

## **Program Review Guidelines and Self-study Template for University and Academic Centers Point Loma Nazarene University**

### **Introduction**

Point Loma Nazarene University is committed to excellence in all aspects of community life supporting the mission of the University including periodic reviews of the academic Centers. The following is an overview of the Program Review process for Centers including guidelines for the self-study. The Program Review process provides a means to monitor the effectiveness of the Center under review and to consider future directions to achieve the overall learning outcomes of the Center and alignment with the mission of the University. All program reviews are ultimately aimed at Center self-improvement and the appropriate allocation of resources.

A Center program review will include a self-study with an analysis of the assessment data provided by students and others served by the Center, as well as employees of the Center under review. In addition, an external peer review is normally required. The size of both the external review team will be determined by the size and complexity of the unit under review. Review teams normally will consist of two to three internal members, and one or two external members. For small Centers, a review team of two, one internal and one external, may be appropriate. Members of review teams should be selected to avoid any conflict of interest.

The review schedule is coordinated by the Provost and the Program Review Committee on a six-year basis and, where possible, will be coordinated with other reviews such as the program review of the academic unit closely associated with the operation of the Center.

The Center Director or Coordinator has the primary responsibility for overseeing the review process. The Center Director will be provided guidance by the Program Review Committee in consultation with the Provost.

### **The Center Self-Study**

The self-study should include an assessment of the mission, organization, resources, policies and procedures, personnel, personnel training, fiscal planning, management, and relationship to other units of the university. Throughout the self-study, the relationship of the unit to the overall mission and vision of the university should be assessed. A central question to be addressed is: *How does this Center directly support the vision, mission and core values of Point Loma Nazarene University?* In addition, evaluation activities should be designed to help the Center find ways to improve their programs, through the identification of the problems and opportunities.

The following is a suggested outline of the Self-Study Report. Given the complexity and diversity of the Centers being reviewed, not every item suggested below will be equally relevant to each Center. In consultation with the Provost and Program Review Committee the Center Director or Coordinator will be responsible for amending this outline in a way that results in an accurate and complete self-study.

It should be noted that the emphasis of the self-study evaluation is focused on quality and efficiency of the services provided by the Center, not on the individuals who provide the services. This should be made clear to all faculty, staff and students participating in the self-study, and in the design of the self-study evaluation instruments, including those targeting constituents who are served by the program. The goal of quality assessment is to promote continuous improvement at all levels of the university by providing the necessary data to guide effective planning and decision-making.

### **Center Program Review Process**

The program review is intended to be an opportunity for reflection on current performance and visioning for the future. The expectation is that all Center stakeholders will be engaged in continuous, ongoing data collection about performance, constituent satisfaction, program effectiveness and learning outcomes success. The program review is the time when stakeholders pause to take an in-depth analysis that most often leads to a major program redesign and/or revision of programs and services.

The program review process is characterized by the following components: (1) a Center self-study with action plan, (2) external reviewers report, (3) Program Review Committees Findings and Recommendations Report, and (4) a signed Memorandum of Understanding.

The Center self-study is the heart of the program review process. This Center Self-Study Template is an outline of the self-study to be used as a suggestive guide not a prescriptive requirement. Each Center is invited to adjust the template in ways that best meet their unique needs.

### **Center Self-Study**

1. Alignment of the Center to the University mission, core values, strategic plan, and learning outcomes. A review of the clarity, power, and appropriateness of the Center's mission, learning outcomes, and planning processes.
2. Effectiveness of the Center programs including assessment plans, services, effectiveness, and community engagement.
3. Capacity and resources currently available including financial, budget, facilities, technology, and personnel.
4. 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. Quality improvement action plan should address gaps in the current performance and specific changes or revisions to improve the program for the future.
7. Themes for future inquiry are interesting questions that the program review identified but beyond the scope of the current program review analysis.

