

**OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE
PROGRAM REVIEW**

EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL GUIDE

STUDENT LIFE PROGRAM REVIEW EXTERNAL REVIEWER'S GUIDE

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I. THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY PROFILE

The University's Beginnings

The Ohio State University's roots go back to 1870, when the Ohio General Assembly established the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College. The new college was made possible through the provisions of the Land-Grant Act, signed by President Lincoln on July 2, 1862. This legislation revolutionized the nation's approach to higher education, bringing a college degree within reach of all high school graduates. Classes began at the new college on September 17, 1873. Twenty-four students met at the old Neil farm just two miles north of Columbus. In 1878 the college's name was changed to The Ohio State University. In that same year the first class of six men graduated, and in 1879, the university graduated its first woman.

The Ohio State University Today

The Ohio State University is a world-class public research university and the leading comprehensive teaching and research institution in the state. With more than 60,500 students (Columbus campus enrollment of 53,700), 18 colleges, and 170 majors, the university offers its students tremendous breadth and depth of opportunity in the liberal arts, the sciences, and the professions. One of the university's core values is to "ignite a lifelong love of learning" in students. Ohio State students benefit from a scholarly environment in which research inspires and informs teaching. Reflecting its land-grant heritage of public service, the university has a deep commitment to outreach and engagement that connects the institution and its students to the community, the state, and the nation and brings to life the institution's motto, "Education for citizenship." Ohio State celebrates and learns from its diversity, and values individual differences. Academic freedom is fostered within an environment of civility, tolerance, and mutual respect.

(Note: To learn more about Ohio State the panel members are invited to read the Ohio State Profile 2008 brochure provided as an insert in the front pocket of your review notebook)

II. Overview of the Office of Student Life at The Ohio State University

The Ohio State Office of Student Life is a comprehensive organization encompassing a wide array of programs, services, and facilities that support and enhance the academic enterprise. These offerings are focused primarily on serving students, but include a broad range of responsibilities that directly or indirectly touch the lives of most members of the university community.

Student Life provides a number of basic services that facilitate the daily lives and serve the needs of students and many other members of the university community. More than 10,000 students are housed in our 34 residence halls and over 400 families in Buckeye Village. Campus dining services operate the traditional dining commons, Buckeye Express, Mirror Lake Café, MarketPlace Café, the Wexner Center Café, the "P.A.D." (Pizza at Drake), the Courtside Café, and Juice 2 at the new recreation center, and several Oxley's eateries. University Card Services manages the Buck ID system used both to gain access to buildings, services, privileges and goods throughout campus, and as a debit card system processing over 10 million transactions each year. Facilities Planning and Support Services provides maintenance, housekeeping, and renewal of over 4 million square feet of buildings, furnishings, and utility systems.

A number of student support services, including Counseling & Consultation Services, Student Health Services, Career Connection, Student Advocacy, Disability Services, Student Wellness, Student Judicial

Affairs, Student Housing Legal Clinic, Off Campus Student Services, and the Multicultural Center complement the academic mission of the university by providing programs, services, and facilities that remove barriers to students' success, contribute to students' development and personal well being, and help create a welcoming, just, and culturally diverse environment in which differences are recognized, understood, and appreciated.

The Ohio Union and Student Activities, Recreational Sports, and University Housing offer expansive co-curricular opportunities that extend learning beyond the classroom and that are beneficial to personal growth, such as living-learning communities, community service, and leadership development. The new Center for Student Leadership and Service strives to serve as a comprehensive, centralized, connection point for students, staff, and faculty to leadership and service opportunities on campus. Other areas of involvement include student employment, clubs and organizations, intramurals and recreational sports, and activities and events.

Community involvement is central to our work and includes such outreach activities as extensive participation in ColumbusReads, Race for the Cure, and Special Olympics. The Student Life Development Office fosters and maintains connections with alumni and friends in an effort to enhance the student experience at The Ohio State University.

The Office of Student Life partners with Academic Affairs to promote student learning and development within the overall mission of the university in many ways, including through formal partnerships, classroom participation, and supervision of students in academic-related experiences. Illustrative of the collaboration are the over 100 formal academic partnerships affecting upwards of 37,000 students. Examples include the Student Housing Legal Clinic's partnership with the Moritz College of Law in providing practical legal experience for Law students, and partnership with the College of Human Ecology's Hospitality Management program to provide students with experience in restaurant management at the Viewpoint Bistro. Student Life partners with more than 20 colleges and 10 support units in offering 33 living-learning programs in the residence halls.

