7.5 Guidelines for Visiting Committees

Procedure

The following sections provide details of the procedures used to identify, schedule and host a visit of a departmental or college visiting committee.

Purpose

A Visiting Committee is an advisory body that is charged by the President to assess and facilitate programmatic and operational developments within an academic unit and to report its findings to the President. Visiting Committees are expected to:

• Represent the frontiers of the discipline nationally and internationally, as viewed from academia, industry and government circles;
• Evaluate the status and progress of the academic unit with respect to peers and the state-of-the-art in the discipline;
• Share long-range projections relevant to the discipline, thus identifying opportunities and possible futures of action for the academic unit;
• Understand the operating environment for the academic unit at Mines and within the larger context of student and recruiter interest in the discipline, as well as in industry and government sponsored research; and
• Provide objective and constructive advice to the President, Provost, Vice-President for Research and Technology Transfer (SVPRTT), Dean, and academic unit head regarding programmatic and operational developments within the unit.

Procedures for Nominating Visiting Committee Members

1. The Department creates a recommendation list, which should include titles, complete addresses, current email addresses, and a brief biographical statement. A typical Visiting Committee consists of three to five external members. The Department Head, in consultation with the Department Faculty, should construct a list of seven to ten potential Committee members. At this time, department staff should not make commitments with potential committee members concerning membership on a Visiting Committee.
2. The list is forwarded to the Dean and Provost, who will coordinate with the Department Head or Dean, the VPRTT, and the President to select a final visiting committee. The Visiting Committee is a Committee that reports to the President, and as such he/she has final authority in approving Committee members.
3. Once Presidential approval of a Committee is conveyed to the Department, the Department makes initial and informal contact with the potential Visiting Committee members to gauge their interest in serving on the Committee. The list of those potential members confirming their interest is forwarded to the President’s office and copied to the Provost.
4. The President’s Office prepares and mails formal letters of invitation to the members identified on the list (a sample letter is attached)
5. The President’s Office acknowledges all responses to the formal letter of Invitation and notifies the Department.

Scheduling Visiting Committee Visits

The Provost establishes a rotating schedule for visits by Visiting Committees. Typically, visits will occur once every three years. Visits are scheduled through the Office of the Provost in concurrence with the Office of the President. A schedule of upcoming visits is available through the Office of Academic Affairs.

Visit Arrangements

Department staff coordinates all logistics for the visit. Department staff should establish the availability of the President and the Provost prior to selecting a date by contacting the President’s office. Visiting committees should normally be held during the months of September, October, November, January, February, March or April. The visits are normally 1 ½ to two days in length and should include opportunities for interaction with administration, students and faculty. Additionally, the Office of the President will coordinate a dinner event with the Visiting Committee. The department may be asked to schedule the travel for their visiting committee members and are responsible for preparing the appropriate travel forms for such travel.

Visit Agenda

The Provost and President must approve the proposed agenda, and any materials sent to the Committee prior to these being sent. The welcome letter, approved agenda, and supplementary materials should be sent to committee members, and copied to the President and Provost, by the department head or Dean.

The agenda for each Visit must include the following elements:

1. An initial meeting of the Committee with the President, the Provost, the SVPRTT, and the Dean, (1 hour, usually 8:00-9:00 AM, in the Coors Boardroom). Department should arrange for coffee and pastries for this meeting.
2. A dinner at the President’s home, to include the Committee, Provost, SVPRTT, Dean, Department Head, and if space is available, selected faculty in the department. Because of space limitations, the Department should work with the President’s Office to determine the number of additional faculty who may be included in the dinner invitation. The department/division should provide the President’s Office with the names of each of the attendees, including spouses and guests. The President’s Office will email invitations to the dinner approximately three weeks prior to the event, with an RSVP date of one week prior. In extremely rare instances, the Provost may host a dinner at another venue.
3. Various departmental meetings and activities, organized by the Department Head in consultation with Program Faculty. These normally include but are not limited to meetings with program faculty and students.
4. An exit meeting with the Provost, Dean, SVPRTT (1 hour). Time should be allowed in the agenda for the committee to meet prior to the exit visit to discuss their recommendations to the CSM administration.
5. The initial meeting and exit meeting are normally held in the Coors Board Room, which may be reserved through the President’s Office as soon as the draft agenda is prepared. Usually lunch boxes are provided to the committee and arranged by Department and include the President, Provost and SVPRTT.