## Point Loma Nazarene University Center Program Review Process

### STEP 1 – Preparation for Program Review

- Review the previous program review action plan and recommendations to assess where the department is in relation to what it intended to accomplish
- Meet with the Program Review Committee for an orientation to the program review guidelines and self study template
- Program Review Committee mentor will be assigned to assist the academic unit
- Submit a proposed program review budget
- Submit a proposed schedule for program review based on the suggested two-year timeline for most academic units (except those with specialized accreditation)

### Step 2 – Program Review Self Study

- Design a self study plan including lines of inquiry based on prior years of assessments
- Self study begins following the self-study template
- Recommendation is sent to the Program Review Committee proposing a list of potential member(s) for an External Review Team (including curriculum vitae, budget and rationale)
- Submit self study with a draft action plan to the Program Review Committee
- Self study with draft action plan is provided to the External Review Team

### Step 3 – External Review Team Visit

- External Review Team visits
- External Review Team reports on its findings and recommendations
- Self study and action plan are revised based on External Review Team recommendations (the Center is invited to comment on those recommendations not incorporated in the revised action plan and on any factual errors made by the Team)

### Step 4 – Program Review Committee Findings and Recommendation Report

- Program Review Committee writes a draft of the Findings and Recommendations Report for Center's review and comments
- Program Review Committee submits revised Findings and Recommendations Report to the Provost

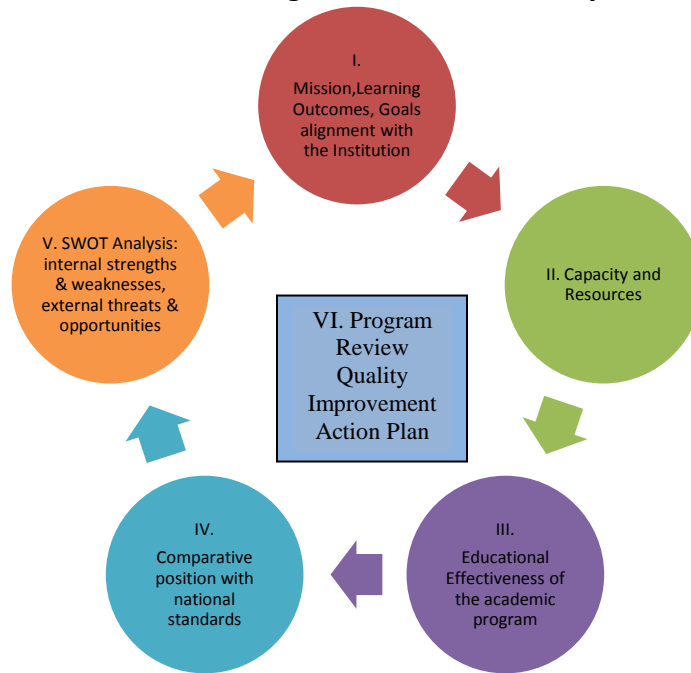
### Step 5 – Memorandum of Understanding

- Provost and Program Review mentor meet with the academic unit to review the recommendations, draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and discuss the Program Review process
- Provost works with the Administrative Cabinet to address any resource implications
- Provost and Center leadership sign a final action plan that contains the MOU for resource allocation, timeline, and program improvement requirements

### Step 6 – Program Review Implementation and Follow-up

- The Center Director provides 1-page Executive Summary to the Academic Council
- The Center Director provides feedback to the PR Committee on the Program Review process

## Academic Program Review Self-Study



### Preparation for the self-study:

#### 1. Center Program Review Schedule Timeline (1-year)

The Center program review process typically takes a year and begins in the fall term and ends no later than the fall term of the following academic year. **The Center Director is expected to draft a schedule timeline for their one-year program review process.** The proposed schedule with timeline will be submitted to the Program Review Committee before the end of the spring semester preceding the fall semester start of the program review. The Program Review Committee will meet with the Center leadership to discuss the review process, the proposed budget and schedule timeline. The Committee will forward to the Provost the proposed schedule timeline and budget with the Committee's recommendations. The schedule and budget both require the approval of the Provost.

#### 2. Program Review Budget

The Center will prepare a proposed budget for the program review process. The budget should include requests for student assistant, expenses related to External Review Team including stipends and travel, costs of additional assessment tools such as surveys, increased administrative costs, travel, meals, and entertainment.

*Program review budget approval process:* consult with the Provost and the Program Review Committee about the program review expense plans. The expense plans are reviewed and approved by the Provost based on the recommendation of the Program Review Committee.

Once the budget is approved the Center can follow the plan. All expenses above the approved budget must have prior approval of the Provost.

