

THE GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATIONS

# GRE

## Program Review Practices of University Departments

Mary Jo Clark

GRE Board Research Report GREB No. 75-5aR

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## **Abstract**

The report summarizes questionnaire responses from 454 university department heads concerning the information that was collected in the most recent self-study or review of their departments and their judgments about the importance of collecting each information element for (1) internal department use for program planning and improvement, (2) university use for department monitoring and decisions about resource allocation, and (3) judgments by external groups such as accrediting agencies or state coordinating boards.

More than 70 percent of the respondents indicated likely or possible use of a common form to obtain information and opinions from students, faculty, or alumni when undertaking future departmental self-studies. Differences in "importance" judgments about information elements by department heads in different disciplines or different kinds of universities did not appear to be sufficient to require different data collection procedures in these settings.

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As a first step in possible developmental efforts to assist departments in conducting self-studies and program reviews, this survey was designed to determine what information departments usually collect in a self-study and the kinds of information department heads think should be available for decision making at the level of the department, the university, and an external agency. Opinions were obtained from department heads in a number of different academic disciplines, rather than asking deans to speak for the departments, and the interest of department heads in the use of some common data collection procedures was assessed. Evidence was sought of the extent to which departmental practices and interests varied among different types of universities and different disciplines.

## Procedures

The questionnaire concerning departmental review or self-study practices (see Appendix) was developed after extensive review of available materials (e.g., McMichael, 1973; CGS Task Force on Internal Evaluation of Graduate Programs; accrediting association reports) and consultation with deans and department heads at selected universities. The collection and potential use of perceptual and judgmental data from those most directly associated with a department—students, faculty members, and alumni—were emphasized, since these sources of information had been endorsed by a panel of graduate school deans (Clark, 1973) but appeared to lag well behind the use of measures such as degrees granted, teaching loads, and faculty publications. Responses were requested to reflect both current and desirable practices concerning the collection of each kind of information.

Four copies of the questionnaire were sent to the graduate dean at a 50 percent random sample of Council of Graduate Schools member universities. The deans were asked to distribute the questionnaires to heads of departments that offered both graduate and undergraduate degree programs and who had some first-hand experience with program review. Requests to participate in the study were sent to 168 graduate deans; one or more usable questionnaires were received from 134 universities for a participation rate of about 80 percent. Questionnaire returns from department heads, based on the distribution of four copies at each university, amounted to about 70 percent from all universities that were contacted or 87 percent from the 134 universities that were known to have distributed the questionnaires. Eight graduate deans replied that they could not participate in the study. Although not every respondent answered every question, fewer than 10 questionnaires had to be omitted because of inadequate or inappropriate responses. A total of 454 usable questionnaires were included in the data analyses.

## Results

The departmental setting and program review experience of the questionnaire respondents are given separately according to three university types as indicated in Table 1. Respondents are individual department heads; as many as four responses may come from the same university. Universities are grouped according to a classification developed by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1973). Research Universities include the 100 leading universities in terms of federal financial support in 1969-70 or the leading institutions in terms of the total number of Ph.D.'s awarded in 1960-70. Doctoral-Granting Universities include other universities that awarded at least 10 Ph.D.'s in 1969-70. Comprehensive Universities and Colleges offered liberal arts and at least one professional or occupational program, but lacked a doctoral program or had an extremely limited doctoral program in 1969-70.

Table 1 indicates that the three types of universities are represented about equally in the results and that about 6 out of 10 respondents in each category are at publicly controlled institutions. About two-thirds of the respondents reported that their departments had conducted a self-study in the last three years, and more than 80 percent indicated that they were personally involved in (i.e., had first-hand knowledge of) the most recent review. This most recent review almost always included the graduate programs (more than 80 percent) and usually (60 percent) included the department's entire academic program. The primary purpose of the most recent review was almost evenly divided between departmental use, requested by university officials, and requested by an outside agency. Though the departments represented in the three types of universities differed in the highest degree awarded and in size, with Research Universities mostly represented by Ph.D. programs in large departments while Comprehensive Universities and Colleges were represented by smaller and mostly master's-level programs, their patterns of departmental review appear to be quite similar. If anything, respondents from Comprehensive Universities and Colleges appear to have had somewhat more recent and more frequent experience with self studies, particularly when requested by outside agencies.