Visiting Committee Information Packet

Members of the Visiting Committee are provided materials in the form of a Visiting Committee Information Packet for their review prior to the
visit. These materials should be provided electronically to each committee member. Format of the Visiting Committee Information Packet is provided below.

Please note, Item 1.2 in the information packet which requires Dean and Provost’s approval. Please find at the end of this section a sample set of questions which may be used for that item.

**Visit Expenses**

The President’s Office will provide travel reimbursement as appropriate to Committee members and financial support to cover all on-campus working meals. The Department must cover any other expenses. For travel reimbursement, the Department should contact the President’s Office for spending authority to be included on TA and TE forms prepared by the Department for Committee travel (Please look at Mines’ travel policy at https://www.mines.edu/policy-library/financial/).

**Visiting Committee Reports and Institutional Response**

1. The Visiting Committee should send its report directly to the President with a copy sent to the Executive Assistant of the President.
2. The President’s Office will distribute copies of the report to the Dean, Provost, and the Department Head.
3. The Provost will direct the Dean and the Department Head to draft a response to the Visiting Committee report in a format approved by the President.
4. The Provost will work with the President to finalize the institutional response to the report.
5. The final version of the response is signed by the President and sent directly to each Committee member by the President’s office. Copies are provided to the Provost, Dean, and Department Head.
6. The Committee’s report and institutional response are shared with the Board of Trustees.

_Last Revision:

January 6, 2020_

Date

Dear:

I am writing to invite you to serve on the Visiting Committee for our Department at the upcoming meeting scheduled for Date.

As Colorado School of Mines evolves in the next decade this administration intends to build on the University’s traditional strengths and shall seek new directions where appropriate in developing the programs that will ensure Mines is a strong and respected institution.

To this end, we have instructed each of our academic degree-granting units to consult with an external Visiting Committee, composed of experts with diverse backgrounds and interests appropriate to the missions of that unit and the University. Visiting Committees provide the University with long-term programmatic direction, audit department programs and operations, and, as appropriate, assist with fundraising. Committee members are selected from nominees submitted by the academic units, the CSM Foundation, the CSM Alumni Association, and the administration. Your invitation is the result of this process.

As a Visiting Committee member you are invited to participate in one audit visit to review progress and future plans with respect to academic programs, research activities, and faculty and student development. Audit visits are scheduled for approximately one and one-half days. The morning of the first day will be devoted to formal presentations and discussions on materials distributed to the committee prior to the meeting. During the afternoon, committee members will have opportunities to meet with faculty members and students. On the second day, the Visiting Committee will prepare a short report to present to the administration during an exit meeting. The formal report of the committee will be sent to me following the visit.

Appointments to the Visiting Committee are for one term. Members of the Visiting Committee will be reimbursed for travel costs associated with their visit to the School, unless the member’s employer is able to cover the cost.

I understand that you have expressed an interest in serving and sincerely hope you will be able to accept this important appointment. I hope to see you in Month.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Johnson

c: Dean
Department Head
Provost
VPUA

_Last revision: November 9, 2016_

Visiting Committee Information Packet

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Part 1 Introductory Material
1.1 Welcome Letter (Required, provided by Department)
1.2 Critical Questions to be Considered (Required, provided by Department in consultation with Dean and Provost)
1.3 Departmental Overview (Required, provided by Department, recommended organization provided below)
   1.3.1 Introduction
   1.3.2 Report Organization
   1.3.3 History of Department
   1.3.4 Department Today
   1.3.5 Departmental Mission and Goals
   1.3.6 Faculty Workload
   1.3.7 Research
   1.3.8 Departmental Finances
1.4 Visit Logistics (Required, provided by Department, recommended organization provided below)
   1.4.1 Visit Schedule
   1.4.2 Visiting Committee Membership and Contact List
   1.4.3 Campus Map

Part 2 Institutional Context
2.1 Institutional Playbook (Required)

Provide link to the President’s Institutional Playbook (i.e., Strategic Plan) (https://www.mines.edu/president/planning/)
Part 3   Departmental Data (All sections provided by Department)

3.1 Departmental Faculty (Required, recommended organization provided below)
   3.1.1 Overview
   3.1.2 Summary
   3.1.3 CVs

3.2 Undergraduate Programs (Required, recommended organization provided below)
   3.2.1 Overview
   3.2.2 Undergraduate Program Administration
   3.2.3 Trends, Strengths, Needs, Opportunities

