



Evaluating CMU's Academic Program Review Process - Report

Survey Distributed April 18 through May 14, 2008

Definition of Program Review

A process with a focus on ongoing program improvement, student learning outcomes, and integration of academic reporting

Report Compiled May 15, 2008

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In early 2004, the provost approved a new program review process recommended by the Academic Planning Council, which meant most notably that reviews will truly be of programs not departments and a review of academic program quality will include an analysis of whether the program is actually achieving its goals for student learning. Criteria were aligned with the regional accreditation criteria of the Higher Learning Commission so as to facilitate the campus-level self study process, increase consistency in communications about academic program quality and to reduce redundant requests for information. Since that revision, Academic Affairs is interested in better understanding the outcome of the established changes for continuous improvement in the program review process. Academic Affairs also aspires to collect feedback on workshop performance, data selection usefulness, and other various avenues for communication (for example, the website).

METHOD

A 17 question online survey was administered to all individuals who participated in the cumulating interview with the provost for program reviews scheduled between academic years 2004-05 and 2007-08 using *SurveyMonkey*. Of the 81 invited to participate, 28 responded (35% response rate) between April 18 and May 14, 2008. The purpose of the survey was to collect information that can be used to improve the program review process and to better understand how to encourage more effective self-study processes.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHICS & BACKGROUND

- The role most of our respondents play in program review is Chair/Program Director (70.8%, 17).
- Most of the respondents completed program review in the 2006-2007 academic year (41.7%, 10).
- The majority of respondents assisted with writing the SWOT (23), assisted in writing the self-study (22), or provided analysis (21). Only a few of the respondents worked with the auditor (6).
- Most of the responses indicate their programs are housed in the College of Humanities and Social & Behavioral Sciences (6) or the College of Education and Human Services (6). There were none housed in Academic Affairs.
- Nearly all of our respondents completed the full program review process (77.8%).

EFFECTIVE ACTIONS RESULTING FROM PROGRAM REVIEW

- Program review was most effective in prompting meaningful conversations about the program future. Respondents feel less strongly that program review effectively leads to supportive actions in program quality and future by individuals in their programs.
- Respondents more strongly agreed that program review assists with identifying strengths and weaknesses in departmental structures and responsibilities than helps in stimulating use of evidence in analyzing criteria.
- Results indicate that the External Reviewer and SWOT components of program review contributed most to the accomplishment of actions important to program review. Respondents were less likely to believe that the Library Resources form was valuable.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS ASSISTANCE

- While the majority of respondents did not attend the Academic Affairs workshops (60%, or 15 respondents), all others believed the workshops helped to some extent.
- Nearly half of the respondents (48%, 12) believe the Academic Affairs website is slightly helpful for program review, while another 44% (11) have not visited the site.

OPEN-ENDED SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

- Revising the components of program review:
 - Simplify, simplify, simplify.
 - For all the time and effort invested by faculty in this process, it would be gratifying if there were better follow-up and more tangible benefits realized from having done all this.
- Adding new/deleting components
 - ...Please do not make it any longer. If anything is added, delete two things. Overall, the process was of some value and is a wholesome exercise. But it was also a substantial burden. There is no "extra" time to do this work, so OTHER THINGS DID NOT GET DONE while this was being done...
- Data needed, not provided
 - Data on Alums; Accurate data on majors and minors (this is now starting to appear on the IR web site but it was not available at the time).
 - Better reporting of off campus SCH generation compared to on campus SCH.
- Workshop Usefulness
 - Procedures and timeline.
 - Explanation and rationale of structure.
- Advice for future workshops
 - Force deadlines in process.
 - Have mentors available who have done this well in the past. Getting a chance to see how others approached would help.
- Website suggestions
 - Samples are good.
 - Perhaps, make the website better known as a resource for everyone who is working with the process.
- Various areas of program review, including faculty involvement
 - Tie this to the by-laws so credit for this work is acknowledged. Service here not valued for tenure.

EVALUATING CMU'S ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS REPORT

SURVEY BACKGROUND

The survey invitations to participate were sent to all individuals who had participated in the culminating interviews with the provost ($n = 81$). Each of the individuals had received the provost's memo summarizing the evaluation and the actions to be taken. Of the 81 individuals invited to participate, 28 responded (35% response rate).

Data were captured electronically using a web-based survey tool, SurveyMonkey (surveymonkey.com). The original invitation to participate was sent via email on April 18, 2008, and two reminder emails were sent on April 29 and May 7. The survey was closed for analysis at midnight May 14, 2008.

A total of 17 questions were included in the survey (see Appendix for list). The questions that comprised the survey were created by the Vice Provost and Research Analyst in Academic Affairs. The purpose of the survey was to collect information that can be used to improve the program review process as part of Academic Affairs commitment to continuous improvement and high quality service for the academic and greater CMU community.

