your statements very carefully, recording only observations about which you are *certain* and for which you have data to support your conclusions. Avoid repeating innuendo or third-hand observations. Tie all of your remarks to specific indicators that can be verified. If deadlines were missed, what were those deadlines and what were the consequences of the faculty member's failure to meet them? If you have concerns about the faculty member's teaching, what were the student complaints, peer observations, or unsatisfactory course materials that gave rise to these concerns? If scholarship is an issue, how does the faculty member's scholarly productivity compare to those of colleagues in the department or in similar disciplines? Be as specific and data-oriented as you can. It serves the interest of neither the institution nor the faculty member for you to render a decision of "not good enough" without specifying your standard, the reason for its existence, and some targets for suitable attainment.

RESOURCES

Some of the best available sources on post-tenure review include:

Alstete, J. W. (2000). *Post-tenure faculty development: Building a system for faculty improvement and appreciation* (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 24[4]). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Licata, C. M., & Morreale, J. C. (Eds.). (2002). *Post-tenure faculty review and renewal: Experienced voices.* Bolton, MA: Anker.

Licata, C. M., & Brown, B. E. (Eds.). (2004). *Post-tenure faculty review and renewal II: Reporting results and shaping policy.* Bolton, MA: Anker.

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The Department Chair's Role in Internal and External Program Review

Internal Review

In order to gain insight into the quality, viability, and institutional fit of their academic programs, colleges and universities frequently rely on a formal process known as *program review.* While a well-designed program review process examines far more than just *academic* programs, most department chairs play a limited role at best in the review of such offices as physical plant, the business office, and residential life. Also, while most program reviews address an institution's general education requirement, department chairs have far greater responsibilities in the processes that examine their own individual disciplines. For this reason, the following discussion uses the term "program" as equivalent to "departmental program" or, in other words, the curriculum offered by an individual academic department that, in most cases, leads to an academic degree.

When dealing with program review for the first time, many department chairs wonder how this process is different from such procedures as evaluation and assessment that they may already have in place, what sort of information is likely to be needed and analyzed in the course of each department's program review, and how they can help make the best possible case for their disciplines within the guidelines imposed by their institutions. The following overview of program review is intended to provide department chairs with clear information in each of these three important areas.

Evaluation, Assessment, and Program Review

The terms *evaluation, assessment,* and *program review* refer to three fundamentally different, though at times overlapping, methods of collecting and analyzing information. *Evaluation* measures the effectiveness of individual people, courses, or programs. It helps the evaluator decide whether the person or thing being evaluated is "meeting the grade" and, if not, how that individual performance may be improved. For instance, the grade and comments assigned by a faculty member to an individual student's project constitute an evaluation, as do the annual performance appraisals prepared for faculty members. That is to say, when a professor grades and provides comments on each student's course project, that professor is appraising that student alone and that specific assignment alone. The student's grade and the professor's comments tell us nothing at all about how much *all* the students in the course have learned, whether the faculty member was successful in designing the course syllabus, or whether the department's curriculum is appropriate for the purposes it is trying to achieve. Similarly, when the dean or department chair writes an annual evaluation of a faculty member, it is that individual alone who is being evaluated; the report that comes out of this process provides no information about the faculty as a whole, the quality of that institution's faculty development program, or the ongoing staffing needs of the department. In addition to students and faculty members, evaluation processes are frequently used for individual courses (peer evaluations, student evaluations, external reviewers' evaluations), individual program curricula, or individual administrators. In all of these cases, one learns the answer to: "How successful was this one individual at the task in question and how can improvement be made?"

Assessment is the process by which entire programs are examined to determine whether they are succeeding in accomplishing a clearly established set of goals and outcomes, and, in those cases where standards are not being met, how the *program* (not the performance of individual students, faculty members, or administrators) should be modified. In order to conduct an appropriate assessment of your program, you should first begin with your discipline's mission statement (a document that is usually based on the mission statement of the entire institution), develop goals that reflect the substance of that mission statement, refine those goals into *measurable outcomes,* and then measure the degree to which those outcomes are achieved. Failure to achieve specific outcomes should lead to consideration of clear steps for improvement. In other words, is there a better sequence in which students should take their courses in this program? Should the syllabi of courses at various levels of the program be modified and, if so, how? Was the curriculum designed with clear enough goals that the students can reasonably accomplish what you believe to be necessary at various points in their academic careers?

