

Academic Senate  
c/o Chris McGowan

FROM: George McMechan (Chair, Academic Program Review Committee)

DATE: 8/21/15



RE: Report of the 2014-15 Academic Program Review Committee

ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE

---

The Academic Program Review Committee (APRC) first met on September 22, 2014 to receive the charge to the committee from James Marquardt, Serenity King and Cinde Gauntt of the Provost's Office. Most of the subsequent communications were conducted by e-mail.

Some of the APRC members participated in a training session in the 'Academic Analytics' data base software on Sept. 26, 2014.

All of the scheduling of the site visits by the external Review Teams (including selection of participants, travel reservations, etc.) were performed by the Provost's office; this function should continue to be done this centralized way, to ensure proper coordination.

Review Teams for the site visits included (as active participants) one APRC member, and two other UTD faculty members, in addition to the external participants.

Five academic programs were reviewed; the dates and APRC participants were as follows:

October 29-30	Applied Sociology	George Fair
January 27-29	Computer Science	George McMechan
February 16-18	Mathematics	James Bartlett
March 2-3	Physics - Applied Physics	Hasan Pirkul
April 13-15	Software Engineering	Linda Thibodeau

Exit interviews were conducted by each of the Review Teams with both the Programs and the Provost.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---

A. Timing is of crucial importance as it is so short.

- a) The APRC appointment letters were delivered last year (and again this year) in late August, which gives very little time for the committee to have an inaugural organizational meeting before the first Review occurs.

b) The Self-Study reports by the Programs being reviewed should be completed and delivered to the APRC member of the review committee as early as possible. These take substantial time to read carefully. A MINIMUM of 2 weeks please.

B. The Provost's Office has indicated a desire for the APRC to have more interaction with them. One possible avenue is for the APRC to recommend names of the UTD faculty to participate in each of the Review Teams.

a) Since the programs to be reviewed in the following academic year are already known in the spring, the APRC committee could provide input on the (non-APRC) faculty participants of each Review Team at the end of the spring (at the same time as the other external members are solicited).

C. It is noted that the Policy Charge document delivered with the 2015-16 appointment letters states that membership is now for one-year renewable terms.

The main commitments and responsibilities of APRC members are two-fold; first to actively participate in one (or more) of the external reviews, and second to provide liason between that external committee and the Provost's office.

There are typically only 4-5 programs reviewed each year, and 10 APRC members, so if the appointments are for only one year, only half of the APRC members will ever actually serve on a Review Team. It is recommended that the normal appointment be for two years, with the expectation that each APRC member will participate in at least one review during those two years (so the workload is even).

This also impacts the timing issues in item A above. If a returning APRC member has committed to a specific review already in the spring, he/she could receive the corresponding self study to read even before the first fall meeting. That is not possible with one-year appointments.

D. The key person in the review process is the chairman of each Review Team. As the site visit is very short, and the report is mainly written by the chairman, the visit time needs to be tightly structured, and the Chairman needs to stick to getting the answers to the relevant questions. I have not heard any complaints this time, but I just want to emphasize that the most important decision that is made in planning the reviews is the selection of the Chairmen.