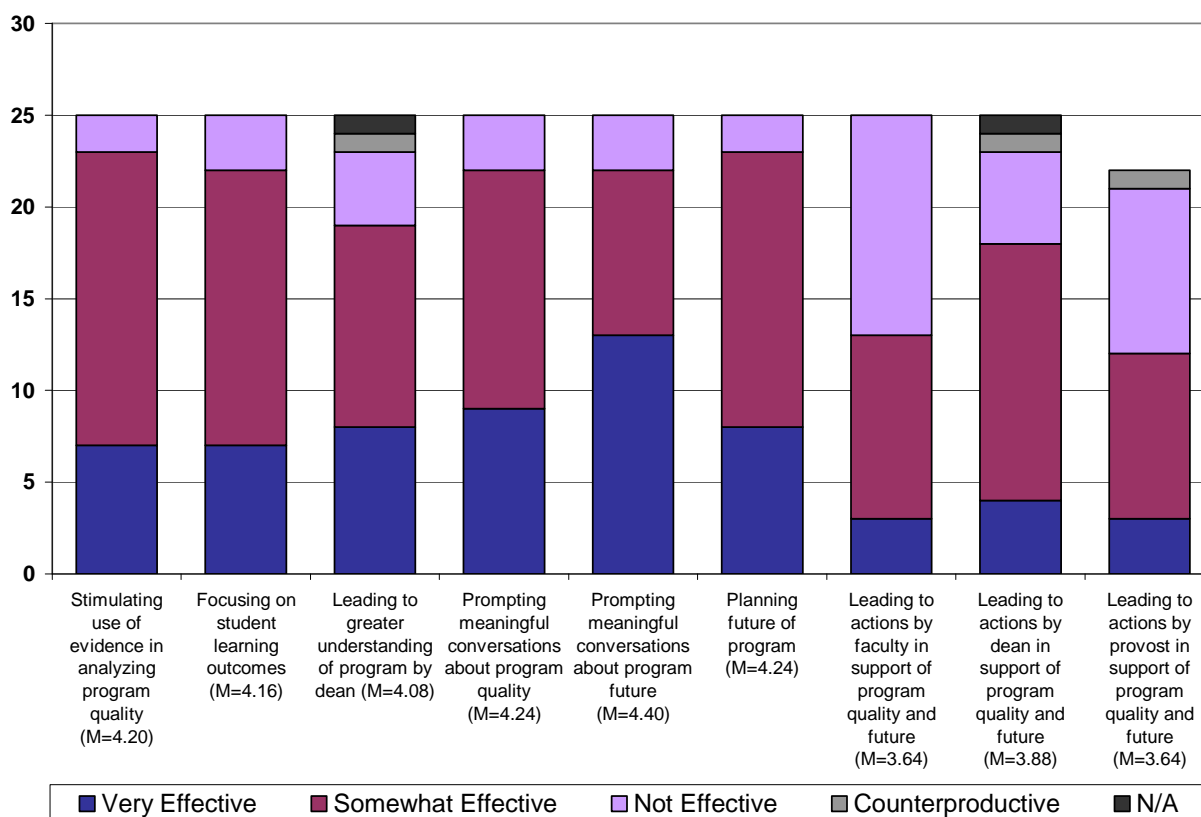
EVALUATION RESULTS

1. Please rate the extent to which program review was effective in achieving these goals for one or more programs in which you are involved.

As shown by Figure 1, program review was most effective in prompting meaningful conversations about the program future (mean = 4.40, where 5 is "Very Effective" and 2 is "Counterproductive." N/A responses were not included in the mean calculation). Program review also seems to assist in prompting meaningful conversations about program quality (mean = 4.24) and planning the future of the program (mean = 4.24).

Program Review is not as effective in other areas, however. Responses indicate that respondents feel that the program review process does not effectively lead to action by faculty (mean = 3.64), the provost (mean = 3.64), or their dean (mean = 3.88) in support of program quality and future.

Figure 1. The extent to which program review was effective in achieving goals as shown by response frequency.

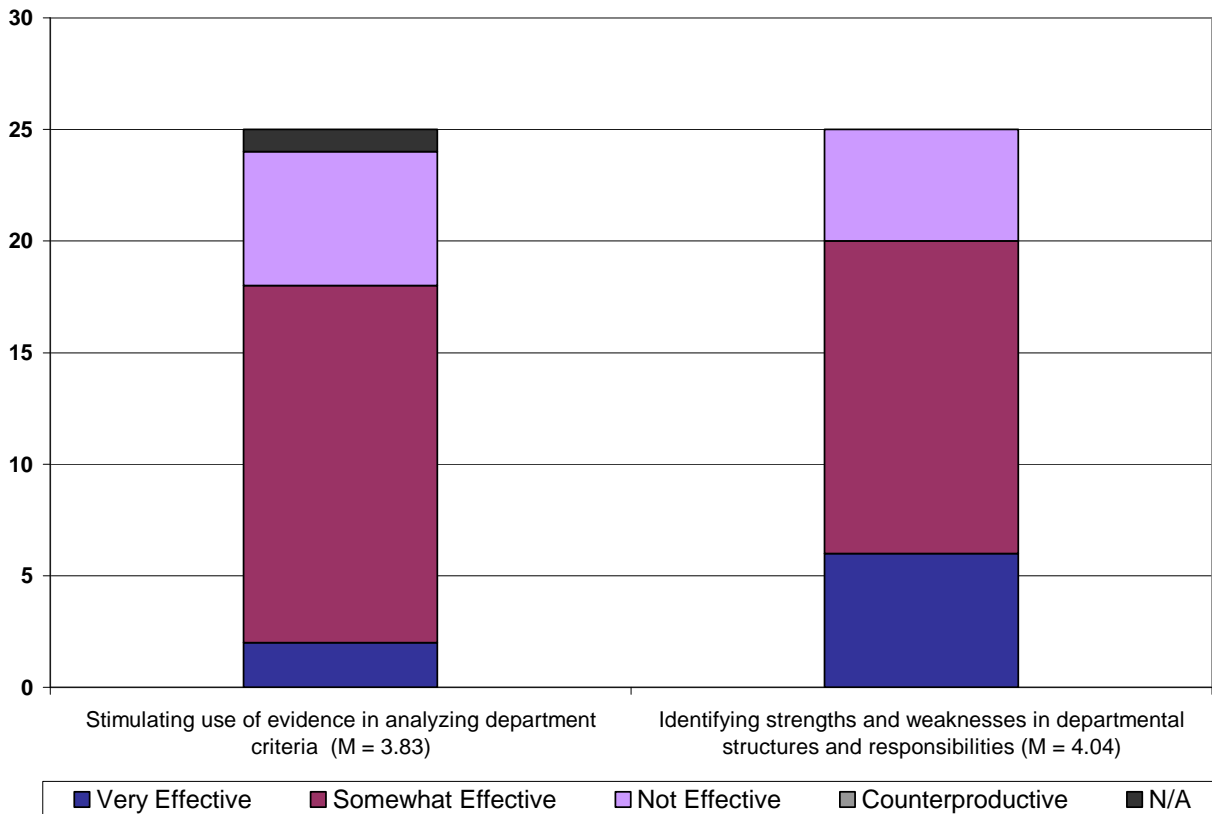


For these means, 5 is "Very Effective" and 2 is "Counterproductive." N/A responses were not included in the mean calculation.