Program review is a process that is far broader than either evaluation or assessment, particularly in terms of what type of considerations are involved in the process. Evaluation and assessment provide information only about the *quality* of what you are examining: Did this individual perform up to expected standards, or did that entire program achieve our stated outcomes? Evaluation and assessment do not tell you whether the program itself is viable in terms of student enrollments, the size of its budget, or likely demands for graduates in the future. Nor do they indicate how important the program is to the institution's overall mission and strategic plan. To provide this more comprehensive look at an institution's programs, colleges and universities frequently rely on a periodic process of program review.

A solid program review process *includes* information obtained from evaluation and assessment, but it also requires additional perspectives and sources of data. For instance, in determining the quality of instruction, some institutions require departments to provide aggregate scores on student course evaluations in order to compare these overall averages to median scores in other related disciplines and to those of all disciplines at the institution. They may also require the submission of external reviews developed by accrediting agencies or peer programs. Almost certainly, institutions require that departments either provide or respond to data about enrollment trends, numbers of majors, graduation rates in the discipline, the size of externally funded grants received, placement of students in graduate school or professions closely related to the major, and trends in faculty scholarship, research, and creative activity.

What Information to Gather

If your institution already has a clearly established program review process in place, it should be fairly easy to determine what type of data you need to collect and in what form your institution wants that information reported. If your discipline has not yet had to submit a program review, ask to see examples of successful documentation submitted by departments as similar to yours as possible. Then use these other reports as a model for your own collection of data. If, on the other hand, your institution is relatively new to program review or if your reports are allowed to be more "free form," the task that you face will be more challenging, since you will need to determine *what* you should report and *how* you should present this information so that it makes your department's strongest case. One good place to begin is to ask yourself such questions as:

- What are my department's strongest assets, the features that make it distinctive from other departments at my institution and from other departments similar to mine at other institutions?

- What weaknesses might others see in our program, and how can I account for these areas of vulnerability so that even someone not familiar with our field will see the larger picture?
- If I were examining a program that I did not know very well, what information would demonstrate to me that students were learning what they needed to know, that faculty members were producing scholarship or creative activity of the appropriate quality, that the program was sustainable for the future, and that the program as a whole was an essential part of what we do as an institution?

The answers that you provide to these questions will tell you a great deal about what type of information you may wish to collect and how you might wish to present it.

If your institution permits you some flexibility in the program review process, you may wish to assemble data in any or all of the following categories:

Quantitative indicators consist of data that are "countable" or at least measurable in some consistent, reproducible manner. Quantitative indicators may be raw numbers, percentiles, rankings, averages, or other similar types of information. The most useful types of quantitative indicators at most institutions tend to be ratios, since they place a raw figure into at least a partial context. For instance, a raw figure such as "Over the last five years, an average of eight graduates each year were admitted to their first-choice post-baccalaureate program," while it may be interesting, is ultimately meaningless for review purposes. Is eight a high figure or a low figure? Presented in isolation, the number alone gives the reader no way of making this judgment. Presented as a ratio, however, the figure begins to take on meaning and to be incorporated into a larger context: "Over the last five years, an average of eight out of eleven (72.7%) graduates each year were admitted to their first-choice post-baccalaureate program, while our overall institutional placement rate is only 53.1% and the rate within our closest peer disciplines is 65.5%." Similarly, presenting raw numbers of student credit hours generated per term or per academic year may be requested at some institutions, but this information really only becomes useful when it is calculated in terms of some other relevant factor, such as the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) faculty members who produced those credit hours.

Qualitative indicators include sources of information that, while not specifically measurable in and of themselves, are nonetheless helpful in providing a more comprehensive picture of a program. Because they tend not to result in specific scores, qualitative indicators almost always require more interpretation than do quantitative indicators. Nevertheless, they can demonstrate aspects of a department's success, viability, or unique mission in a manner that proves to be far more compelling than sheer numbers. Perhaps the most commonly used type of qualitative indicator for program review purposes is the portfolio. For instance, representative portfolios of student work provide a valuable impression of the level of work achieved by students and their rate of growth during the program. In much the same way, faculty portfolios of teaching, scholarship, service, and administrative contributions can provide a much more balanced view of the faculty than can mere scores on student evaluations or the number of refereed articles published. The ground-breaking work of Seldin (2004) in *The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions*, now in its third edition, is a good place to begin for information on assembling this type of material, followed by Murray's (2000) *Successful Faculty Development and Evaluation: The Complete Teaching Portfolio.* Moreover, Seldin has recently begun exploring other types of professional portfolios in such works as *The Administrative Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Administrative Performance and Personnel Decisions* (Seldin & Higgerson, 2001), and the possibilities exist for using the portfolio approach to document faculty professional contributions in such areas as scholarship and service as well.