Student Life employees annually teach more 50 classes for over 4,000 instructional hours and supervise close to 600 students in credit-earning internships and practicum experiences. In addition, about 450 students gain noncredit experience related to their academic programs or career goals as a result of employment and/or volunteer service in Student Life units.

Another important role of Student Life is providing and interpreting information about student behavior, experiences, expectations, satisfaction, etc. The Student Life Research & Assessment Office serves as a hub of student-centered knowledge that informs learning outcomes assessment in Student Life and The Ohio State University. It conducts assessment work that collects and interprets data to inform practice and understanding of the impact of policies, programs, services, and facilities on student satisfaction, learning and development, and retention and graduation.

Student Life at Ohio State is one of the largest offices of its kind in the nation, employing over 1,000 full time staff and 4,000 part-time student employees and managing a total annual budget of \$194 million, of which \$159 million is generated by earnings and \$35 million is allocated in annual general funds support. Its effective functioning requires an operational infrastructure of experienced central staff who can manage the resources (financial, human, technology, and facilities) used by the various departmental staff and

students, as well as provide other administrative support functions such as communications, special projects, fundraising/development activities, and risk assessment responsibilities.

Student Life Mission, Vision, and Values

Our Mission: We foster student learning and development by providing the highest quality programs and services that enhance students' educational experiences and that prepare students to be contributing members of a diverse society.

Our Vision: We envision a community where all students are inspired to explore their hopes and dreams and to achieve their full human potential through involvement in collaborative, innovative and results-oriented programs and services that exemplify the national hallmarks of Student Life best practices.

Our Guiding Values

Relationships: We place importance on how we work with each other, students, staff, faculty, and community partners to achieve excellence.

Mutual Respect: We acknowledge and appreciate human diversity through our words and actions.

Integrity: We behave honestly, ethically, and respectfully. We assume responsibility for our duties and actions.

Innovation: We aspire to incorporate new ideas, processes and technologies in our work.

Service: We strive to meet the needs of members of the university community, exceed expectations, create memorable experiences and educate.

Our Functions

Student Success: Promote learning and personal development, and academic performance through programs and services that enhance student success.

Wellness: Foster health enhancing behavior and feelings of well being within social, physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and career dimensions.

Diversity: Promote understanding and mutual respect of personal and cultural differences and similarities by building supportive and inclusive communities and celebrating our uniqueness.

Environments of Support: Provide supportive environments where members of the university community may safely learn, meet, live, teach, work, and relax.

Involvement: Foster a sense of community and engage students with the university through programs, services, events, clubs and organizations, employment, community outreach, and leadership opportunities.

Advocacy: Assist students in navigating campus processes and systems and in reducing barriers to their success. Contribute to the university community's understanding of students in and out of the classroom.

Overarching Student Life Goals

The Office of Student Life plays a key role in the University's quest for excellence by assisting in the educational fulfillment and academic success of students and in meeting the institution's need for high quality student-oriented services. The living and learning experiences, professional expertise, programs and services, and facilities Student Life units provide are instrumental in advancing the University's goals. Student Life's commitment to student success and development at Ohio State are reflected in the office's strategic initiatives:

Enhance learning environments

- Foster programs and partnerships that promote seamless and comprehensive learning experiences
- Provide integrated programs and facilities that promote opportunities for students to maximize learning in all of its dimensions
- Collaborate with Academic Affairs to define and measure learning outcomes
- Maintain effective, innovative and creative technology support services for students
- Extend the commitments of caring and support to regional campus learning environments

Provide support for transformational student experiences

- Facilitate transitions into and through the academic progression from enrollment through graduation and early career steps
- Provide opportunities for students to interact, both formally and informally, in effort to foster unique and memorable experiences; encourage students to take advantage of the vast opportunities that only Ohio State can offer
- Remove barriers that impede student success; support student safety and wellness, physical and mental health; provide assistance for those with ability challenges
- Integrate leadership, service, civic responsibility, and global awareness into overall student experience
- Challenge students to reduce high-risk behaviors that impede their progress academically and personally