2. While the focus of program review is improvement of a particular program, the process often provides a better understanding of opportunities that exist in a department as a whole. The following questions ask you to rate the extent to which the process was effective in achieving better understanding of department needs.

Results show that respondents more strongly agreed that program review assists with identifying strengths and weaknesses in departmental structures and responsibilities (mean = 4.04) than the process helps in stimulating use of evidence in evaluating standing and department criteria (mean = 3.83) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The extent to which program review was effective in achieving better understanding of department needs, shown in frequency of responses.



For these means, 5 is "Very Effective" and 2 is "Counterproductive."
N/A responses were not included in the mean calculation.

3. Type of program review process.

Nearly all respondents completed the full program review process (77.8%, or 21 responses). Five programs completed the abbreviated process, meaning the program completed an agency-specified self-study (18.5%). As we might expect, only one response indicated his/her program completed the modified program review (3.7%). In the modified program review process, the program completes a unique self-study not associated with specialized accreditation.

Based on the response to this question, participants are directed to a set of slightly different questions. This feature has been utilized because those that complete the full or modified program review might have reactions to the self-study area of program review, whereas those that complete the abbreviated process will not.

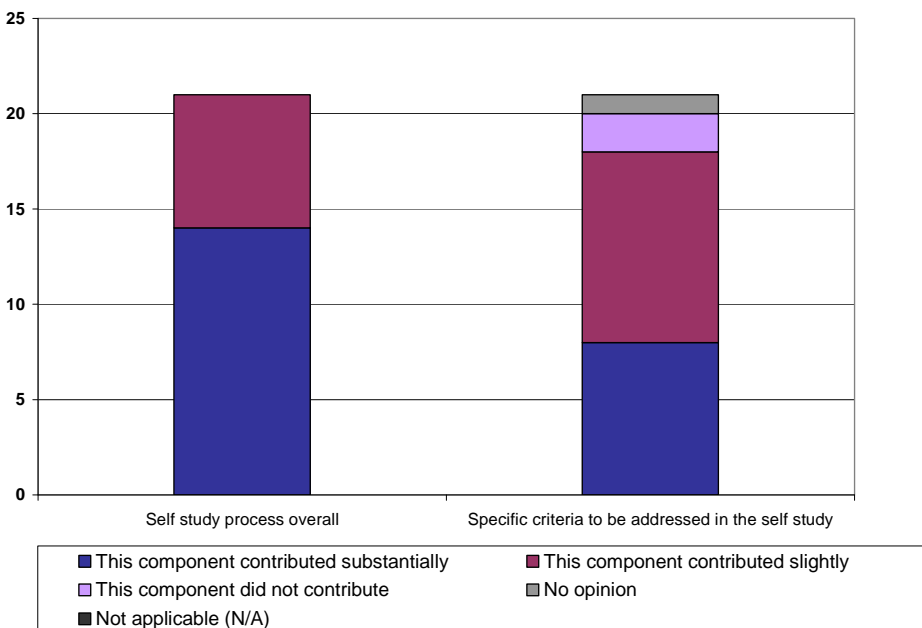
4. Program review has a number of components. To what extent did each component contribute to accomplishment of actions important to the quality of the program?

For the purpose of this report, the responses have been aggregated for all components with the exception of feedback from the accrediting body (abbreviated) and the self-study process (full and modified). Those results are broken down below. All shared components are on the following page.

The single question pertaining only to the Abbreviated-process respondents asked how much the feedback from the accrediting body contributed to accomplishment of actions for their program review. Of the four responses, two believed the feedback contributed substantially, one reported “slightly”, and another one did not believe this question was applicable.

Self-study questions asked only to those who completed the full or modified program review process indicated that the self-study process overall contributed more substantially to their accomplishment of actions than did their specific criteria to be addressed within the self-study (Figure 3).

