Administrative Program Review: Information Guide

John Carroll University

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PREFACE

The fundamental purpose of Administrative Program Review (AdPR) is not only to promote and maintain academic and operational excellence but also to ensure that co-curricular activities, services, and administrative processes are being efficiently administered and working in ways consistent with the University's mission and values. The review process, therefore, permits all units to craft clearly articulated goals for which measurable outcomes are identified and are systematically assessed.

AdPR provides an opportunity for units to identify areas of strength and address areas that need improvement and is also an important source of information for making resource allocation decisions. Accordingly, at each level of the review process (unit, director/dean, vice president), recommendations will be made that the University preserve the strengths of particular departments or address specific weaknesses. The primary goal is to ensure that the process improves institutional effectiveness in realizing the mission of John Carroll University.

Program review is an ongoing process involving the vice presidents, directors, managers, and staff concerned with meeting the stated goals and objectives of an administrative unit. The guidelines established will ensure that evaluation of each department will occur formally at regular intervals. This document describes the guidelines for the systematic evaluation of all administrative units at John Carroll University.

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is a Program?

Administrative programs are units at the university that support the students or institution but are not directly part of the grade-granting academic experience. Examples include Office of Financial Aid, Department of Human Resources, Student Engagement, Facilities, Campus Police, and Computer Services.

Essentially, all units that are not included in Academic Program Review are part of Administrative Program Review. Academic Program Review programs include each academic department in the College of Arts and Sciences, each major in the Boler School of Business, the Pre-Health Professions program, and the three major signature programs (Honors, Arrupe, and Leadership)

New units will first participate in AdPR during the cycle after the cycle in which they are launched.

> *The **length of the current and future review cycles**, as well as the **placement of each unit within the cycle** are posted in the online supplement to this guide.*

History of Administrative Program Review at John Carroll University

John Carroll University has a history of conducting reviews of administrative units, which were typically carried out by outside entities at the direction of the president or divisional vice president. This process yielded a number of program reviews that informed resource allocations, departmental restructuring, and integrated planning. During the 2015-2016 academic year, John Carroll University moved toward a more consistent and systematic process of AdPR. The first round of reviews using this model occurred during the 2016-2017 academic year, and feedback from those involved led to the modifications reflected in this document.

STANDARD TIMELINE (FALL PROGRAMS)

Late Fall Semester of the Year <u>Before</u> Review

Administrative Program Review Orientation

Spring Semester of the Year <u>Before</u> Review

The head of the program should discuss the upcoming review at a program meeting: go over the guidelines, outline the process, and preview the documentation that is necessary. Staff should determine what other constituencies to involve—faculty, students, alumni or staff in other programs.

Program staff should begin the process of data collection, analysis, and reporting.

In consultation with the designated administrator, program staff should determine whether or not to bring in a formal Review Team. If so, staff should identify possible members of the Review Team. If not, staff should request time on next year's agenda of the University Committee on Administrative Policies (UCAP, who will serve as reviewers for the program).

The head of the program should designate the author or author team and provide their names to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The bulk of the Self-Study Report should be written before the beginning of the fall semester.

Fall Semester

The Self-Study Report is completed in consultation with the program faculty, and the entire self-study document is submitted to the appropriate administrator before the third week of September.

Staff will revise the Self-Study Report at the administrator's request and then submit it to the Review Team or UCAP.

Review Teams, if used, should conduct campus visits prior to Thanksgiving. UCAP will review programs in late fall or early spring.

Spring and Summer Semesters

The Review Team or UCAP sends the program head the Visit Team Report/UCAP Report.

Program staff <u>*may*</u> prepare a written Response to the Visit Team Report.

The head of the program (or full program staff) meets with the appropriate administrator to discuss the Report and a final Action Plan.

When all AdPRs in the cohort are completed, the designated administrators will meet with the SLT to discuss the future allocation of resources. Once the administration has communicated these commitments to program staff, the program faculty should prepare the final AdPR Action Plan, which must be completed and approved by the appropriate administrator.