The respondents represented about 80 different academic disciplines. To evaluate possible differences in the views of department heads from different disciplines, the departments were grouped into four categories: humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and professional fields. Humanities included all languages and literature, philosophy, religion, speech, fine arts, music, and dramatic arts. Social sciences included geography, anthropology, economics, history, government, psychology, and sociology. Natural sciences included all of the biological sciences, chemistry, physics, geology, and mathematics. Profes-

**Table 1. The Departmental Setting and Program Review Experience of Questionnaire Respondents (in percentages)**

Characteristic	Research Universities I & II (N=156)	Doctoral-Granting Universities I & II (N=123)	Comprehensive Universities and Colleges I & II (N=175)
University control:			
Public	69	58	62
Private	31	42	28
NA	—	—	10
Departmental academic area:			
Humanities	19	15	14
Social Sciences	26	28	18
Natural Sciences	29	30	27
Professional Fields	25	27	41
Highest degree awarded:			
Ph.D.	94	79	22
Master's	6	21	78
Number of faculty:			
1-10	11	15	38
11-20	31	43	39
21-30	22	24	14
over 30	36	18	9
Most recent review in:			
1974, 1975, or 1976	67	67	77
Earlier	33	33	23
Program levels reviewed:			
Entire academic program	54	65	60
Graduate programs only	28	22	22
Undergraduate programs or no answer	18	13	18
Purpose of review:			
For departmental use	35	41	39
Requested by university officials	37	47	28
Requested for an outside agency	31	33	55
Respondent personally involved in the review: yes	81	88	91
Number of departmental reviews in the last 10 years: 3 or more	35	41	55

**Note:** University classifications from Carnegie Commission, 1973; N's are department heads from these types of universities. A few technical institutes have been included with Comprehensive Universities and Colleges.

sional fields included all departments of education, engineering, and business and a few responses from department heads in fields such as architecture, agriculture, forestry, home economics, veterinary medicine, and law.

Table 1 indicates that the distribution of respondents according to these groupings of fields is about the same in the three types of universities, except that more professional fields and fewer social science fields are represented in Comprehensive Universities and Colleges. The larger proportion of professional fields at Comprehensive Universities and Colleges may be related to the fact that most of these respondents represent master's-level programs and may also be associated with more program reviews for outside agencies at this type of university.

The general conclusion from Table 1 is that the respondents appear to represent a good balance of departments in relation to the three major types of universities. Therefore, all respondents are included in an overview of the results of

the survey concerning departmental review practices and preferences presented in Table 2. An examination for differences according to university type will be reported later.

Only department heads who had first-hand knowledge of the most recent departmental review were invited to indicate the kinds of information that were collected as a part of that review. Eighty-seven percent reported personal involvement; therefore, the number of responses on which the percentages in the first column of Table 2 are based is slightly smaller than the total number of usable questionnaires that provide the base for columns 2 through 4.

The first column in Table 2 indicates the percentage of departments that collected each kind of information in its most recent review, regardless of the purpose of that review. Information collected by more than 75 percent of the departments included the personal and professional characteristics of faculty, faculty judgments about available resources, number of degrees granted, budgetary support, first-year enrollments in graduate programs, faculty/student ratio, and student judgments about the quality of teaching. Relatively few departments collected other information concerning faculty subjective opinions about the department.

Columns 2 through 4 of Table 2 report the percentage of department heads who indicated that each kind of information is "very important" for one of three specific purposes—individual department improvement, use in university decisions, and use in judgments by agencies outside the university. Other response options included "some importance" as well as "not important;" therefore, only the highest level of endorsement is reported here. In general, most of the items were perceived to be important for individual department use, with somewhat less enthusiasm for the use of some of them at the university level, and only a few items highly endorsed for use by external agencies.

If both "very important" and "some importance" responses are considered, more than 90 percent of the respondents endorsed all but information about faculty community service as useful at the individual department level. The same high proportion gave some encouragement to use at the university level of all items except faculty community service, student post-degree employment plans, information about student dropouts, and alumni publications.

When considering information for the use of external agencies, more than 30 percent said that faculty community service was "not important;" more than 20 percent also gave "not important" responses to number of student credit hours produced, student postdegree employment plans, and information about dropouts. Only the personal and professional records of faculty, faculty judgments about available resources, faculty/student ratio, number of degrees granted per year, and budgetary support for the department were supported by more than 90 percent of the respondents as of at least some importance to outside agencies. Not surprisingly, these are also the kinds of information departments most often collect, since they are considered important regardless of the purpose of the program review.

