

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Academic Program Review
College of Arts and Sciences

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM
BA Asian Studies and MA/MBA in Asia Pacific Studies

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS
Professor Sing-Chen Lydia Chiang, Boston College
Professor Hazel Hahn, Seattle University
Professor David Ludden, New York University – *WITHDREW DUE TO ILLNESS*
Professor Eve Zimmerman, Wellesley College

CAMPUS VISIT
April 13-15, 2016

The review team read the *Self Study* written by the faculty in the 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 (including Career Services and Development Offices). Prior to their visit, the reviewers were also provided with a variety of materials about the College and the University.

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 **Asian Studies Program** an overall rating of ADEQUATE. While reviewers highlighted “the dedication of excellent faculty, strong student interest,” and “many invaluable Asia-related resources [uniquely enjoyed by USF],” they felt that critical “structural and institutional” issues impede the program’s success. However, the reviewers felt the Asian Studies program “is too central to the core identity of USF ... to be allowed to fail,” and requires “every effort to provide ... optimum structural and administrative support” for it to succeed.

The committee gave the **Asia Pacific Studies Program** an overall rating of VERY GOOD. They noted the “professional advantages [of an Asia Pacific Studies degree] attested to by dozens of MAPS alumni,” as well as the “high quality of courses,” “professional development and mentorship opportunities,” and “flexible ... pragmatic” program options. While the MAPS program “has been flourishing” in recent years, the reviewers offered several suggestions for “long-term stability and success” of the program.

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

For both Asian Studies and MAPS

- USF is “truly unrivaled by its peer institutions” in terms of “disciplinary range,” “dedication of both full-time and part-time faculty,” and “unique and well endowed resources, such as the Ricci Institute, Center for Asia Pacific Studies, and Philippine Studies Program.” Also of note are USF’s “prime geographic location of San Francisco” and “unique claim to the long Jesuit history in Asia.”
- Reviewers were “astonished” to find that neither Asian Studies nor MAPS were “flagship programs of the university,” given “USF’s inherent advantages [in the field of Asian Studies.” They felt that “a strong Asian Studies Program needs to be front and center to the core identity of USF,” and given the chance, could yield “a unique institutional identity” and “endowment growth.”
- The reviewers felt it would be “a grave strategic error for USF to subsume the Asian Studies Program under the International Studies Department.” An independent Asian Studies department would signal “that the University has recognized the importance of a key region of the globe ... and is willing to dedicate resources to its study.” This, in turn, would better attract donors and philanthropists “[committed] to specific regions of the world,” and help students “stand out from the crowd” in a field where “many other universities” already offer International Studies degrees.

Specific to Asian Studies

- With “small enrollments leading to smaller resources” at USF, Asian Studies is in a vicious downward spiral.” The reviewers felt that the program’s current structure “has become manifestly untenable,” but with “a slightly different combination of current elements ... and a few new faculty lines” the program could “become a leading light” in the field of Asian Studies.
- The program’s interdisciplinary nature is challenging in terms of curriculum and student experience: “to have a solid education in Asian Studies, students need ... committed faculty within a coherent organizational structure ... a dedicated space on campus for personal interaction with their professors and other students ... and required courses [to be] offered on a regular basis.” The reviewers felt that Asian Studies currently lacks these aspects, and recommended restructuring the program’s departmental model.
- The current director of Asian Studies is stepping down this year, yet “given all the difficulties directing the program,” no faculty are willing to step up as director.

Specific to MAPS

- The Master in Asia Pacific Studies program is characterized by “a sense of community and the lengths faculty [go for students].” Both current students and alumni “spoke highly about their experiences in the program.”
- While MAPS is “by all measures thriving,” with a “strong number of students and an “impressive” program, due to “a lack of coherent vision on the part of the University, MAPS too has failed to live up to its own potentials.”

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

For both Asian Studies and MAPS

Departmental Structure

- Create a new department of Asian Studies that can house “all Asia-related educational resources at USF” and “better coordinate curriculum to serve the needs of students.”
- Model this new department after USF’s International Studies department – the “well-designed tracks” in the undergraduate International Studies Program could be adapted to draw a large number of students to an Asian Studies program. Further, housing MAPS and Asian Studies in one department would allow for better coordination, “building strong networks among alumni,” and “fostering long-term loyalty to the university.”
- Promote the “under-publicized” 4+1 BA/BS-Master’s degree program currently offered by MAPS to undergraduate students – an “opportunity that could eventually draw many more majors” to the Asian Studies program, and provide MAPS “higher enrollments and faculty available.”
- Set long-term goals for “significant fundraising focused on Asian Studies” to fund the new Asian Studies department – a “very viable” goal, given USF’s location and “the resources available on campus.”
- Better interlink “all Asia-related resources,” including the Center for Asia Pacific Studies, the Ricci Institute, and “various study abroad programs in Asia” – this is “Critical to building strong networks among alumni” and “fostering long-term loyalty to the university.”

Specific to Asian Studies

Future Program Structure

- Model the new Asian Studies program (housed within the new Asian Studies department) after USF’s current International Studies program – the latter’s “distinctive, well-designed tracks” could be adapted to draw a large number of students to Asian Studies. Further, as “Asia is not strongly presented in International Studies,” a new Asian Studies program would have room for growth.