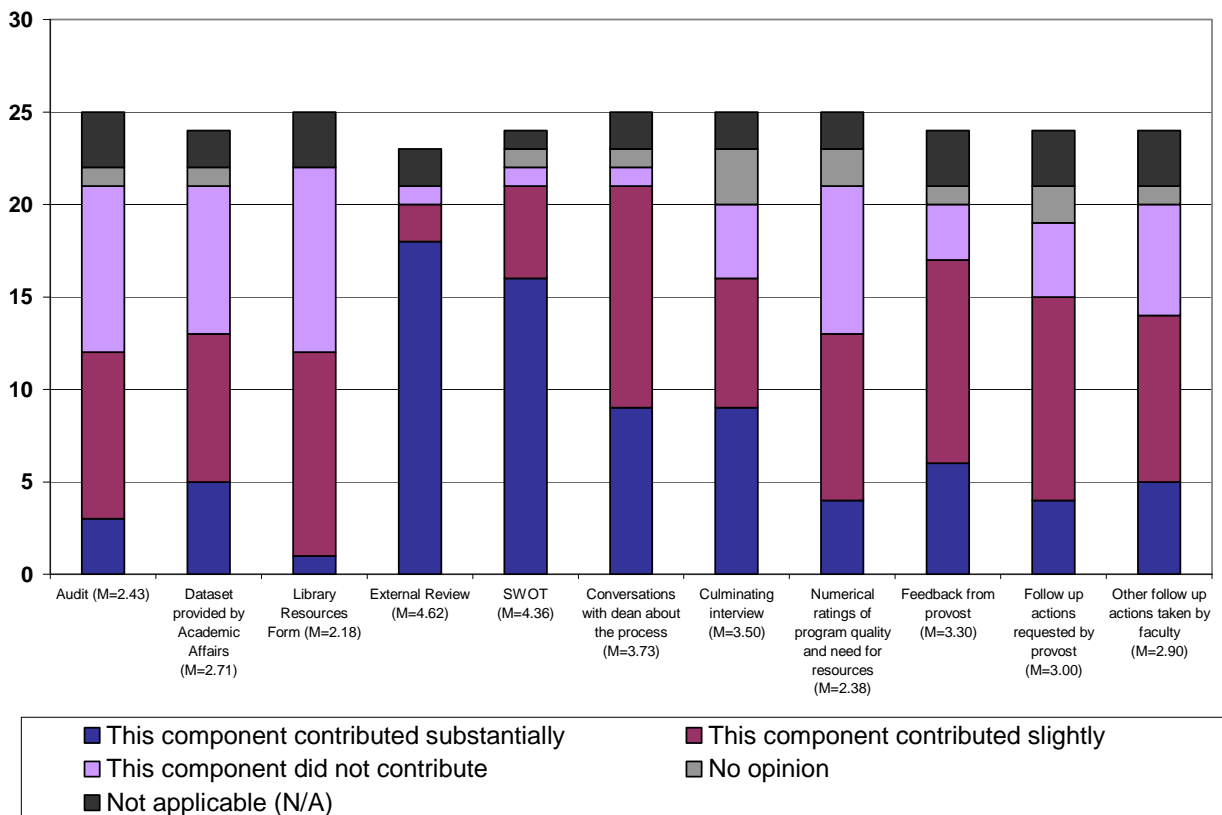
Figure 3. Response frequency regarding the amount of contribution of self-study components (limited sample).



Results indicate that the External Reviewer and SWOT components of program review contributed most to the accomplishment of actions important to program review (means = 4.62 and 4.36, respectively; For these means, 5 is "Contributed Significantly," 3 is "Contributed Slightly," and 1 is "Did not Contribute." N/A and No Opinion responses were not included in the mean calculation).

Respondents were less likely believe that the Library Resources form caused them to take action in program review (mean = 2.18). They also did not feel that numerical ratings of program quality and need for resources (mean = 2.38) or the audit (mean = 2.43) contributed to the accomplishment of actions.

Figure 4. The extent to which each component contributed to the accomplishment of actions important to the quality of the program, as shown by frequency of responses.



For these means, 5 is "Contributed Significantly," 3 is "Contributed Slightly," and 1 is "Did not Contribute." N/A and No Opinion responses were not included in the mean calculation.

5. Do you have suggestions for how any of these components (previous page) could be improved?

- The difficult task of linking evaluation and assessment to program change (even small changes) is vital to making the process relevant and getting general department buy-in. Meeting with the dean was a very good idea. Maybe have the dean meet with the department to discuss the results in more detail.
- Since we were one of the first programs to do program review, I can hardly even remember the process. I do remember how valuable the external review was to the program.
- Our program review XXXX was incorporated in with other department reviews. In some ways this was a help since it avoided duplication of information. But, it also made it so accountability for each was less. Since we had done a major curricular overhaul recently, the information for the review was available. The larger issue of the needs for XXXX did not occur since the culture of the unit does not acknowledge these problems.
- Much that was done did not seem to add to our knowledge of our academic program. Past evaluation tools were ineffective with assessing current needs. After completing the process there appeared to be little support for change since the need for change was not effectively identified.
- The SWOT Analysis and External Review seem to make the most impact. The related documents are burdensome to gather and report.
- Simplify, simplify, simplify.
- For all the time and effort invested by faculty in this process, it would be gratifying if there were better follow-up and more tangible benefits realized from having done all this.
- Data from IR came late relative to the published deadlines, causing stress.

6. Do you have suggestions for adding a new component or deleting any of the above components?

- The links with the assessment plan were critical. We were able to have good data since we had followed our plan.
- Streamline, simplify, and reduce; excessive demands in such processes as this are a significant negative element about being a CMU faculty member, especially if the purpose seems only to complete and comply with a prescribed process, and if the outcome and benefits seem negligible. At some point, assessing and reviewing can become excessive and counterproductive, and I fear that CMU has crossed that line. Most faculty choose their careers because they want to teach and do research, and excessive review processes may substantially detract from such efforts.
- Some of the assessment-related questions seemed redundant. Please do not make it any longer. If anything is added, delete two things. Overall, the process was of some value and is a wholesome exercise. But it was also a substantial burden. There is no "extra" time to do this work, so OTHER THINGS DID NOT GET DONE while this was being done. In other words, some aspects of what the department does well were not done or done less well so that we could do this review instead. Please take this into account.

7. Was there any data that you needed that you did not have? If so, please list.

- I was not aware of the institutional data and the library resources form.
- Internal record keeping on graduate students. This is improving, but the overall lists often had inaccuracies--we couldn't look at where they were since we ourselves didn't track well.
- Data on Alums; Accurate data on majors and minors (this is now starting to appear on the IR web site but it was not available at the time).
- Big problems involved for interdisciplinary program. Very hard to get substantial input from all departments involved in the process.
- Better reporting of off campus SCH generation compared to on campus SCH.

8. How helpful were the program review workshops sponsored by Academic Affairs prior to undergoing review (April & October)?

While the majority of respondents did not attend (60%, or 15 respondents), all others believed the workshops helped to some extent. About 28% (7) felt that the workshops helped slightly, while 12% (3) felt they were very helpful in understanding how to conduct an effective program review.