Indicators of quality are, as their name implies, factors that suggest to an observer how good a program is or the level of success that the program has had in achieving its goals. Indicators of quality may be either quantitative or qualitative and may draw upon data dealing with students (e.g., five-year graduation rates, placement rates for graduates, alumni portfolios of scholarship in the discipline, etc.), faculty (e.g., percentage holding a terminal degree, number of refereed publications per FTE faculty member each year, teaching and administrative portfolios, etc.), support staff, access to information resources, and other such elements that contribute to the overall quality of an academic program.

Indicators of viability are those factors that indicate whether a program is likely to be sustainable in the future. Quantitative indicators of viability include such things as enrollment trends, estimates of probable demand for graduates in the discipline over the next five to ten years, additional sources of program revenue such as grants and sponsored programs, and ratios of tuition generated by the program to expenditures made in such areas as salaries, benefits, and operating expenses. Qualitative indicators of viability might include a discussion of factors that are likely to affect demand for graduates within the foreseeable future, a listing of honors or achievements attained by alumni, and a statement of the advantages accruing to your program from your institution's location or the uniqueness of your curriculum. One quantitative indicator of viability that disciplines occasionally overlook is the correlation between enrollment in one or more of the department's courses and retention at the institution. Frequently, courses that have a clear mentoring or experiential component—for instance, studio art, lab science, or applied music courses—produce students who are more likely to persist at the institution because they develop closer bonds with faculty. By demonstrating a differential between the retention rates of students who have enrolled in your department's courses and the retention rate of the institution as a whole, you can provide a perspective on viability that your college or university may find particularly compelling.

Indicators of centrality to mission are those types of information that suggest the degree to which your department is essential to your school's fundamental purpose, strategic plan, and vision for the future. For instance, at a research university, the ratio of books and articles, grants received, patents obtained, or academic recognitions won per FTE faculty member helps to suggest the vital role your department is playing in advancing your institution's mission. At a liberal arts college, the connection you can make between your discipline and the traditional liberal arts goals of developing critical thinking, improved communication, and aesthetic appreciation is likely to assume greater significance. Church-related schools, professional schools, community colleges, comprehensive institutions, and schools adhering to the model of the "New American College" are each likely to have distinctive missions and goals for the future to which you will need to relate your mission as a discipline. In each case, however, it is likely to be *outcomes*—what students and, under certain conditions, faculty members *produce*—that will be the most important and compelling as sources of evidence, rather than "*inputs*," such as faculty credentials, SAT/ACT scores of incoming students, or the number of volumes relating to your discipline in your institution's library.

How to Make Your Case

Inevitably, every institution's program review process will be based on its own set of core values and assumptions. As a department chair, you will need to determine what underlying values and assumptions have been in order to know how you can make the strongest case for your discipline. For instance, does the program review process at your institution primarily focus on the number of majors in each program or on your discipline's overall production of student credit hours? If you find that most of your school's questions tend to deal with the number of majors in your department, then it is clear that what your institution values most is recruiting students to your program, graduating them on time, and placing them in graduate school or employment closely related to your field. Departments that, for instance, do not generate a large number of majors will then need to put this information in its proper context: can you demonstrate that, even though your major itself may be small, you provide a vital role in supplying service courses to other majors and offer a number of important courses in the general education program? If, on the other hand, most of your institution's questions tend to deal with student credit hour production, then the overall focus appears to be on general productivity and efficiency rather than the size of the major. Programs such as business administration, which may be required by their accrediting agencies to have majors take a substantial amount of coursework outside the department, may need to clarify this situation for reviewers who might not understand the context in which your discipline is compelled to operate.

