc.

1. External Demand for the Program(s) (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 2)

Analysis of enrollment trends and retention data

What are the national and regional enrollment trends for the program(s)? Based on data provided by the Office of Institutional Research, what are the past five (5) year enrollment trends for the major and minor, retention and graduation rates?

Please work with the Offices of Institutional Effectiveness and Institutional Research to review and interpret the data. Summarize your findings.

2. Internal Demand for the Program(s) (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 3)

Do our programs support university's internal program needs such as general education, minor supporting other majors, service courses, courses required for other majors such as nursing or business? How many units are generated by non-majors as compared to majors? If the program(s) were changed or discontinued how would this impact other programs in other Academic Units or co-curricular programs? Are students migrating into or out of the programs and from which majors?

3. Size, Scope, and Productivity of the Program(s) (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 6)

Comment on the program faculty profile (numbers, rank, teaching load, administrative load release, etc.). For each program include the criteria used by the Academic Unit in the assignment of faculty to teach undergraduate and graduate courses, and serve on committees that administer the culminating experience (thesis, action research, honors project, comprehensive exams, Teaching Performance Assessments, etc.) and for determining undergraduate and graduate adjunct faculty assignments.

Briefly summarize and discuss the students being served by the program such as a demographic profile of majors and other students served by the program. The Academic Unit might consider:

- Characteristics of students majoring in the program (e.g. enrollment numbers, SAT scores, GPA, and other relevant characteristics).
- Demographic characteristics of majors and minor in terms of diversity, ethnicity, gender, etc. Where information is available by class (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate) and any observed trends.
- Description of recruitment practices and admissions criteria if different from standard University admissions practices:
 - Activities and resources that serve students who declare a major in the department but have not yet met the department's entrance requirements.

- The number of students who have declared a major in the department but failed to meet the department's entrance guidelines.
- Types and levels of financial assistance available to students.
- Academic and career services, programs, and resources
- Basic skill remediation, tutoring, supplemental instruction
- Orientation and program activities to build community
- Number of students in service activities and type of activities

4. Revenue and Other Resources Generated by the Program (Dickeson Model, Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services, Criterion No. 7)

Review the revenue trends provided by the Office of Finance and Accounting. Are there sources of revenue in addition to tuition being generated such as grants, fundraising, and continuing education courses?

5. Costs and Other Expenses Associated with the Program(s) (Dickeson Model, Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services, Criterion No. 8)

Comment on the department's budget resources and include budgets and actual expenses for past three years. The Academic Unit will be provided past budgets and expenses by the office of Budgets and Accounting. Other information that may be provided are national benchmarks by major in terms of costs and FTEs.

6. Quality of Program Inputs and Processes (Dickeson Model, Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services, Criterion No. 4)

- **Faculty**

Discuss the ratios of fulltime to adjunct and part time faculty teaching courses over past three years. What is the proportion of faculty with terminal degrees, tenure, rank, length of time at PLNU, etc? How have these ratios changed over the past five years? Are there planned retirements in the near future?

- **Adequacy and Availability**

Discuss the faculty needs and identify any gaps. Summarize the evidence of success in recruiting key faculty and staff. Comment on any curricular areas for which the department has difficulty hiring.

- **Professional Development/ Travel Support**

Comment on the adequacy and availability of institutional support and outside funding for professional development and travel.

- **Technology**

Discuss the program's use of technology in the classrooms, faculty offices, library, and labs. Comment on the adequacy of the technological resources and support. Forecast any future needs in the area of instructional technology.

Information and technology resources

- Library print and electronic holdings in the teaching and research areas of the program
- Information literacy outcomes for graduates
- Technology resources available to support the pedagogy and research in the program

- **Facilities and other**

Discuss on the adequacy in the areas of faculty offices, classrooms, and other facilities and space allocation. Comment on the availability and use of library resources and Institutional support services. Issues to consider might include: classroom space, instructional laboratories and technology support, research laboratories, office and meeting spaces.

