



OFFICE OF
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



Office of Assessment & Academic Program Review

State of APR Affairs Report

**Fall 2021 - Spring 2022
22 July 2022**

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APR Initiatives

All but one AY2021-2022 APRs were conducted in-person on site. The transition back to face to face meetings was seamless and successful. In November 2021, the office’s current APR Specialist was promoted to Institutional Researcher and a newly hired APR Specialist took over the remaining APRs. The APR Manual received updates, making it the 9th edition. These amendments included a modification to *Criterion 5: Faculty*, and revisions to *Criterion 6: Research, Scholarship, & Service* by the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR).

A new APR mid-cycle review process was successfully enacted, providing programs and leadership an opportunity to reflect and discuss actions/changes since the previous APR and providing insight on key metrics moving forward.

Great progress has been made toward the General Education Program Review (GEPR). The manual is near finalization and approval, with an anticipated late Summer 2022 completion. A timeline has been established with a target of Spring 2024 site-visit. Current phase includes completion of GEPR materials and identifying key personnel charged with overseeing the self-study report and site-visit preparations/decisions.

This year the office conducted a reflection survey with previous APR chairs and department administrators. Edits were made to current APR materials such as the orientation ppt and itinerary template to incorporate their feedback.

Lastly, the format of the APR report itself (this report) was modified this year.

Main Campus Program Reviews

Fall 2021 APRs	Spring 2022 APRs	APR Mid-Cycles
Health, Exercise, and Sports Sciences	Theatre & Dance	Biology
Special Education	Combined BA/MD Program	Latin American Studies
Optical Science & Engineering Program	Teacher Education, Educational Leadership & Policy	Spanish & Portuguese
Communication & Journalism		Physics & Astronomy
Economics		

Summary of Review Team Reports for AY2021-2022

The section below summarizes the collective views and recommendations of this year's review teams. Each team produces a report specific to the academic program they reviewed. Links to each report can be found on the last page.

Curriculum

UNM programs' curricula were recognized by review teams for their comprehensive, flexible, and hands-on approaches to meeting the needs of students and communities. Curricula cover the broad interest and expertise of faculty and utilize assessment reports for adjustments. Some programs were commended for embedding various community contexts (i.e. social justice, equity, cultural responsiveness, bilingualism, economic inequities, and rural) throughout coursework.

It was recognized that student enrollment numbers are lower than pre-pandemic. Review teams suggested departments review program tracks and course offerings to reduce faculty burden and improve program efficiency by eliminating options that have fewer student registrations. While many programs offer a commendable robust selection for students, it may be unsustainable with current faculty numbers. Some reviewers pointed out how many courses overlap for different program tracks, possibly causing confusion that results in friction for collaborations. Reviewers advised this should be reviewed and revised to improve communication and functionality of curriculum and instruction.

"The number of undergraduate curricular tracks within the Communication major appears to be more than is necessary to serve student needs."

C&J Review Team

Review teams highlighted the need for greater research opportunities, student projects, theory to practice assignments, and cross-campus integration and collaboration should be built into curriculum to enhance student experiences, skill development, and program effectiveness. Teams suggested a well-organized and centralized hub for students and faculty to learn and share research and other opportunities and to improve communication with students as well as student schedule planning. Reviewers noted communication channels may need updates such as course catalogs, websites, and student handbooks.

"Undergraduate students want knowledge about research as well as the opportunity to participate. They identified a lack of a central resource to identify faculty research project as a detriment to pursuing opportunities."

BAMD Review Team

Additionally, APR meetings with students and faculty revealed how some courses are offered on a rotation. While these strategies combat faculty shortages and smaller enrollment, reviewers stated it may affect "time to graduation" and complicate student attempts to map out their courses and degree plans. They iterated keeping advisement staff in the loop and prioritizing major/career objectives for first year students in order to help with course sequencing, while reducing the burden on students and supporting graduation timelines.