Similarly, are you ever asked in your institution's system to differentiate your student credit hour production into upper-level as opposed to lower-level courses or according to courses that satisfy the institution's general education requirements as opposed to courses that are usually taken to satisfy major requirements? If not, and this distinction is integral to your department's mission, try to find a way in which you can make this distinction, clarifying the data for the individual or the committee that will be reading your review. Also, at many institutions, the revenue produced by a department is calculated by a formula similar to the following:

department revenue = discounted tuition generated – (salaries + benefits + operating expenses)

If your discipline is also contributing to your institution's overhead through significant grant activity or sponsored programs, and this is not reflected in the revenue formula adopted by your college or university, be sure to cite this added resource as an important factor in your department's ongoing viability.

Above all, be sure to consider assets of your program that are not easily quantifiable or that do not lend themselves to the reporting format required by your institution. Are your faculty or the students who take courses from your department demonstrably more diverse than elsewhere in the institution? If so, then this may be an asset in enhancing your college or university's diversity plan that may not be visible from the data *required* by your institution's program review process. Consider, too, whether a larger percentage of your faculty members or students would have had a significant international experience compared to their peers across the institution. Or do your faculty members or students help improve your institution's diversity in terms of gender or socioeconomic background? Either of these factors can add value to your discipline in a way that may not otherwise be clear from the review format required by your institution. It may also be that your discipline is attracting an exceptionally large number of first-generation college students to your institution, a factor that you can present as enhancing the school's mission to reach out to traditionally under-represented groups. If your faculty's scholarly output appears low in terms of the number of refereed publications or the total number of pages of work appearing in books and journals, can you document that these works were commonly cited by other scholars in your field or that your department's scholarship tended to appear in extremely selective journals? If so, you will need to introduce this information in a discussion of "quality versus quantity," even if your review format does not specifically request this information.

Finally, remember that a score or ratio alone, without the benefit of interpretation, rarely tells the entire story. For instance, the incoming SAT or ACT scores of your majors may be significantly higher or lower than those of students in other disciplines. Either one of these results may be an asset to your institution, depending upon the interpretation that is made of it. High standardized test scores may indicate that your department's recognized level of academic excellence is attracting exceptionally strong students. On the other hand, low standardized test scores may nevertheless result in high rates of student success after graduation, demonstrating the life-transforming nature of your program. By making your case in this manner, therefore, you will be much more likely to create a review of your program that casts your achievements in the best possible light, places vulnerable areas within a more comprehensive context, and guides your department as it continues to make progress in the future.

External Review

As part of the program review process at many institutions, departments may be encouraged—or even required—to obtain some sort of external evaluation. In many cases, this external review may be conducted by an accrediting agency specific to that individual discipline. In other cases, it may follow a process set forth by the institution itself. Or, it may be left up to the individual department to propose the most appropriate form for this review to assume. In the last of these cases, the department will find itself having an incredible amount of flexibility, but the chair may also be left wondering *how* best to conduct this external program review, *what* should be included in the review, and *how* the information should be collected and analyzed. Sometimes, chairs may not even be sure which questions they should ask or even where they should begin. To assist in these cases, it is frequently helpful to have a general framework for what the chair's role is likely to be in the most common type of external program review, what information will be most beneficial for the chair to obtain, and how to make the strongest possible case for the department undergoing external review.

If you are scheduled to participate in an external review of your department, you may be asked to select (or at least to recommend) a partner institution for an external paired assessment. In this case, you will want to recommend an institution that has a program reasonably comparable to your own, that is not located so far away that visiting the other campus is needlessly expensive, and that stands to benefit as much from the external review project as your institution will. When looking for a comparable institution with which to share program reviews, try to consider not only such matters as the size of each program and the overall similarity of the two institutions' missions, but also such factors as entering student SAT/GPA scores, size of endowment, and the condition of the physical plant used by each department. Failure to consider variables of this sort can result in a forced "comparison" of two departments that are in reality so different that meaningful results will end up being all but impossible to obtain.

Even while you are still locating a comparable program with which to conduct this review, you should begin thinking about what instruction you will give faculty members who themselves may never have participated in such a review before. What types of observations are they likely to find most useful? What sort of information should each team examine in order to develop a realistic assessment of and worthwhile advice for the other program?

