Appendix B: Guidelines for Preparation of a Self-Study Report For Academic Program Review

Introduction:

The self-study report of an academic program describes the academic program using a common set of institutionally determined standards and criteria. The self-study report, together with external reviewer's input, identifies the program's strengths, challenges and opportunities, and provides a basis for informed decision making about future directions. The report is structured around the APR standards and criteria and agreed-upon unit-specific indicators, and should be built upon evidence that clearly indicates how the criteria are being met.

Guidelines for Writing the Self-Study Report

The self-study report is prepared by the responsible faculty and department chairperson or director of the program under review. The report should include relevant data supplied by the Office of Institutional Research (enrollments, FTE ratios, performance of graduates, etc.). The report is expected to provide a review of these data, along with other information collected through program-based assessment and other review processes. The program should utilize these data to explain its status with respect to the standards and criteria included in these guidelines. Evaluation data from existing reviews of the program such as accreditation reports, and any program changes made in response to accreditation reviews, should be incorporated into the self-study report wherever appropriate.

The main body of the report is divided into five sections, and should be approximately fifteen pages in total. Appropriate appendices comprise a sixth section and should be attached to the main body of the report:

- Section One: General Information
- Section Two: Introduction/Overview
- Section Three: Standards and Criteria
- Section Four: Analysis
- Section Five: Summary and Prospective
- Section Six: Appendices

The first two sections of the report provide general information and an executive summary. Sections Two and Three review data for each of the APR standards, and are followed by an analysis of the data in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 comprises an integrative Summary and Prospective that specifically identifies program strengths, challenges and opportunities, and poses future plans and directions for improvement. Each of these sections is described more fully below.

Section One: General Information

The General Information section provides factual data about the program, including name of the program, program type, college or school in which the program is located, name of the chairperson/director of the program, name of the dean of the academic unit, names of faculty writing the report, and date of the report. The process used to develop the report and the participation of different constituencies in its formulation should be described.

Section Two: Introduction/Overview

The Introduction/Overview section establishes the background and context for the review. It should include a brief history of the program, a brief description of its present status, the goals and mission of its graduate and undergraduate programs, unique and distinguishing characteristics, and links with other units such as joint faculty appointments, cross-listed courses, shared undergraduate and graduate service courses, and research collaborations.

Section Three: Standards and Criteria

In this section the program provides data for each standard and criterion. The standards are:
  I)   Contribution to Mission
  II)   Program Quality
  III)   Demand
  IV)   Societal Need
  V)   Quality Control Mechanisms; and
  VI)   Efficiency

In addressing Standard I, *Contribution to Mission*, the program should identify courses it offers that contribute to the University's General Education program.

The assessment of student learning outcomes is one of several items under Standard V, Criterion 5c and it requires special attention. To address this part of the standards, the program needs to:
  a) state its learning outcomes for students in the program and outline the methods and processes for assessing those outcomes. In addition to listing current learning outcomes and indicating the website where they are posted, all programs must provide an updated version of NECHE form E1A or, in the case of an externally accredited program, form E1B. Both forms are posted on the Assessment Website.
  b) describe its long-term, cyclical plan and processes for assessing these learning outcomes.
      i.   Non-accredited programs should utilize the assessment plan template posted on the Assessment Website to outline their cyclical assessment plan. If the department has a current assessment plan, this can be attached; if it does not,

       training and consultations are available to support the program as it develops the plan.

ii.   Externally accredited programs do not need to fill out an assessment plan form. NECHE form E1B should be filled out with clear reference to the indicators of program success and areas of remediation identified by the external accreditors.

The completed forms should be included as an Appendix.

Note that additional consultation contacts, resources, and support services are posted on the Assessment Website. All programs preparing for Academic Program Review are encouraged to consult with their school or college's Assessment Coordinator and the Provost's Office.

Where possible, direct assessment of student work should be included in the evaluation of student achievement of program outcomes along with indirect assessments. Direct assessments are those that evaluate student work as evidence of achievement of learning outcomes. In most cases these evaluations will be conducted by program faculty and/or staff (where appropriate). However, some direct measures may be completed by people outside the program. These include students' performance on the licensure exams for which a program prepares them, or direct evaluation of student/graduate performance by employers or internship supervisors using criteria supplied by the program.

In addition to direct assessment of student work, indirect indicators of program outcomes should also be presented. These indicators may include student self-evaluations; interviews, surveys or focus groups of majors; interview, survey or focus group data on alumni satisfaction with the program; interview, survey or focus group data on employer satisfaction with program graduates' performance; post-doctoral placement of graduate students; academic or professional achievements of program graduates; job placement and career progression; and creative works, publications, and grant awards by program students and graduates. Program faculty can also include other data they deem indicative of student outcomes, etc.

