External Review Process

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Each department in the Moody College of Communication will be reviewed on a regular basis through a process that calls for a self-study and external review team assessment. The general guidelines for the self-study and external review team are contained in this document and set forth by the College of Communication Dean's Office. Each department in the College may choose to add specific questions to be addressed in either the self-study or by the review team to this document.

This review process is established by the College of Communication as a mechanism to review and evaluate the departmental unit's strategies and goals for enhancing its position as one of the programs in the country. The College of Communication at The University of Texas has established as its goal to be the College of Communication that defines communication education in the 21st century. Each department level-program in the college is asked to establish its specific goals and strategies for contributing to the College's mission.

Unit reviews typically will occur every six years and will follow the following procedures:

The Dean, Associate Dean and Department Chair or Director will discuss the timing for a review.

In the semester before an external review team is invited to campus, the unit will conduct a self-study.

The unit will recommend up to six external reviewers to the Dean's Office and the Dean's Office will identify at least three external reviewers to visit the campus the following semester (the Dean's Office may add names to the reviewer list in consultation with the unit head (Chair or Director).

Typically, the Dean's Office will arrange the external review visit and in consultation with the unit head will outline the itinerary for the external review visit.

A report from the external review committee will be sent to the Dean who will share it with the unit head and faculty who will have the opportunity to respond to the review.

Any follow up from the review process will be proposed by the unit head or Dean and negotiated with other university administrators as needed.

The self-study and the external review are intended to help both the Department and the Dean's Office gauge the progress of a unit toward meeting its goals by assessing the quality of the program, its faculty, curriculum, students and administration, and assessing the unit's contribution to the advancement of the College's overall mission.

Self Study

The unit self study should identify the departmental-level goals and mission and their relationship to the College as a whole. Evaluation and evidence of the quality of the faculty (including their research productivity, standards for tenure, diversity of faculty, external funding, teaching ability, and service contributions), the quality of the undergraduate and graduate student body (as assessed by selection criteria for admission, awards or performance while enrolled as students, graduation rates, retention information, and measures of diversity), the excellence of the curriculum (including descriptions of the tracks or specializations available in the graduate and undergraduate programs; adequacy of the degree requirements at both the graduate and undergraduate levels; innovations in the use of technology or other pedagogy in the curriculum, and assessment of any outcome measures –such as placement of undergraduate and graduate students after graduation), the available unit resources (funding for graduate students, faculty travel and operations budget, teaching monies, investment funds within the unit, space and equipment available), and assessment of the quality of the unit's administration and faculty and student governance.

The Department or unit can add to this list any specific evaluations it chooses.

External Review

The external reviewers will be provided with the departmental self-study and asked to address the following questions:

What is the overall excellence of this department relative to other peer departments at research universities? How do you evaluate this department as a whole--its strengths and its weaknesses? How well is it meeting its department goals? How well is it contributing to the larger goal of maintaining a college of communication that is in the forefront of defining communication education?

How do you evaluate the faculty of this department? What is its national or international stature? Does the faculty cover the discipline well? How well are they performing in acquiring external funds for research? What is the quality of teaching in the department? Are policies for promotion and tenure reasonable? Well-understood? Are junior faculty adequately mentored? Is the faculty diverse and committed to actively recruiting women and minorities?

Is the department well administered? What is the leadership quality of the department chair? Are there adequate mechanisms for faculty governance? Are student and staff concerns adequately taken into account in the administration of the department?

What is the quality of the undergraduate program? Students? Admissions procedures? How would you evaluate the quality of the education students are receiving across the various areas of the program? What is the quality of teaching? What evidence of innovation in teaching methods or course or curricular content is there? Is technology used effectively to enhance the learning environment? How would you assess placement of the students after graduation?

What is the quality of the graduate program? What is the quality of the graduate students? Are the selection criteria appropriate to ensure a high quality of students? How do they compare with students at other peer institutions? How well are students supported financially via teaching assistantships or research assistantships? Are the degree requirements appropriate to the goals of the program? Are students progressing towards a degree in a timely manner? How would you assess the quality of the student’s placement after graduation?

Is the department receiving adequate resources (space, technology, money, and personnel) to meet its mission and to ensure overall excellence?