

ADVANCE
PROJECT
CREST



FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF
CREATING ANNUAL REVIEW
CRITERIA

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ABSTRACT

In 2021-22, the Project CREST team surveyed tenure-track faculty and department chairs (51.4% response rate) about their perceptions of creating annual review criteria. We measured satisfaction with the process, perceived inclusiveness of the documents, and expectations for future annual reviews as well as how often faculty feel the review documents should be revisited. Overall, faculty reported satisfaction with the process of creating annual review criteria documents; felt their documents are inclusive; and reported positive expectations for future annual reviews. The majority of faculty reported that criteria should be revisited every 1-3 years. Some different patterns emerged by type of discipline and between faculty and department chair perceptions. Finally, familiarity with the CREST Dialogues technique for co-creating annual review documents was associated with positive perceptions, suggesting it is a promising avenue to use for departmental policy work. Results suggest that the faculty experience was generally favorable during the annual review criteria document creation process.

Authors

Daniels, E. A., Poe, J., Smith, J. L., Mendez, S., Skop, E., & Song, H.

FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF ANNUAL MERIT REVIEW CREATION

Co-Creating Annual Review Documents

In 2020, the University of Colorado Board of Regents revised Regent Policy to mandate that campuses create stand-alone criteria for annual reviews. Given the formative nature of annual reviews, the NSF funded Project CREST adapted the West Virginia University facilitation process, called *Dialogues*, to support the inclusive and equitable development of unit criteria. Nearly all department chairs in STEM and Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) engaged in 12 hours of training on creating an atmosphere of inclusive communication and collaboration among faculty during the development of departmental annual review criteria documents. These chairs then showcased the process with other campus leaders. Project CREST created a [toolkit](#) with these procedures, which was shared broadly with campus, to facilitate the use of Dialogues-inspired processes. By spring 2022, all units, except one college, had either begun or completed their annual review criteria documents. Those documents are available on the [Provost's Website](#).

Executive Summary of Results

Project CREST surveyed faculty and department chairs in units across campus about their perceptions related to the process of developing annual review criteria documents in their unit. Overall, faculty reported satisfaction with the process of creating annual review criteria documents; they also felt that their documents are inclusive; and they reported positive expectations for the use of the documents in future annual reviews. The majority of faculty reported that criteria should be revisited every 1-3 years. Some different patterns emerged by type of discipline and between faculty and department chair perceptions. Moreover, familiarity with the *Dialogues* process was positively related to perceiving review documents as inclusive and feeling positive about expectations for future reviews. Results suggest that the faculty experience was generally favorable during the annual review criteria document creation process.

Method

We invited 255 tenure-track faculty and 35 department chairs and directors ($n = 290$) to complete an online survey. A total of 149 ($n = 134$ faculty and $n = 15$ department chairs/directors) responded to the survey (overall response rate = 51.4%). We asked participants about their perceptions of creating their department's annual review criteria documents (see Appendix for survey questions). For faculty in the one college that had not yet started their annual review criteria document creation process, they completed the same survey, but worded as to their hopes and anticipations. Those respondents however were not included in subsequent analyses reported here to maintain the focus on perceptions of the actual process that unfolded. We created an average composite score for three variables including: satisfaction with the process, inclusiveness of the documents, and positive expectation for future reviews. We also asked all participants how often they think their department should revisit annual review criteria documents.

Departmental Field Groupings:

STEM = Biology, Chemistry/Biochemistry, Physics, Mathematics, and the engineering units of Computer Science, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