- **Staff**

Describe and discuss the administrative, clerical, technical, and other administrative service support. This is an excellent opportunity to review job descriptions (these may be included in the appendices as supporting documentation).

- **Student Profile**

Briefly summarize and discuss the demographics, preparation, and general performance of majors and other students served by the program. Describe any significant changes in enrollment, retention, and graduation. This section should include the following components:

- Characteristics of students majoring in the program (e.g., enrollment numbers, SAT scores, GPA, and other relevant characteristics)
- Description of recruitment practices and admissions criteria, if different from standard University admissions practices
 - Activities and resources that serve students who declare a major in the department but have not yet met the department's entrance requirements
 - The number of students who have declared a major in the department but failed to meet the department's entrance guidelines (if applicable)
- Types and levels of financial assistance available to students
- Academic and career services, programs, and resources
- Basic skill remediation, tutoring, supplemental instruction
- Orientation and program activities to build community
- Number and percentages of women, minorities, international students in the population of majors
- Number of students in service activities

- **Course Profile:** Briefly summarize and discuss the number of courses offered, class and lab sizes small-large-mean, the percentage of classes taught by full-time faculty and other relevant course data for the past three years. Include any other information regarding lab and course resources.
- **Resource Profile:** Overview of the physical environment for the program, including instructional technologies, other equipment, and supplies. Briefly summarize and evaluate the adequacy of the budget, facilities, equipment, and computing and support services available to the program. Discuss information literacy among the students in the program.

PART III: Educational Effectiveness, Analysis of Evidence About Program Quality and Viability

Educational effectiveness is the core of the program review Self Study and focuses the effectiveness of the Academic Unit to achieve program and student learning outcomes. This part of the Self Study is the opportunity for reflection and analysis. WASC suggests, “To facilitate meaningful analysis of the evidence, it is helpful to provide guiding questions to structure the Self Study inquiry and report. These questions often produce deep discussions among faculty and are considered the most important aspect of the Self Study process *WASC Resource Guide for ‘Good Practices’ in Academic Program Review*, September 2009, p. 8”.

WASC Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness

The institution evidences clear and appropriate educational objectives and design at the institutional and program level. The institution employs processes of review, including the collection and use of data, that ensure delivery of programs and learner accomplishments at a level of performance appropriate for the degree or certificate awarded.

The Core Commitment to Educational Effectiveness provides an opportunity for the institution to explore holistically its approaches to educational effectiveness. The institution assesses whether its systems, such as course and program design, faculty support, and program review, are effectively linked to evidence of students learning and are consistent with the educational goals and the academic standards of the institution. By design, elements of educational effectiveness are incorporated into all four Commission Standards, so that institutions explore the relationships between capacity and educational quality and effectiveness. Each of the four Accreditation Standards describes key elements of educational effectiveness.

Source: *WASC Handbook of Accreditation*, July 2008, p. 8

Examples of lines of inquiry:

1. Is the program growing, shrinking, or maintaining its current size (enrollment trends over 5 years, retention over 5 years, degrees awarded over 5 years)?
2. Are students able to move through the program in a timely manner (time-to-degree, courses with high failure rates, course rotation schedule)?
3. Is the department diverse (student and faculty data disaggregated to ethnicity, gender, etc.)?
4. Is the program reputable (the number of applicants, admissions profile, enrollment, percentage of undergraduate students going on to doctoral programs, and students employed in the field after graduation)?
5. Is there an appropriate balance of lower division, upper division, and graduate resources (e.g., graduate FTEs and % of total FTEs, adjunct and part-time faculty to full-time faculty ratio, full-time faculty to student ratio, number of sections offered broken down by course level (e.g., lower division, upper division, general education, and graduate)?
6. Is the program rigorous (grade distribution compared with samples of student work, percent of honors students, rubrics used for assessment of a culminating-experience, national exit exam ETS MFT)?
7. Are the students learning what is expected based on the Academic Unit's stated objectives and learning outcomes (Direct data: results from program assessment, reports from employees, ePortfolios. Indirect data: student exit surveys, NSSE data, alumni surveys)?
8. The faculty reviews curricular maps, signature assignments, rubrics and other assessment tools used to evaluate success, answering the following questions: Are the correct measurements being used? Are there direct as well as indirect measures of student learning outcomes? Are the tools giving faculty needed information?