Assessment and Data

Across all APRs, reviewers report assessment is systematically completed as required by the institution but fluctuates in usage. Based on the collective findings of review teams, some programs utilize assessment to inform decisions for program improvements and adjustments better than others. It has been suggested efficiencies need to be built into the process to provide greater information that could assist assessing time to graduation, in seeking funding, and identifying effective distant or online teaching/learning methods since the past few years were mostly held online for all programs. Reviewers highlighted that some departments included a program survey in addition to end of course surveys; review teams agreed that surveying students on their experience in the program would be informative to program planning and effectiveness. One review team suggested linking assessment to funding growth to increase participation efforts and support of the process. Reviewers noted for department specific assessment structures (i.e. Tk20), part-time instructors could be better involved and trained.

“As SLO requirements continue, we recommend programs move toward appropriate SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time Bound) goals to evaluate students and program effectiveness.”
HESS Review Team

Students

Across all programs under review, reviewers reported unanimously that students felt greatly supported by faculty and staff. In the APR meetings with students, it was revealed that overall students were satisfied with their experiences, resources, and engagement. Many graduate students successfully participate in presentations, publications, scholarships, and research opportunities. Nonetheless, graduate students registered a desire for more equitable sharing of opportunities and longevity of support. For some programs, graduate students stated that financial support fell short of needs and were sporadic from year to year, making it difficult to

“It is essential that, at the time of admission, a student is offered some form of financial support... for at least the first year of his/her graduate studies, to entice the student to seriously consider accepting the offer.”

Optical Science Review Team

plan for the next semester. Review teams suggested that departments should plan GA support beyond the first year and to increase stipends, even at the expense of reducing total awards, to remain competitive at recruiting and retaining students. Both graduate and undergraduate students requested greater exposure to research projects and travel support for conferences.

Reviewers also stated there is opportunity to strengthen various program pipelines from solidifying articulation agreements with community colleges and branch campuses, as well as undergraduate to graduate programs. While many programs have built in such strategies, targeted efforts and prioritizing of underrepresented students may be a chance to reinforce communication channels. Review teams suggested some programs consider a structural change to eliminate constraints that dampen student interest, such as: reduce high credit hours/GPA requirements, review prerequisite system for reduction or clarity, and enhance organizational mechanisms of communicating requirements to students to increase attractiveness.

Students also discussed a desire for curriculum collaborations with other programs to enhance their own learning experiences and career interests, in particular integration between Theatre and Film & Digital Arts. The review team for Theatre & Dance noted that students in some programs

“Given the burgeoning film industry in [NM], students in all areas asked for better integration between the Department and the Film & Digital Arts Department. The student organizations in each department have worked together to support cross disciplinary projects.”

Theatre & Dance Review Team

feel resources are disproportionately available across campus; for example, some programs are housed in dated facilities with limited multi-purpose spaces, obsolete or hand-me-down equipment, and limited funding for student projects. Dance students requested equitable access to trainers and physical therapy, comparable to what student athletes experience.

Faculty

Reviewers identified UNM faculty as resourceful, innovative, and of high quality. Faculty bring years of expertise and vast knowledge and personal interest, contributing to the different directional needs of students, the community, and academia. Reviewers have commended faculty for their productivity, diversity in research, accomplishments, and dedication, and support for their students.

Reviewers highlighted that students do not feel that faculty accomplishments and services are marketed well across UNM campus, to the community, or to the state. Students and reviewers agreed there is opportunity to better showcase faculty through websites, events, and other communication networks. Reviewers believe such efforts would increase visibility, benefiting recruitment, the university, and community support.

Reviewers reported that for some programs that faculty numbers were lower compared to peer institutions and under further examination teaching and service loads were higher than expected, making it difficult for other professional activities and research endeavors. Reviewers also noted reliance on part-time instructors may foster inconsistency in instruction.