3.3 Graduate Programs (Required, recommended organization provided below)
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   3.3.3 Trends, Strengths, Needs, Opportunities

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3.5 Peer Department Analysis (Required, recommended organization provided below)
   3.5.1 Section of Peer Departments
   3.5.2 Faculty, Research, Students and Staff Comparisons
   3.5.3 Summary

3.6 Facilities (Required)

Visiting Committee Checklist

• Department or College constructs a list of seven to ten potential Committee Members, which should include titles, complete addresses, current email addresses and a brief biographical statement. Do not make commitments with potential committee members yet (Approximately six months before the visit).
• Forward list to the Dean and Provost.
• The Provost will coordinate with the Dean, the President, the Sr. Vice President for Research Technology Transfer (VPRTT), and Department Head to select a final Visiting Committee.
• When the Presidential approval of a Committee is conveyed to the Department. The Department Head or Dean will make initial and informal contact with the potential Visiting Committee members to gauge their interest in serving on the Committee.
• Interested potential members of the Committee list should be forwarded to the President’s office and copied to the Provost.

• The President’s Office prepares and mails formal letters of invitation to the members identified on the list (a sample letter is attached).
• The President’s Office acknowledges all responses to the formal letter of Invitation and notifies the Department or Dean.
• The Department or Dean should establish the availability of the President and the Provost prior to selecting a date for the visit. They can do this by contacting the President’s Executive Assistant.
• Department or Dean coordinates all logistics for the visit.
  • Visiting Committee Members’ travel arrangements (please look at Mines’ travel policies at: https://www.mines.edu/policy-library/financial/).
  • Lodging reservations and transportation.
  • Food arrangements if necessary.
  • Conference or boardroom reservations.
• Department or Dean prepares an agenda which needs to be approved by the Provost and President’s Office. When ready please forward it to them.
• Department or Dean Prepares Visiting Committee Information Packet (Eight weeks before the visit).
• Academic Affairs provides Part 2 of the Information Packet (Eight weeks before the visit).
• Department or Dean delivers Information Packet for review to the Dean or the Provost appropriately. (Four weeks before the visit).
• The Dean and Provost provide collective feedback to the Department or Dean and works with them to submit a final copy to the President (Two weeks and a half before the visit).
• After presidential approval of the Packet, the Provost returns approved Packet to the Dean or Department Head so it can be forwarded to the President, Provost, VPRTT and the Visiting Committee Members (Two weeks before the visit).
• After the visit, the Committee will send its report directly to the President and his Executive Assistant, and his office will provide copies of it to the Dean, Provost, and the Department Head.
• The Provost will direct the Dean and the Department Head to draft a response to the Visiting Committee report in a format approved by the President (After the Visit).
• The Provost will work with the President to finalize the institutional response to the report.
• The final version of the response is signed by the President and sent directly to each Committee member. Copies are provided to the Provost, Dean and Department Head.
• The Committee’s report and institutional response are shared with the Board of Trustees.

Sample Set of Questions for Item 1.2
1. Overall, what are XXXX’s strengths? (e.g., students, faculty, leadership, reputation, aspirations, organization, education, scope of research, impact on the field, etc.)?
2. Are there any areas in which XXXX is truly exemplary relative to other universities?
3. Overall, what are the key opportunities for improvement and investment, particularly with respect to student preparation/success, research impact, faculty development, and reputation?
4. Overall, what metrics should XXXX focus on when tracking their progress?
5. XXXX was only formed a few years ago – have benefits from the college structure emerged or are the programs largely self-isolated?
Do you see opportunities that are being missed and could be realized with the college structure?

6. What opportunities are there for XXXX undergraduate programs to be distinct and differentiated from similarly-named programs at other institutions?

7. What opportunities are there for XXXX graduate programs to be distinct and differentiated from similarly-named programs at other institutions? What opportunities are there for the graduate programs to be more self-sufficient financially?

8. Relative to other top programs, how does our instructional delivery compare?

9. Relative to other top programs, how does our external engagement compare?

10. Relative to top programs, how productive are the XXXX programs in areas of education and research? How familiar and aligned are they with Mines’ strategic plan?

11. Relative to top programs, how would you assess the engagement of XXXX faculty and students in evolution of the programs?

12. What opportunities are there for XXXX research programs to be distinct and more impactful? Do you consider the efforts to be largely isolated or collaborative?

**Last Revision:**

January 6, 2020