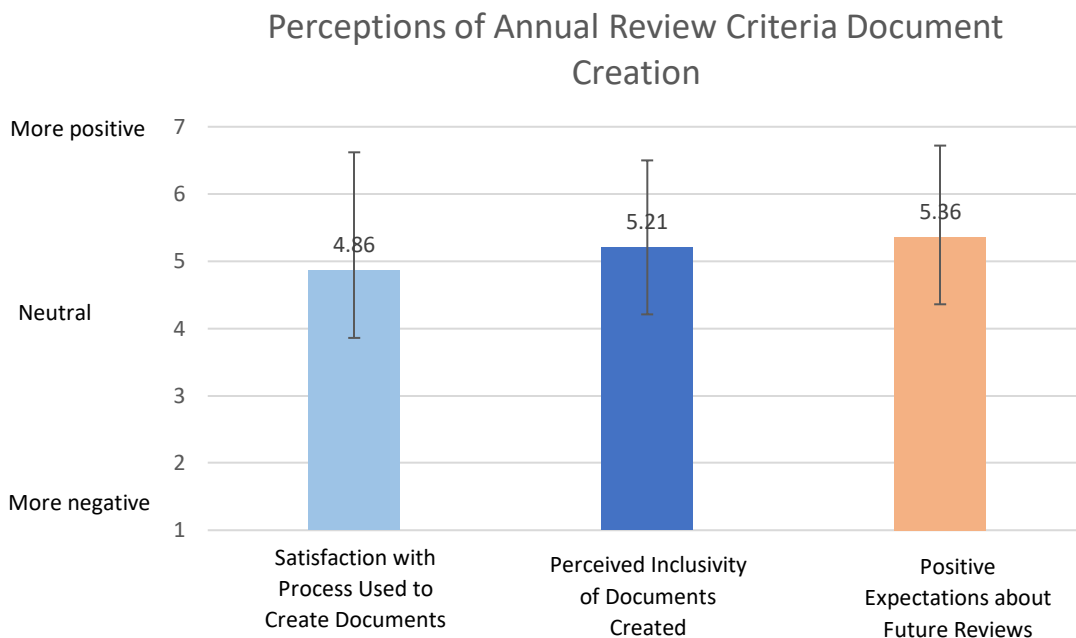
Social/Behavioral Sciences (SBS) = Anthropology, Economics, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology

Humanities/Arts (Hum) = Communications, English, History, Languages and Cultures, Philosophy, Visual and Performing Arts, and Women's and Ethnic Studies

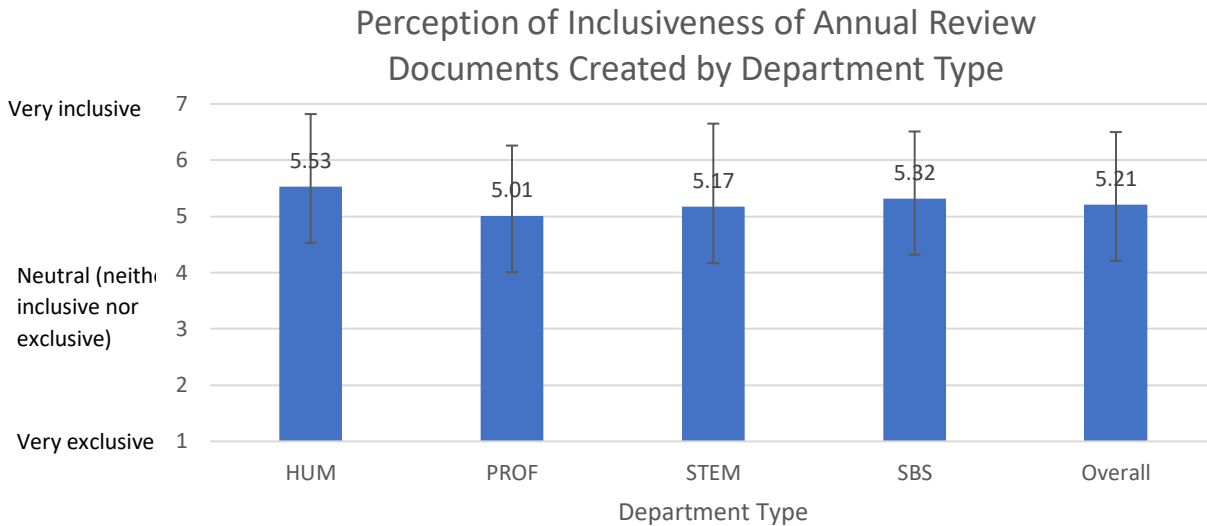
Professional Programs (Prof) = Business, Nursing and Health Sciences, Public Affairs, Technical Communication and Information Design. The units within the College of Education were not included (as they had not yet started creating their annual review criteria documents).