Promote positive climates of diversity

- Expand beyond a climate of civility to a community of respect, understanding and appreciation of others
- Use living-learning environments to create experiences that embrace diversity
- Reduce barriers to inclusion and full participation in the life of the university

Reinforce resource stewardship

- Manage fiscal resources efficiently and in compliance with regulations

- Demonstrate responsible resource allocation
- Market, promote and develop funding for services and programs that support fundamental goals
- Promote sustainability and energy management

Strengthen staff development and culture

- Develop and implement a comprehensive talent acquisition and staff development program
- Maximize programs that support an effective and diverse work environment
- Engage staff in providing student employees with opportunities that enhance their learning and development

III. INTRODUCTION TO THE EXTERNAL PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

This guide is intended to supplement the information provided in the *Student Life Program Review Guidelines Manual* and contains information specific to the external review panel's role and responsibilities in Program Review. In addition to these written guidelines, the Office of Student Life Program Review Administrator, Mary Daniels (614-292-7418 // daniels.10@osu.edu) is available to answer any questions about the process.

A secured web site is set up for use by the External Review Panel to assist with easy access to program review documents. Login and password information will be shared with Panel members so that they can download materials that relate to the review process for their specific unit. General information about the Student Life Program Review process can be found at <http://www.studentaffairs.osu.edu/programreview/>.

The Ohio State University has instituted a systematic program review process designed to assess the overall organizational effectiveness of all academic support units in the university. These reviews are an important source of external input regarding the strengths and limitations of units and serve as a constructive base for future improvements. Reviews are also a catalyst for units to seek and implement change. These reviews cumulatively inform university-wide priority setting. They are an essential means of communication—within a department, with the Vice President for Student Life, and with the central administration and trustees. Finally, program review is an important mechanism for accountability within the university.

The review process includes a self-study by the unit being reviewed, a comprehensive review by an internal university committee of Ohio State faculty, staff, students, and, where appropriate, community members, and a two or three day site visit by field experts from outside the university. The External Review Panel will write a report, which the University Internal Review Panel will incorporate with its own findings in a final report. The final report will be presented to the Student Life Program Review Administrator for preliminary discussion, and then presented to the Vice President and unit staff for action. The resulting action plan will be forwarded to the Senate Fiscal Central Services Subcommittee for comment. The Vice President for Student Life will approve the action plan and forward it to the Executive Vice President and Provost and other appropriate university administrators for sign-off.

IV. SELECTION OF EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Early in the review process, the members of the unit to be reviewed are asked to recommend individuals to serve as potential outside experts. The units are asked to nominate individuals who lead highly efficient and effective units, provide leadership in the field, and who are recognized for implementing the best practices.

The list of potential external reviewers is reviewed by the program review administrator in the Office of Student Life and staff from other administrative offices involved in the university's program review activities. The Vice President for Student Life will have final approval of the Panel composition.

V. ROLE OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW PANEL

One of the primary strengths of the program review process is the involvement of external reviewers who have a wealth of knowledge about the particular field at issue. The external reviewers are asked to evaluate the unit in its national context and provide insight and feedback on issues and trends particular to the academic support unit being reviewed. In contrast, one of the roles of the Internal Unit Review Panel (who cannot be members of the unit under review) is to filter the external reviewers' expertise through the lens of the peculiarities and uniqueness of the Ohio State environment.

The Internal Unit Review Panel is asked to view the external reviewers report as one factor in their final report, along with the numerous interviews, the self-study report, and other data. The Internal Unit Review Panel is urged to use the external reviewers to answer questions and address issues which it is not qualified to answer (e.g., How do unit operations compare to other operations at similar institutions? How are similar institutions providing efficient and effective unit operations?). The Internal Unit Review Panel is strongly encouraged to discuss these questions and issues with the external reviewers at the beginning of their campus visit.

Because of their expertise in the specific field, members of the unit under study may view the external reviewers with more credibility than the Internal Unit Review Panel and may raise different issues with the external reviewers than with the Internal Unit Review Panel. Thus, the external reviewers should view the list of issues/questions provided by the Internal Unit Review Panel as a guide—members of the unit may raise different, and equally or more important, issues during their meetings.