“Interviews with faculty... indicate a strong dedication to the program but a concern that the current demands on faculty is leading to a low morale. ...faculty members shared ... that the program and students would benefit from having full time faculty... instead of hiring part-time or adjunct faculty members”
TEELP Review Team

With budget constraints, vacancies, and prospective retirements, reviewers recommended programs and leadership should review current hiring plans and engage faculty in the annual process to balance T/TT faculty and adjunct faculty needs and to prepare for replacing senior faculty to maintain program strength. Reviewers acknowledged the limitations on resources allocated to faculty lines, competitive salaries and internal funding for research and professional development. Yet they advocated that leadership prioritize effective faculty retention, recruitment, and promotion. Reviewers also mentioned there is opportunity to clarify and

communicate expectations for tenure and promotions. Some of the programs have an effective junior faculty mentorship that could serve as a model for other programs.

Research, Scholarship, & Service

UNM faculty were recognized for their excellent research, volume of publications, and creative works by reviewers. Some faculty are very active in service and it was highlighted during the APRs the impact they have on local/regional/national communities. Cross-campus collaborations were emerging for research projects and are encouraged to continue and expand across more programs.

While some programs have adequate staff to oversee grant management, some review teams reported additional support staff are needed in other programs to be sufficient.

“The limited lab space and outdated equipment hinders EXSC faculty from conducting/disseminating research.”
HESS Review Team

“Current staff are stretched too thin to assist faculty with identifying research opportunities and post-award grant support.”

Economics Review Team

Reviewers observed that some faculty have greater burdens in managing their own grants and need updated research equipment and software to continue high quality research.

Voicing students’ desire for more research opportunities, reviewers suggested standardization built into curriculum and systematically creating GA/RA positions for research endeavors. Reviewers believe increasing opportunities and participation would enhance preparation for graduate studies, especially for BA/MD into SOM. For units with fewer or more narrow research opportunities review teams recommended that collaborating with departments with strong grant raising could be promising.

For faculty who assist on sponsored projects but are not PIs, reviewers advised strengthening tracking and recognition mechanisms that build awareness within the college and university. Improving recognition could better position the institution in spheres of influence within the state and nation.

“Consideration should be given to how the expertise, research, scholarship, services, and national recognition can be used to better position the college and university in spheres of influence within the state and nationally.”

Special Education Review Team

One APR revealed that some faculty do not feel incentivized to apply for grants due to lack of leadership support and compensation concerns. In addition to hiring grant support staff, reviewers suggested greater flexibility in faculty workloads and inclusion of grant work in promotion consideration could encourage wider participation from faculty members.

Peer Institutions

Review teams commented that the peer institutions selected for comparison have significantly greater enrollment, faculty numbers, and larger budgets, faculty at UNM are generally

performing at or beyond peer levels, producing excellent graduates and high-quality research. UNM has great potential to grow.

Resources and Planning

The resources available and needs vary across reviewed programs. Reviewers noted that with limited budgets, programs utilized their faculty and staff to maximum levels. While the dedication and high-level performance is commendable, the additional burdens of coverage needs are a concern for burnout and growth opportunities. Some review teams identified additional staffing is required for program efficiency or to support grant administration. Other review teams identified replenishing faculty that have departed UNM or are preparing for upcoming retirements. Reviewers also shared methods to increase revenue streams, such as creating additional program certificates or online tracks. For programs with sufficient faculty and staff levels, reviewers advised a focus on re-branding to improve program visibility and attractiveness. Others highlighted the need for increasing discretionary funds for professional development or GA/TA support.

Facilities

Many of the recent renovations and construction provide superior spaces for instruction, meetings, and other uses by faculty, staff, and students. Only a few of the facilities discussed in the most recent APRs raised serious concerns.