Results

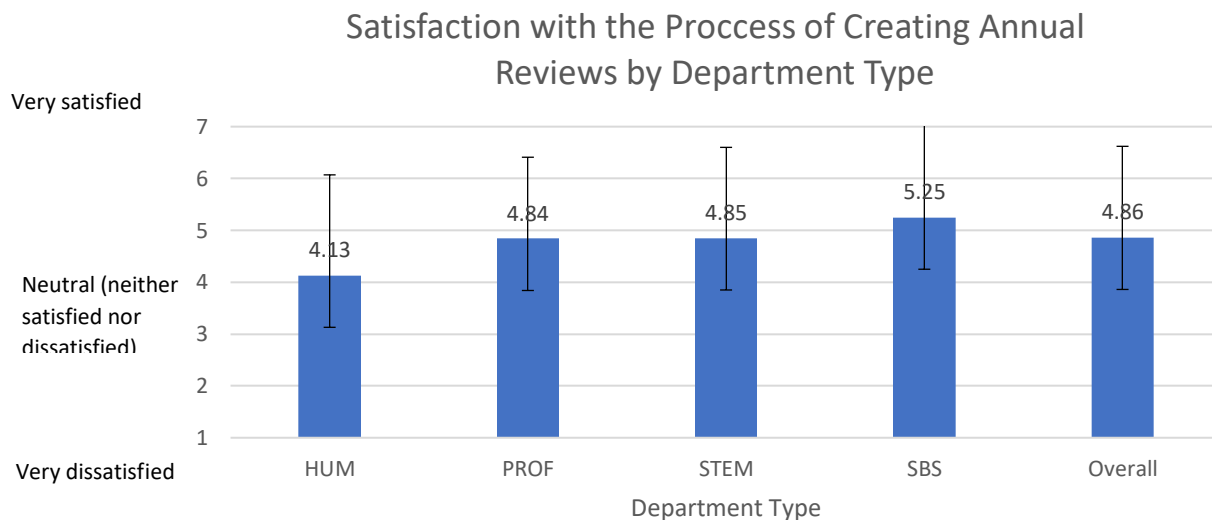
The findings represented below indicate that, on average, participants were satisfied with the process of creating annual review criteria documents; perceived their documents to be inclusive; and hold positive expectations for future annual reviews.



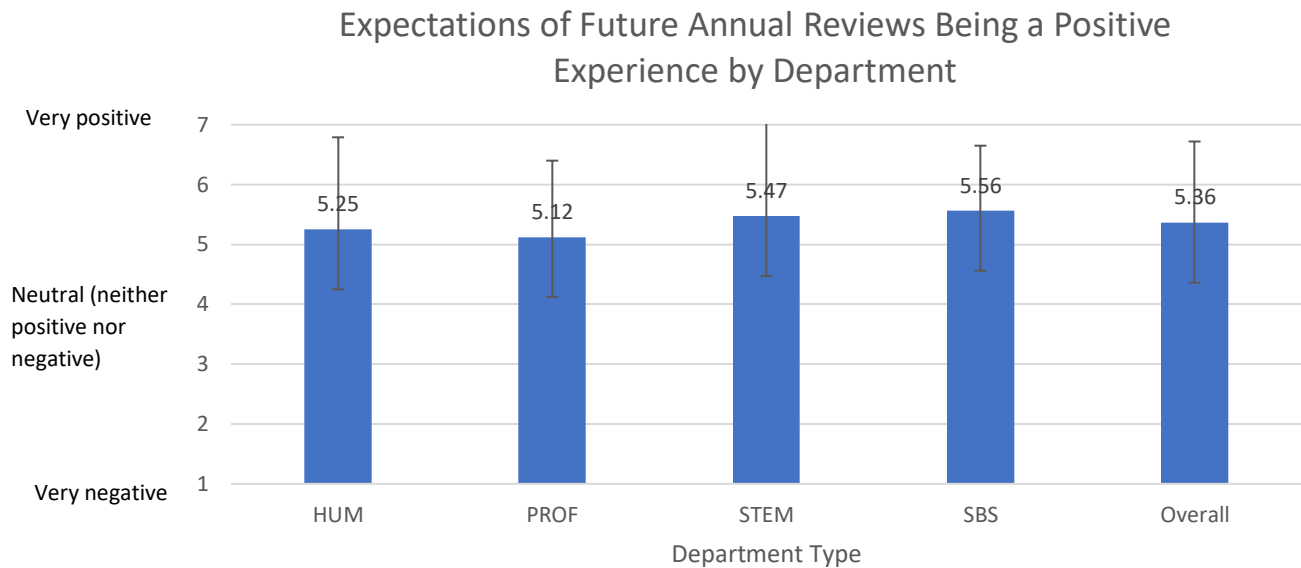
The results depicted below indicate that perceptions of inclusiveness in review documents were generally high for everyone, though relatively highest in humanities/arts departments and lowest in professional programs.