STANDARD TIMELINE (SPRING PROGRAMS)

Late Spring Semester of the Year Before Review

Administrative Program Review Orientation

Summer and Fall Semesters

The head of the program should discuss the upcoming review at a program meeting: go over the guidelines, outline the process, and preview the documentation that is necessary. Staff should determine what other constituencies to involve—faculty, students, alumni or staff in other programs.

Program staff should begin the process of data collection, analysis, and reporting.

In consultation with the designated administrator, program staff should determine whether or not to bring in a formal Review Team. If so, staff should identify possible members of the Review Team. If not, staff should request time on next year's agenda of the University Committee on Administrative Policies (UCAP, who will serve as reviewers for the program).

The head of the program should designate the author or author team and provide their names to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The bulk of the Self-Study Report should be written before the beginning of the spring semester.

Spring Semester

The Self-Study Report is completed in consultation with the program faculty, and the entire self-study document is submitted to the appropriate administrator before the first week of February.

Staff will revise the Self-Study Report at the administrator's request and then submit it to the Review Team or UCAP.

Review Teams, if used, should conduct campus visits prior to midterm. UCAP will review programs in late spring or early summer.

Summer and Fall Semester of the Year After Review

The Review Team or UCAP sends the program head the Visit Team Report/UCAP Report.

Program staff *may* prepare a written Response to the Visit Team Report.

The head of the program (or full program staff) meets with the appropriate administrator to discuss the Report and a final Action Plan.

When all AdPRs in the cohort are completed, the designated administrators will meet with the SLT to discuss the future allocation of resources. Once the administration has communicated these commitments to program staff, the program faculty should prepare the final AdPR Action Plan, which must be completed and approved by the appropriate administrator.

PART I:
Self Study

The Self-Study Report is the centerpiece of Administrative Program Review (AdPR). To ensure broad participation and support, all staff members in the unit are expected to participate in the creation, review, and discussion of this document, with the exact scope of such participation dependent on their role in the program.

A thoughtful, well-written self-study is critical to the success of AdPR. It is the primary occasion for the program's central members to demonstrate understanding of the goals and dynamics of the program. It is also a time to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, and to make a persuasive case for specific actions to enhance program quality and effectiveness.

- *Be brief.* Each section should be as short as possible but long enough to present evidence and make effective arguments. Reviewers will find tedious narratives that fail to distinguish major issues from minor ones.
- *Be judicious.* The narrative should certainly highlight the program's strengths and distinctive qualities, including the nature and value of the contributions it makes to the campus and, where relevant, to the larger community. It also should highlight problems candidly. Accompanying discussion of problems should be a discussion of steps the program that can be taken to remedy them. The self-study should invite the reviewers to offer constructive recommendations for solving the problems.
- *Provide evidence.* The narrative should provide supporting evidence for the arguments, drawing on and efficiently referring to the data contained in the self-study and appendices. Narrative portions should focus on the implications of data for the review.
- *State disagreements explicitly.* If the self-study raises disagreements among staff (and other constituencies), these disagreements should be stated explicitly, including a sense of what is at stake in such disagreements, and a plan outlined that can enable the program to deal constructively with those disagreements.

Data Sources

The information forming the basis of the Self-Study Report will come from a variety of sources. The time window of interest for AdPR is usually three to five years. A standard package of information will be provided to each program.

> ***Precise details of this standard package*** *(contents, timeline, and processes) will be explained at the orientation and are available in the online supplement to this guide.*

Programs will need to collect updated CVs from all program staff.

The Self-Study Report

The body of the document is limited to twenty-five single-spaced pages. Authors are strongly encouraged to follow the structure outlined below. However, the specific topics, and their specific ordering, can be adjusted to best fit the specific program. Substantive changes should be discussed beforehand with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

The head of the program should designate an author or author team to take the lead in assembling the information, drafting the Self-Study Report, and involving the rest of the unit. The names of the author or author team should be sent to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

PREFACE (One-page overview of the University and the program's place within it)

I. MISSION
- A. Mission Statement
- B. Relationship to University Mission
- C. Relationship to Program Operations
- D. Relationship to Diversity and Inclusion
- E. Evaluation of Mission