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

1. **Quality of Program Outcomes (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 5)**

Summarize the status of assessment of student learning in the program including a discussion of the program assessment activities. Include a description of actions taken in response to information gained from assessment. This section should include a discussion of evaluation methods used for each outcome and how the faculty and staff will know outcomes are being reached. Provide an overview of the annual assessment results since the last program review and how the annual assessments have evolved and informed the Academic Unit for continuous improvement.

Discuss how the Academic Unit intentionally designs program, activities and support services to achieve learning outcomes. Evaluate how the learning outcomes are communicated and understood by students, staff and faculty and the design of evaluate measures to assess learning outcomes. The program review should focus on whether students are achieving the desired learning outcomes for the program and the school/ Academic Unit. This section should analyze the learning outcomes and reflect on the appropriateness and assessment of the learning outcomes. Include as attachments current Assessment Plan as well as all reports of specific assessments the program has conducted in the past six years. Evidence to include:

- Annual results of direct and indirect assessments of student learning in the program (could be combination of quantitative and qualitative measures), including the degree to which students achieve the program’s desired standards
- Ongoing efforts by the department to “close the loop” by responding to assessment results
- Student retention and graduation rate trends (disaggregated by different demographic categories)
- Placement of graduates into graduate school or post-doctoral experiences
- Job placements
- Graduating student satisfaction surveys (and/or alumni satisfaction surveys)
- Employer critiques of student performance or employer survey satisfaction results
- Disciplinary ratings of the program
- Student/ Alumni achievements (e.g. community service, research and publications, awards and recognition, professional accomplishments, etc.)

WASC Resource Guide for ‘Good Practices’ in Academic Program Review, September 2009, page 9.

2. Curriculum

Structure/ coherence of instructional program

Assess the appropriateness of the structure, rigor, quality, currency, comprehensiveness, adequacy, coherence, and delivery of the curriculum. Describe any changes made in the program’s curriculum in response to outcomes assessment. The Self Study may report recent recognitions/ awards for innovative curriculum and/or outstanding students, or external funding for curricular innovation or reform. Include tables of course enrollment over past three years. Discuss any course enrollment issues such as low (under 10) or high enrollment.

For graduate programs include the guidelines for culminating experiences such as thesis, action research, honors project.

Cooperative programs and initiatives with other academic programs (joint degrees, service courses, general education courses)

Evaluate the program’s effectiveness in cooperatively offering joint degrees, shared courses, service courses, cross-listed courses, and/or General Education courses.

3. Program faculty

Write a summary of the qualifications and achievements of the program faculty. Examine how the current faculty enhances the program's mission, core values, learning outcomes and goals. Describe in what ways the faculty members' backgrounds, research, scholarship, teaching and service contribute to the quality of the program. The program review might consider (the Academic Unit may want to include CVs of fulltime faculty as attachments):

- Proportion of the faculty with terminal degree
- Institutions from which faculty earned terminal degree
- List of faculty specialties within discipline (and how those specialties align with the program curriculum)
- Teaching quality (e.g. peer evaluations, faculty self-review, teaching evaluations)
- Record of scholarship for each faculty member
- Faculty participation in development opportunities related to teaching, learning and/or assessment
- External funding awarded to faculty
- Record of professional practice for each faculty member
- Service contributions made by each faculty member
- Distribution of faculty across ranks (or years at the institution)
- Diversity of faculty
- Awards and recognition

WASC Resource Guide for 'Good Practices' in Academic Program Review, September 2009, p. 10.

Discuss the program faculty profile information and the Academic Unit's ability to provide currency, expertise, and effective teaching for the next five years. Identify any current or future known gaps in academic expertise based on changes in the program(s) or faculty assignments, retirements or moves. Prepare a five year plan for faculty hiring, retiring, and promotion. Discuss the process used for hiring and assigning adjunct faculty. Discuss the Academic Unit's process for initiating, supporting and developing faculty including adjunct and part-time faculty.

