

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
***Academic Program Review***  
***College of Arts and Sciences***

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM  
**Department of Kinesiology**

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS  
Professor Melinda Solmon, Louisiana State University  
Professor Stuart Rugg, Occidental College

CAMPUS VISIT  
March 7 – 9, 2018

The review team read the self-study written by faculty in the Kinesiology 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, 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 Kinesiology Department an overall rating of VERY GOOD, and commended its impressive faculty, staff, and students. Overall, the review team felt that the Department compares "very favorably to other programs, both at institutions of similar size and missions," as well as at "larger, more research-intensive universities." While they described the Department as "a cohesive, dedicated unit" whose "efforts to provide a high-quality program are reflected in the quality of the students and the learning outcomes they achieve," reviewers felt that ultimately resources available to the program "are not sufficient to support [its] pursuit of excellence and attain the goal of becoming an exemplary program."

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

- While the program is "doing an outstanding job of maximizing" the instructional and laboratory space available to them, "the currently available space is not adequate to provide optimal instructional laboratory and research experiences," especially given Department growth and advances in/developments to curriculum. There is also "no place to house additional equipment [for] cutting edge technological applications in the field." Additional lab space could not only provide students experiences that will help them be more competitive for admission into graduate study and/or successful in future workplaces, but also afford faculty an opportunity to conduct more publishable research.
- Though the program has seen steady enrollment increases over the past seven years, yielding a current faculty-to-student ratio of 30:1, increases in faculty positions and instructional/lab space have not followed. Reviewers felt that allowing enrollments to continue to grow without "an accompanying increase in support" would put at risk the strong sense of community present in USF's Kinesiology program.

- Reviewers expressed concern that USF’s “budget model does not make adjustments for fluctuation in enrollment,” i.e. for programs like Kinesiology, despite continued growth both in the field as a whole and specifically at USF. They felt that “in order to continue to improve the program,” USF needs to think beyond its current model of “relying on student fees” to fund lab classes, and consider a budget model that increases in tandem with enrollment.
- That all seven Kinesiology faculty hold full-time positions is “an excellent commitment by the University [and College] to build a superb academic program.” Reviewers felt that this “sends a clear message to the students that the Kinesiology major is a valued addition to the sciences at the University of San Francisco.”
- While collaboration between the Kinesiology Department and USF’s Athletics program “has been pursued,” by the kinesiology faculty however no relationship has been established. Reviewers found this “unfortunate,” given the potential benefits of sharing space and equipment, and also that “kinesiology faculty could be valuable resources to personnel in the athletic department.” Reviewers thought this would be worth trying to pursue again, given the “mutual benefit of the Kinesiology students, student athletes, coaches, and Kinesiology faculty.”

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

Space and Resources

- Think specifically about laboratory and instructional space during renovations and building
- The investment in laboratory space and subsequently updated equipment is required in order for this “Very Good” program to be recognized as “Excellent”. This change would support hands-on laboratory experiences for students as well as enhance the ability of faculty to conduct their own research.
  - The current available space is not adequate to provide optimal instructional laboratory and research experiences.
  - the committee recommends the provision of resources to support the purchase of “badly needed laboratory equipment to update laboratories,” and the creation of a dedicated lab for biomechanics to replace the currently “too small” Motor Control lab.
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- Ensure more responsive and consistent “tech support” for the Department – faculty report that the level of support currently available is “sometimes problematic.”

Curriculum, Assessment and Advising

- Revisit Department’s strategic plan: review its mission and vision and update strategic initiatives
- Reconceptualize the program assessment process to focus on whether or not program graduates have achieved learning outcomes: such would utilize faculty time more efficiently while continuing to provide useful data for honing/retooling curriculum as necessary.
- Consider streamlining the assessment of program learning outcomes to be “more efficient” for assessment.
- Continue to devise an exit survey of graduates – “this could be a valuable source of information

in the assessment process.”

- Reconsider the program electives offered to ensure that “courses students view as important in their professional preparation are offered on a consistent basis.”
- Include opportunities for service learning, as well as university designated Core-courses, within the Kinesiology major “to help students meet graduation requirements within their areas of interest.”
- Consider increasing opportunities for upper level students to have more “hands on experiences, such as: internships, research opportunities, and/or a capstone course.” At present, the curriculum lacks an emphasis on “field work or internship experiences.”
- If/when space and resources allow, consider adding lab components to some upper division courses – reviewers noted “several” courses could benefit from hands-on application.
- Implement release forms in physical activity classes “as a proactive approach to risk management.”
  
