

OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE
PROGRAM REVIEW

INTERNAL REVIEW PANEL GUIDE

**Office of Student Life Program Review
Internal Reviewer Panel Guide**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction.....	3
II.	Role & Responsibilities.....	3
III.	Internal Review Process	4
VI.	Guidelines for the Support Unit Program Review Report.....	5
IV.	Internal Review Panel Q& A Fact Sheet	6

I. INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to supplement the information provided in the *Student Life Program Review Manual* and contains information specific to the internal review panel's role and responsibilities in Program Review. In addition to these written guidelines, the Office of Student Life is always available to answer any questions about the process.

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 committee of Ohio State faculty, staff, students, and where appropriate community members, and a 2-3 day site visit by distinguished field experts from outside the university. The external review panel will write a report, and the Internal Review Panel, incorporating its own findings with those of the external reviewers, will compose a final report. The final report will be presented to the Special Assistant for 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.

II. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES of the INTERNAL REVIEW PANEL

Internal Review Panel

The University Internal Review Panel will be comprised of 5-8 people, including faculty, administrators, and students. A Chair of the Internal Unit Review Panel will be designated. Generally, the Panel will conduct its review based on the unit's self-study report. From the information presented in the self-study the Panel will determine areas/issues that they deem important to look at further. This process may include conducting interviews or focus groups with a variety of individuals who interface with the unit and/or the gathering of additional data to better inform its work. The Student Life Program Review Administrator and central office staff will assist the Panel in arranging meetings. The unit under review is available to assist with the gathering of additional data requested by the Internal Review Panel. Primary responsibilities of the Internal Unit Review Panel include:

- Reading and evaluating materials submitted by the unit, including the self-study, organizational chart, previous annual budget reports, and strategic plans, etc., and using this information to identify areas of inquiry that will guide their review activities;
- Interviewing staff from the unit under review, as well as customers and other key individuals who have contact with and/or affect the work/performance of the unit;
- Attending scheduled internal review panel meetings;

- Drafting a preliminary findings and recommendations report for use by the external review team;
- Meeting with the External Review Panel during their site visit -- members of the Internal Review Panel may contact external reviewers in advance of the campus visit to highlight key issues and questions and to use their expertise in conducting their review activities; and
- Preparing the Unit Program Review Report – concise assessment of the unit and recommendations for future improvement.

III. INTERNAL REVIEW PROCESS

In preparation for the review, the internal reviewers will meet with the Student Life Program Review Administrator to plan for review of the unit. During the orientation, the Panel members are provided with the following materials:

- Student Life Program Review Manual
- Internal Review Panel Guide
- Secured website information
- Names and information of the external reviewers
- Unit Self-Study Report, along with supporting documentation

Upon completion of the unit self-study, the self-study report, along with supporting documentation, will be provided to the Internal Review Panel. The unit self-study becomes the basis for the next steps of the review. The Panel carefully reads the self-study and determines areas of inquiry that will be considered further. Panel members will meet with unit staff, department head, and other individuals or groups (students, faculty, staff, and community representatives) that they believe can provide valuable perspective and key information related for the review. During the internal review panel members are encouraged to have contact with the External Review Panel members to make use of their expertise in conducting their review.

A secured web site is set-up for use by the 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 Program Review process within Student Life can be found at <http://www.studentlife.osu.edu/programreview/>.

The unit and other central Student Life staff are available to assist the Internal Review Panel, including providing the Panel with staff/customer/student contact information (email, phone numbers, etc.), gathering additional data to support the review, and arranging meetings, if requested by the Internal Unit Review Panel to do so.

At the conclusion of the Internal Review Panel's review activities, the Panel will draft a preliminary findings and recommendations report to help inform the External Review Panel in preparation for their site visit. The Internal Review Panel will also meet with the External Review Panel as part of its site visit. After the External Review Panel completes its visit it will prepare a findings and recommendations report that will be used by the Internal Review Panel in their preparation of the final Unit Program Review Report.

IV. GUIDELINES FOR THE UNIT PROGRAM REVIEW 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 should be 12-15 pages in length and provide a concise assessment of the unit under review and recommendations regarding future improvements.

The 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.

To avoid any factual errors in the final report, the Chair of the Internal Review Panel will share the Unit Program Review Report with the unit director. If factual errors are discovered they are corrected prior to submitting the report. The unit director is advised not to discuss the report since it has not yet been distributed to anyone.

The Unit Program Review final 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 discussion, and then 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. INTERNAL REVIEW PANEL Q & A

What is Program Review? Program review is a process using organizational performance measures that will give units the opportunity to:

- 1) Examine current programming, services, directions, and organizational efficiency and resource capabilities
- 2) Validate strengths;
- 3) Identify opportunities for improvement; and
- 4) Achieve high-level performance results.