Development on effectiveness of teaching and learning

Describe the program faculty members' activities to continuously improve classroom research, innovative instruction, and scholarship of teaching and learning. Discuss the impact of this scholarly work and creative activities on the curriculum and on student engagement and learning.

4. Credit Hour Policy and Monitoring

The Department of Education (March 18, 2011) has mandated that all universities receiving Federal financial aid will have a definition of a credit hour and a policy for ensuring adherence to the credit hour definition. The definition should reasonably approximate the Carnegie unit in terms of student work needed to achieve program learning outcomes.

Undergraduate Credit Hour definition

One semester unit represents an hour of class per week for at least 15 weeks (Carnegie definition). Three hours of laboratory are equivalent to one hour of class. Two hours of preparation are normal for each hour of class. Transfer work on the quarter system converts as three units equal to two semester units.

Graduate Credit Hour definition

One unit of credit represents the amount of student work appropriate to graduate level instruction, academic rigor, and time requirement essentially equivalent to a Carnegie unit, which is defined as fifteen hours of instructional contact and an additional 30 hours of student work outside of the physical or virtual classroom [as defined by, United States Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, Assistant Secretary, GEN-11-06, March 18, 2011, p. 3]. Academic Unit leadership will monitor the unit of credit policy through the course syllabus and schedule.

In addition, WASC is required by Department of Education as of July 1, 2011, to “conduct an effective review and evaluation of the reliability and accuracy of the institution’s assignment of credit hour used for Federal program purposes.” In the Program Review Self Study the Academic Unit is required to demonstrate how the unit monitors course instruction time to ensure compliance with the University’s Credit Hour policy and federal regulations. The Academic Unit should be specific in identifying how and when the Credit Hour policy is communicated to fulltime and adjunct faculty and safe guards used by the unit to assess the accuracy of its monitoring system.

5. Recruitment, retention, and student services

Discuss any recruitment, retention, and support services for students (advising, mentoring, career development, conferences, and student placement) provided by the Academic Unit for the program. Comment on efforts in terms of the quality, success, and diversity of the student population.

6. Professional and Community Interactions

Summarize opportunities for student internships, employment, and other high impact practices and/or professional development programs as well as the ways in which external communities interact with students and/ or the curriculum. Comment on ways in which program faculty, students and the various community stakeholders form partnerships and comment on any programmatic interactions with the off-campus regional community, any related professional communities, and/ or community experts.

7. Post-Graduation Outcomes and Alumni Satisfaction

Summarize and discuss data and surveys regarding alumni satisfaction and success, graduate program admission, and post-graduation employment.

Program review is designed to lead to specific curriculum proposals for program improvement. This might include academic proposals requiring approval by the Academic Policies Committee (undergraduate) or the Graduate Studies Committee (graduate), a vote by the full-time faculty, and the

approval of the Administrative Cabinet. The faculty should work closely with the appropriate committees throughout the Program Review process. If the Academic Unit is considering a new program or new degree, a WASC substantive change proposal may be required. In such cases PLNU's Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) will provide assistance to the faculty in preparing the substantive change proposal based on the analysis gathered through the program review process. These proposals will be drafted in the WASC Substantive change format addressing the specific questions appropriate for a new program or new degree level.

PART IV – Comparative Position and National Standards

The Program Review process includes a comparison to other nationally recognized programs of similar size, purpose and discipline and to national standards in the specific disciplines. The Academic Unit should compare curriculum, support activities and services, learning outcomes, and student research opportunities. The comparative analysis should identify ways to enhance the program to better support the student learning outcomes. This section should include:

Comparison with comparable programs at comparator and aspirant programs at other universities: Describe the most important similarities and differences between your program and three to five programs at other institutions with similar and highly regarded programs. Identify appropriate national benchmarks for comparison (e.g., Educational Benchmarking, Inc., ETS Major Field Test).