The results depicted below indicate that satisfaction with the process of creating annual review criteria documents was generally high among all respondents, with the relatively highest satisfaction in social and behavioral sciences (SBS) departments and relatively lower satisfaction in humanities/arts departments.

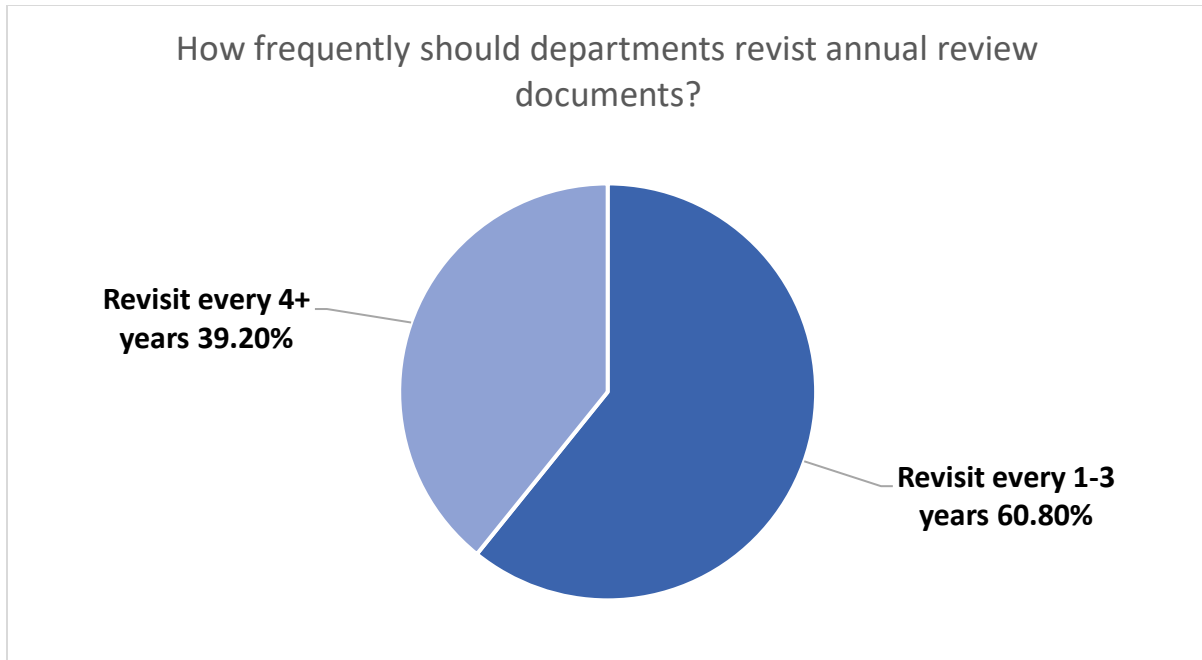


The results depicted here indicate that overall, everyone generally held positive expectations for future annual reviews, with the relative best expectations in social and behavioral science and STEM departments and relatively lower expectations in professional programs.



How often do faculty want to revisit the annual review criteria documents criteria?

Participants were asked how frequently they think their department should revisit their annual review criteria documents. As viewed in the pie chart on the following page, approximately 60% reported the documents should be revisited every 1-3 years.



