

# Academic Programs Committee resolution on the unit review process

## I. Introduction

The Academic Programs Committee discussed revisions to the unit review process. The key changes to the process are:

- Move primary oversight of the process to the Provost's Office, with the Graduate School still a vital partner
- Streamlining of the framework for self-study with centralized provision of most of the relevant data
- Addition of confidential external peer review letters to the review
- Change of the review committee to include two external and one internal (outside unit) reviewer
- more formal mid-cycle check-in with the units
- some tweaks in verbiage of materials requested

## II. Discussion

The full APC committee reviewed the proposal on 9/20/2023. VPAA Mohamed Noor and VPIS Ed Balleisen were present to discuss the proposal and answer questions. Overall the proposal received a very positive reception by APC. The discussion focused on two main topics – clarification on details of the proposal and best practices for its implementation:

(a) clarification on details of the proposal:

- how to ensure there is no potential conflict regarding the Duke member of the review committee
- providing a sample agenda in the appendix to guide planning of the actual review process
- will Duke roll out an electronic platform for the review process to facilitate information sharing of non-confidential parts of the review?
- Make sure confidentiality is maintained on issues pertaining to climate and conduct
- Safeguards for securing involvement of all members of the unit community, in particular vulnerable groups (junior faculty, minority students etc.)
- How to ensure candid flow of information?
- Specifics on the mid-cycle check-in?

- Highlight the role of graduate student teaching

(b) Best practices for implementation:

- Concerns were raised regarding the quality of data harvested from scholars@Duke
- Does the Provost's Office have the bandwidth for the proper execution of these reviews, in particular regarding the provisioning of the data on their end?
- Coordination with schools and units in preparation of the review: a lot of materials can be prepared ahead of time and maintained up to date on a continuous basis if schools and units put best-practices in place around strategic planning and their ongoing operations
- Ensure timely and continuous information sharing with the units – a lot of information that is provided in the context of external reviews could be very useful to the units outside of the review process to improve their teaching, research and service missions.

Several points under (a) were addressed in the revised new unit review document. The other points will be handled at the implementation stage via best practices for conducting these reviews.

### **III. Resolution**

APC recommends the implementation of the revised unit review process. This process will significantly reduce the workload on the affected units and realign the process with its actual scope beyond the graduate education component. A timely implementation of the revised process is strongly encouraged.

**IV. Vote** – This resolution was passed unanimously by the Academic Programs Committee – full voting membership.