An examination of departmental review practices and preferences by type of university indicated only occasional

**Table 2. Departmental Review Practices and Preferences (in percentages)**

Kinds of Information	"Yes," information was collected by department (N=393) <sup>1</sup>	Percentage who said the information is "very important" for:		
		Individual department use (N=454) <sup>2</sup>	University decisions (N=454)	External judgments (N=454)
<b>From or about faculty</b>				
a. Personal characteristics (highest degree, experience, rank, tenure, etc.)	95	68	71	77
b. Professional activities (office held, speeches, honors and awards, research grants, etc.)	91	67	67	62
c. Professional productivity (publications, inventions, artistic performances, etc.)	94	78	77	73
d. Community service (offices held, honors and awards, etc.)	74	29	27	21
e. Teaching performance (student course evaluations, etc.)	70	77	61	39
f. Distribution of time to various professional activities (teaching, advising, research and writing, administration, etc.)	73	51	46	30
g. Satisfaction with employment conditions (ratings of department leadership, morale, participation in decision making, etc.)	45	58	45	26
h. Judgments about the departmental learning environment (ratings of intellectual climate, student/faculty relationships, whether or not policies are administered fairly and equitably, etc.)	54	65	50	34
i. Judgments about available resources for learning (adequacy of library, laboratories, computer, etc.)	80	68	61	63
j. Other	08	09	06	07
<b>From department records</b>				
a. Faculty/student ratio by level	81	65	62	53
b. Number of degrees granted per year by each degree program	95	63	58	44
c. Amount of financial assistance available to students by level	60	54	47	30
d. Student credit hours produced by level	70	50	48	25
e. First-year enrollments in graduate programs	82	59	47	29
f. Budgetary support	86	80	70	55
g. Other	03	06	05	05
<b>From or about students</b>				
a. Characteristics by level (profile or origins, ages, academic aptitude, concurrent employment, financial assistance, etc.)	49	48	37	30
b. Judgments about the quality of teaching in the department (ratings of general level of faculty helpfulness, knowledge, teaching ability, etc.)	76	77	57	44
c. Judgments about the departmental learning environment (student/faculty relationships, whether or not policies are administered equitably, competition among students, etc.)	59	64	45	34
d. Judgments about assistantships and other departmental forms of financial assistance (administration, contribution to learning, etc.)	55	49	37	24
e. Satisfaction with program (would recommend the program to others with similar interests, providing good training for anticipated career, etc.)	61	69	48	35
f. Postdegree employment plans	50	50	24	22
g. Exit interview or survey data on dropouts (timing, reasons, etc.)	20	38	23	16
h. Other	03	04	03	03
<b>From alumni</b>				
a. First jobs of graduates, and relationship to educational program	54	56	34	28
b. Publications and other professional products of graduates	26	36	27	20
c. Judgments of recent alumni about the character and quality of the program (climate for learning, placement help, academic excellence, etc.)	40	58	41	29
d. Other	03	04	02	02

<sup>1</sup>Number of respondents who had first-hand knowledge about the most recent departmental review.

<sup>2</sup>All respondents.

**Note:** See questionnaire (Appendix) for specific instructions to respondents.

differences of any significance. For instance, department heads at Research Universities assigned somewhat more importance to faculty productivity than did department heads at Comprehensive Universities and Colleges, while the latter attached somewhat more importance to faculty judgments about their satisfaction with employment conditions and faculty judgments about the departmental learning environment. Departments in Comprehensive Universities and Colleges also were more likely to collect information about the postdegree plans of their students and to attach importance to this information, especially for use at the department level. These department heads also attached more importance to information about the first jobs of graduates and to alumni opinions about the character and quality of the program. In contrast, department heads at Research Universities attached less importance to student/faculty ratio or number of student credit hours produced than did their counterparts at less prestigious institutions. Most of these differences appear to reflect reasonable differences in the types of programs represented at the different universities (e.g., Ph.D. vs. master's, research scholar vs. professional orientation, and size). They do not appear to be sufficient to require different data collection procedures to meet the needs of departments in different types of universities.

The reports of departmental information collected and preferred were also examined in relation to the purpose of the most recent program review—for department use, requested by a university officer, or requested by an outside agency. The frequency of data collection and endorsement of the information for each specified purpose were almost identical to the tabulations for all respondents presented in Table 2. Therefore, they are not reported separately.

