Looking in the Mirror:

Program Reviews and Self-Studies in International Education (GS066)
Program Reviews and International Education: Coping Strategies for “Newbies”

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May 28, 2009
The Profile

• New to the field of international education?
• As Director, are you wearing many administrative and/or faculty “hats” simultaneously?
• Do you have little to no support staff?
• Does your office have multiple responsibilities between academic functions and service orientations?
  – International Studies major/minor
  – Study Abroad
  – Incoming exchange students
  – Faculty-led programs
  – Undergraduate and/or graduate
  – International degree seeking students
  – Transnational internships and field experiences
  – Outgoing and incoming international faculty
  – Overall campus internationalization
Program Reviews: Where to Begin?

• Start and plan early!
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• And most importantly of all, start and plan early!
• Program reviews cannot be “winged”
Get Focused

• Obtain your institution’s specific program review guidelines; they vary widely
• If a multi-purpose office, determine exact scope of what is under review:
  – How well your office provides a service or services?
  – Integrity of an academic program?
  – Achievement of overall campus internationalization?
  – All of the above and then some?
• If single review process involves dramatically different evaluation criteria, external evaluators, etc…
• Consider negotiating with administration regarding scope/definition/emphasis of activities under review
Get a Handle on the Process

- Once scope is determined, gather and study completed program reviews from fellow campus units with similar orientations (study abroad = internship office)
- Also request from fellow international offices with similar missions at other institutions
- Search internet for ideas; many reviews are posted on-line
- Latter may also help generate preliminary candidate list for external consultants
Prepare a Time and Task Plan: Early Priorities

Determine information needed to draft a self-study (institution and reviewer dependent):
• Profile statistics
• Outcome assessment data
• Peer international office information

Establish a review process support structure:
• Use an existing or develop an ad hoc program review committee of stakeholders and supporters
  – Faculty
  – Campus partner offices administration/staff
  – Students
• If particularly short-staffed, also consider credit-bearing internships for advanced students interested in international education, project management, etc.
Prepare a Time and Task Plan: Early Priorities

**Begin researching external reviewer candidates:**

- The “best director from the best international education office in the country” is not necessarily the best reviewer for your office!
- Goal is constructive feedback; reviewer should be sensitive to your institution’s particular strengths and limitations based on profile and size
- Your institution will typically have a list of “peer institutions” as a place to start
- Consider a reviewer from a peer institution with an international education vision that you consider next growth stage for yours
- Ask around; network at NAFSA Regionals and other similar venues
Prepare a Time and Task Plan
Mid-Range Actions

Begin collecting and organizing information and data needed to draft review:

• What information/data already exists?
  – International Education Office
    • Annual Reports
    • Data from in-house surveys and focus groups
    • Data submitted to IIE Open Doors
  – Institutional Research
  – Other Academic Departments? (Foreign Languages, etc.)
  – Professional Training and Education/Continuing Education
  – Alumni Office

• What new information/data needs to be collected?
  – Surveys of peer or system institutions
  – Surveys and/or focus groups of students/faculty served
  – Alumni surveys

Mechanisms for gathering data
  – Get your committee to help!
  – Survey Monkey and other electronic programs
  – On campus Research Methods course project?

• Have never done it before? Time to establish your baseline!
Prepare a Time and Task Plan
Mid-Range Actions

Other tasks:
• Arrange for selected external consultants
• Schedule external consultants’ visits and get on all relevant campus parties’ schedules immediately
• Begin “warm up” meetings with your committee:
  – Review committee mandate
  – Explain review process
  – Divide responsibilities (keep on top of them!)
• Start drafting self-study; leave time for editing/revising
• Organize self-study support material
Prepare a Time and Task Plan
Final Stage (pre-visit)

• Submit self-study and support material to outside evaluators
• Reconfirm all logistics and visit appointments
• Take a deep breath, you’re almost there!
How Will A Review Help “Newbies”?

• Forced to take a step back:
  – Are we doing our job well according to nationwide international education standards? Where do we need to improve?
  – How do we work together as an office?
  – Where does my office fit in the big picture?
• The “ad hoc” committee may become a permanent support structure; enhanced working campus relationships and visibility at minimum
• Will launch “best practices” related to program outcome assessment/opportunity to initiate long-term data collection
• Survey and focus group feedback useful for internal improvement; internal advocacy and external marketing (with permission)
• Gathering data with current students and alumni strengthens bonds between them and the program
The Greatest Way It Helps?
You’re Not Alone in Believing in International Education!

