

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Academic Program Review
College of Arts and Sciences

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM **International Studies Department**

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

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CAMPUS VISIT

October 26-28th 2016

The review team read the self-study written by the faculty in USF's International Studies Department, reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; 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 committee gave the International Studies Department an overall ranking of "GOOD." The committee ranked the undergraduate program as "very good" and the graduate program as "good."

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

Undergraduate Program

- too few courses in the curriculum as a whole that consider the regional areas broadly both in terms of geography and discipline
- students are generally not getting the advertised curriculum, and faculty time and resources are being diverted to troubleshooting this problem on an ad hoc basis
- non-uniform foreign language requirement for BAIS majors
- because of limited language offerings, students are not always able to match their foreign language study with their area interests
- severely curtailed study abroad options in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East

- confusing website that may discourage potential majors

Graduate Program

- the core graduate curriculum is out of step with current trends in the field
- some graduate students are underprepared for the challenge of graduate work and/or do not have sufficient English language skills to keep up with their coursework, and there seem to be insufficient support structures in place to mitigate that problem
- the graduate program is not well funded with graduate student stipends or tuition waivers

Faculty

- balance of tenured/tenure track faculty and term faculty suggests a primary emphasis on teaching and service rather than research
- many faculty brought into department on ad hoc basis rather than as response to curricular or programmatic needs
- the current faculty cannot service the broad range of courses needed to sustain and grow the undergraduate and graduate programs

Program Administration

- lack of coordination between the BAIS and MAIS programs and between International Studies Department and other departments, among MA programs, and among academic units and the study abroad office
- the role of and need for a Program Advisory Board is not completely clear
- Staff do not report directly to their departments, which is inefficient and not conducive to optimal workplace coordination
- Insufficient evening and weekend staff support due to university/union policies

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

- a. Address lack of coordination between BAIS, MAIS, other departments, and other MA programs.
- b. Engage in "smart hiring" of additional faculty lines as needed to fill holes in the curriculum.
- c. Identify clearly the roles and responsibilities of each staff member as well as faculty administrators and have them agreed upon and documented.
- d. Facilitate a less rigid interpretation of the 9:00 AM-5:00 PM workday rules that apply to the support staff.
- e. Clarify educational goals for the BAIS program thoughtfully in relation to contemporary challenges and their particular implications for the university's Jesuit mission including, if necessary, rethinking and reconfiguring the current tracks and minors.
- f. The foreign language requirement should be uniform for all IS majors.
- g. Enhance the Asia Pacific component of the BAIS program.

- h. Address the issue of sub-par English language skills among admitted graduate students and/or modify the admission criteria.
- i. Revise or perhaps overhaul the structure and focus of the graduate program, including the nature of the core graduate curriculum

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

Not addressed in the reviewers' report.

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?

"It is clear to the review committee that both faculty and students share a clear sense of mission perfectly aligned with the university's larger commitment to social justice. This mission needs to be articulated more clearly in the department's educational goals.

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 Chair and full time faculty members of the International Studies Department and discuss the action plan based on the self-study and reviewers' report. Based on the reviewer's suggestions, the Office of the Provost can assist the program by developing and implementing solutions to the key issues facing the department so the programs offered could effectively utilize the talented faculty and maximize growth and success of students.

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