*Information for different purposes.* Another way of considering differences in departmental review practices and preferences is by curricular area. Departmental review practices might be expected to differ somewhat with different ways of organizing knowledge, different instructional traditions, and different career expectations. Also, curricular differences found in these data may reflect different university expectations or traditions, since more of the humanities departments were located in Research Universities while more professional departments were in Comprehensive Universities and Colleges. For these reasons, Tables 3, 4, and 5 list the information options in their order of importance to departments in different disciplines at each of the three levels of possible use. In Table 3, all 25 kinds of information that were listed in the questionnaire are arranged in rank order of importance to the heads of departments in the humanities. The rank order of importance of these elements for departments in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences is very similar; the natural sciences attach somewhat more importance to faculty professional activities while the humanities are more concerned about the quality of teaching in the department, but the differences are slight. Departments in professional fields show more divergence from the three academic areas, attaching more importance to faculty judgments about the learning environment than to faculty professional activities, and more

**Table 3. Information for Individual Department Use: Rank Order of Importance by Type of Program**

Information about:	Information "very important" for department use in decisions concerning departments of:							
	Humanities (N=72)		Social Sciences (N=107)		Natural Sciences (N=129)		Professional Fields (N=144)	
	Rank	(%)	Rank	(%)	Rank	(%)	Rank	(%)
Faculty productivity	1	(82)	1	(82)	2	(81)	7	(72)
Overall student rated quality of teaching	2	(77)	4	(76)	6	(70)	1.5	(83)
Faculty teaching performance	3	(76)	2.5	(79)	3	(74)	3	(79)
Budgetary support	4	(74)	2.5	(79)	1	(82)	1.5	(83)
Personal characteristics of faculty	5	(69)	6	(66)	8	(67)	9.5	(69)
Student satisfaction with the program	6	(65)	10	(63)	7	(69)	4	(76)
Faculty judgments about resources	7.5	(63)	7.5	(64)	5	(71)	8	(71)
Student judgments about the learning environment	7.5	(63)	10	(63)	9.5	(62)	12	(62)
Faculty professional activities	9	(61)	5	(67)	4	(72)	13	(65)
Faculty/student ratio	10	(60)	10	(63)	13.5	(59)	5.5	(74)
Faculty judgments about the learning environment	11.5	(58)	12	(62)	9.5	(62)	5.5	(74)
First-year enrollments	11.5	(58)	13	(61)	17.5	(56)	16	(62)
Faculty satisfaction with employment	13	(57)	16	(51)	13.5	(59)	14.5	(63)
Number of degrees granted per year	14	(54)	7.5	(64)	11.5	(60)	11	(68)
Alumni judgments about quality of the program	15	(51)	20	(48)	15.5	(57)	9.5	(69)
Student judgments about assistantships	16	(47)	18.5	(49)	17.5	(56)	23	(45)
First jobs of graduates	17	(46)	15	(52)	11.5	(60)	17.5	(61)
Faculty use of time	18	(44)	22	(40)	20	(50)	14.5	(63)
Student postdegree employment plans	19.5	(43)	21	(44)	19	(54)	20	(56)
Amount of financial aid	19.5	(43)	14	(55)	15.5	(57)	19	(57)
Student credit hours produced	21	(36)	18.5	(49)	22	(46)	17.5	(61)
Student personal characteristics	22.5	(32)	17	(50)	21	(49)	21.5	(54)
Alumni publications	22.5	(32)	23	(36)	23	(40)	25	(34)
Faculty community service	24	(22)	25	(25)	25	(22)	24	(42)
Information from student dropouts	25	(21)	25	(34)	24	(35)	21.5	(54)
Number "very important" by 50 percent or more	15		17		20		22	

importance to the quality of teaching than to faculty productivity. Alumni judgments about the quality of the program are more important to heads of professional departments, while alumni publications are judged to be less important. Again, however, the differences are probably not large enough to cause concern about the appropriateness of common data collection procedures for different kinds of departments.