Recent Focus Group Question:
“If the President of the university were sitting here right now, what would you tell her about your study abroad experience?”
Answer:

“COMPLETELY AMAZING!!!
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External Reviews of Study Abroad Offices

Kendall Brostuen
Brown University
May 28, 2009
Approaching the Review: Context is Everything

- Comprehensive international offices versus targeted offices
- Study abroad model assessed
  - Reciprocal exchange
  - Island programs
  - Third party providers
  - Hybrid integrated programs
The Bottom Line On Study Abroad Programs

• Academic rigor

• Pastoral care

• Emergency protocols

• Evaluation and assessment instruments
Who Are Your Champions?

• Senior leadership
  – Tying international programs to the academic mission
  
  – Financial wherewithal – staff and funding
  
  – Investing for the “long haul”
Talking the Talk/Walking the Walk

• Faculty are key
  – Your window to the students
  – Your loyal ally, nemesis or something in between?
  – Expanding the Choir... Indicators of Mobilization and Engagement
    • Your international faculty committee
    • International Learning Goals?
    • Incentivizing faculty
Why Put Yourself Through This?

• Advocacy/validation of your program
• Getting a piece of the pie
• Better serving your students//continuous quality improvement
• The Forum on Education Abroad’s “Standards of Good Practices”
Concluding Thoughts

“For a college or university to be internationalized, it requires a pervasive feeling and awareness that internationalization is an integral part of the day-to-day life of an institution. An international perspective must become the modus operandi for the way that administrators, faculty and students think and act.”

Maurice Harari, Chairman
World Association of International Studies (WAIS)
Stanford University
Looking in the Mirror:

Program Reviews and Self-Studies in International Education (GS066)
External Reviews of Offices of International Student & Scholar Services or Comprehensive Campus Internationalization

Stephen C. Dunnett, Ph.D.
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May 28, 2009
Process

• Obtain approval to conduct external review
• Determine scope of review – individual office, program or entire area of international education
• Identify number of potential external evaluator(s)/reviewer(s) (check references)
• Negotiate terms and dates with reviewer(s) (effective reviews require minimum 2 day visit)
• Send formal contract letter to evaluator(s), reviewer(s) with terms of reference of review
Process

• 6-8 weeks prior to external evaluator visit office/program should produce a comprehensive self-study report

• Self-study report should be sent to evaluator at least two weeks prior to campus visit along with annual reports, brochures, and other descriptive literature, policy statements, budgets, strategic plan for institution or office being reviewed.
Process

• At least 2 weeks prior to review visitation schedule should be set up & include following meetings and events:
  – Initial meeting with program/office director, vice provost or chief international education officer
  – Meetings with head of all related offices/programs if conducting comprehensive review
  – Meetings with all stake holders i.e.- staff, students, deans of schools and faculties who collaborate with office or use services, faculty/staff advisory committees, etc.
Process

– Meetings with provost and president (pre & post review)
– Meeting with staff of unit(s)
– Meeting with faculty in groups
– Tour of campus and office(s) being reviewed
Preparing the Self-Study Report: Mission and Vision

• Prepare a statement that delineates the unit/office/department/division’s mission and relationship to the institution’s overall mission

• Delineate the unit’s goals and objectives

• Articulate a vision for the unit
  – Where it would like to go and how it will get there (i.e.—financial, staff, space resources etc.)
Preparing the Self-Study Report: Identity

- Describe how the unit defines itself, what it is and what it is not
- Describe main areas, focus, services, populations served, etc.
- Describe staff and duties
- Describe reporting lines
- Describe unit needs and issues
- Provide a frank assessment of the issues, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the unit/division.
Preparing the Self-Study Report: Resources

• List all full-time & part-time professional and clerical staff with job descriptions
• List all part-time, student staff with job descriptions
• Provide copy of operating budget
• Provide copy of hiring plan
• Describe any deficiencies in staff
• Compare support staff in type and number with similar units in institution and to those of peer institutions
Preparing the Self-Study Report: Resources

- Delineate space by use/function. Indicate and discuss any deficiencies
- Describe and discuss equipment (computers, etc.)
- Provide comparison with similar units in home institution and at peer institutions
- Describe how central IT and other resources support the program, is infrastructure adequate?
Conducting the Review
The Site Visit

The external evaluators should (not all of these items will be relevant to all reviews):

• Conduct a through review of all aspects of the unit including mission, vision, SWOT statement, staff, services etc.

• Review all documentation, including self-study report, etc.

