

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Academic Program Review
College of Arts and Sciences

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM
Master in Museum Studies

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS
Professor Lisa Strong, Georgetown University
Professor Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Seton Hall University

CAMPUS VISIT
April 10 - 12, 2019

Prepared by: Dr. Suparna Chakraborty, Associate Dean for Academic Effectiveness, CAS

Draft reviewed and approved by: Faculty of the Master in Museum Studies Program & Dr. Jeffrey Paris, Associate
Dean for Arts & Humanities

The review team read the self-study written by faculty in the Master in Museum Studies Program (MUSE), 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, 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 review team rated the program as "Good." According to the review team, "though it (MUSE program) is at a level that would be judged acceptable at a top-tier liberal arts college or university, there are some notable areas where improvements could be made."

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

- The reviewers commended the program on the retention rate "Yearly, the program receives some one hundred applications, admits some 60 students and enrolls between 20 and 25. It graduates 96% of the students admitted, which is an excellent retention rate."
- The reviewers commended the course and syllabi but did point to some areas of improvement – "Judging by the syllabi, the quality of the individual courses seems good, though some appear to cover a very large amount of material, privileging breadth over depth."
- The reviewers commended the alignment of the program's vision with the social justice component of a Jesuit education. The reviewers noted that "a number of students we interviewed confirmed that they selected the program because of its Social Justice emphasis. As a consequence, it appears that the current emphases in the curriculum meet

the needs and interests of the (self-selected) body of students.”

- The reviewers noted that the full time faculty were spread very thin across teaching and service obligations.
- Administration of the internship program places a workload burden on full-time academic faculty expected to serve as advisers to students in internships
- Compactness of the program results in more breadth of knowledge but little depth
- Staff members’ qualifications suggest that there are additional responsibilities they could take on and student funding could attract more minority students

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

- The program would need to hire a faculty member to cover Museum Education
- Administrators should seek out adjunct faculty from diverse backgrounds to enhance diversity further
- Administrative and service components of faculty could be streamlined to reduce the workload
- Better allocating administrative resources could help the thinly stretched faculty
- Students should be encouraged to maximize their credit hours by doing actual museum work.
- There is an opportunity for the program to rethink the ways in which it administers the internship program
- Theoretical and practical goals of the curriculum need to be brought into sync and not seen as competing with each other
- Improvements to the Thacher Gallery exhibition space should be made, including museum-quality standards for climate-control, storage space, office space, and educational space.
- A Thacher Gallery full-time staff position to work with graduate and undergraduate programs should be supported. Review team suggested that current funding for a student worker should be “applied to fund a paid internship in Thacher Gallery or other administrative support.”
- Museum Studies classrooms would benefit from an upgrade in instructional technology.
- In the future, the USF program may consider raising its admission requirements and accepting fewer students
- The program should explore offering scholarships earmarked for creating greater diversity and a more inclusive student body (in terms of race, ethnicity, gender identity, and/or income level).”

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

The reviewers were of the view that the MA program's mission statement is clearly aligned with that of the University. Not only does the program highlight social justice, but it also emphasizes developing skills graduates will need to succeed as both persons (social justice, museum best practices/theory) and professionals (professional training). In addition, the MA program is uniquely positioned among USF programs to draw upon the cultural and intellectual resources of the Bay Area and Pacific Rim through its engagement with area museums and museum professionals.

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 were of the view that faculty and students exemplified the Jesuit identity. The reviewers commented that "The program's emphasis on social justice is its selling point, which is fine and legitimate." However, the reviewers felt that "emphasis on social justice may come at the cost of solid practical training."

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 faculty (full-time) of the Master in Museum Studies program and discuss the action plan based on the self-study and reviewers' report. Based on the reviewers' suggestions, the Office of the Provost could assist the program by: thinking creatively about faculty support in terms of both staffing and facilities, (Thacher Gallery, classrooms) and considering more rigorous admissions standards and enrolling fewer students as a means to improve the academic performance of students the program ("leaner and meaner").

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

No additional information is necessary to understand the report.