9. What was the most valuable aspect of the Program Review workshops?

- The document about the program review process is very helpful. The workshop helped somewhat to the understanding of the process but most understanding was from the document itself.
- Attended with the doctoral review plan--that was helpful. Also, HEV provided us with a template to one of their reviews, so could see a "real" example.
- I did not know there were such workshops.
- Seeing the grim faces of other faculty members as APR was presented.
- Explanation and rationale of structure.
- Explaining the process to someone not familiar with it.
- Procedures and timeline.
- SWOT really gave a chance to discuss our situation.
- Discussing the process.

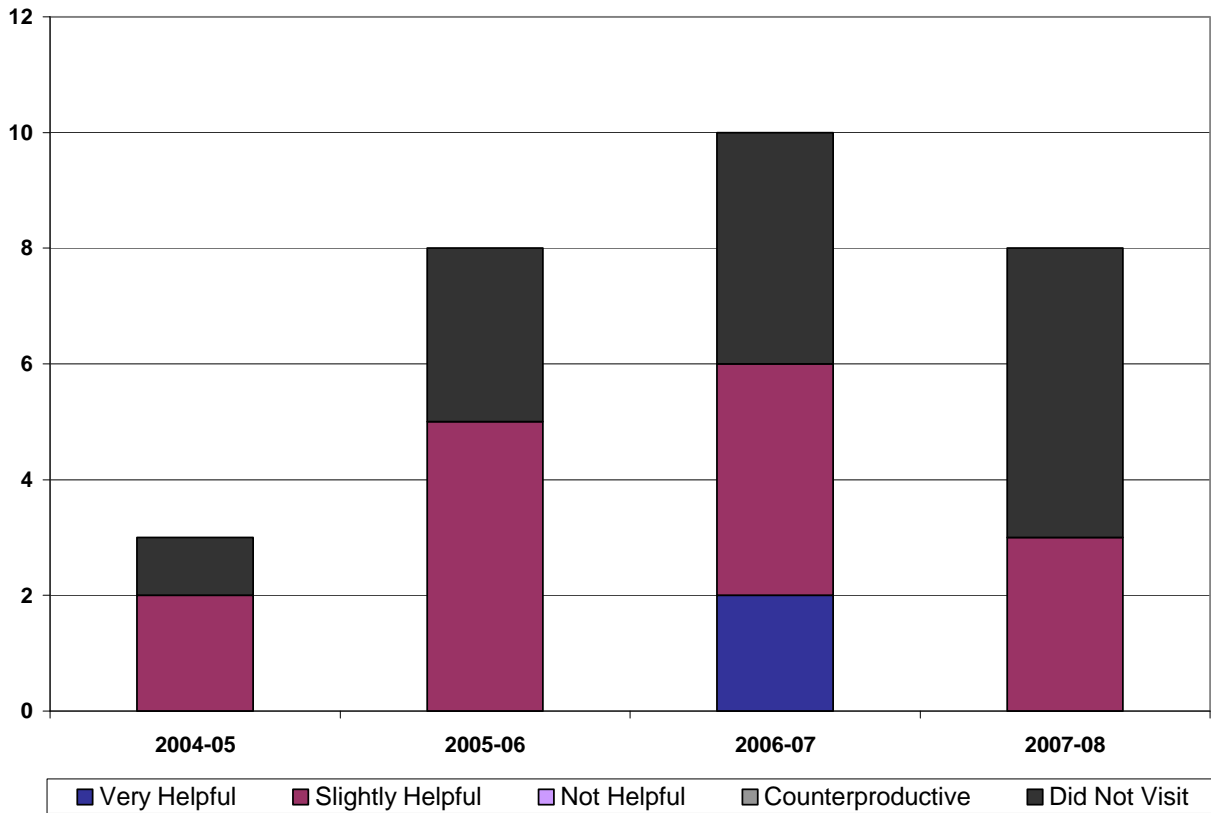
10. What advice would you give us as we plan for future Program Review workshops?

- Force deadlines in process.
- Have mentors available who have done this well in the past. Getting a chance to see how others approached would help.
- Involve every one who may be involved with program review instead of a select few.
- Perhaps, the University could invite the faculty to attend.
- I candid conversation with departments to use APR as part of tenure and promotion.
- Offer mid-process review.
- Perhaps more examples of actual program reviews.
- Continue, include representatives from programs that have gone through review.
- Stay the course.

11. How helpful was the program review website?
<http://academicaffairs.cmich.edu/programreview.shtml>

Nearly half of the respondents (48%, 12) believe the website is slightly helpful for program review, while another 44% (11) have not visited the site. The remaining 8% (2) felt it was very helpful in understanding program review.

Figure 5. Usefulness of website broken down by year of program review (frequency of responses).