• Inspect offices & equipment

• Review unit’s budgetary resources, staff size and configuration, reporting lines etc.
Conducting the Review
The Site Visit

• Meet with staff, stakeholders, senior leadership etc. to gain insight into unit’s role and placement in the institution, goals and objectives, specific issues, future plans
• Conduct exit interviews with senior leadership to enlist buy-in
• Discuss areas to be highlighted in Review Report
• Establish due date for report
Some external reviews are less successful because:

– Lack of upper administration buy in
– Scope was either too broad or too narrow
– Ineffective evaluator (choose carefully/check references!)
– Terms of reference were vague or client had hidden agenda
– Self-study poorly prepared
– Unit/campus has unclear focus, mission or vision
– Review Report poorly prepared or did not make compelling case for unit
Looking in the Mirror:

Program Reviews and Self-Studies in International Education (GS066)
Program Reviews and Self-Studies in Comprehensive International Education Offices

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May 28, 2009
Program Reviews

• Why do one?
  – Mandated by institution or system?
  – Requested by International Office?
• Scope of review?
  – Focused review: International Office only
    (comprehensive office, international student and scholar office or study abroad office)
  – Institutional review: Role of internationalization across entire campus
• How often?
  – Typically, every five years
Goals

• International Office:
  – Opportunity to focus on “big picture” – past, present and future of International Education at your institution
  – Assess internationalization efforts across campus and in context of best practices within field of International Education
  – Highlight strengths and weaknesses – don’t assume you can identify these…you’re too close
Goals (continued)

• Institutional:
  – External reviewer has access to President and Provost and can place your institution within context of national trends in field of International Education
  – Self-Study and External Reviewer’s report adds credence to issues you’ve been fighting for (staffing, space, budget, scope of office, etc.)
  – Remember, you’re competing for resources (money, space, staff) and support (recognition, title, inclusion on committees, etc.)
Self-Study

• Overview of office and institutional commitment (or lack thereof) to internationalization
• Not the place to complain, make ultimatums, or attack other offices
• Important document—write it with the expectation that several people will read it beyond you and external evaluator (i.e. Provost, Deans, etc.)
• For a comprehensive office, the document will run 40-80 pages plus appendices
Preparation

• Establish scope, format, budget, and deadlines for Program Review and Self-Study with Provost and/or supervisor
• Start collecting information for Self-Study:
  – History and current state of internationalization on-campus
  – Personnel and facilities
  – Budgets (operating, staff, etc.)
  – Numbers (international students, study abroad, faculty/staff, etc.)
  – Programs and events
Preparation (continued)

- Meet with Institutional Advancement Office for data
- Establish *ad hoc* committee with following stakeholders and shareholders:
  - Selected International Office staff
  - Faculty
  - Administrators/Staff
  - Students (International and Study Abroad)
- Create survey instruments and discuss process with IRB
Timeline

• If conducting first-ever Program Review, allocate 1 year to complete entire process:
  – Find time in already busy schedule for a major project. If taken seriously, Program Review needs to be one of your top priorities for academic year.
  – Organize meetings with committee
  – Gather data and information
  – Coordinate an external reviewer’s visit
  – Build in a buffer. Do not underestimate the amount of time it will take to complete the Self-Study. Double your expected writing and editing time.
Costs

• What covered by Provost? International Office? Other offices?
• Find out procedure for payments
• Get an estimated invoice from external evaluator in advance of visit
• Budget
  – External evaluator: daily rate plus write-up days, travel costs, accommodation, and meals
  – Time: International Office staff
  – Committee: meal(s)
  – Printing/binding of Self-Study
External Reviewer – Selection

• Most important part of process
• Get recommendations from colleagues and from attending NAFSA and AIEA Conferences
• Contact potential external evaluators well in advance
• Talk to potential external evaluators on phone
• Discuss costs – no good to select someone you can’t afford
• Request curriculum vitae and brief biography – share with shareholders and stakeholders when setting up appointments during visit and also include in Self-Study as an appendix
External Reviewer – Visit

• Focused review – recommend two to three days minimum
• Set up multiple, small group meetings well in advance with shareholders and stakeholders:
  – Ad hoc committee
  – Faculty
  – Administrators/staff
  – Students (International and Study Abroad)
• Set up meetings with Provost and President at the beginning and end of visit
Results

• Objective assessment of International Office and guidance in instituting best practices in various areas (international students, study abroad, marketing/recruiting, faculty/staff, admissions, transfer credits, programs and events, etc.)
• Increased visibility on campus and within community
• New advocates for internationalization efforts
Results (continued)

- Possible **concrete** outcomes for International Office:
  - Increased staff
  - Increased budgets
  - New/improved/additional space
  - Improved technology and equipment
  - New institutional placement (i.e. reporting to Provost)
  - Office name and title changes
Suggestions

- Do a Program Review!
- Be open with your external reviewer
- Have realistic expectations
- Enjoy the process— you’ll learn a lot about yourself, your office and your institution even if you’ve been there a long time