VI. THE EXTERNAL REVIEW PROCESS

The Internal Unit Review Panel and Mary Daniels, Office of Student Life Program Review Administrator are available to consult with external reviewers on any issue that might arise during the course of the review and to provide assistance or additional information whenever needed.

Background Materials

In preparation for the campus visit the external reviewers are provided with the following information:

- **Campus information**
- Unit's self-study report
- Materials outlining the internal review panel's preliminary findings
- Issues Statement -- an overview of the key issues that have been identified through the unit self-study and internal review process and will serve to guide their site visit activities.

The director of the unit being reviewed is given contact information for the external reviewers in advance of their visit and encouraged to provide additional information or comments directly. In addition, the members of the internal review panel are also advised of the opportunity to contact the external reviewers in advance of the campus visit to highlight key issues and questions.

Travel Arrangements

The Office of Student Life will make hotel reservations and is available to provide assistance in ground transportation arrangements, and will work with reviewers on flight arrangements.

Approximately one month prior to the campus visit, a draft itinerary for the visit, along with hotel and ground transportation reservation numbers, and other pertinent information, will be provided to the external reviewers.

The Campus Visit

The external reviewers' visit is generally scheduled during summer of the review year and is usually two to three days in length but can be extended for particular needs. The external reviewers meet with members of the unit's professional staff, the members of the internal review panel, line administration involved (unit manager and appropriate assistant/associate vice president), and others appropriate to the review.

1. Meeting with the Student Life Program Review Administrator(s)

- A brief orientation session will be scheduled to discuss the campus visit arrangements and to highlight elements of the visit that will better prepare the external review team for their time on campus

2. Meetings with the Internal Unit Review Panel

The external reviewers generally have two opportunities to meet with members of the Internal Review Panel.

- Early on in the visit the Internal Unit Review Panel members will share their perspectives on the issues. The members of the Internal Review Panel may also discuss the questions they have and may highlight areas they would especially like the external reviewers' input on.
- At a wrap-up session on the last day of the external reviewers' visit the external reviewers will debrief the Internal Review Panel and share their initial observations and

recommendations that they will be emphasizing in their final report. Internal panel members may also address follow-up questions to the external reviewers.

3. Meetings with the Unit Professional Staff

- Every effort will be made to permit all professional staff to meet individually or in functional groups with the external reviewers. These meetings are intended to allow the members of the unit to talk about issues on their minds, as well as for the external reviewers to explore the critical issues or questions identified by the internal review panel. Although every attempt is made to schedule the campus visit when all key individuals of the unit will be available, if key individuals are unavailable, the external reviewers may be requested to participate in a conference call with them.
- Every effort will be made to permit the external reviewers to meet with the unit head at the conclusion of the campus visit to answer any additional questions that arose during the visit or clarify any matters of interest to the reviewers. If he/she is unavailable, the external reviewers may be requested to participate in a conference call.

4. Meeting with the Line Associate/Assistant Vice President

- The external reviewers will also meet with the appropriate Associate/Assistant Vice President to become familiar with the overall strategy of the larger organization in which the unit is situated. The priorities of the unit should be coordinated with the priorities and strategies of the larger entity within which it functions.

5. Meetings with other Campus and Community Stakeholders

- As time permits and the unit structure and size will allow, the external reviewers may also meet with individuals who can provide additional information about the unit.

6. Private Meeting(s) among Reviewers

- Generally, the schedule allows for private meeting time for the reviewers toward the end of the visit to prepare for their debriefing sessions with unit staff and the internal review panel and to coordinate their thoughts, discuss the division of labor in drafting a joint report (or begin preparing the report if desired).

External Program Review Report

The external reviewers will be asked to provide a joint written report that assesses the strengths, weaknesses, personnel, overall organizational performance, unit leadership, governance, and improvement opportunities for the unit; the reviewers' perspectives on the issues outlined in the unit's self study, and those highlighted by the Internal Unit Review Panel Preliminary Report. Panel members are also encouraged to attach individual reviewer comments, but this information will not be included as part of the panel's official report. A draft electronic copy of the panel's report will be sent to the Program Review Administrator within two weeks of the site visit and will be reviewed for any factual errors and/or necessary content clarification. The external reviewers' final report is due within four weeks of their campus visit, and will be sent electronically to the Program Review Administrator.

