

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Academic Program Review

Master's in Asia Pacific Studies
(MAPS)

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Don Baker, Professor of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia.
Mark Hansell, Professor of Chinese and Director of Asian Studies, Carleton College.
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Sigur Center for Asian Studies, George Washington University.

CAMPUS VISIT:
March 3-5, 2010.

The review team read the self-study written by the faculty in the department; reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; conducted class visits; interviewed faculty, students and staff; and met with the Dean, Associate Deans and other relevant members of the campus community. Prior to their visit, the reviewers were provided with USF's Vision, Mission, Values Statement, the department's self-study and other university materials.

- 1. How did the external review committee rate the quality of the program – excellent, very good, good, adequate, or poor? How does the program compare with benchmark top-tier programs nationally? Please provide a brief rationale for the external review committee's rating.**
 - The reviewers rated the MAPS program as 'adequate' or 'good'.
 - They identified serious problems in terms of student satisfaction, excessive use of adjunct faculty, the "shortcomings of a highly structured program" and the program's language requirement.

- 2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?**
 - At its inception, the program had a clear logic in "offering a liberal arts masters degree to working adults who often had no background in the study of Asia". The reviewers questioned whether this logic continues to meet the needs of the current students entering the program and they suggested a re-evaluation of the original model.
 - The MAPS program is one of the most highly structured programs in North America giving students little choice in the selection of courses.
 - There is a heavy reliance on adjuncts and this could be alleviated by more faculty hires in other departments with an interest in Asia, something that would be commensurate with USF's global and international ambitions.

- 3. What specific recommendations for improving the program's quality has the external review committee made to the Dean?**

Mission and Goals

- The MAPS program describes itself as a "night program oriented towards working adults who may have little academic training in Asian Studies" (Self-Study, p.8). However, this may

- not address the current needs of students who expressed real concern about whether the degree would prepare them for employment.
- The reviewers argued that MAPS faces “strong competition” from other programs in the United States. Some professional programs fashion curricular around security policy, development, trade, etc. Others are more humanities focused.
 - The review team rejected the self-study’s assertion that the “program should not be judged by the same criteria as its peers” – all programs are compared to each other and prospective students in particular will compare programs.
 - The program needs to consider what kind of Asian Studies masters programs should be considered benchmarks as the program moves forward.

Curriculum and Instruction

- The reviewers questioned whether the highly structured curriculum was pedagogically sound and whether it prepared students for employment. They did however recognize that it provided great breath, makes scheduling easier and was cheaper to deliver (since less classes need to be offered).
- The reviewers recommended offering a broader range of classes in conjunction with the MA in International Studies and encouraging more tenure track faculty to offer classes (possibly in the late afternoon rather than evening).
- The reviewers recommended offering seminars of 2-2 1/2 hours in length rather than the current 4 hours (a four hour evening class might be a disincentive for full time faculty).
- The reviewers recommended that the program consider developing, in a more systematic manner, an internship program for students (especially given the opportunities afforded by being based in San Francisco).

Language Instruction

- The review team had “serious reservations” about MAPS language classes. Language faculty are placed in an “impossible situation” since they are asked to markedly improve the language ability of graduate students but are “not provided the optimal scheduling to achieve that goal”.
- The current arrangement of one session four hours per week is “untenable” – language learning requires frequent reinforcement (most introductory language classes meet five days per week).
- The reviewers made some suggestions as to how this might be improved – have language classes meet twice a week for half as long; have the language course schedule be independent of the seminar schedule; and utilize technology for remote tutoring/conversation practice sessions in conjunction with tutoring by native speakers.
- Another serious concern is the lack of a language pre-requisite for admission.
- The review team unanimously agreed that the program should require at least one year of an Asian language (perhaps raising this to two years in the near future).
- This change would raise the academic level of the degree and enable students to probe more deeply into culture through language.
- It would also solve some practical problems since students are currently at different levels in terms of language, requiring multiple classes that might not be pedagogically or economically effective.
- The requirement would eliminate introductory level classes and increase enrollments in second year classes while also allowing for opportunities to integrate language courses and seminars at a higher level.