“...the Department’s facilities were amazing when built in the ‘70’s. Since then, updating has been sporadic and basic. ...the pandemic accelerated the development of systems designed for remote collaboration in professional settings but students are unable to take advantage of these developing technologies”

Theatre & Dance Review Team

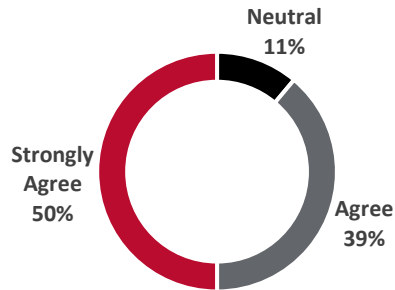
Theatre & Dance’s current facilities are dated to the 70s and new modernized equipment is necessary to attract students and keep up with the industry. Due to the age of facilities, there were also ADA compliance concerns and funding concerns to meet expected standards. Hokona Hall as well as Carlisle Gym are in need of plumbing and heating upgrades. Technology in the older buildings also appear to be limited. Students request more multi-purpose spaces for meetings, such as for student projects, maker spaces, and having group lunches.

APR Mid-Cycles

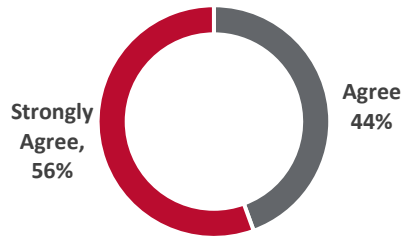
Spring 2022 is the first semester implementing the new process. Mid-cycle discussions examined key metrics that provided insight to a program’s performance, structure, and progress/changes made since the last APR. Conversations also discussed necessary support and guidance for targeted goals before the next APR. Meetings included department leadership, the OA/APR office, and college and university leadership. New documentation of this process includes Key-Indicators and Mid-Cycle Check-in form; both are uploaded to the repository under the program’s latest APR.

Reviewer Feedback: Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 Visits

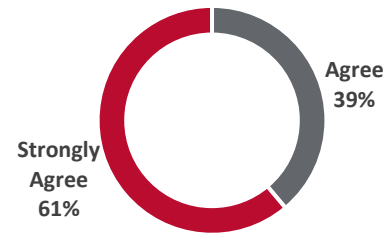
The OA/APR solicits survey responses from all reviewers. This year 18 of 24 surveys were completed. Some reviewers advised they wish they knew more of what to expect in the site-visit. The OA/APR has created a Reviewer's Guide to enhance consistency of orientation.



I made observations that would be useful in my own institution, college, and/or department/program



Serving as a reviewer was a meaningful experience



I was prepared for my role and responsibilities as a reviewer

“ My department has already borrowed some of the practices used at UNM.

“ I appreciated the interaction with the other reviewers. It was useful, as faculty in [xxx department], to get a perspective on another department. And also to learn about the view students have regarding their interaction with [xxx department].

“ I would have liked to have had more 1 on 1 discussions with individual faculty members. Of course, this would have required an additional day.

“ The APR Office were very helpful and organized throughout the entire process. They provided all materials I needed for the review. [One program chair] was especially welcoming and organized. She made us feel at home.

“ Materials supplied were well done.

“ It would be useful for reviewers to [have information] from past reviewers on the process and what to expect. Departments and programs could also give feedback on the process and what were the most useful aspects of the review to share with new reviewers.

Appendix A – Reviewer Survey

Fall 2021 / Spring 2022 Reviewer Survey

Please take 5 minutes to answer the following questions. These responses will be used to improve the APR process for reviewers & units.

1. Which unit/department did you serve as a reviewer for?
2. I made observations that would be useful in my own institution, college, and/or department/program. (Likert) Please provide a rationale for your rating.
3. Serving as a reviewer was a meaningful experience. (Likert) Please provide a rationale for your rating.
4. I was prepared for my role and responsibilities as a reviewer. (Likert) Please provide a rationale for your rating.
5. Please provide any additional thoughts and feedback:

Links

Health, Exercise, and Sport Sciences

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/186/

Special Education

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/189/

Optical Science & Engineering Program

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/6/

Communication & Journalism

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/187/

Economics

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/190/

Theatre & Dance

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/191/

Combined BA/MD Program

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/192/

Teacher Education, Educational Leadership & Policy

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/189/

Biology

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/87/

Latin American Studies

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/42/

Spanish & Portuguese

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/76/

Physics & Astronomy

https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_acad_program_review/8/