Governance

- Restore course relief for the current director of Asian Studies, as the “inherently complex relations” of an interdisciplinary program demand “a considerable amount of energy” regardless of major size.
- Continue to provide funding for administrative assistance to program director
- Consider hiring an outside Chair with “a proven track record of consultation and collaborative decision-making,” to lead the new Asian Studies department, as an “effective leader could make the difference” in its success.

Faculty Cohesion and Morale

- Create a non-voting advisory committee for the new Asian Studies department, to “engage in curricular discussion and planning for the future.”
- Create joint appointments between the new Asian Studies department and other existing university departments, while mindful of potential problems “when it comes to promotion and evaluation of service.”
- Provide seed money for cross-collaboration and projects between core faculty in the new Asian Studies department and other, tangentially related faculty around the university (e.g. “team-teaching” and “lecture series”).
- All faculty associated with Asian Studies “should engage in a retreat” to discuss program goals—e.g. curriculum methodology, major structure—and foster a “sense of intellectual community.”
- Explore incentives to encourage Modern and Classical Languages faculty to join the new Asian Studies department, perhaps by hiring of lecturers “on a long-term basis,” to increase cohesion with any new social science faculty members specializing in East Asia.

Student Cohesion and Community

- Draw from MAPS’ successful integration with the Center for Asia Pacific Studies. Increased coordination with the Center will help undergraduate students “enjoy better events and job fairs.”

Curriculum and Enrollments

- Develop a foundational course to structure and introduce students to the major.
- Re-conceptualize and re-frame the Asian studies program around core themes and strengths already present in the program, e.g. “Critical Heritage Studies,” or “Culture, Heritage, and Contemporary Issues.”
- Consider hiring a tenure-track Social Science faculty member to develop “contemporary aspects” of the program – perhaps in the model of Critical Heritage Studies at other institutions, or with insight from “The Association of Critical Heritage Studies.”
- Consider offering “more practical courses” to “draw pre-professional students.”

- Reinstate cross-listing and sustain coordination with the School of Management to boost enrollments and limit attrition.
- Offer more social science courses, and increase coordination with Chinese/Japanese studies. However, this would require the hiring of “a few social scientists.”
- Consider developing “a proper Chinese Studies major.” The reviewers were “surprised” that one did not already exist, and felt that “given the success of the Japanese major ... a Chinese major [could] draw students given institutional support.”

Specific to MAPS

Curriculum Delivery and Development

- Avoid offering MAPS courses online to offset San Francisco’s high cost of living. Alumni “strongly and unequivocally” oppose this idea, as it would “cheapen’ the program and their degree.” Further, the [on-ground] “cohort experience” is a strong facet of the program and should be maintained.
- Offer courses on regions of Asia beyond East Asia, on which MAPS has a “heavy focus”. Other areas of study could include Southeast Asia, South Asia and Central Asia, and/or “pan-Asian themed courses that investigate the dynamic interlink across Asia and beyond.”
- Consider hiring tenure-track faculty, “especially in the Social Sciences,” to ease a “lack of stable full-time faculty” and reliance on adjunct faculty.

Program Space and Support

- Provide structural support, through closer interlinking of existing resources, to the annual Career and Networking Forum, “to ensure that [its] success does not rely so heavily” on personnel that may change.
- Provide space for non-tenure track faculty members to “hold office hours and gather.”

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

- a) *Recruits and retains a richly diverse mix of students, faculty and staff so that the university community, as much as possible, broadly resembles the world to which our students will contribute;*

Reviewers commended the “diversity in faculty and student body” present in both Asian Studies and MAPS, and noted aspects of each program well suited for nurturing diversity. For MAPS, USF’s two locations in the heart of San Francisco and further downtown make it “extremely well situated to draw from the [city’s] diverse population.” For Asian Studies, undergraduate students “of diverse backgrounds” have the potential to “explore their own ethnicity,” “learn about other Asian countries,” or further cultural understanding introduced in “high-school Asian language courses.”

b) *Promotes close student-faculty relationships and effective mentoring/advising by faculty and staff on the personal and professional development of students*
A chief strength of both Asian Studies and Asia Pacific Studies is the “quality” and “dedication” of faculty. In Asia Pacific Studies, students “spoke passionately [about] the lengths faculty had gone for them,” and “[expressed] enthusiasm” for the program’s development. The reviewers noted the sense of community in MAPS, as well as the “attention that [its] faculty bestows” on students as important for Asian Studies to consider as it grows into its own rite as a program, with its own “excellent” faculty.

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?

While the reviewers noted significant areas for growth in Asian Studies, and made suggestions for the long-term growth and success of MAPS, they felt “deeply impressed by the outstanding strengths of both programs.” Further, they felt that both Asian Studies and MAPS so exemplify the “twin pillars of USF’s identity ... San Francisco and the Jesuit intellectual tradition,” that they could be “flagship” programs. If USF surmounts “serious structural weaknesses” by providing “coherent vision,” it could leverage the two programs to well serve its core educational missions, and provide students a necessary “knowledge of Asia [for] today’s globalizing world.”

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 full-time faculty of Asian Studies and of Asia Pacific Studies, and discuss the Action Plan for each program based on the *Self Study* and the *External Reviewers’ Report*. Based on the agreed upon Action Plans, the Office of the Provost can assist the program by providing necessary resources to implement those actions.

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

One reviewer was present for only 1.5 days of the three-day program review due to illness. As a result, he later withdrew from writing of the *External Reviewers’ Report*.