External Reviewer Guidelines

Purpose
The purpose of external review is to provide a broader, independent perspective on the program. All programs will have the opportunity to host external reviewers in regular, periodic episodes (usually every five years.) External reviewers consider the current condition of the department, considering such factors as the effectiveness of the curriculum, trends in the discipline, the quality of the faculty, and the characteristics of the students and the community the program serves. Reviewers will be provided with a list of issues/questions to be addressed in their report, but they are free to address other issues that arise during the course of their review.

Selection Criteria
Academic programs that are accredited by an external professional/specialized accrediting agency may utilize the specialized accreditation report as the basis for their program review and do not need to secure an additional external reviewer. Academic programs that are not accredited by an external professional/specialized accrediting agency are required to utilize an outside (external to CBU) reviewer. External reviewers should meet the following criteria:
- Distinguished scholar/teacher/practitioner in the field,
- Chosen from a campus similar to CBU,
- Experienced with assessing student learning outcomes,
- Experienced with program administration,
- Familiar with CBU’s mission and purpose, and
- No conflict-of-interest.

Preparation for Site Visit
Academic units make initial arrangements for the dates of the program review site visit to be held during the Fall semester. The academic unit will work with the Office of the Provost for Accreditation, Assessment, and Curriculum (OPAAC) to prepare for and develop a schedule for the external reviewer’s site visit.

Faculty members in the academic unit will serve as local hosts, escorting the external reviewer to meetings, and provide general assistance. Reimbursement is provided for the use of a personal vehicle through mileage and an honorarium to be determined. All reimbursement occurs after the reviewers have sent their final report.

The department/school will provide the external reviewer with an office or room for use during the visit as well as a computer if needed. In addition, meeting space will be provided for scheduled meetings of the reviewers with the various groups. It
is the academic unit’s responsibility to schedule all meetings with faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

**Elements of the Site Visit**

The external reviewer will meet with individuals and groups and review program materials. During the external reviewer’s visit, the unit shall be responsible for making any other needed materials available, including: university student outcomes, student learning outcomes, course student outcomes, syllabi, samples of student work, etc. The academic unit is responsible to ensure these meetings have been planned and attendees invited well in advance of the actual site visit.

- **Orientation**: A meeting should be held at the start of the site visit with the department chair (or dean) and the Director of Assessment. The purpose of this meeting is to orient the external reviewer to the goals and agenda of the site visit.

- **Meetings with Current Students and Alumni**: Some of the most helpful meetings of a site visit are those with students. A faculty member can introduce the external reviewers and explain the purpose of their visit, then leave so that the students feel free to discuss any issues and concerns with the site visit team. Since undergraduate and graduate students may have different concerns, separate meetings should be arranged if possible for these students.

- **Meetings with Full-Time and Adjunct Faculty Members**: The external reviewer should meet with the Assessment Coordinator and with faculty members whose work is most closely related to the program review. Additionally, the external reviewer should meet with enough professors so that most (or all) programs in the academic unit are represented. The department chair (or deans) should not attend any faculty meetings with site visitors so that faculty members feel free to discuss issues and concerns openly with the external reviewers.

- **Meeting with Advisory Board (or Potential Employers)**: The external reviewer may want to meet with the unit’s advisory board or group of potential employers.

- **Meeting with Department Chair (or Deans)**: At least an hour should be scheduled for the site visitors to meet with the department chair (or deans) beyond the orientation meeting at the start of the site visit. Because site visitors will often have questions from their conversations with students and faculty, some time for this meeting with the department chair (or dean) should be scheduled late in the site visit.
External Reviewer’s Report

The External Reviewer must consider the University Values, Mission and Vision Statements, and corresponding statements for colleges/schools. The Reviewer’s report is part of a process intended to help guide future decisions about the program under review, and should address the issues most important in this context of planning. Concrete suggestions for improvement are expected.

Within six weeks of the site visit, the external reviewer will submit a final written report. The final report of the external reviewers should be addressed to the Dean of the Unit. The External Reviewers’ Report is not required to be in a specific format.

At a minimum, the report should address the following:

1. All questions discussed with unit before the visit.
2. **Student learning outcomes:** Are the current SLO’s relevant and in-line with industry standards? Do they support the mission of the College and University?
3. **Capacity:** Does the department have the resources to deliver the academic program in a quality way?
4. **Academic integrity of the program:** Does the program provide a comprehensive and integrated educational experience for students?
5. **Currency of program:** How is the program preparing for the future trends in the discipline? Is it up-to-date with market trends and current technology, forward looking, and preparing students for the future?
6. **Any other recommendations, suggestions or comments.**
   Department chairs should collaborate with faculty to provide the external reviewer with several specific questions they would like answered during the review.