Descriptive Statistics: Overall Respondents were Generally Positive

To get a sense for how respondents felt about the annual review criteria document creation process using the scale of the survey (which ranged from 1 to 7), we used a one-sample t-test to test the mean responses against the specific “neutral” scale point value. The average measure of satisfaction with the process used to create annual reviews ($M = 4.86, SD = 1.76$) was significantly higher than the scale mid-point ($M = 4.00$), $t(82) = 4.47, p < .001$. The average measure of the perceived inclusiveness of the new documents ($M = 5.21, SD = 1.29$) was also significantly higher than the scale mid-point, $t(94) = 9.05, p < .001$. Finally, positive expectations about future annual reviews ($M = 5.36, SD = 1.36$) were significantly higher than the scale mid-point $t(95) = 9.74, p < .001$. Together, results indicate that participants’ perceptions of the annual review process are more positive than would be expected compared to neutral.

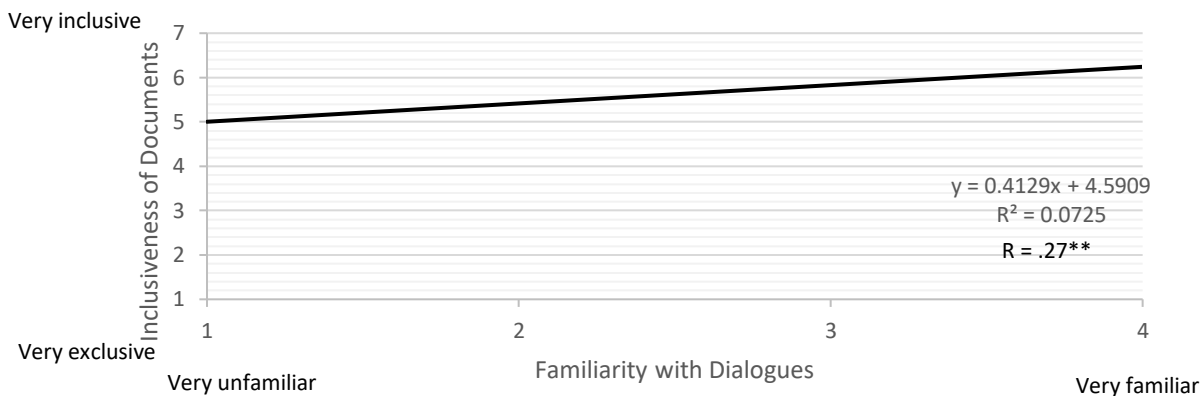
Faculty and Department Chair Perceptions: Chairs Comparatively more Positive

Though there were necessarily fewer department chairs who completed the survey, we explored patterns between faculty and chair responses. Department chairs ($M = 5.66, SD = .92$) were significantly more satisfied with the document creation process compared to faculty members ($M = 4.74, SD = 1.83$), $t(81) = 9.11, p = .015$. Department chairs also perceived the documents to be more inclusive ($M = 6.28, SD = .64$) compared to faculty members ($M = 5.04, SD = 1.31$), $t(93) = 9.25, p < .001$. Finally, department chairs ($M = 6.45, SD = .49$) reported more positive expectations about future reviews compared to faculty members ($M = 5.18, SD = 1.03$), $t(94) = 13.23, p < .001$. Together, these findings suggest that department chairs generally had more positive attitudes about the annual review process compared to other faculty.

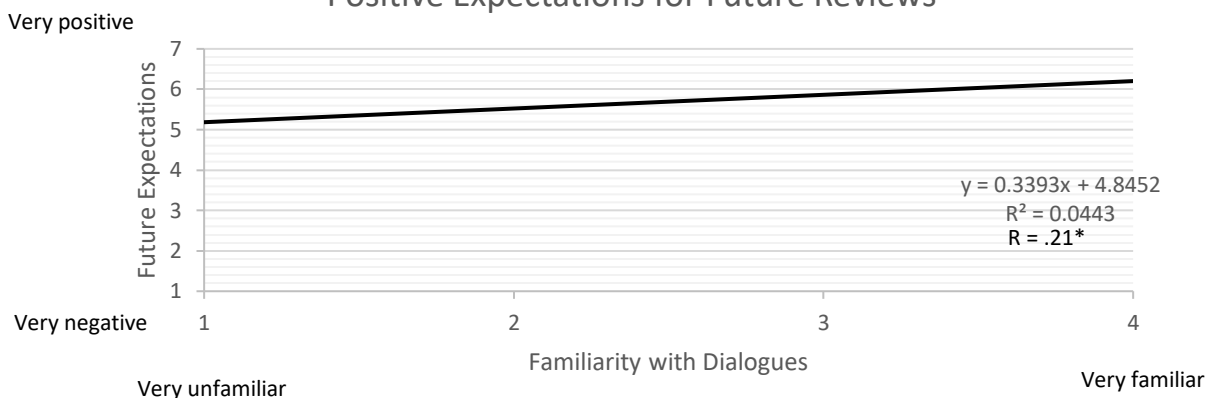
Familiarity with the Dialogues Technique: Positive Associations