Section Four: Analysis

This section should present the main findings of the self-study including an analysis of the extent to which the program meets each standard. Data from direct and indirect assessment[1] of student achievement of program learning outcomes must be included in this analysis, as well as any planned or in-process responses to assessment data. Other regular internal review and evaluation processes, such as departmental reports and retreats, can also provide useful data and examples to demonstrate how well the program is meetings the standards. The meaning, implications, and any departmental response to the findings should be explained.

Section Five: Summary and Prospective

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[1] See Standard 5c for an explanation of direct and indirect assessment.

The Summary and Prospective should present a vision for the program grounded in the program's strategic goals. It should also present a balanced assessment of the program's strengths, challenges and opportunities as well as directions for the future as informed by the findings. The discussion should include scholarly directions, research plans, curricular or degree program changes, and plans for maintaining and enhancing excellence and diversity of faculty and students over the next eight years. Given the persistence of budgetary constraints, the discussion should include ways in which the unit can be strengthened without receiving additional internal resources.

<u>Section Six: Appendices</u>

Supporting data and materials may be appended to the main body of the report.
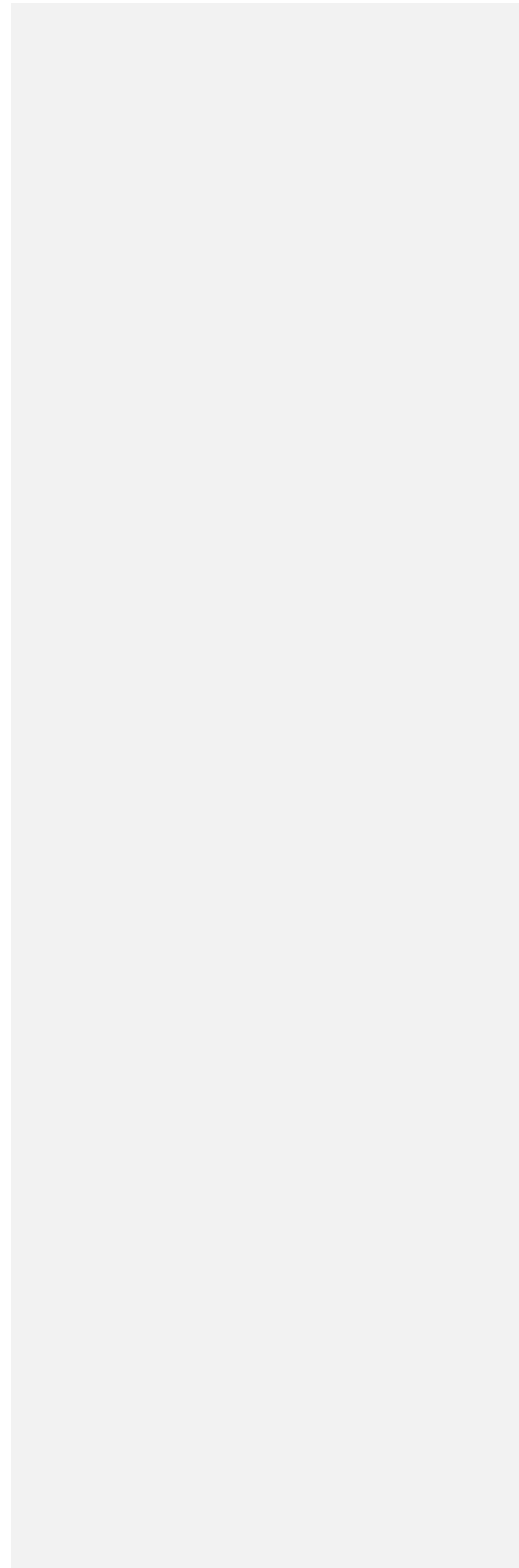
Appendix C: Standards and Criteria for Academic Program Review
Approved by the University of Vermont Faculty Senate mm/dd/yyyy

Standard I: The program has a clear and publicly stated purpose that contributes to the mission of the University.

Criterion 1: The program ***contributes to the mission*** of the University, the College/School, and department by:

a) Having an active strategic plan that is aligned with the vision, mission, and strategic plan of the University.

b) Supporting research and creative activities that generate new knowledge and understanding and enrich the intellectual environment for students, staff, and faculty.

c) Engaging in relevant application of new knowledge to contemporary problems through teaching, scholarship, creative activities, and service and outreach.

d) Preparing students for productive, responsible, and creative lives.

e) Encouraging students to use their knowledge and skills for the benefit of society.

f) Promoting global perspective and appreciation of cultural and intellectual diversity.

f)g) Reflects university priorities for diversity and inclusion in the faculty and student bodies.

g)h) Fostering an enduring commitment to learning.

h)i) Fostering the qualities of respect, integrity, innovation, openness, justice, and responsibility accountability, and leadership as expressed in *Our Common Ground*.

i)j) Additional unit-specific indicators.