When did OSU begin doing program reviews? Although program review has been used periodically in past years, most recently, program review at The Ohio State University was introduced in the Fall 2003 following the recommendations of the Ad hoc Support Units Committee, also known as the Hoffsis Report. At the same time the Office of Student Life instituted program review as a continuous improvement strategy in their 2003-2007 Strategic Plan. This joint interest in using program review as an improvement strategy led to the integration of efforts in 2004 and the review process being used today

What performance measures form the basis for Student Affairs Program Review? The Northwestern University program review procedures, the Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence, and the Council on the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education review criteria were used to develop measurement criteria for evaluating organizational performance in Student Life units. To ensure that these performance measures address institutional expectations and priorities that have been outlined in key university documents (Student Life Mission Statement, Student Life Strategic Plan 2003-2007, The Academic Plan, The Diversity Plan, The Leadership Agenda 2003, and the State of the University Address 2004), an analysis of these important documents was conducted using NUD*IST. This analysis confirmed that the criteria used to structure reviews did a thorough job of addressing institutional priorities and themes.

In addition to the performance criteria set forth in the self-study tool, each unit under review is also encouraged to identify other specific topics/questions relevant to their operation they want to have included in the review agenda.

How is an Internal Unit Review Panel formed? For each unit review, the unit under review, Student Life central administration, and the Office of Institutional Research and Planning develops a pool of names of prospective panel members. This list includes faculty, staff and students, and where applicable community members. The list is circulated to the Vice President for Student Life, Assistant Vice President responsible for the unit under review, and to the university's Office of Institutional Research and Planning, so that any concerns may be addressed. From this list of approved names the Office of Student Life then selects 5-8 individuals to serve as members of the Internal Unit Review Panel.

Can anyone be on the Internal Unit Review Panel? No. A unit under review cannot have unit staff serve as reviewers on its internal panel. In most situations, staff from Student Life will not serve on an Internal Review Panel.

What activities are involved in the internal review process? The Internal Review Panel will conduct its review based on the unit's self-study report. The information presented in the unit self-study will help the Internal Review Panel identify areas they want/need to look into further. Interviews or focus groups with customers of the unit under review and/or staff members from the unit itself will be used to gather information related to these topics. Findings from their work will be shared with the External Review Panel to inform them in their review. The External Panel's will submit a report highlighting their findings and recommendations and the conclusion of their site visit.

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 should be 10-14 pages in length and provide a concise assessment of the unit under review and recommendations regarding future improvements.

Are there other reviewers involved in the unit program review? Yes. The Office of Student Life will choose experts in the field that are credible to both the unit and the administration to serve on the External Review Panel. They will evaluate the unit in its national context and provide insight and feedback on issues and trends particular to the unit being reviewed.

What happens after the report is finished? Once the Internal Review Panel completes the final Unit Program Review Report it will be forwarded to the Special Assistant to the Vice President responsible for program review, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning, and the Vice President of Student Affairs. The Internal Review Panel will also be required to submit the report electronically to the Office of Student Life. The Vice President will meet with the unit(s) under review to verify, discuss, and clarify issues raised in the Program Review Report.

Who makes sure units adhere to the recommendations of the reviewers? Following consultation with the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Office of Institutional Research & Planning, a Plan of Action will be developed, including any budget adjustments, based on matters raised in the external or internal reports. One year after that implementation agreement is finalized, the Vice President will evaluate the Program Review Update with regard to the unit's annual progress in implementing the Plan of Action.

Specific Questions About the Panel's Activities:

Who coordinates the internal panel meeting times? The Internal Panel will decide what is the best time to meet according to their schedules and the Program Review Administrator will arrange the meetings.

Will I be sent a reminder of meeting dates and times? Yes. The Program Review Administrator from the Office of Student Life will notify the members of the Internal Review Panel via email of dates, times and locations.

What should be discussed at the internal review meetings? Meetings of the Internal Review Panel should focus on questions that arise from the self-study. These discussions however can also be used to identify questions or areas of inquiry that are more suited for the External Review Panel to explore.

Will the Internal Panel interact with the External Panel? Yes. The Internal Review Panel is urged to use the External Reviewers to answer questions and address issues that it may not be able 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 Review Panel is strongly encouraged to discuss these questions and issues with the External Reviewers at the beginning of their campus visit.

What about the time commitment? Program review will require a commitment of time and effort from all involved. Meeting times depend on the Internal Review Panel as a whole and how much work needs to be done. The work of the Internal Review Panel is heaviest during spring quarter.

If I miss a meeting, how will I know what has happened? Meeting notes will be the responsibility of the review panel. A secured web site is available for dissemination of information among panel members. It is also a good idea to take your own personal notes when you attend.

Who will I be working with? Faculty, staff and students from all parts of the university campus will participate on the Panel. This interaction will allow input from the academic and administrative sides of the university, as well as a chance for both to better appreciate the strengths, weaknesses and needs of the support unit of the University.

Who is responsible for collecting & compiling data? The Program Review Administrator and the unit under review are available to assist in gathering data to support the review.

Who will run internal review panel meetings? A chair will be designated and asked to run the meetings.

Do I need to have knowledge in the area(s) being reviewed? No. Members are not expected to have expertise in the area being reviewed.

Who do I contact for more information? Mary Daniels, the Special Assistant to the Vice President who oversees Program Review within the Office of Student Life will be available to assist the Internal Unit Review Panel. Mary Daniels can be reached at (614) 292-7418 or via e-mail at mdaniels@studentaffairs.osu.edu.