

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW GUIDELINES

The Self-Study and Self-Study Report

The self-study review and report is designed to give an instructional unit an opportunity to examine the totality of its undergraduate educational program and to assess the impact that the program is making upon the undergraduate students it instructs, as well as to plan for the future of the program. Our periodic, individual undergraduate self-studies are also one component of our larger institution-wide accreditation through the Western Association (WASC). As the unit progresses with its self-study it will be useful to keep in mind the words of the Western Association:

Baccalaureate programs engage students in an integrated course of study of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare them for work, citizenship, and a fulfilling life. These programs also ensure the development of core learning abilities and competencies including, but not limited to, college-level written and oral communication; college-level quantitative skills; information literacy; and the habit of critical analysis of data and argument. In addition, baccalaureate programs actively foster an understanding of diversity; civic responsibility; the ability to work with others; and the capability to engage in lifelong learning. Baccalaureate programs also ensure breadth for all students in the areas of cultural and aesthetic, social, and political, as well as scientific and technical knowledge expected of educated persons in this society. Finally, students are required to engage in an in-depth, focused, and sustained program of study as part of their baccalaureate programs. (from the 2001 WASC Handbook)

The self-study review should cover all aspects of the instructional mission of the unit – including courses, labs, studios, and seminars as well as other modes of instruction and student learning such as research opportunities, support of study abroad, internships, opportunities to participate in creative activities, and support of student professional development.

The self-study review should consider the contributions of all levels of instructors (regular rank, non-senate lecturers, graduate teaching assistants, as well as undergraduates who contribute to the instruction mission of the unit) – but the inquiry should pay particular attention to the role of the ladder rank faculty in educating students and enhancing student learning opportunities.

The inquiry should consider the education of undergraduate majors in particular, but should also consider the impact of its instructional program on the general educational mission and needs of the institution, the Colleges, and other department, programs, and majors.

The inquiry should consider the pattern of requirements for the major (including those outside of the department) and the degree to which they help promote the students acquisition of “core learning abilities and competencies” when taken together with the general education requirements of the institution. The program’s advising practices should be analyzed.

The self-study review should consider the ways in which the curricular offerings of the unit correspond to national standards (or models) in the discipline. To this end, the unit should determine if there are published national standards (or models, guidelines, etc.) for undergraduate majors in the field. If there are it would be helpful if the unit would include a copy of these guidelines in the self-study report and would assess the degree to which those elements are included (or not included) in the instructional program of the unit. The overall academic quality of the faculty and the undergraduate curriculum should be compared with other institutions.

The self-study review should describe co-curricular efforts of the program and any special educational opportunities provided to students. Some examples of these are research opportunities, support of study abroad, internships, opportunities to participate in creative activities, support of student professional development, and special seminars.

The self-study review should report on the current operation of the program including the administrative structure, composition of the faculty (workload, distribution of graduate/undergraduate teaching activity, lower-division teaching, and turnover), numbers of undergraduate majors and non-majors (including their academic objectives if known), joint programs offered with other departments/programs and/or colleges, grading policies, and teaching evaluations. If applicable, include a historical overview of changes since the last review and plans for any future growth and/or changes.

As part of the self-study process, it is expected that the unit will complete the grid that is enclosed in which the various learning goals that one has for ones students are arrayed along with a statement of how the program assesses the degree to which those goals are accomplished by its students.

It is expected that the unit will approach this review with openness and honesty – reflecting on both the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The review is an opportunity for the unit to honestly and openly share its thoughts about its instructional program, the future it sees for its program, and the ways in which it can preserve the strengths of the program that it identifies and well as the steps that would be needed to correct shortcomings that the program may have.