Standard II: The program is of high quality

Criterion 2: The ***program quality*** is evidenced by:

a) Faculty - The Program faculty are qualified to teach the curriculum, as indicated by earned academic degrees and professional certifications. The program invests in the professional and scholarly development of its faculty, including the mentoring and guidance of junior faculty members through the RPT process.

b) Resources - The program has adequate faculty, support staff, library resources, equipment, and facilities to accomplish its purpose.

c) Reputation – The program is well regarded, as evidenced by external rankings and

assessments by external reviewers of students, faculty, resources, and productivity. The program attracts and retains excellent students as evidenced by admission qualifications, performance on standardized examinations, etc.

d) Faculty performance – Faculty demonstrate effectiveness in teaching and student advising, scholarship, and service, as evidenced by evaluations, awards, honors, grants, research contributions, publications, citations, and service endeavors.

e) Student performance – The program assesses student mastery of learning outcomes Students demonstrate mastery of knowledge by means of direct and indirect formative and summative assessments, performance in the field, professional achievements, and performance on professional licensure exams. Program graduates succeed in finding jobs and progress well in their chosen careers; alumni are satisfied with the program. Undergraduate and graduate students produce creative works, publications, and receive grant awards. Graduate students are awarded post-doctoral fellowships.

f) Benchmarks – The program reflects "best practices" and compares well to relevant performance standards from comparable institutions and/or accrediting agencies and/or other authoritative sources. The program demonstrates leadership in its performances relative to appropriate external benchmarks.

g) Advising – Program faculty provide excellent academic advising, per student evaluations and other appropriate indicators.

h) Extramural Funding (for programs where such funding is critical) – Success in attracting extramural funding that contributes to the Program's long-term stability.

Standard III: There is demand for the program.

Criterion 3. There is *demand* for the program as evidenced by:

a) external demand based on local, regional, national, and global trends and forecasts for persons with particular types and level of education.

b) internal demand as reflected by both student enrollment in the program and the scope of service teaching for students from other programs.

Standard IV: The program provides graduates who contribute to social institutions.

Criterion 4: *Societal need* for the program is reflected by:

a) evidence for private, public and/or not-for-profit sector needs for persons with particular knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values required to make social institutions work.

b) evidence of the need at national, state, and local levels for persons who can be informed and responsible citizens.

Standard V: The program uses an identified plan for systematic evaluation and assessment of goals and purposes.

Criterion 5: The program has *quality control processes* that are used:

a) to evaluate how well the program is achieving its strategic goals.

b) to monitor on an ongoing basis, the design and delivery of the curriculum/curricula as informed by student outcomes.

c) for ongoing evaluation of clearly stated student outcomes. This includes but is not limited to direct and indirect formative and summative assessments of student learning at the course level. As appropriate, other outcomes should include academic or professional achievements; job placement and career progression; alumni satisfaction with the program; employer satisfaction with program graduates' performance; graduates' performance on professional licensure exams; post-doctoral placement of graduate students; publications, grant awards, and creative works of undergraduate and graduate students, etc. The program should have has a sustainable cyclical n assessment plan in place to evaluate on a regular basis students' achievement of each program outcome on a regular basis, as well as a process for using assessment data to inform make specific changes that are intended to improve with the goal of improving student outcomes.

> **Commented [Office1]:** The terms formative and summative have been replaced with *direct* and *indirect* to be consistent with the terminology used by NECHE.

> **Commented [BR2]:** This text has been moved into the Guidelines because it is interpretive in nature. It does not describe a standard or criterion; rather it explains how the criterion can be met.

d) to monitor the quality of student advising.

e) to utilize data gathered in 5b-d to determine needed changes in tactics, policies, curriculum, and course contents.

f) To plan and implement the self-determined changes in a timely manner.

Standard VI: The program accomplishes effectively its educational and related purposes

Criterion 6: The *effectiveness* of the program is reflected by:

a) improvements in the design and delivery of the curriculum based on assessment s of new knowledge in the discipline, of student achievement of program learning outcomes, new knowledge in the discipline, societal need, and demand for the program.

b) measures to maintain or improve high quality student advising, including career preparation advising.

> **Commented [LA3]:** suggested change = "which can include career preparation advising"

c) programmatic features that foster an appreciation of cultural and intellectual diversity.

d) linkages with other programs, including articulation agreements, co-sponsored academic majors, minors, or concentrations, joint appointments of faculty members, cross-listed courses, student internships, practica, or field-based projects with organizations outside the University, resources shared with other academic units, dual degrees, and 3-2, 4-1, or other undergraduate + graduate degree arrangements.

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