Table 4 lists only the kinds of information that were considered to be "very important" for university-level use by 50 percent or more of the department heads in one or more curricular areas. They are listed in the rank order of their importance to heads of humanities departments. There is even more similarity in the rank order of the importance of information for this purpose than for departmental use; the same nine elements rank one through nine in all four curricular areas, although in slightly different orders. Faculty productivity and training and the department's budget are of primary importance in all areas, followed closely by student/faculty ratio, number of degrees granted per year, and judgments about the adequacy of available resources. The other characteristic that is consistently in this top group is judgments about the teaching performance of faculty members in the department. Other characteristics considered fairly important to know about for this

purpose include student satisfaction with the program, faculty reports on the learning environment and employment satisfaction and use of time, and structural characteristics such as number of new students each year, amount of financial assistance available to students, and student credit hours produced. For decisions at the university level, none of the department heads attached much importance to information about alumni activities and judgments or to student background characteristics, employment plans, or judgments about the learning environment or assistant-ships.

The list of information elements in Table 5, when the information is to be used for accreditation or other external judgments about departments, is even shorter; again the top-rated characteristics are consistently faculty training and professional activity, resources including budget, program size (faculty/student ratio and number of degrees granted per year), and teaching performance. Student and faculty judgments about the quality of the learning environment were given slight marginal endorsement, but in general these department heads did not perceive that student, faculty, or alumni judgments about programs are appropriate information for use at this level. Certain kinds of factual information about departments also were not endorsed, such as amount of financial aid available, the number of student credit hours produced, or the distribution of faculty use of time.

*Interest in common forms.* Department heads were asked to respond to an open-ended question concerning procedures

**Table 4. Information for University Review and Decisions About Departments: Rank Order of Importance, by Type of Program**

Information about:	Information "very important" for university use in decisions concerning departments of:			
	Humanities (N=72)	Social Sciences (N=107)	Natural Sciences (N=129)	Professional Fields (N=144)
	Rank (%)	Rank (%)	Rank (%)	Rank (%)
Faculty productivity	1 (75)	1 (77)	1 (83)	2 (74)
Personal characteristics of faculty	2.5 (67)	2 (69)	2 (79)	3 (70)
Budgetary support	2.5 (67)	3 (66)	4 (77)	1 (69)
Faculty professional activities	4.5 (58)	4.5 (64)	3 (77)	4.5 (67)
Faculty/student ratio	4.5 (58)	8 (57)	6.5 (61)	4.5 (67)
Faculty teaching performance	6 (57)	4.5 (64)	6.5 (61)	8 (62)
Overall student rated quality of teaching	7 (56)	7 (58)	9 (54)	9 (61)
Number of degrees granted per year	8 (53)	9 (56)	8 (58)	7 (63)
Faculty judgments about resources	9 (50)	6 (59)	5 (64)	6 (66)
Student satisfaction with the program	10 (49)	15 (38)	12 (50)	13 (54)
Faculty judgments about the learning environment	11 (44)	12 (47)	13 (48)	11.5 (56)
First-year enrollments	12 (43)	11 (48)	17 (45)	14 (50)
Amount of financial aid	13 (42)	10 (50)	14.5 (47)	16.5 (49)
Faculty satisfaction with employment	15.5 (38)	17 (35)	10 (52)	16.5 (49)
Student credit hours produced	15.5 (38)	13.5 (43)	16 (46)	10 (58)
Faculty use of time	18 (35)	19 (34)	11 (51)	11.5 (56)
Number "very important" by 50 percent or more	9	10	12	14

**Note:** Information elements are included in this table if they were considered to be "very important" by 50 percent or more of the department heads in any curricular grouping.

**Table 5. Information for Accreditation or Other External Judgments: Rank of Importance, by Type of Program**

Information about:	Information "very important" for external agency use in decisions concerning departments of:			
	Humanities (N=72)	Social Sciences (N=107)	Natural Sciences (N=129)	Professional Fields (N=144)
	Rank (%)	Rank (%)	Rank (%)	Rank (%)
Personal characteristics of faculty	1 (71)	2 (66)	1 (81)	1 (84)
Faculty productivity	2 (68)	1 (72)	2 (75)	2 (76)
Faculty judgments about resources	3 (54)	4 (54)	3.5 (69)	3 (69)
Faculty professional activities	4 (51)	3 (56)	3.5 (69)	5 (67)
Overall student rated quality of teaching	5 (47)	8 (36)	13 (32)	7 (57)
Faculty/student ratio	6 (44)	6 (46)	5 (56)	6 (60)
Budgetary support	7 (42)	5 (50)	6 (53)	4 (68)
Number of degrees granted per year	8 (40)	7 (40)	7 (45)	8 (49)
Faculty teaching performance	9 (39)	9 (33)	8 (36)	11 (47)
Faculty judgments about the learning environment	12.5 (26)	18.5 (21)	9 (35)	9.5 (48)
Student judgments about the learning environment	14 (25)	12 (26)	16 (29)	9.5 (48)
Number "very important" by 50 percent or more	4	5	6	7

