

## 2.3 DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### 2.3.1 Departmental Reviews *[Revised September 1999]*

**A. Goal:** Each department or program reporting to the Office of the VPAA will have an external review within a seven-year period.

**B. Rationale:**

1. *Primary:* For departments to assess their program (curriculum) in light of the College's overall mission, as well as to articulate and defend requests for additional budgetary support.
2. *Secondary:* To provide the VPAA with information concerning future priorities and to assist in the accreditation process.

**C. Process:**

1. Determine with appropriate lead-time a targeted date (year) for the review.
2. The department in conjunction with the VPAA will select a review team.
3. The VPAA will provide the review team with a standard set of questions; the chair of the department will provide the team with a list of any department-specific issues. The department will provide the team with appropriate background material.
4. Upon arrival the review team will have a brief orientation meeting with the VPAA and the department chair.
5. The team will spend up to two days on campus, meeting at a minimum with the department as a whole, faculty members individually, students who major in the department (perhaps, others as well), the VPAA and the President.
6. Expenses during the team's visit:
  - a. **TRAVEL:** Consult with the VPAA Office on the best way to make travel reservations and cover the expenses. The VPAA Office covers transportation to and from the college, parking at the airport or hotel, and/or mileage.
  - b. **LODGING:** Reservations should be made at the college Guest House. If the Guest House is unavailable, please consult with the VPAA Office regarding other appropriate arrangements.
  - c. **MEALS:** Reimbursement to the reviewer or department for meals will be based upon original receipts provided. *For 2005-06 the VPAA Office has set maximum reimbursement per person limits including gratuities at \$8.00 for breakfast, \$15.00 for lunch, and \$25.00 for dinner. **Chairs should remind department members of these limits before they host reviewers. Any additional expense for a meal must be paid for by the hosting department (only with prior approval of the department chair) or the individual.*** Please note that the VPAA Office does not reimburse faculty for other entertainment expenses (such as coffee, ice cream, sodas, meals for spouses/partners, etc.) associated with the visits.
7. The team will have an exit interview with the VPAA.
8. The team submits an initial report to the VPAA and the department chair (or program director) who responds to the accuracy of the report.
9. The team submits its revised final report to the VPAA (within 45 days).
10. The VPAA asks the department to respond to suggestions contained within the report.

**D. Team Selection:**

The department chair, after consulting with the department, should provide the VPAA with a recommendation for the composition of the team. Normally, the team will consist of two professionals working in the discipline (or program) being reviewed. At least one member of the team should be from an institution with a mission similar to that of Davidson College. *[Note: In the past, some departments have found it helpful to include a Davidson graduate on the team.]*

### **E. Background Information:**

This list of background information is primarily relevant for academic departments.

1. Current College *Catalog* with attention drawn to the mission of the College and departmental offerings
2. Current *Faculty Handbook*
3. Departmental Mission Statement
4. Statement of department-specific issues and aspirations, ideally placed in some historical context
5. Current *c.v.*'s of departmental faculty
6. Syllabi for departmental course offerings
7. Enrollment statistics for the last 3 years [*Available from the Assistant Dean or Registrar's Office*]
8. Numbers of majors and minors over the last several years.
9. Departmental budget (administrative)
10. Library and audio-visual budgets
11. Facilities inventory (e.g., faculty offices, classrooms, laboratories, computer facilities)
12. Placements of recent graduating majors. [*Available from the Careers Office*]

### **F. Common Questions:**

1. Is the department's mission statement consistent with the overall mission of Davidson College?
2. Are the curricular offerings appropriate for a high-quality, liberal-arts undergraduate program?
3. Is the design of the major (number of courses, required courses, sequencing, and capstone experience) appropriate? Similar question for the departmental minor, if one exists.
4. Are majors finding post-undergraduate opportunities consistent with their interests and training?
5. Are departmental resources (faculty positions, non-teaching support, and budget) adequate for the department's mission?
6. Is the department receiving sufficient assistance from supporting groups such as the Library, Information Technology Services, and Instructional Support Services?
7. Are facilities (office space, classrooms, and laboratories) adequate?
8. Are departmental faculty appropriately engaged in professional activities and service to the institution?
9. Are non-tenured faculty appropriately apprised of criteria and procedures for faculty evaluation?
10. Is there an appropriate mentoring process for junior faculty?
11. Are the opportunities for faculty development adequate?
12. Are appropriate evaluation tools (e.g., national examination or external oral examiners) being used to assess student performance in the major?
13. Is the department appropriately planning for the future, such as the filling of any vacancies that are likely to exist in the short to medium term?
14. Has the department supported appropriate means for student-faculty exchange outside the classroom?  
[*Examples would include departmental social events or honorary society.*]
15. What recommendations can be made with some associated priority?