### **3. Meet with the Program Review Committee**

The Center leadership will meet with the Program Review Committee Chair in the spring semester prior to the start of the academic year the program review will begin. The Center will present their proposed program review schedule and budget. It is during this meeting the Program Review Committee will review the program review process and Guidelines as well as provide guidance and resources available for a successful review. The Center will have a Program Review Committee mentor assigned to assist them through the process. During this meeting the Program Review Committee will outline the University's expectations, including:

#### **Criteria for Effective Program Review**

- All Center personnel will review and familiarize themselves with the Center Program Review Guidelines and Self-study Template.
- All Center personnel will participate in the program review process and share equally in the overall responsibility in defining issues, analyzing evidence, and formulating plans.
- The self-study is an open and candid assessment of the Center's programs leading to insights for continuous improvement with special attention given to student learning and engagement.
- The self-study is evidenced by rigor and candor leading to an in-depth analysis.
- The Center leadership develops a quality improvement plan that can be resourced, sustained, and implemented and leads to improvements based on the University mission, core values, and learning outcomes.

## **SELF-STUDY TEMPLATE INTRODUCTION (1 page)**

The introduction provides the context for the program review. It is a descriptive overview of the Center's mission, unique aspects, and specific objectives. This section sets the stage for the self-study that follows.

### **1. Name of Center, overview, and programs and services offered**

The program review document should begin with a list of the programs and service offered by the center under review. The overview should orient the reader to your Center, including items such as highlights, unique services, contributions to the curricular and co-curricular programs, and the learning experience of the PLNU student.

## 2. 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 annual assessment plans, program revisions, added support services, etc.

## 3. History, development, and expectations of the Center (Dickeson Model, Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services, Criteria No. 1)

It is important to understand the history of the Center and the evolution of programs and services including a summary of the demand for the Center's programs and services. 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.

This section of the self-study might include the following:

- Why was the Center established?
- What are its academic antecedents?
- How has the Center evolved over the years?
- What were the institution's original expectations?
- How have those expectations changed?
- What were the origins of initial support?
- How has the Center adapted to meet change?
- How has the Center 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

## **PART I – Center Alignment with the University Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Learning Outcomes (1-2 pages, and attachments)**

The focus of this section is on the alignment of the Center to the Institution's vision, mission, core values, and learning outcomes, and will provide a check if the Center has experienced "mission drift." The Nichols text, [A Practitioner's Handbook for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Outcomes Assessment Implementation](#), will assist the academic unit in analyzing the programs alignment with the University mission and core values. Center leadership should also

use this opportunity to review the currency and appropriateness of the Center's mission statement (vision and core values) and how this informs the 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 Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

### **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.

## **PART II – Capacity and Resource for Academic Quality (3 to 5 pages)**

The Capacity and Resource section is a summary overview of the Center’s resources including facilities, revenue, diversity goals, staffing, and budget. This section of the self-study should address the Center’s resource viability and should include: (1) analysis of demand for the Center programs and services, (2) discussion regarding changes in the Center’s mission, objectives and professional standards, (3) resource allocation including staff and faculty, facilities, technology, library support, budget, etc., (4) external funding, grants, and donor support.

- 1. External community demand for the Center’s program(s) and services (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 2)**
- 2. Internal faculty and student demand for the Center (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 3)**
- 3. Size, Scope, and Productivity of the Center’s activities (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 6)**
- 4. Revenue and Other Resources Generated by the Center (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 7)**
- 5. Costs and Other Expenses Associated with the Center (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 8)**
- 6. Quality of Center Inputs and Processes (Dickeson Model, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, Criterion No. 4)**

## **PART III – Educational Effectiveness: analysis of Evidence About Academic Program Quality and Viability (8 to 10 pages)**

The Educational Effectiveness is the core of the program review self-study and focuses on the effectiveness of the Center’s learning outcomes. 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 and are considered the most important aspect of the self-study process,” WASC Resource Guide for ‘Good Practices’ in Academic Program Review, September 2009, page 8.