**Note:** Information elements are included in this table if they were considered to be "very important" by 40 percent or more of the department heads in any curricular grouping.

to be used in departmental review or self-study. This question was: "Systematic collection of opinions about a program from students, faculty members, and alumni generally require some sort of questionnaires or report forms. Each department can develop its own questionnaires, or a set of common questions can be developed for use on many campuses. Would your department use a common form to obtain information and opinions from students, faculty, or alumni if such materials were available when you were beginning a self-study or program review?" Among all respondents, 33 percent responded "yes" without qualification or further comment. Another 16 percent responded with terms such as "probably" or "very likely," which was considered a "qualified yes" response. Another 20 percent said maybe—"perhaps," "possibly," "if it fits our particular needs," "if forms were satisfactory," etc. A qualified or unqualified "no" response was given by 13 percent (no, probably not, not likely, etc.). And finally, 7 percent of the respondents indicated that they would like common questionnaires as something they could start with and then change or adapt to their specific situation. Only 12 percent of all respondents failed to make a response that could be placed in one of these categories.

Responses to the question concerning possible use of a common form were evaluated for discipline and university differences. Responses from department heads in different curricular areas were very similar, with "yes" responses from more than 50 percent of the respondents in social sciences, natural sciences, and professional fields. Only humanities departments were somewhat less enthusiastic, with 37 percent qualified or unqualified "yes" responses. Differences by type of university were somewhat more pronounced and are given in Table 6. These data suggest that the use of common forms would find most immediate

**Table 6. Department Head Interest in Using Common Data Collection Forms (in percentages)**

Response	Research Universities (N=156)	Doctoral-Granting Universities (N=123)	Comprehensive Universities and Colleges (N=175)
Yes—unqualified	21	32	46
Qualified yes	15	17	17
Maybe—depends	24	21	15
Probably not or no	17	11	12
Yes, for adaptation	9	8	3
Other or NA	14	11	7

acceptance by departments in Comprehensive Universities and Colleges and least acceptance (or most adaptation/revision) by departments in Research Universities. Even here, however, 36 percent of the respondents expressed positive interest.

### Summary and Discussion

This report presents a current state-of-the-art analysis of information collected by university departments when they undertake program reviews, together with opinions about the judged importance of each kind of information for use at the department level, the university level, or by agencies outside the university. Only minor differences were found in the collection of information for different review purposes; similarly, only slight differences in collection practices or in judged importance were found among department heads from different kinds of universities, or in different academic disciplines.

Sizeable differences were apparent, however, in the department heads' perception of the importance of different kinds of information for different purposes. Almost all of the 25 variables that were included on the questionnaire were considered to be "very important" or to have "some importance" when reviewing programs at the departmental level. Judgments and perceptions from students, faculty members, and alumni were often considered very important for departmental use even though they had not been collected in the department's most recent review; information about a number of these characteristics was also considered very important for university decisions. But, in general, high endorsement of information for use in external judgments was limited to traditional measures that were almost always currently available. The perceptions and judgments of faculty members and students were not encouraged at this level, perhaps because they were not considered to be relevant to the kinds of judgments about departments that are made by outside agencies. However, it is also possible that they were not endorsed because departments lack reliable ways to collect, report, and interpret these kinds of information. If some of these information elements were more routinely collected and used at the departmental and university level, it seems likely that their use by outside agencies would gradually become more acceptable.

One kind of judgment about programs that was endorsed by the department heads as very important for use at all three levels was student evaluations of faculty teaching performance and student ratings of the general level of faculty helpfulness, knowledge, and teaching ability. Though faculty training, professional productivity, and professional activity were given higher endorsement, it is significant that the teaching component of the faculty role was perceived to be a very important part of program evaluation at all levels.

Finally, we were interested to find out whether departments might use standard instruments to collect information for program review if such instruments were available to them. The responses of these department heads appear to support the development of a departmental descriptors inventory; more than half of them indicated definite interest in the use of standard questionnaires, and others supported the development of some standard procedures that could be adapted to the particular needs of individual departments or universities. The greatest amount of interest was expressed by department heads in Comprehensive Universities and Colleges, which is also the largest institutional classification (in the Carnegie classification, there are 92 Research Universities, 81 Doctoral-Granting Universities, and 453 Comprehensive Universities and Colleges).