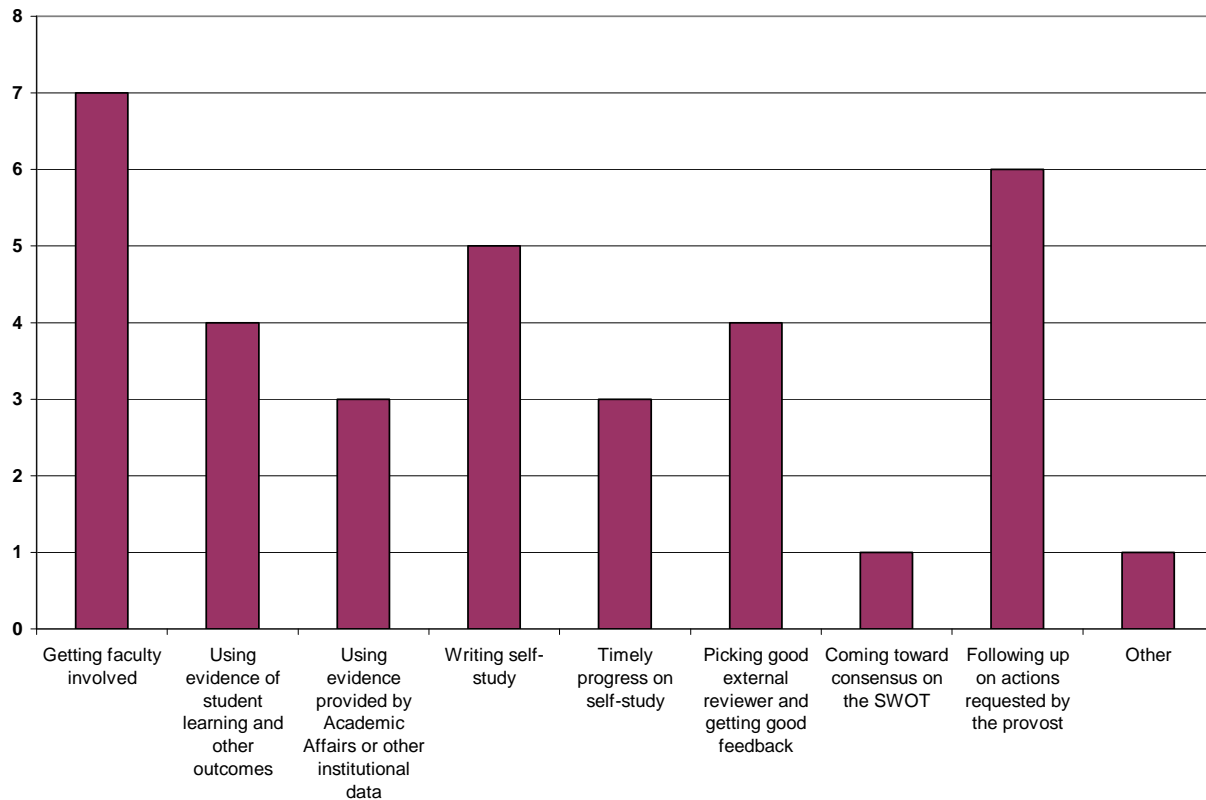
12. Do you have any suggestions to improve the program review website? If so, please list.

- Samples are good.
- I do not know about the website.
- The biggest challenge is finding the Provost's web site and then the program review web site. There should be a link from the Portal, but there is not.
- Perhaps, make the website better known as a resource for everyone who is working with the process.

13. If you have suggestions for how to improve program review in a specific area, please comment.

As Figure 6 shows, respondents suggestions for improvements in program review are most frequent for getting faculty involved in the process (7 comments) and following up on actions requested by the provost (6 comments). See the comments verbatim on the following pages.

Figure 6. Frequency of comments in various areas of program review.



Getting faculty involved

- Carrots and sticks. Assessment without these feels merely a burden.
- Unfortunately, some faculty will need incentives.
- Tie this to the by-laws so credit for this work is acknowledged. Service here not valued for tenure.
- Bylaw changes/updates.
- No one was enthusiastic; yet another burden.
- Horrendous waste of faculty time.
- Provide evidence of concrete positive results of other reviews.

Using evidence of student learning and other outcomes

- Suggested formats of desired data (for future planning if data aren't currently available).
- Add assessment plans to by-laws. They need some teeth. If you can get the deans to use as leverage it would help.
- The most successful program reviews probably had excellent assessment plans.

- Useful in grant applications.
- This could be a lot of work.

Using evidence provided by Academic Affairs or other institutional data

- More guidelines as to what can be provided.
- This data often was inaccurate--also from graduate studies. Need to keep internal records as well. Once started, it is easy to maintain.
- Good useful data.

Writing self-study

- A good sample will be helpful.
- Provide an on-line format so that multiple people can input data at any time.
- Samples.
- Difficult and burdensome.
- Lots of time and work.

Timely progress on self-study

- Should there be deadlines for certain parts to be due?
- LONG Process.
- More follow-up from Academic Affairs. May ask for sections to be completed at different times.

Picking good external reviewer and getting good feedback

- After department's recommendation of external reviewers, the Dean's office needs to approve or deny in a timely fashion.
- This seemed to be the best feature.
- Training needed for external reviewers.
- This was quite rewarding.

Coming toward consensus on the SWOT

- An interesting experience as this highlighted the various meanings departmental members had about how "good" we were. Data were good to confront these misconceptions.

Following up on actions requested by the provost

- Never saw anything after we submitted our separate information to department chair. Unsure of any outcomes.
- Good to track but no mechanism for faculty follow through.
- What happens if the Provost does not follow through on they commitment?
- Main problem is the reverse; provost & dean follow-up.
- Distinct impression that this was an afterthought.
- Need cooperation of Dean and Chair and provost's office to remind of expected actions.

Other

- Serious help needed for interdisciplinary programs - it doesn't matter what Academic Affairs says this is NOT a collaborative process where many are involved. It always comes to one person having to do the entire program review!

14. Your role: (please check all that apply)

Table 1. Respondent roles for those involved in program review.

Role	Response Count	Percentage of Total
Dean/Associate Dean	2	8.3%
Chair/Program Director	17	70.8%
Program faculty/staff	6	25.0%