In situations where the institutions themselves do not provide any standard set of guidelines or templates for external program reviews, department chairs might begin by instructing the faculty members on each review team to examine the following nine areas.

1) Learning Goals

First, try to determine the adequacy of the learning goals adopted by the department that you are reviewing. Have goals been written at the appropriate level for each of the following types of students: majors (where the department offers its own major), minors (again, where this is an appropriate question), and non-majors/minors? Where specifically in the curriculum is each of these learning goals addressed? How does the department assess its effectiveness in attaining these goals? What has this assessment process suggested about the program's effectiveness to date? What improvements has the department made on the basis of the results of its assessment plan?

2) Curriculum

Next, using these learning goals as your guide, assess the adequacy of the program's curriculum as a whole. Consider its overall structure. Does it flow in a logical sequence? After examining catalog offerings and syllabi, members of each review team should consider whether, in their professional judgment, there are noticeable "holes" in curricula, course offerings, or course content. Conversely, are there areas of exceptional strength, distinction, or innovation? What recommendations can you give your peers in terms of improving their course offerings, content, and rotation?

3) Student Achievement

Then, looking beyond the program's formal program of assessment, try to gauge a sense of how effective the department has been in helping students to develop their knowledge and skills in the discipline. One of the best ways to do this is by examining a representative sample of student projects. For instance, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2004) states that

> There should be periodic evaluation by external reviewers of the goals, the proficiency standards, and work samples submitted by students to meet standards. Such external reviews provide validation of both the goals and standards. A representative sample of student performances in different fields will provide sufficient evidence for external feedback. (p. 12)

In performance-based disciplines such as art, music, and theater, ask to attend an actual jury, performance, or exhibition. In research-oriented disciplines, try to review a selection of senior projects or at least of significant coursework done for upper-level courses. In your professional judgment, is the discipline "taking students to the level they need to be?" If not, what suggested improvements can you recommend? Ask to see examples of what the department considers to be its best student products. Then ask to see the same number of examples of minimally acceptable (and even unacceptable) student projects. The difference between these two sets of coursework should indicate for you the expected standards of the department and provide you with a touchstone by which to compare student achievement at your own institution.

4) Faculty

Consider the number, credentials, and achievements of the faculty members in both departments. Adjusting for FTE, calculate how many full-time and how many part-time faculty members are serving how many students. To get a more accurate sense of comparison, you may need to calculate this figure several different ways. For instance, first compare FTE faculty to the total number of students enrolled in any of the department's courses, then to the number of majors (where applicable), then to the number of students in introductory courses, and finally to the total number of student credit hours generated by the department (or in some disciplines, such as the natural sciences, to student contact hours). If the total number of student credit hours varies significantly from year to year, you may find it useful to develop a three- or five-year rolling average. How do the two institutions compare in terms of teaching load, average numbers of students in a discipline's courses, the maximum number of students allowed to enroll in a course, the number of advisees per faculty member, and the average number of students served by each faculty member? Where there are striking differences, begin to see if you can determine why those differences exist. How do the two institutions compare in terms of expectations for scholarship and service by faculty members? In which professional organizations are the faculty members of the two institutions active? Are these at all comparable? Over the past five years, how many publications and how many conference presentations have the faculty members of each program produced on a per capita basis? In cases where there are reviews or referee reports related to these publications, try to gauge a sense of how successfully the scholarship

By examining the information in these nine categories, you will begin to learn several important things about the department that you are reviewing and its areas of success and weakness relative to your own program.

