

## EXTERNAL REVIEW TIPS

As part of the Program Review process, programs are required to obtain an external review. Here are a few suggestions and guidelines to help you select, schedule, and work with an external reviewer.

### ***How to select a qualified external reviewer/team***

*The reviewer(s) should have:*

- Professional knowledge and experience related to your program/department
- Experience with programs similar to yours and institutions similar to UNC in mission, scope, and size
- Evaluation experience
- Independence and objectivity
- Understanding of current issues and trends within the profession and higher education
- Knowledge of CAS Standards (or the professional accreditation standards you are using)

*Additional characteristics to consider:*

- Knowledge of professional standards for your program
- Administrative leadership experience
- Expertise in an area or focus your program is considering developing or adding in the future

### ***Finding a reviewer***

*Consider the following sources of information for finding a qualified reviewer:*

- Professional organizations
- Faculty from higher education and/or student affairs graduate programs
- Administrators from peer programs
- Recommendations from UNC faculty and colleagues

### ***Preparing for the review***

Develop a clear understanding and written description of what you want and need from the reviewer prior to the visit. Create a list of particular questions you'd like to have answered and issues that must be addressed. Ask your Dean/AVP for guidance in developing any additional questions for the reviewer. Refer to the External Review Checklist for specific tasks that should be completed before the reviewer arrives on campus.

### ***During the review***

*The following activities will be appreciated by your reviewer:*

- Provide an agenda that includes times, meeting locations, and the names of people s/he will be meeting.
- Identify someone from the program to act as a campus guide during the visit.
- If possible, provide an office or workspace for the reviewer to use and have copies available of any documents or resource materials s/he has requested.
- Arrange for staff and/or students to have lunch and/or dinner with the reviewer.

### ***After the review***

- Expect to receive the reviewer's report within 30 days of the campus visit.
- Be prepared to send any additional information s/he might request to complete the review.
- Prepare a response that will be included in your program's self study report. In particular, address any factual errors and respond to any recommendations your program does or does not endorse.

## EXTERNAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

**Before the review**

- Define the purpose and scope of the review
- Work with the AVP/Dean to select reviewer(s) and establish a budget
- Prepare contract (Standard Services Invoice)
- Develop a timeline for the review
- Verify travel arrangements and itinerary
- Develop a list of written questions the program wishes answered
- Determine what documents and information the reviewer would like to have in advance
- Send documents and information to the reviewer, including some or all of the following:
  - Program's web address
  - Current self-study
  - CAS binder
  - Staff vitas/resumes
  - 3-5 year program data
  - Department/program budgets
  - Handbooks, program policies, newsletters
  - Assessment measures used by the program
  - Results of student learning outcome assessments, program satisfaction studies, alumni surveys
- Schedule times and locations for the reviewer to meet with program staff, students, the AVP/Dean, and any others you or the reviewer identify. If the reviewer has provided a list of questions s/he intends to discuss, provide these in advance.

**The review visit itinerary**

- Schedule an initial meeting with key stakeholders to acquaint all parties and review the itinerary (brief)
- Conduct individual and/or group visits with, staff, students, AVP, and any others you've identified
- Provide time for solo campus walk about
- Arrange for one or more meals with staff and/or students
- Conduct debriefing meeting or exit interview (preview what final report might look like)

**After the review**

- Expect reviewer's report within 30 days of the review
- Complete paperwork for the reviewer's fees and expenses
- Provide the report to staff and solicit feedback and information about any factual errors
- Address reviewer's recommendations in the program's comprehensive self study report

Checklist based on Howery (1999)