The Internal Unit Review Panel prepares the Support Unit Program Review Final Report using information from the unit self-study, the Internal Unit Review Panel's own findings, and the External Review Panel findings. The Final Report provides an assessment of the unit under review and recommendations regarding future improvements.

VII. AFTER THE CAMPUS SITE VISIT

Follow-up with the External Review Panel

1. Honorarium and Reimbursement

Each external panel member will receive a \$1,500 honorarium upon completion of the report. All travel, lodging, meals and other expenses associated with the review will be reimbursed upon submission of an expense account and receipts. Well in advance of the campus visit reviewers will be asked to supply their social security number and contact information in order to process the payments. Further information and forms will be supplied by the Office of Student Life and any questions regarding payment should be directed to Mary Daniels, Program Review Administrator.

2. Evaluation

Evaluation forms are provided to the external reviewers along with their honorarium and reimbursement check. These evaluations are intended to assess the quality of the process (sufficient and adequate breadth and depth of meetings to provide meaningful insight for assessment) as well as satisfaction with the review logistics (timely receipt of materials and other information, satisfactory accommodations, etc.). The Office of Student Life greatly appreciates candor in this feedback so that it may improve the review process.

Preparing the final Unit Program Review Report

The review process is not complete when the external reviewers have submitted their report. The Internal Unit Review Panel prepares the final Unit Program Review Report using information from the Unit Self-study Report, the Internal Unit Review Panel's own findings, and the External Unit Review Panel findings. The report provides a concise assessment of the unit under review and recommendations regarding future improvements.

The final Unit Program Review Report will include the following elements:

- **Evaluation of Mission and Key Goals:** Briefly assess the degree to which the unit's mission statement and key goals support the University's Academic plan and Student Life goals and strategic initiatives. Evaluate the unit's success in achieving its mission and key goals.
- **Customer Perception of Unit:** Summarize customer feedback regarding services provided and the quality of these services as obtained through customer surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups. Discuss additional services customers would like to receive from this unit, as well as any services that customers believe could be discontinued. Provide the unit's perspective on their customers' perceptions.

- **Use of Successful Organizational Practices:** Assess the effectiveness of the unit's processes and capacity for building and sustaining performance excellence.
- **Evaluation of Resource Usage:** Provide commentary on the appropriateness of resource allocations and use given the unit's mission and role in fulfilling the University's Academic Plan and Student Life goals and strategic initiatives. Consider financial, human, space and equipment, and technology support in this commentary.
- **Measuring of Performance Results:** Address how successful the unit is in determining intended student learning and development outcomes and/ or specific business and service outcomes, user satisfaction, financial performance, and other noteworthy performance results related to organizational effectiveness. Discuss the relevance of key performance measures the unit uses to track results.
- **Recommendations:** Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the unit. Discuss the key program/service, operational, resource, and campus/community environment challenges the unit faces. Provide concrete suggestions for improvement including ways to build upon current strengths, overcome weaknesses, and increase effectiveness and efficiency. Offer specific strategies for addressing the key challenges affecting the unit. Recommend budget adjustments, providing the appropriate rationale.

Implementing and tracking review findings and recommendations

The final Unit Program Review Report, with the External Review Report attached as an addendum, will be presented to the Special Assistant for Student Life/Program Review Administrator for preliminary read, and then to the Vice President for Student Life and unit staff to verify, discuss, and clarify issues raised in the Support Unit Program Review Report.

The recommendations contained in this report form the basis of a unit action plan that speaks to the findings and recommendations presented in the final unit report. This plan serves as the basis for an implementation agreement that is developed through meetings with the Vice President responsible for the unit(s) under review and the Senate Fiscal Committee, the Executive Vice President and Provost. These meetings also offer an opportunity to respond to any matters raised in the external or internal reports. Beginning one year after the implementation agreement is finalized, the Office of Student Life will provide the Executive Vice President and Provost with annual updates on the progress of the unit action plan.

Information gathered in this guide compiled from:

- 2008 Ohio State Profile brochure
- 2009 Student Life Strategic Plan
- OSU Academic Support Units External Reviewer's Guide