

September 2018

AAPR General FAQ

What is AAPR?

The Academic and Administrative Program Review is a critical and ambitious initiative, spanning the college and conservatory, that seeks to address head-on the challenges facing Oberlin and many of the nation's top-tier liberal arts colleges and conservatories. It provides a venue and an opportunity to build on the strengths of the college and conservatory, refocusing the entire community on what Oberlin distinctively offers to its students and to the world.

Why do we need to do this?

President Ambar has communicated openly about the financial challenges facing Oberlin. Our peer institutions across the country face the same challenges.

The goal is to enhance Oberlin's educational excellence for the long term and to demonstrate national leadership in addressing the changing landscape for higher education. The AAPR steering committee has expressed its confidence and commitment to doing this work in a manner that is authentic to Oberlin's mission and governance culture.

What outcome do you hope for?

AAPR will help refocus Oberlin's energy and resources on a compelling vision for the future. It will create a new path for the college and conservatory, by building on the excellence and creativity that are embedded in the institution.

Isn't Oberlin already in a strong position?

Oberlin occupies an important place in higher education and has been a bold leader in the past, pioneering many approaches that others have emulated. However, the structural and financial challenges Oberlin now faces require attention. The AAPR process provides a new opportunity for Oberlin to make bold choices for excellence and leadership in the century to come.

How will AAPR work?

Through a thoughtful and rigorous process of research, deliberation, and broad consultation, the AAPR Steering Committee is charged to make recommendations on areas for prudent contraction and, just as importantly, areas for investment that will build on Oberlin's distinctive strengths.

The steering committee has six working groups, comprised of steering committee members, focusing on essential elements of the program review: Mission Centeredness, Quality, Financial Viability, Potential Student Interest, Survey Design, and Administrative Review. These working groups were established to collect and carefully assess information and advice for the program review on behalf of the steering committee.

The steering committee as a whole will consider all of the information and advice and formulate and explain its findings to the Oberlin community. AAPR recommendations will inform actions by the administration and the Board of Trustees, and actions taken through faculty governance and other established processes.

Will I be represented?

The steering committee has committed to a broadly inclusive process that taps the full range of Oberlin wisdom, creativity, and experience. The 31-person AAPR Steering Committee [[hyperlink to membership page](#)] is comprised of 15 members of the faculty, 10 administrators, 3 students, 2 trustees, and 1 member of Alumni Council.

That breadth of experience is important, and at the same time President Ambar has specifically asked the steering committee and working group members to act not as representatives of a particular area or interest, but as citizens of Oberlin College, in the best interests of the entire institution.

AAPR working groups and the steering committee will consult early and often with the President and Senior Staff, the appropriate divisional heads, the General Faculty, elected faculty governance committees, and the Board of Trustees to receive advice regarding the administrative and academic program reviews.

How can I make sure my voice is heard?

The AAPR Steering Committee will communicate regularly with the campus community through a variety of channels. Community members, in turn, will have several opportunities to add their ideas.

Campus community members have already been surveyed, and may take part in planned campus conversations. The AAPR Steering Committee will also meet frequently with the elected faculty governance committees, the General Faculty, Student Senate, and other representative bodies, through which members of the community can engage in the AAPR process.

The path forward must be shared to make this a process that is authentic to Oberlin's culture.

What about faculty governance?

College and AAPR leadership remain committed to faculty governance. AAPR working groups and the steering committee will consult early and often with the appropriate faculty governance bodies to receive advice for the academic program review.

All final AAPR recommendations will include specific proposals for implementation through the appropriate governance structures, including the faculty governance protocols that apply to academic programs.

How will I find out what AAPR is doing?

There have been and will continue to be a wide variety of forums for participating and channels for information about AAPR, beginning with the website at Oberlin.edu/AAPR. This website will collect and make available written and video communications, as well as providing a calendar of events and other reference information about AAPR. AAPR leaders will continue to make themselves available at meetings AAPR hosts, as well as at meetings of other campus governance bodies. At key points in the process, AAPR leaders will address the entire campus community via email.