II. STAFF
- A. Personnel Profiles
- B. Staff Development and Evaluation
- C. Professional Service and Community Engagement

III. STRUCTURE AND SERVICES
- A. Unit Organization
- B. Services and Programs
- C. Metrics

IV. STUDENT LEARNING AND SUCCESS

V. UNIVERSITY SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

VI. PROGRAM EVALUATION
- A. Program Goals
- B. Evaluation and Analysis

VII. COMPARATIVE POSITION
- A. Comparison with Other Institutions
- B. Best Practices in Field
- C. Unique Features

VIII. CONCLUSION
- A. Summary of Program Strengths and Weaknesses.
- B. Action Plan (Initial Version)
    1. Vision Statement
    2. Improvements Using Current Resources
    3. Improvements Requiring New Resources

VIII. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

APPENDICES

A. Program documents
B. Staff position descriptions
C. Staff achievements
D. Assessment Plan
E. Evaluations and assessment reports
F. Any other documents that might be useful to the reviewers
G. Supporting evidence, tables, charts, etc.

*A **more detailed document** including prompts for each heading is available in the online supplement to this guide, and an editable version of it is available from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and will be provided following the AdPR Orientation.*

Role of the Unit

The minimal expectation is that all staff members of the unit will be providing information to the author or author team of the Self-Study Report, validating the information provided and conclusions drawn in the Self-Study Report, and participating in the conversations that lead to the text of the CONCLUSION section. To document involvement, staff will be asked to sign their names to the following statement on a Signature Page:

> By signing below, I affirm that I participated in the Administrative Program Review process and endorse the accuracy and completeness of our program's self-study.

*The **signature page** will be provided following the AdPR Orientation.*

Administrative Approval and Distribution

Following the completion of the document, the appropriate administrator should receive the Self-Study Report by the third week of September for fall programs or by the first week of February for spring programs and may request revisions from the unit. Once any necessary revisions have been completed, the administrator should notify the author or author team and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness that the Self-Study Report has been approved and can be sent to the Review Team (or University Committee on Administrative Policies. The Review Team should receive the report no later than two weeks before the visit.

*Each program's **designated administrator** will be identified at the orientation. The administrator in question is usually head of the division in which the unit is located.*

The Self-Study Report should be provided to the office of the appropriate administrator, to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, and to each member of the Review Team in two formats: a digital version of the entire Report including appendices and a print version of the Report excluding appendices. A print copy of Appendices should be provided to Review Team members, if requested. The Signature Page should be included with the print version given to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

PART II:
The Review Team & Visit

The Self-Study Report provides the program a chance to take a deep look at strengths and weaknesses and begin planning for the future. Review by persons outside the unit serves an important consultative role in helping validate the program's self-assessment, identify additional strengths and weaknesses, and provide additional recommendations for improvement. There are two mechanisms for this review: use of the University Committee on Administrative Policies (UCAP) or the creation of a Review Team.

The Review Team: Qualifications and Duties

A Review Team is composed of up to two outside members, one of whom serves as chair, and one optional internal member. Outside members should be staff or faculty at institutions other than John Carroll University in the same field and/or have appropriate value for and experience in relevant arenas. The internal member should have full-time status at John Carroll University but be unaffiliated with the program in question. No reviewers should be friends or close colleagues of program faculty; rather, they should be selected so that they bring an objective perspective and forward-looking vision to the review process.

The members of the Review Team will review the Self-Study Report before coming to campus and then spend up to two days on campus meeting faculty, staff, and students and seeing the facilities. The members of the Review Team work together to identify strengths, weaknesses, answers to questions posed by faculty and administrators, and recommendations for improvement. The chair is responsible for collecting the Review Team's conclusions and producing a written Visit Team Report. Once this Report is returned to the chair or program director, each member of the Review Team will receive a stipend (the chair typically receives an additional supplement for producing the Visit Team Report).