Best Practices in the Field: Identify at least three issues, problems, or challenges your program is facing for which it is possible to identify “best practices” in the discipline. Describe those “best practices” and how they can inform your own program improvement efforts (best practices do not have to be drawn from comparator or aspirant universities).

Unique features: Describe any unique features of your program that strengthen its comparative position or represent best practice within the discipline.

PART V – Internal Strengths-Weaknesses and External Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) Analysis

SWOT analysis focuses on the “fit” between the internal capability (strengths & weaknesses) of the Academic Unit and the changing context of the external situation (threats & opportunities). Summarize the internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities of the program based on the program review process. Prioritize each based on the future goals of the

Academic Unit. Discuss the gaps between current and desired performance, resources, academic quality, and program viability. Identify ways to close or mitigate the gaps in current program with the existing resources. What improvements could be made with additional resources (faculty, facilities, staff, equipment and technology)? What changes does the Academic Unit anticipate in the discipline, including cooperative efforts with other programs?

1. Impact, Justification, and Overall Essentiality of the Program(s) (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 9)

This is a summary of the internal Academic Unit strengths and weaknesses of the program(s) as well as the benefits to the university for retaining, building or redesigning the program(s). What are the identified strengths of the program(s)? Will these strengths continue into the foreseeable future? How does the program contribute to the mission and add value to the university? Does the program serve the community, students, or university in unique ways?

What specific weaknesses were identified in the program review? How will the Academic Unit address these weaknesses? How threatening are these weaknesses to the future viability of the program(s)? Will the Academic Unit mitigate or eliminate the programs vulnerability to future challenges?

Internal Capability (current situation analysis)

- **Strength** – is a valuable distinctive of the program or Academic Unit. A strength might include faculty expertise, a national grant, community network for jobs and internships, diversity of student population, student learning, or achievements (e.g., professional accreditation) that place the Academic Unit in a strong position. A strength can also mean alliances with other universities, outside organizations (e.g. BioLogos, San Diego Zoo Biomimicry).
- **Weakness** – is something the Academic Unit lacks or does poorly in comparison to others or a condition that puts them at a disadvantage (e.g., lack of lab space and inadequate facilities). Examples of weaknesses in an Academic Unit might include: lack of administrative or managerial skills and talent, narrow course offerings, poor facilities, weak image among colleagues in the discipline, declining enrollment, no clear direction, and outdated programs.

2. Opportunity Analysis of the Program(s) (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 10)

This section focuses on the external threats and opportunities to the program(s). What are the best ideas that surfaced about future innovation of the program(s) to strengthen the program to meet future direction of the academic field? Is the program(s) preparing students for the new realities in terms of their profession, job market, graduate school or research?

What external threats were identified to the program(s) that might question the sustainability of the program(s) over the long term? How immediate or strong are these threats? Are there ways to minimize the impact on the program(s)?

External Situations (future direction and vision)

- Opportunities – are those situations that offer the Academic Unit pathways to growth, innovation, and program development. Opportunities may include ability to attract new student population, offer innovative new emerging programs in the discipline, new partnerships with high profile partners.
- Threats – are those areas external to the university and Academic Unit that threaten the survival of a program or Academic Unit. Examples of threats include: downturn in the economy in a particular employment sector (e.g. layoff of teachers), less expensive alternative programs, changes in federal or state regulations, other universities that become relatively more attractive, and changing demographics of student population.

PART VII - Program Review Themes for Future Inquiry

Based on the current program review and analysis, discuss future lines of inquiry the Academic Unit may want to pursue for continuous improvement of the program. These may include questions or concerns the Academic Unit would like to pursue or issues on which the Academic Unit wishes to receive guidance from external reviewers, Program Review Committee, Provost or others. Such future lines of inquiry might include a revision to mission, learning outcomes, goals, grant opportunities, revised assessment plan, new degree program, a new academic center, etc. (see page 29 & 30 of these Guidelines for specific examples of lines of inquiry).