- You should gain a clear sense of how the department you are reviewing is similar to your own and how it operates in ways that are simply not comparable to the practices of your department. Understanding these similarities and differences is an important part of the external review process for one very important reason: *Simply because two programs are different in some way, it does not mean that one of the two departments is flawed, inadequately funded, or poorly designed.* You may discover, for instance, that the department you are reviewing has a much larger budget in some area—or even in many areas—than your own. You cannot immediately assume that your department is underfunded. It is possible, of course, that the other department is *overfunded*, but it is even more likely that you will learn this difference in funding exists because of an underlying difference in mission, size, or focus between the two programs. Use, therefore, distinctions between your department and the program you are reviewing to begin asking why those distinctions exist. Don't immediately assume that they indicate a problem.
- You should develop a good sense of what the expectations or standards of the department have been. You know the prestigious journals in your field. You know the conferences where it is difficult to get an abstract accepted and those where virtually everyone who applies to be on the program is successful. You know the level at which students should be performing by the time that they complete upper-level coursework in your discipline. Are faculty members and students at the institution you are reviewing performing at those high levels? If not, should they be doing so in light of the department's size and stated mission?
- You should be receiving a clearer sense of whether the department is meeting its own stated goals. Do the learning goals expressed by the department have any real meaning—for instance, are they actually reflected in the design of the curriculum—or have they been suggested as a mere exercise? Is there any systematic assessment of these goals being conducted? Can the department point to anything that it is doing differently now than it was doing five or ten years ago because it has gathered data about its effectiveness, given serious consideration to those data, and made a deliberate attempt to improve in these areas where it has not been as successful as it would like? Is the department *intentional* about the learning that occurs under its supervision or does it appear not to have much insight into how it is achieving success?

Common Mistakes

Finally, there are several mistakes that are commonly made by faculty members who do not have much experience with external program reviews. The following are common "rookie" mistakes that must be avoided if the review is to be valuable.

"Log-rolling." The problem of "log-rolling" develops when the express or tacit operating principle of each review team is, "You tell us we're wonderful, and we'll tell you you're wonderful." Or, at the other extreme, "log-rolling" can occur when the operating principle is "You tell us that we desperately need what we say we want, and we'll do the same for you." This type of providing mutual favors between the review teams is unethical and degrades the reviewing process. Moreover, as a strategy, it never really works. There is no ploy easier for an upper administrator to see through than this type of mutual back-scratching. After all, if an external review does not contain candid and substantive reporting of programmatic strengths and weaknesses, it will end up being dismissed out of hand, and the department that did not push for more objective analysis could easily suffer as a result.

Excessive fault finding. External reviews that are nothing more than long lists of extra faculty positions wanted, facility improvements needed, reductions in workload required, and budget increases sought are unlikely to be given serious attention by anyone outside of the department. Whenever needs or recommended changes are included in a report, they should always be carefully prioritized, not simply "dumped" as a laundry list of requests. What needs to be done most immediately? *What is likely to happen if this action is not taken?* How does that priority rank compared to the other competing needs of the department (e.g, scholarship support, salary increases for faculty and staff, improvements of technology, renovations in facilities, etc.)? If a recommendation is regarded as extremely urgent, what expenditures ought the department to defer or what reductions in its budget are permissible in order to make this recommendation possible?

By helping your faculty members to understand these guidelines, you will be taking an important step toward developing a valuable review of an external program . . . and of receiving a more useful review from that program. By going over these guidelines with the external team assigned to review your department, you are more likely to receive a final report that contains accurate, reliable observations and that is clear in its guidance about how you can improve your program.

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What Every Department Chair Needs to Know About Fundraising

The financing of higher education is so complex that every department chair should have at least some familiarity with the basic principles of fundraising. Even if there is already a well-established development office at your institution—*particularly* if there is a well-established development office at your institution—there might be a time when some highly desirable opportunity for your department can only be pursued through the acquisition of external funding. Perhaps there is some special project—a scholarship in your discipline, a distinguished lecture series, a conference, a new or expanded facility—that would help you advance your program's goals but for which your regular, internal sources of funding are insufficient. On the other hand, it is also possible that you will someday find yourself approached by a donor who has some particular interest in making a contribution to your area. Whatever the situation may be, you will need to know at least the basics of fundraising and understand what your role in this process could potentially be. As a result, here is a very general primer of fundraising, outlining a few basics that *every* good department chair needs to know.

The Importance of Careful Preparation

Fundraising projects largely fall into two categories: those that originate at the institution and for which external funding is sought and those that arise from the interest of a donor who approaches the institution with a desire to make a contribution of some kind. The first of these two types is significantly more common than the second and, in order for these projects to be successfully planned and implemented, they require a great deal of planning, research, and preparation. Even in situations that arise out of a donor's interest, however, where the donor may feel a great deal of urgency, it is important for the chair to be certain that proper steps are taken and the appropriate plans are made before the project gets too far under way. Failure to prepare properly can leave the institution vulnerable to unanticipated costs at a later date, alienate a once enthusiastic donor, and doom what