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Abstract for an Invited Paper
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Best Practices in Physics Program Assessment: Should APS Provide Accreditation Standards for Physics?¹

THEODORE HODAPP, American Physical Society

The Phys21 report, “Preparing Physics Students for 21st Century Careers,” provides guidance for physics programs to improve their degree programs to make them more relevant for student career choices. Undertaking such changes and assessing impact varies widely by institution, with many departments inventing assessments with each periodic departmental or programmatic review. The American Physical Society has embarked on a process to integrate information from Phys21, the results of other national studies, and educational research outcomes to generate a best-practices guide to help physics departments conduct program review, assessment, and improvement. It is anticipated that departments will be able to use this document to help with their role in university-level accreditation, and in making the case for improvements to departmental programs. Accreditation of physics programs could stem from such a document, and I will discuss some of the thinking of the APS Committee on Education in creating this guide, and how they are advising APS to move forward in the higher education landscape that is increasingly subject to standards-based evaluations. I will describe plans for the design, review, and dissemination of this guide, and how faculty can provide input into its development.

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