> *The **travel reimbursements, Review Team stipend and chair's supplement** are funded by divisional funds and must be approved by the head of the division in question.*

The Review Team: Selection Process

Program staff should identify a number of possible reviewers. Once the potential reviewers have been approved by the appropriate administrator, the head of the program should contact the reviewers and, working in conjunction with office of the administrator, set a date for the Visit. Once the Visit date has been established, the administrator's office will send an official invitation. Travel and lodging arrangements are typically handled by the administrator's office in conjunction with the head of the program and are paid by divisional funds.

Preparing for the Visit

Reviewers will meet at the beginning and the end of their visit with the appropriate administrator. During this initial meeting, the administrator should provide a written charge to the Review Team that includes questions to discuss in the Visit Team Report. During the closing meeting, the head of the program will be present for the first portion of the meeting and then leave before the final debrief between the reviewers and the administrator. Other meetings and interviews organized as part of the external review vary significantly by program. In some cases, review committee members may interview core and affiliated staff singly or in groups. Reviewers may want to talk to undergraduate students, graduate students, alumni, and faculty; many reviews arrange for separate meetings with these relevant constituencies.

Programs should provide time and space for the external reviewers to confer with each other every day while on campus. The Review Team should be able to talk to each other about their initial impressions of the program before their meetings with administrators, staff, and others begin. In a typical campus visit, reviewers need time by themselves at the end of the first day and another block of time to themselves before any exit interviews.

Meals during the visit are arranged by the unit and paid by divisional funds.

The Visit Team Report

In the written Visit Team Report, members of the Review Team (or UCAP) should include the following material:

- Answers to questions posed in the DISCUSSION QUESTIONS section of the Self-Study Report,
- Answers to questions posed in the charge provided by the appropriate administrator,
- A ***brief*** summary of the visit or meeting,
- Discussion of the program's strengths and weaknesses, and
- Concrete suggestions for program improvement.

The Visit Team Report should be sent digitally to the head of the program, typically within a month of the conclusion of the visit. The head of the program is then responsible to provide digital copies of the Visit Team Report to the appropriate administrator and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

> *An optional **Visit Team Report template** is available in the online supplement to this guide, and an editable version of it is available from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and will be provided following the AdPR Orientation.*

PART III:
Closing the Loop

Assessment of any kind is not complete until findings are used to make changes. The final steps of the AdPR process are crucial to institutional success.

Response to the Visit Team Report (Optional)

The unit has the option to offer a written response to the report. The response provides an opportunity to correct factual errors and ought to indicate clearly those issues on which the staff of the program agree with the report, as well as highlight points of disagreement.

Action Plan

Upon receipt of the Visit Team Report, the administrator meets with the program faculty to discuss the Report and charges them to finalize an Action Plan that considers the Review Team's findings. The Action Plan consists of a list of specific changes, identifying the responsible parties, timeline, expected costs (if any), and projected impacts on student learning and/or unit functioning. The Plan should differentiate between initiatives needing no new resources and those requiring new resources. The Plan should include a timeline for implementation for the "no new resource" portion. Programs are encouraged to prioritize the action steps: a simple three-category prioritization is suggesting ranking items as mission-critical, mission-centered, and nice to do. Where possible, linkages should be drawn between the Plan and the University's Strategic Plan.

The final Action Plan, developed in a collaborative process between the administrator's office and the program, is signed by both parties indicating the program's commitment to the plan and the administrator's endorsement of the plan's overall direction. This signature is not a binding commitment for funding, as plans will cover several years and many funding decisions are made on a year-to-year basis. The final document is then filed with the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Administrative Response

The administrator should review the entire written record (Self-Study Report, Visit Team Report, optional Response to the Visit Team Report, and Action Plan) and prepare a recommendation for discussion with the Senior Leadership Team. This discussion includes a review of the Action Plan and the administrator's preliminary recommendation for resource allocation.

Follow Up

The program will be required to provide evidence that the changes have been made and data demonstrating actual impact on student learning or department function as part of the Annual Assessment Report, filed as part of the routine process of student learning assessment, or as a stand-alone report.

CLOSING:
An Offer of Assistance

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is charged with enabling faculty and staff to successfully complete Academic and Administrative Program Review. This charge is one of our central functions, so do not hesitate to seek assistance.