### **Examples of lines of inquiry:**

- Are the Center's activities growing, shrinking, or maintaining their current size (participation trends over 5 years)?
- Does the Center service a diverse population?
- Is the Center reputable?
- Does the Center serve a unique Institution Mission that is not being met in other venues or programs?
- Are the students learning what is expected (direct data: results from Center assessment, reports from employees, student/ alumni surveys, supported by institutional findings such as NSSE data)
- Are there new programs or services that would be more effective in the future?

In addition, the Center should make a careful self-study of the changes in similar centers, best practices, trends in the field, and an analysis of threats and opportunities.

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

Summarize the status of assessment of student learning and satisfaction with the Center programs. This section should include a discussion of assessment plan and activities. Include a description of actions taken in response to information gained from assessment. Include a discussion of evaluation methods used for each outcome and criteria for success. Provide an overview of the annual assessment results since the last program review and how the annual assessments have evolved and informed the Center for continuous improvement.

#### **2. Student services**

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

### 3. Professional and Community Interactions

Summarize opportunities for student and faculty engagement with external communities as well as the ways the Center enhances external community interactions with students. Comment on ways in which program faculty, students and the various communities they serve interact. In specific, of interest are comments on any programmatic interactions with the off-campus regional community, any related professional communities, and/ or broader academic or faith community.

### 4. Post-Graduation Outcomes and Alumni Satisfaction

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

## PART IV – Comparative Position and National Standards (2 to 3 pages)

Analyze the comparative position of your Center in relation to Centers at other institutions, identifying ways in which your Center can either learn from others or serve as a model for others. This section should include:

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

**Best Practices in the Field:** Identify at least three issues, problems, or challenges your Center 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 Center improvement efforts. Best practices do not have to be drawn from comparator or aspirant universities.

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

## PART V - Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats Analysis (1 to 2 pages)

Summarize the internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities of the Center based on the program review process. Prioritize each based on the future goals of the Center. Discuss the gaps between current and desired performance, resources, academic quality, and Center viability. Identify ways to close or mitigate the gaps in current programs with the existing resources. What improvements could be made with additional resources?

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

This is a summary of the internal Center strengths and weaknesses as well as the benefits to the University for retaining, building or redesigning the Center. What are the identified strengths of the Center? Will these strengths continue into the foreseeable future? How does the Center 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 Center 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?

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

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

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

**PART VI - Quality Improvement Action Plan (6 to 8 pages)**

The final section of the self-study should include an analysis of “gaps” between the desired outcomes and assessment of current performance. This section should shift from analysis to planning for needed Center improvements. The self-study is not required to include specific proposals but should layout a development and implementation plan as the foundation for future proposals.

Describe the changes the Center is planning to address gaps in performance. Describe the rationale for the change based on the program review and the implementation plan including any additional or new resources required.

Be specific in the action plan:

- 1) Identify specific actions to close the gaps in current and desired performance,
- 2) Identify measurable goals or outcomes for specific actions
- 3) Identify measures to provide data on progress toward achieving the goal or outcomes
- 4) Describe data to be collected
- 5) Describe resources needed to achieve goals

<b>Quality Improvement Action Plan</b> Degree Name Department Name <i>(source: adapted from, California State University, Fresno)</i>
<b>Vision, Mission, Core Values:</b> Enter any recommended changes and alignment with Institution.
<b>Specific actions to be taken to achieve desired change (in order of priority):</b>  ➤ <b>Gap:</b> describe the gap in current performance and desired performance followed by action to be taken to improve performance (a single gap may involve more than one action).  ➤ <b>Action 1</b> _____  a. Enter expected outcome and its alignment with the organizational goals and vision b. Enter cost and resource implications c. Enter source of funds/ resources d. Enter benchmark and timeline for action e. Enter communication path/ approval route for action # 1 to be implemented f. Enter requirements and responsibility for implementation

- **Gap:** describe the gap in current performance and desired performance followed by action to be taken to improve performance (a single gap may involve more than one action).
  
- **Action 2** \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Enter expected outcome and its alignment with the organizational goals and vision
  - b. Enter cost and resource implications
  - c. Enter source of funds/ resources
  - d. Enter benchmark and timeline for action
  - e. Enter communication path/ approval route for action # 1 to be implemented
  - f. Enter requirements and responsibility for implementation

**PART VII - Program Review Themes for Future Inquiry (1 to 2 pages)**

Based on the current program review and analysis, discuss any future lines of inquiry the Center wants to pursue for continuous improvement of the program? Such future lines of inquiry might include revision to mission, learning outcomes, goals, grant opportunities, revised assessment plan, etc.

