

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Academic Program Review

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM
Comparative Literature and Culture Program Review

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

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CAMPUS VISIT:

April 11-13, 2012

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 program **VERY GOOD**, especially "given the short period of time the program has existed and the structural limitations it has encountered".
- The University of San Francisco is one of the few Jesuit Colleges and Universities to offer Comparative Literature as an undergraduate major.
- One of the main strengths of the program is its strong focus on foreign language study, which supports the University and College's commitment to internationalization.
- The reviewers found "the teaching and syllabi to be excellent" and "the curriculum, though limited by its size and in need of expansion, introduces students to some of the major concerns of a vibrant and growing field." They also praised the "personalized undergraduate research" experience the students are receiving.
- The program is a "younger and much smaller program than benchmark programs" at other universities, and therefore, the reviewers argued, "it could not be compared to programs offering graduate and undergraduate degrees and with greater resources".

2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?

- An administrative structure needs to be created.
- More faculty input and expertise is needed to develop the curriculum and grow the program.
- An administrative structure needs to be created.
- There is limited scholarly vision and scope of expertise.
- Program seems isolated in the College, with little communication between the program and the departments in which students take electives for the major.
- Human and fiscal resources are lacking.

- Do not recommend detaching Comparative Literature and Culture program from Modern and Classical Languages now because the “programs can be mutually supportive”. Also recommended, however, that the program consider becoming a freestanding program in the future.

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

Curriculum

- Creation of “an advisory board or committee consisting of full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members from fields that share affinities with Comparative Literature” is needed.
- The reviewers identified several areas where curricular expansion would benefit the program and its alignment with the University of San Francisco’s mission and priorities:
 - East Asian Literature and Culture
 - Translation Studies and Theory
 - Theatre, Music, and Performance Studies
 - Art and aesthetics
 - Greater coverage of periods and genres
- A core CPML course at the 300-level could be created to provide more continuity.
- The Capstone seminar needs to be discussed. It is frequently under-enrolled and taught as a Directed Reading.

Faculty

- The program needs to “incorporate other USF faculty who are comparatists or hire comparative literature full-time faculty” in order to guarantee stability.
- Program faculty should strengthen ties between the program and other post-disciplinary programs.

Students

- Visibility of the program needs to be increased in order to enhance recruitment.
- Strategies need to be developed for double majors in other related programs
- Flow through the major needs to be considered. Students usually enroll in the introductory class too late in their academic year to declare a minor.

Resources

- The program needs a dedicated program assistant, office space with signage, and budget.
- Recommend hiring a student assistant for a couple of hours a week.
- Technical support inadequate and should be improved.

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

- a. *Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty of outstanding teachers and scholars.*
- The reviewers commented on the collegiality and cohesiveness of the faculty members
 - Limited number of faculty currently teaching in Comparative Literature and Culture limits the scope of the core offerings and does not represent the scope of the field.
 - Research interests are heavily weighted towards the modern period.
 - Director and adjunct faculty members are all females.

- b. *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.*
 - Program provides intellectual challenges at all levels of its curriculum.
 - The program builds awareness of diversity through its curriculum.
 - The student population of students in the classes is quite diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, and class.
- c. *Providing the environment necessary to promote student learning in the program.*
 - Students are encouraged to read complex cultural and literary texts in multifaceted ways.
 - Faculty provide “a nurturing and challenging environment conducive to robust learning” and the program “trains its students not only to be productive members of society but future leaders in their chosen fields of study”.
 - The dedicated faculty members take their students to cultural institutions as a supplement to their coursework.

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?

- Three of the University’s four strategic priorities namely diversity, internationalization and academic excellence are clearly and coherently integrated into the program’s current syllabi.
- Comparative Literature, as field of study, has “long been linked with human rights” and “takes as its starting point the appreciation for the worth of all forms of cultural expression”.
- The students are taught to be “tolerant world citizens” through the study abroad experience, rigorous training in the classroom, and local community involvement.

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?

The next step is for the Dean and Associate Dean to meet with the Program Director and discuss the report. Based on the reviewers’ suggestions, three ways the Provost’s Office can assist the program immediately are to support the creation of an advisory board, help with building bridges with other programs to increase visibility of the program, and provide funding for a dedicated student assistant. Additional resources (e.g., faculty hire, dedicated staff and space) should be considered as part of long-term planning.

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

- The University of San Francisco is one of the few Jesuit Colleges and Universities to offer Comparative Literature as an undergraduate major.
- Three of the University’s four strategic priorities, namely diversity, internationalization and academic excellence, are clearly and coherently integrated into the program’s current syllabi.
- More faculty input and expertise is needed to develop the curriculum and grow the program and an administrative structure needs to be created.