Guidelines for the Visiting Committee’s Report

The goal of the external review is to help department’s maintain their current strengths and identify opportunities for growth and improvement. The review also provides departments the opportunity to reassess their goals, directions, and strengths in teaching, research, and service. The committee visit should focus on administrative, operational and programmatic functions of the department and not on the strengths or weaknesses of any one individual.

The visiting committee report is based on a review of the department’s self-study report and supplemental materials, as well as information acquired through meetings with department faculty and staff, students, and faculty affiliated with the department. Visiting committee members do not observe classes or evaluate individual faculty or student work.

The committee report should address:

- The extent to which the department’s mission and goals are aligned with the College mission
- The effectiveness of the department in fulfilling its mission and goals
- The extent to which the structure and offerings in the department are consistent with national trends in the discipline
- The extent to which department resources meet needs and are being used effectively
- The extent to which the department’s future goals are reasonable given its mission and the College mission

The committee report should include:

- An explanation of the procedures followed by the visiting committee
- An evaluation of the evidence included in the Briefing Book
- An outline of the strength and weaknesses of the department
- Recommendations about curriculum, resources, and internal operations of the department where appropriate

The Chair of the visiting committee should ensure that the report has not:

- Been written in a highly prescriptive manner
- Named individuals, either in praise or blame
- Focused on trivial issues
- Suggested changes that necessitate a significant increase in resources
- Advocated the personal educational theories of any of the team members

Prepared by Kathleen Harring, Associate Dean for Institutional Assessment
March 13, 2009