

Departmental Program Review Overview

Student Affairs at the University of South Florida is committed to a comprehensive program review and evaluation process as part of a larger emphasis on planning and assessment. Program review gives an opportunity for departments to thoroughly assess programs and services in the context of nationally accepted guidelines, standards, and benchmarks.

The components of the Departmental Program Review consists of:

- Departmental self-assessment
- Internal review
- External review
- Development of Action Plan
- Review of Action Plan

Projected Timeline:

Action	Target Date
Departmental Self-Assessment	Summer
Internal Review	Fall
External Review	Spring

Student Affairs departments will complete a program review once during a five year cycle. The Student Affairs Planning & Assessment Team will provide oversight and training as needed to the departments assigned for a program review in that year. All final departmental external review reports and action plans will be submitted to the Vice President and the appropriate Assistant Vice President.

Departmental Self-Assessment

Departmental Self Assessments will be conducted in accordance with the Council for the Advancement (CAS) Self-Assessment Guides (SAGs). “Users of the SAG will gain informed perspectives on strengths and weakness or deficiencies of the program and services. Student Affairs staff members benefit from having a common language and purpose for reflection. This leads to and encourages planning for future improvement” (Carretta, 2008). If a department does not ascribe to specific CAS standards to identify relevant professional standards by which a meaningful self-assessment can be conducted, comparable standards from other similar organizations will be researched and utilized.

Departments should initiate the Self Study and will receive instructions on this process. The most current SAG’s will be distributed to departments during the assigned review year as the CAS standards are periodically updated.

The departmental self-review will be conducted by the director working through the CAS standards for the department with staff. A preliminary review with ratings, comments and suggestions for improvement will be prepared. This review will be shared with the internal and external review teams. Concurrently with the departmental review, documents to support the

case made by the departmental review team will be collected and placed on display for use by the internal and external review teams. A list of suggested documents, reports and/or office publications that are recommended for posting will be provided.

Internal Review Process

The Director will establish and prepare the Internal Review Team. The director will determine the composition of the review team, with a designated leader of the team. The following is a suggested composition:

- At least two members should be external users of the department
- A Student Affairs leader outside of the department
- A USF faculty as appropriate
- One or two students as appropriate

The department's staff can be involved in the process. It is recommended that the director appoint a scribe to take notes at the meetings of the Internal Review Team. The scribe may be a member of the department. Please take the following into consideration for the Internal Review Team:

- Compile and review documentary and evaluative evidence for the Internal Review.
- Departments may be asked to review departmental data, host focus groups with constituents, review publications, websites, and other materials.
- Both qualitative and quantitative data will be important to this process. A summary of the findings of the internal review team as well as access to documents to support the results should be available to be shared with the External Review Team.

External Review Process

The External Review Team will be convened to review the work of the previous groups, documents and whatever other information or materials they deem necessary to complete the external review.

The External Review team should include three professionals with extensive experience in the functional area. Criteria to consider when selecting external reviewers include:

- Director level or above
- Employment at a public institution with 20,000 + students
- Employment at a metropolitan university
- Diversity of the team should to be considered
- A peer from a public institution in the state of Florida should also be considered

The names and brief biographical information (name of institution/organization, title, and work history) about the external reviewers should be forwarded to the Vice President for Student Affairs for approval of the review team prior to contacting the reviewers. Once approved, departments will then make contact with the reviewers and coordinate the review schedule for the spring semester. In keeping with the sample schedule provided for departments during the annual training, departments will be responsible for coordinating the

review schedule. Payment to the external reviewers will be managed by SASSC through our contracting process.

Each department will be allowed up to \$6,000 for the external review. The review will be funded by Strategic Initiatives. Departments which exceed this budget will pay the overages from their individual departmental budgets.

A sample budget might be:

- \$2,000 for lead reviewer
- \$1,000 each for the other two reviewers
- \$2,500 for travel, lodging, and miscellaneous expenses for reviewers

The external review team should submit a preliminary report based upon the CAS (or other related standards if CAS is not available for a particular department) and their experiences during the program review visit within 2 weeks of the visit. The department will review the preliminary report and provide feedback to the reviewers about missing pieces or need for clarifying information. A final report by the external review team will be due within four weeks of the visit.

Action Plans

With the results of the departmental, internal and external review teams, the director will create a “**Preliminary Action Plan**” based on the “Summary Action Plan” in the CAS Self-assessment Guide. The SAG worksheets provide opportunities to identify areas of discrepancies between current practices and the accepted standards and guidelines. Self-assessment reports should also include information about areas for corrective action and program enhancement. The Preliminary Action Plan will be reviewed with the AVP to whom the director reports.

At the conclusion of the external review, departments are responsible for synthesizing the information received from the self-assessment process and the external review report. A format for the **Action Plan** will be distributed to departments in the annual training process. Departments will then submit a **Final Action Plan** by **December 1, 2016**. External review teams’ final report will be submitted along with “**Final Action Plans**”. All **Final Action Plans** and external review team final reports will be archived by Student Affairs.

Review Schedule

All Student Affairs departments will participate in the Program Review process once during a five year cycle. Each year three to four departments will be participating in the departmental program review.

References

Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. (2015). *CAS professional standards for higher education* (9th Ed.) Washington, DC: Author.

Carretta, P. (2008). *Using CAS standards and review process for improving student learning and program outcomes*. Presentation at NASPA International Assessment & Retention Conference. From <https://www.cas.edu/index.html>