In the fall of 2021, chairs of departments in STEM and SBS (n = 12 of the 14 possible STEM/SBS chairs chose to participate) were invited to take part in a 12-hour online training in the *Dialogues Dual Agenda Technique* developed by the ADVANCE team at West Virginia University. This training technique was implemented to facilitate inclusive unit-level discussions specifically with regard to the development of new annual review criteria and processes for faculty. The training concluded with a session with the other campus unit chairs and academic leaders (n=37) to teach them the techniques. The Project CREST team also developed an in-depth toolkit as a resource. <https://research.uccs.edu/co-creating-annual-reviews>. This toolkit was broadly shared with campus. Project CREST also met with other departments (by invitation) that did not take part in the training directly to so they could utilize the same *Dialogues* technique in their departments. In our survey, we assessed familiarity with the *Dialogues* technique. We found the perceived inclusiveness of the documents and the positive expectations for future reviews were positively correlated with *Dialogues* familiarity.

Relation Between Familiarity with Dialogues and Perceived Inclusiveness of the Annual Review Documents



Relation Between Familiarity with Dialogues and Positive Expectations for Future Reviews



Conclusions and Implications

Overall, faculty who participated in this survey:

- Reported satisfaction with the process of creating annual review documents.
- Perceived that the annual review criteria documents are inclusive.
- Have positive expectations for future annual reviews.
- Report that criteria should be revisited every 1-3 years.
- Indicated that greater familiarity with the *Dialogues* co-creation technique was associated with feeling department review documents were more inclusive.
- Indicated that greater familiarity with the *Dialogues* co-creation technique was associated with holding more positive expectations for future reviews.

Together these findings are encouraging. Faculty experiences of creating annual review criteria documents were positive overall, suggesting that this process need not be viewed as onerous. Therefore, we recommend that department chairs engage faculty in reviewing and revising their criteria on a regular basis (i.e., 1-3 years). Finally, we highly recommend departments use the Project CREST co-creation toolkit (<https://research.uccs.edu/co-creating-annual-reviews>) to facilitate this process, as the toolkit provides detailed instructions regarding the use of the *Dialogues* co-creation technique within the UCCS context and can be adapted to other departmental business needs.

Appendix: Survey Questions

1. Satisfaction with the process (1 – Strongly disagree to 7 – Strongly agree)
 - In general, I am extremely happy with the process we used to create/revise our unit’s annual review criteria.
 - I feel that the development/refinement of the annual review criteria went very smoothly.
 - I felt that the process our department used to develop/revise annual review criteria was very inefficient. (reverse-coded)
 - In general, how satisfied are you with the process your unit used to develop/refine annual review documents? (1 – Very unsatisfied to 7 – Very satisfied)
2. Inclusiveness of the documents (1 – Strongly disagree to 7 – Strongly agree)
 - I am proud of the annual review documents our department created.
 - I would guess that our annual review criteria are likely very similar to the same criteria that was used 25 years ago. [reverse coded]
 - Our unit's annual review criteria reward a variety of accomplishments.
 - Our department considered how the review criteria reflects the contributions of faculty from multiple social groups and backgrounds.
 - Our department's annual review documents build in flexibility to account for unexpected work and life events.
3. Positive expectations about how annual reviews will go in the future (1 – Strongly disagree to 7 – Strongly agree)
 - As a faculty member, I know what to expect for annual review next year.
 - I feel confident that next year's annual review process will be transparent.
 - I feel confident that next year's annual review process will be fair.
 - I feel confident that our annual review process going forward will be meaningful.
 - I feel confident the annual review is flexible enough to account for COVID-19 impacts.
 - I feel confident that the annual review process will be inclusive of faculty with differing experiences based on their race/gender/sexual orientation and other intersecting identities.