15. Academic year in which your review(s) occurred: (please check all that apply)

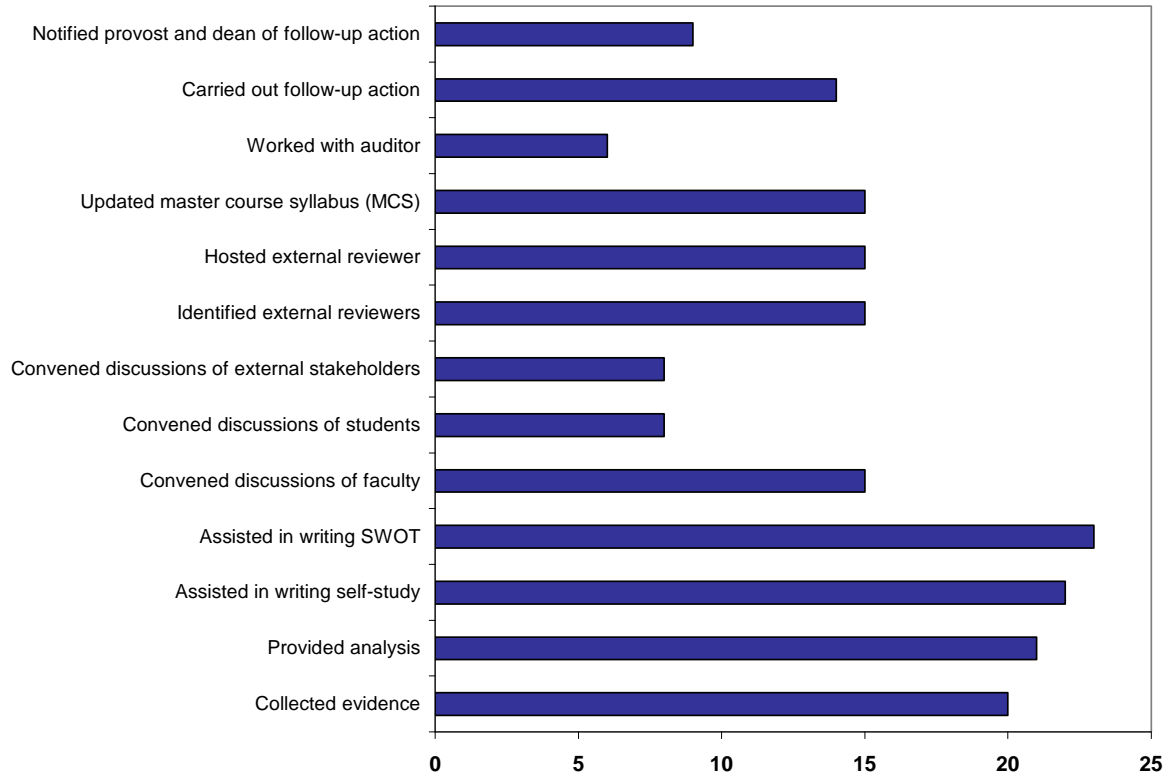
Table 2. The academic years in which respondents completed the program review process.

Academic Year	Response Count	Percentage of Total
2004-2005	3	12.5%
2005-2006	8	33.3%
2006-2007	10	41.7%
2007-2008	8	33.3%

16. Your role in the creation of the self-study: (please check all that apply)

The majority of respondents assisted with writing the SWOT (23), assisted in writing the self-study (22), or provided analysis (21). Only a few of the respondents worked with the auditor (6).

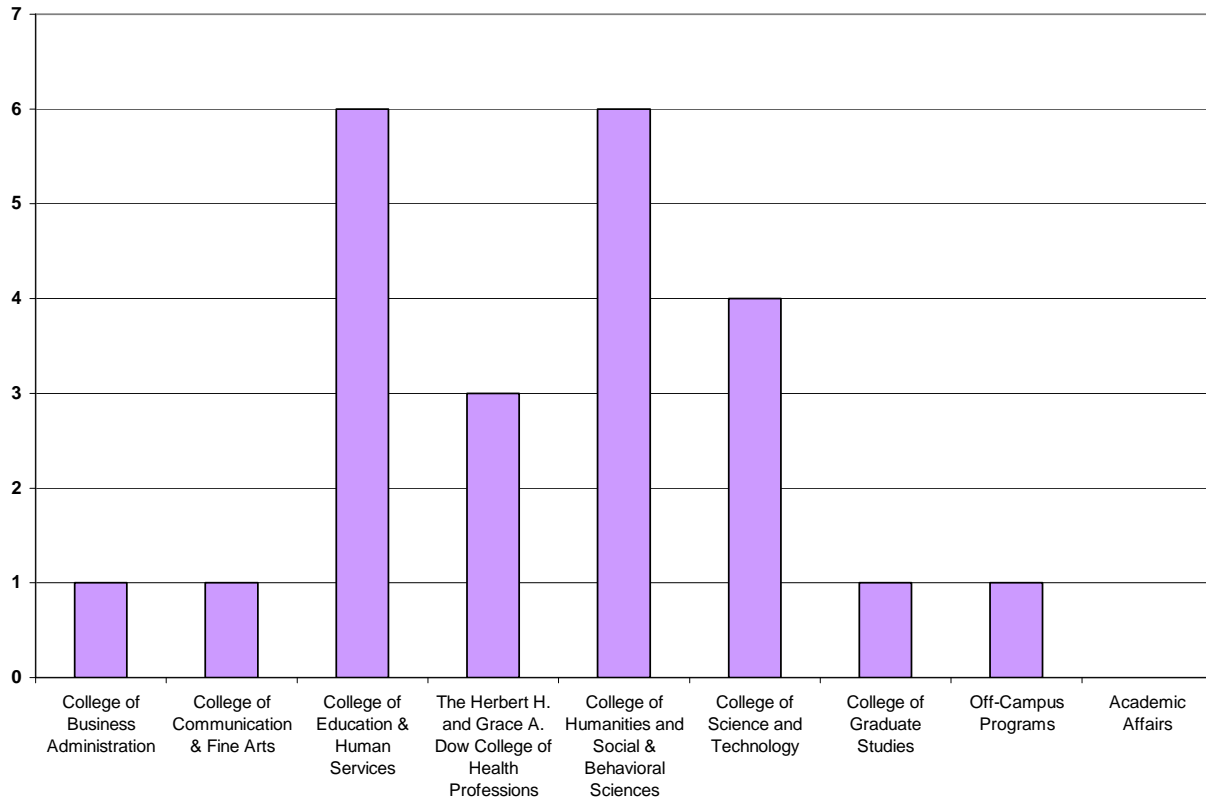
Figure 7. Respondents' roles in the self-study creation for their program.