The similarities of information preferences in different types of universities and different curricular areas suggest that common data collection procedures could be developed for use in a variety of settings and for a variety of purposes, provided some guidelines were developed for flexible use and interpretation. An opportunity for departments to add local option items would add flexibility within the framework of a common form. The results of this survey indicate the potential acceptability and usefulness of a department-level inventory that systematically gathers the opinions and judgments of students, faculty members, and graduates as an integral part of university program review procedures.

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Appendix

Graduate Record Examinations Board  
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IN AFFILIATION WITH  
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Maryann A. Lear  
Secretary to the Board

Dear Colleague:

We are undertaking a survey of practices and needs in departmental program review and need your assistance. The purpose of the study is to find out what kinds of information departments use when they review their degree programs and what kinds of information they might find most useful.

We hope that you will be able to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to your graduate dean as soon as possible. He or she will forward your responses to researchers at Educational Testing Service who will summarize the results. Questionnaires are being distributed to a sample of department chairmen at about 150 universities.

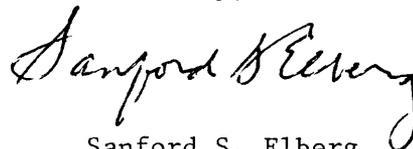
You will note that the questionnaire lists a variety of information from or about faculty, students, and alumni. We are interested in knowing whether these kinds of information have been collected in recent departmental reviews and your opinion about the importance of each for various review purposes. We assume that descriptive data about the department's purposes, curriculum, and resources will be compiled from other sources.

We also invite you to submit copies of forms or procedures that have been used by your department when carrying out a program review or self-study.

The summary of the survey will not identify individuals or institutions by name. We will be happy to provide you with a copy of the summary at your request.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,



Sanford S. Elberg  
Chairman

cc: Maryann A. Lear



1 = Not important  
 2 = Some importance  
 3 = Very important

Part I  
 Information collected  
 in most recent depart-  
 ment review:

Part II  
 Importance of collecting  
 this information for each  
 of the following uses:

Kinds of Information	Part I			Part II								
	Yes	No	Don't know	A Individual department use			B University review and decisions			C Accreditation or other external judgments		
<b>6. From or about students</b>												
a. Characteristics by level (profile of origins, ages, academic aptitude, concurrent employment, financial assistance, etc.)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
b. Judgments about the quality of teaching in the department (ratings of general level of faculty helpfulness, knowledge, teaching ability, etc.)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
c. Judgments about the departmental learning environment (student/faculty relationships, whether or not policies are administered equitably, competition among students, etc.)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
d. Judgments about assistantships and other departmental forms of financial assistance (administration, contribution to learning, etc.)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
e. Satisfaction with program (would recommend the program to others with similar interests, providing good training for anticipated career, etc.)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
f. Post-degree employment plans	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
g. Exit interview or survey data on dropouts (timing, reasons, etc.)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
h. Other _____	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
<b>7. From alumni</b>												
a. First jobs of graduates, and relationship to educational program	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
b. Publications and other professional products of graduates	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
c. Judgments of recent alumni about the character and quality of the program (climate for learning, placement help, academic excellence, etc.)	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
d. Other _____	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
<b>8. From department records</b>												
a. Faculty/student ratio by level	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
b. Number of degrees granted per year by each degree program	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
c. Amount of financial assistance available to students by level	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
d. Student credit hours produced by level	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
e. First-year enrollments in graduate programs	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
f. Budgetary support	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
g. Other _____	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3

9. How many department reviews or self-studies have there been in your department during the past ten years? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Systematic collection of opinions about a program from students, faculty members, and alumni generally require some sort of questionnaires or report forms. Each department or university can develop its own questionnaires, or a set of common questions can be developed for use on many campuses. Would your department use a common form to obtain information and opinions from students, faculty, or alumni, if such materials were available when you were beginning a self study or program review?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title or Rank \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_ University \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Highest degree offered by the department \_\_\_\_\_

Number of full-time faculty members in the department \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if you would like a copy of the final results \_\_\_\_\_

Someone in your graduate dean's office is coordinating the distribution and collection of these questionnaires. Please return your completed form to this person.

Thank you for your assistance.

Mary Jo Clark  
John A. Centra  
Project Directors  
Educational Testing Service  
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