- pursuing a graduate level program It is not recommended given the lack of space, resources and equipment. Additionally, masters programs in the state California struggle recruiting students.
- Discuss associated minors and their requirements with students as early as possible in the program, so that interested students can plan their studies proactively and graduate on time.
- Utilize the “excellent” Kinesiology Club and its students to share information with their peers.
- Strengthen and expand student opportunities for community based service.

#### University Support, Communication, and Collaboration

- Work to improve efficiencies in the registration process wherever possible, with special attention to issues such as: “the removal of the advising flag, prerequisite checks, and other issues related to the degree audit.”
- Implement a “more transparent” process for Departments to access University-held data.
- Ensure better alignment between faculty and university perceptions “concerning the availability of some university support mechanisms,” i.e. maintaining relations with alumni, and grant support. Moving forward, both parties should ensure they are on the same page and communicating regularly about what support is available and when.
- Pursue future collaborations with USF’s Athletic department.

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

a) *Promotes close student-faculty relationships and effective mentoring/advising by faculty and staff on the personal and professional development of students*

Reviewers cited close student-faculty relationships as one of the Kinesiology department’s greatest strengths. In meeting with students, they heard “unanimous praise for [their] faculty for being open, receptive, accessible, and helpful in advising them throughout their undergraduate careers,” and that as a result, students expressed feeling “on our game” with their studies. Further, students “expressed their desire to work hard, not only because they are enthusiastic about Kinesiology, but also because they connect with, and respect [their] instructors” and the committed, innovative teaching they provide.

- b) *offers demanding academic programs that challenge students to maximally expand and develop their intellectual capacities and transformative educational experiences*
- c) Student interviews characterized the Kinesiology learning environment as both stimulating and challenging, as well as inclusive and attentive to the needs of a wide range of students. The Review team ultimately felt that a dedication to creating “engaging, challenging, and supportive learning environments” is universal across faculty, and that the Department as a whole both “provides learning experiences that are inclusive of the values, knowledge, and skills appropriate to the discipline of Kinesiology,” and “clearly meets the criteria for a nationally competitive program.”
- d) *offers students the knowledge, skills, sensitivities, and motivation to succeed as persons and as professionals contributing to the common good of all, especially the most vulnerable.* Reviewers commended the Department’s “support of community based research and service,” which they felt provides an excellent opportunity for students to connect with underrepresented groups, and is “an emphasis often missing from other top-tier Kinesiology programs.” The review team noted that students seem to “embrace” this focus, as for many, “the potential for connecting with the community [was] one of the important factors that drew them to this Kinesiology program and the University.”

**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?**

Reviewers felt that the department is “clearly aligned with the University’s mission and strategic priorities” in many ways: not only does the Department make “a significant contribution to the university mission through its rigorous undergraduate curriculum,” but also through its course contributions to the university CORE, by offering physical activity classes opportunities to students across campus with knowledge “that will help them be healthy, active citizens across the lifespan through their physical activity courses,” and through its faculty’s involvement in developing four interdisciplinary minors (Child and Youth Studies, Gerontology, Health Studies, and Neuroscience) that are “very timely and consistent with national trends.”

**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 of Kinesiology 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 the Department’s physical space (which hampers its overall development and success) and facilitating renovations that better suit its needs, maintaining low student-faculty ratios, and re-assessing the Department’s budget if enrollments continue to increase.

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

Without question, space is the most pressing issue for the department and its future developments. It was a key factor in the reviewers’ choice to rate the program “VERY GOOD” rather than “EXCELLENT,” despite the program’s many positive qualities (i.e. strong curricular modifications over the past 7 years, consistency with national trends in the field, committed and dedicated faculty, achievement of learning outcomes). Reviewers also noted that space limitations limit innovation in research and teaching, by foreclosing the possibility of updated laboratories with up-to-date

equipment. Secondly, reviewers expressed concern that the Kinesiology department may not be adequately resourced despite being one of the college's larger programs, and additionally one that has been steadily growing over time. They strongly urged "an accompanying increase in support" as enrollments continued to grow and noted that such is integral to protect the program's unique sense of community through close student-Department interaction.