Faculty

- The reviewers were impressed with the dedication of the full-time tenure track faculty who provided a core to build on. However, this core was small at the present time.
- The reviewers encouraged the University to “take utmost advantage” of the Yuchengco Philippine Studies program since it was “quite distinctive and sets apart USF from most other Asian Studies programs”.
- There was too much reliance in the program on adjunct faculty and the University needed to find ways to lure more full-time faculty into the program or hire more new faculty in Asian Studies.
- While there may be sound reasons to use adjunct faculty (for professional expertise for example), in the MAPS program the “extensive use of adjuncts comes about from necessity not choice.”
- The reviewers recognized the distinctive contribution made by some adjuncts but raised some questions as to the competence of others.

Assessment

- The assessment plan for MAPS seemed reasonable but the reviewers noted that this was the first year of collecting data.
- In terms of language assessment, MAPS might consider mapping its assessment according to ACTFL standards.
- The reviewers recommended that Tagalog learning goals be more specific and they should be rewritten so that they resemble the goals in Japanese and Chinese.

Students

- The reviewers noted that the profile of students entering the MAPS program had changed. Rather than working adults, students were younger and were not in general returning to jobs – they were interested in using the degree to obtain employment.
- Students were adamant that they needed much more help with careers, more contacts with alumni, etc.
- There seem to be two distinct constituencies in the current program – students from Asia and students from the United States. They have different needs and expectations.
- The key question is “whether or not a model crafted in an earlier time for students from a different demographic profile will be sustainable. The reviewers are concerned that it may not be.”
- More employers want students have a useable command of an Asian language. Without greater language competencies, the program may not be competitive in five or ten years time since many masters programs are producing students with language competence at the ACTFL level of intermediate-high or better.
- The review team recognized the diversity of the student body in terms of ethnicity and gender.

Resources

- The review team were unsure how MAPS was integrated into the Center for the Pacific Rim.
- The reviewers unanimously recommended more financial and staff support for the program – there are too many adjuncts, office space is limited, and the support staff is deficient in size. For a masters level program, MAPS appears to compare badly with others in terms of resources.
- The review team also unanimously recommended that the University hire more tenure-track faculty who work on Asia since “any excellent Asian Studies program needs to have a strong tenure-line core.”

4. In the opinion of the external review committee is the program following the University's strategic initiative in that it is;

Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty of outstanding teachers and scholars.

- The review team noted that the faculty were “scholars and educators engaged with their fields and working hard to juggle the responsibilities of scholarship, education and service.”
- The reviewers were impressed by the “range of individuals who have participated in MAPS program.”

Enrolling, supporting and graduating a diverse student body that demonstrates high academic achievement, strong leadership capabilities, a concern for others, and a sense of responsibility for the weak and vulnerable.

- The review team was impressed were impressed with the “excited and engaged” students that they met.

Providing the environment necessary to promote student learning in the program.

- The review team felt the program could, with some changes, develop into a truly stellar and distinctive program in Asian Studies. But they were concerned about the outmoded rationale for the program and language requirements and instruction.

5. In what way is the program contributing to the goal of making the University of San Francisco a premier Jesuit, Catholic urban university with a global perspective that educates leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world?

- The review team found that the program was “well aligned with the mission of the University.”
- In conversations with students and faculty, there was “an emphasis on the values of social justice and service along with academic rigor and intellectual curiosity”.

6. What is the timetable for the response to the external review committee's recommendations for program improvement? What can the Office of the Provost do to appropriately respond to the review?

- Work with departments to hire faculty with teaching and research interests in Asia.
- Improve collaboration and co-operation across the academic units studying Asia.
- Assist the programs as they seek to improve language instruction and acquisition particularly in the MAPS program.

7. What general comments or issues, if any, are crucial to understanding the reviewers report?

- The reviewers noted that Asian Studies at USF is sometimes less than the sum of its parts.
- Better exploitation of resources, thoughtful collaboration with other units (the Ricci Institute, the Kiriya Chair, the Nautilus Institute, China Dialogue, Japan Policy Research Institute) and some modest investments will be the path to excellence.
- The review team were particularly concerned that “there appears to be little interaction between the research activities of the Center for the Pacific Rim and the teaching programs on campus.”

- The University should also better leverage the resources of San Francisco and the Bay Area as well as the Jesuit network of universities in Asia.