## THE EXTERNAL REVIEW

### **External Review Purpose**

The purpose of the external review is for an independent team of experts, outside the Center and associated academic unit, to read the program review report and provide an objective assessment of the quality and effectiveness of the Center, adequacy of resources, and operations based on the program review self-study and action plan provided by Center. There will be at least one reviewer external to the university providing expertise. Other team members will have administrative or accreditation expertise.

The Center leadership will recommend external team members to the Program Review Committee which will in turn make a recommendation to the Provost who will make the final decisions and approve the external review team. The University will have a Letter of Agreement (LOA) with the External Reviewer outlining the University's expectations with a timeline.

### **External Review Team Guidelines**

In a program review questions may arise regarding Center's effectiveness and quality of the programs and services offered. The external review typically occurs a month or two after the Center submits its self-study report to the Program Review Committee. The Committee will work with the Center leadership, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and the Provost to identify an external review team. The external review team may include individuals from PLNU, but outside the Center and associated academic unit being reviewed, as well as at least one reviewer from outside PLNU. The review team should be comprised of 2 to 4 individuals with appropriate expertise. Recommendations for the proposed members of the external review team are provided by the Center and reviewed by the Program Review Committee which in turn makes a recommendation to the Provost. The Provost will have the final approval regarding the external review team membership.

The Center is expected to make nominations of up to three potential external reviewers, with accompanying curriculum vitae, and rationale for the recommendation. Once the Provost has determined who will be invited to serve on the external review team, the Provost (or designee) will extend the invitation to the review team members. The Center with the assistance of the Office for Institutional Effectiveness will arrange the logistics for the visit, including the delivery of all written materials to the external reviewers, administrative support, assist with travel plans and hotel reservations, payment or reimbursement of expenses, including arrangements with the business office for the external reviewer's stipend (typically \$ 500 to \$ 1000 per person plus expenses).

### **External Reviewers' Tasks:**

The external reviewers will provide insight on programs from the external perspective of the outside expert in program content. The team's written critique, when combined with the Center's self-study and Program Review Committee's analysis will provide a thorough and credible review of the quality and effectiveness of the Center services, resources, and operations. To facilitate the process the reviewers should be asked a series of questions that have surfaced during the self-study and are areas of particular interest to the university.

The External Review Team will be provided a copy of the program review self-study and the Program Review Guidelines well in advance of the Team's interviews with the Center personnel (WASC recommends 30 days prior to scheduled visit). During the interviews the Team will be provided access to key personnel, students, alumni, program coordinators, appropriate administrators, and the Program Review Committee. The Center will provide any additional information requested by the Team and support the team's logistical arrangements.

After the External Review Team's interviews with the department they will be available to meet with the Provost, Program Review Committee and others as indicated by the Provost. The Team is expected to provide the Provost a written report within four to six weeks from the time of the formal on-campus interviews. The academic unit under review will be provided an initial copy of the External Review Team's report and be given the opportunity to write a unit response addressing any factual errors or misperceptions, and if appropriate incorporate the findings or recommendations in a revised report to the Program Review Committee. The revision should include additional specific program changes with an implementation timeline and assessment plan.

<b>Center Program Review External Review Team's Report Template (sample)</b>	
<b>I.</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Provide a brief executive summary of major findings for this Center.</li><li>b. General observations and comments on the Center, effectiveness, learning outcomes, the annual assessment plan, programs and services, facilities and resources.</li><li>c. Summary of responses to questions posed by Center stakeholders.</li></ul>
<b>II.</b>	<b>Commendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Identify those things the Center is doing well</li><li>b. Discuss the programs &amp; services provided that enhance the Mission of the University</li></ul>
<b>III.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Provide comments to guide future direction for the Center. Provide feedback that would improve the Center with specific recommendations. The report should include examples of similar programs at other universities that can be used as exemplars.</li><li>b. Educational effectiveness topics might include: suggestions on any learning outcomes, offer suggestions to improve assessment process, evaluate assessment plan, and evaluate the process for continuous program improvement.</li></ul>