

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*Academic Program Review  
College of Arts and Sciences*

**DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM**

Sport Management

**EXTERNAL REVIEWERS**

Professor Heather Lawrence-Benedict, Ohio University  
Professor Ellen J. Staurowsky, Drexel University  
Professor Emeritus David Stotlar, University of Northern Colorado

**CAMPUS VISIT**

December 8-11, 2015

The review team read the self-study written by the faculty in USF's Sport Management department, reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; conducted class visits at the Orange and Hilltop Campuses; interviewed faculty, students and staff at both campus locations; 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 program'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 committee gave the Sport Management department an overall rating of **excellent**. They noted that Sport Management faculty have "created a recognized brand in [its] education area that is known to be high quality," with "carefully cultivated" links between "industry and vital networks" to sustain the program and its "high caliber" students. Faculty, staff, and students are said to be "responsive to [any] issues that arise" within the program, and in "ongoing dialogue" to assess and maintain its quality.

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

- The program is highly ranked by external measure; strengths of the program are "in quality of students, placement and industry performance after graduation", while "productivity and impact of full time faculty and the quality of adjunct professors are also strengths"

- The program’s curriculum is an important strength. It is said to “reflect industry trends,” balance “in class expectations [with] experiential/internship requirements” well, and provide good “exposure to sectors and segments of the industry” in which students seek work.
- More Sport Management programs are being offered “in the U.S. and around the world,” and USF will need to be mindful of competing programs (i.e. University of Oregon and Long Beach).
- The lack of a strategic plan and student exit/post-grad data hinder the program’s “ability to forecast and prioritize” changes to strengthen the program.

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

#### *Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Opportunities*

- Hire at least one full-time faculty member to specialize in “placement opportunities and internship offerings” in the OC program, and/or ensure that opportunities and offerings are balanced between northern and southern California campuses
- Explore the use of online course offerings, to “strategically enhance student experience,” “contribute to retention,” and “protect income that would be lost otherwise”
- Establish an Alumni Advisory Board or Industry Advisory Board to support the program and enhance its development (in the areas of “elective [offerings], “job placement,” etc.)
- Explore the feasibility of offering a course in diversity, so as to better fulfill “the university’s mission in terms of social justice and elevation in humanity”

#### *Facilities and Staffing*

- Retain “excellent” Orange Campus support staff, if/when additional programs begin there and threaten to “overextend” staff
- Address “technology shortfalls” (including lack of “smart classrooms”) at the Orange Campus

#### *Student Retention and Support*

- Further develop scholarship assistance “to support students” and “increase national and international prominence”

#### *Alumni Tracking/Employment*

- Utilize exit surveys/focus groups/interviews to strengthen data collection from graduates
- Consider surveying employers to receive formal reports on student quality

### *Diversity*

- Utilize “targeted efforts” to “attract a racially and ethnically diverse” faculty pool
- Continue to monitor the diversity of faculty prospects in the adjunct pool

#### **4. In the opinion of the external review committee, is the program following the University’s strategic initiatives?**

- a) *Offering a demanding academic program that challenges students to expand and develop their intellectual capacities*

The program offers a curriculum that is constantly updated and changed to reflect industry trends and as a result, students “feel challenged in most courses” and have “the foundation to excel in the sport business.” Reviewers also noted that the presence of “industry executives currently working in the field in which they teach” is a unique and important strength, and felt that the program “should be commended” for “identifying these individuals and supporting their teaching for the benefit of the students.”

- b) *Supports a faculty of teaching scholars whose pedagogy is informed by rigorous research and who engage in their disciplines*

The reviewers noted that faculty “appear to be excellent teachers,” whose “strengths are recognized within the discipline.” They also noted that “faculty relative to their positions and titles are publishing in high level academic journals” and “contributing to industry trade publications.” In addition, faculty scholarship is said to be “incorporated well into the program through consulting, research and volunteer activities,” and to provide “relevance for classroom teaching.”

- c) *Ensuring that different voices and perspectives are present in curricula, programs and activities*

While the reviewers note that this program “seems to be more diverse than many across the country,” and that “faculty and staff have a clear consciousness regarding diversity among the student population,” they found it unclear “how the program engages around issues of diversity and the steps taken to ... build awareness of and sensitivity to multicultural issues.” They suggested that faculty consider 1) clarifying diversity goals (regarding students, faculty, and program offerings), and 2) “how to continue to fulfill the university’s mission in terms of social justice.” The reviewers cited concern from some students that their colleagues “were not fully prepared to explore race and gender issues knowledgeably and with sensitivity,” and a level of diversity among full-time faculty “that is not reflective of the diversity in the student population” as areas for growth, in this respect.

**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 reviewers noted that Sport Management “relates well and contributes to the USF mission,” and exposes students to it from “their first interactions ... in the recruiting process.” USF’s mission is also reinforced “through a focus on social justice in several courses and program outreach initiatives,” and modeled by faculty members whose “writing and scholarship also address these issues.” The curriculum includes courses addressing “workplace fairness issues for professional and college athletes,” “ethics in Accounting and Budgeting,” and provides “international outreach” through an immersion program in South Africa. As a whole, reviewers felt the program “does not just talk the talk of USF mission, but embodies it in the culture of support and care that it extends to its students and in the scope of what it offers.”

**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 Deans to meet with the Sport Management faculty and discuss the action plan based on the *Self Study* and *External Reviewers’ Report*. The Office of the Provost could assist the program by supporting the recommendations of the external review team that are endorsed by the faculty of the Sport Management Program.

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

No additional information is necessary to understand the report.