17. Where is (are) the program(s) that was (were) reviewed housed? (please check all that apply)

Most of the responses indicate programs housed in the College of Humanities and Social & Behavioral Sciences (6) or the College of Education and Human Services (6). There were none housed in Academic Affairs.

Figure 8. Respondent identification of program location.



APPENDIX

Evaluating CMU's Academic Program Review Process

Greetings!

Our records indicate you participated in the review of an academic program between 2005 and 2008. Since we value your opinions on the ease of the process, we would like to offer you the opportunity to share with us ways it could be improved. As you will notice, this questionnaire has been divided into several categories to focus your attention on specific areas of program review:

- Strategic Objectives
- Evaluation of Specific Program Review Components
- Guidance for Programs Undergoing Review in the Future
- Background Demographics

We greatly appreciate any advice you can offer to assist us as we improve the process for future programs. At the end of the questionnaire, we hope you take a minute to write comments or provide additional feedback that others may find helpful.

Thank you for your participation!

Catherine Riordan
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

1. The goal of program review is to improve academic programs through the processes of collecting evidence relative to quality, shared reflection regarding a program's current status and future directions, and constructive feedback through peer and administrative review.

The following questions invite you to rate the extent to which program review was effective in achieving those goals for one or more programs in which you are involved:

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective	Counterproductive to achieving goals	Not Applicable (N/A)
Stimulating use of evidence in analyzing program quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focusing on student learning outcomes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leading to greater understanding of program by dean	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prompting meaningful <u>conversations</u> about program <u>quality</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prompting meaningful <u>conversations</u> about program <u>future</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<u>Planning</u> future of program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leading to <u>actions</u> by faculty in support of program quality and future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leading to actions by dean in support of program quality and future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leading to actions by provost in support of program quality and future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Evaluating CMU's Academic Program Review Process

2. While the focus of program review is improvement of a particular program, the process often provides a better understanding of opportunities that exist in a department as a whole.

The following questions ask you to rate the extent to which the process was effective in achieving better understanding of department needs:

	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not effective	Counterproductive to understanding needs	Not Applicable (N/A)
Stimulating use of evidence in analyzing department criteria	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Identifying strengths and weaknesses in departmental structures and responsibilities	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

1. Type of program review process:

- Full
- Abbreviated (program completed an agency-specified self-study)
- Modified (program completed unique self-study not associated with specialized accreditation)

1. Program review has a number of components.

To what extent did each component contribute to accomplishment of actions important to the quality of the program?

	This component contributed substantially	This component contributed slightly	This component did not contribute	No opinion	Not applicable (N/A)
Audit	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Dataset provided by Academic Affairs	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Self study process overall	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Specific criteria to be addressed in the self study	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Library Resources Form	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
External Review	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
SWOT	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Conversations with dean about the process	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Culminating interview	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Numerical ratings of program quality and need for resources	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Feedback from provost	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Follow up actions requested by provost	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Other follow up actions taken by faculty	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

Evaluating CMU's Academic Program Review Process

1. Program review has a number of components.

To what extent did each component contribute to accomplishment of actions important to the quality of the program?

	This component contributed substantially	This component contributed slightly	This component did not contribute	No opinion	Not applicable (N/A)
Audit	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Dataset provided by Academic Affairs	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Library Resources Form	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
External Review	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
SWOT	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Conversations with dean about the process	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Culminating interview	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Numerical ratings of program quality and need for resources	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Feedback from provost	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Follow up actions requested by provost	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Other follow up actions taken by faculty	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Feedback from accrediting body	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

1. Do you have suggestions for how any of the above components could be improved? (optional)

2. Do you have suggestions for adding a new component or deleting any of the above components? (optional)

3. Was there any data that you needed that you did not have? If so, please list. (optional)

Evaluating CMU's Academic Program Review Process

1. How helpful were the program review workshops sponsored by Academic Affairs prior to undergoing review (April & October)?

Very helpful

Counterproductive to understanding process

Slightly helpful

Did not attend (N/A)

Not helpful

2. What was the most valuable aspect of the Program Review workshops?

3. What advice would you give us as we plan for future Program Review workshops?

4. How helpful was the program review website?

(<http://academicaffairs.cmich.edu/programreview.shtml>)

Very helpful

Counterproductive to understanding the process

Slightly helpful

Did not visit the website (N/A)

Not helpful

5. Do you have any suggestions to improve the program review website?

If so, please list.

1. Some areas of program review may have been more challenging than others. If you have suggestions for how to improve program review in a specific area, please comment below. (optional)

Getting faculty involved

Using evidence of student learning and other outcomes

Using evidence provided by Academic Affairs or other institutional data

Writing self-study

Timely progress on self-study

Picking good external reviewer and getting good feedback

Coming toward consensus on the SWOT

Following up on actions requested by the provost

Other

Evaluating CMU's Academic Program Review Process

1. Your role: (please check all that apply)

- Dean or Associate Dean
- Chair or Program Director
- Program faculty or staff

2. Academic year in which your review(s) occurred: (please check all that apply)

- 2004-2005
- 2005-2006
- 2006-2007
- 2007-2008
- Don't remember

3. Your role in the creation of the self-study: (please check all that apply)

- Collected evidence
- Provided analysis
- Assisted in writing self-study
- Assisted in writing SWOT
- Convened discussions of faculty
- Convened discussions of students
- Convened discussions of external stakeholders
- Identified external reviewers
- Hosted external reviewer
- Updated master course syllabus (MCS)
- Worked with auditor
- Carried out follow-up action
- Notified provost and dean of follow-up action

4. Where is the program(s) that was(were) reviewed housed? (please check all that apply)

- College of Business Administration
- College of Communication & Fine Arts
- College of Education & Human Services
- The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow College of Health Professions
- College of Humanities and Social & Behavioral Sciences
- College of Science and Technology
- College of Graduate Studies
- Off-Campus Programs
- Academic Affairs