Guidelines for Nomination of External Reviewer Candidates

A vital component of reviewing academic units is the proposal and selection of external reviewers. The informed perspective of highly qualified professionals regarding the functioning, accomplishments, and goals of academic units is critical in providing informed feedback in affirming significant unit, faculty, and student accomplishments, and in suggesting the best plans and priorities for future action.

The names of at least six candidates for the external review of the unit should be submitted to the office of Planning and Assessment by the middle of March (see Timeline for due date). In nominating candidates the unit should consider the following general guidelines. Individuals conforming to the following criteria have provided the most insightful reviews in the past.

- For university faculty:
  a) Tenure and the rank of associate or full professor at a respected university.
  b) A consequential scholarly record disseminated in peer-reviewed forums acknowledged as prestigious, according to the normative standards of the discipline.
  c) Significant experience in undergraduate and/or graduate student teaching and mentoring and teaching, consistent with the relative focus in the units’ programs.

For each candidate the unit should consider the following details:

- The specific aspects of the candidate’s professional qualifications that best suit them to serve as an external reviewer for the unit.
- The nature of relationships (e.g. co-authored publications and/or professional presentations, joint research or grant endeavors, etc.) between the candidate and faculty in the unit.
- The nature of past and/or current connections between the candidate and BYU.

Units with graduate programs that require theses, dissertations, projects, performances, or other culminating experiences will have these products from the culminating graduate student experience reviewed. They should nominate four to six additional candidates for this review. External review of the various culminating graduate student experiences, apart from the review of the unit itself, can provide very helpful information for improving the quality of the education and preparation of graduate students. For this
review to be useful, however, the reviewer candidates must have the credentials and experience to provide an expert review. Experience has shown that candidates that meet the following criteria have provided the best reviews in the past.

In addition to the criteria for on-site reviewer nominees, **thesis/dissertation reviewers** should have:

- Graduate Faculty Status at a respected university.
- A consequential research/creative program disseminated in prestigious peer-reviewed forums, according to the normative standards of the discipline.
- Significant experience in graduate education and with advising in the type of culminating experience(s) to be reviewed.
- Expertise and experience in the areas in which our students are writing. (If the unit has several graduate programs or emphases where the theses/dissertations are diverse it may be necessary to have more than one thesis reviewer for the unit.)

Some candidates might appropriately serve as either unit or culminating experience reviewers. Your department may also have specific areas of interest or subcategories of specialties. An excel spreadsheet has been prepared for you which allows you to identify the candidates according to these preferences. **You will need to submit 8 to 10 names** to allow sufficient options for each subcategory and unit review or culminating experience reviewers.

Finally, for the purpose of reviewing units, as well as students’ culminating work, it has proven most useful in the past to choose individuals who represent the discipline but have limited personal connections to BYU. **Unless a reasonable rationale is presented, you should avoid nominating reviewers who have been:**

- Faculty members of BYU.
- Students (undergraduate or graduate) at BYU.
- Visiting faculty, visiting scholars, or recent guests of BYU.
- Dissertation advisors or committee members of BYU faculty.
- Research collaborators, co-authors, relatives, or personal friends of BYU faculty members in your unit.

An example of the Nomination Spreadsheet is provided in the packet. The electronic spreadsheet can be found on the Unit Review Information CD which has been provided for you. If there are any questions on aspects of nominating candidates for unit and student culminating experience review, please contact Kristie Seawright (kseawright@byu.edu).