

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM

**Minor in Public Service and Community Engagement**

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Professor Emma Fuentes, University of San Francisco

Professor Marcia Hernandez, University of the Pacific

CAMPUS VISIT

November 7-9, 2018

The review team read the self-study written by the Director of the Public Service and Community Engagement minor; reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; interviewed affiliated faculty and staff, as well as the program's students; 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 Minor in Public Service and Community Engagement an overall rating of VERY GOOD. They noted the program's "attention to detail in course selection, faculty training opportunities, and efforts to provide a welcoming and academically engaging environment to attract a diversity of students" as specific strengths. Additionally, its "intentional partnerships with community organizations and modeling of leadership and civic engagement tied to social justice" make it a stellar example of USF's academic offerings. Reviewers felt that with "additional institutional investment in the program, increased partnerships with [other programs] in Arts and Sciences," and some changes to its course structure and assessment efforts, the program could "easily elevate from 'Very Good' to 'Excellent.'"

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

- The PSCE minor is a "genuine reflection of the Jesuit mission and values" of the University: it prepares students for "meaningful, active engagement with communities in and around San Francisco" and "should be supported by the university to grow and reach even more students."
- Though the program utilizes a list of over 100 courses that students may choose from to complete the minor, reviewers felt that these offerings were selected "with much intentionality," and they "come together to create an outstanding minor" that allows students to "tailor [the program] to their interest/majors."
- Students minoring in PSCE "spoke highly of the minor overall," and felt that it "allowed them to link their rich educational experience at USF" with service and career opportunities. However, reviewers noted that "[our] campus visit highlighted that students and advisors [in other programs] are unaware of all that the minor has to offer." Reviewers provided a series of recommendations that could increase the program's visibility, from strategic partnerships across campus to targeted recruitment in majors closely related to PSCE.
- There are both "opportunities and challenges of a program housed in the McCarthy Center" – it may be worth revisiting conversation about where the program should be located in USF.

**3. What specific recommendations for improving the program's quality has the external review committee**

## made to the Dean?

### *Faculty:*

- Devote a full-time faculty line to the PSCE minor, to increase its sustainability, efficiency, and effectiveness.
  - Prioritize the hire of a faculty member trained in participatory methodologies and engaged scholarship, and if possible with meaningful community partnerships in the SF Bay Area that can benefit the program.
  - Utilize this faculty member to teach the program's Intro and Capstone courses, advise students, serve as a bridge with other programs on campus, and oversee student peer mentor programs.
- Provide resources to support the existing adjunct faculty, including their inclusion in the PHP adjunct pool.
- Explore a Faculty Fellowship model, "as outlined in the PSCE self-study."
- Reconvene a faculty advisory board to better access and utilize the expertise of USF faculty that align with the vision/mission of the PSCE minor.
  - A member of the Arts and Sciences "Dean Team" should be a member of this board.
  - This board should also work to plan "large visibility" events, "generally stay engaged in meaningful ways with the minor and with each other," and offer feedback on the program's structure.

### *Student Recruitment and Retention, Program Promotion*

- Develop a peer-mentor program with PSCE minors and student-staff in the McCarthy Center to guide students through the program, as well as "serve as ambassadors for [and] heighten awareness of the PSCE minor."
- Develop an Alumni/Student Advisory Board.
  - These students can guest lecture in courses, network with students, and help to further market the program, perhaps using a social media campaign that they develop.
- Promote the PSCE minor to new, incoming students interested in closely aligned departments/programs (e.g., Critical Diversity Studies, Politics, Urban Studies, Sociology, Psychology), as well as those interested in Living Learning Communities during the recruitment and admission process.
  - Additionally, work to increase participation of students in the humanities and health sciences, "to provide opportunities to different student groups."
  - A relationship with the Honors College could aid such.
- Advertise the PSCE minor at all McCarthy Center events.
- Work with the Registrar's Office to develop an alert system for students 1. during registration, when they are close to completing PSCE requirements, or 2. when they change majors into a department closely affiliated with PSCE, "to encourage them to join the minor."

### *Curriculum and Assessment*

- Partner with the Career Services Center to include a module, and/or dedicated activities for students in the Intro and Capstone courses, "to provide professional development" for students.
  - Additionally, include a module on "grant writing, fundraising, and philanthropy in both courses."
- Revise the number of units for bookend introductory courses, increase the Introductory course to 3 units, and decrease the Capstone to 1 unit.
- Improve assessment efforts by implementing an alumni survey and "opening a feedback loop with community partners who routinely work with the program."
- Utilize the faculty advisory board to develop rubrics for the Intro and Capstone courses.

- Review workload for faculty and staff directly involved with assessment on a consistent basis.
- Utilize campus resources and partners (i.e., the Registrar’s Office, Institutional Research (*clarification*: perhaps the reviewers are referring to the Center for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness, or CIPE), Center for Teaching Effectiveness (CTE)) to provide data and assist in “creating a sustainable assessment” system for the PSCE minor.

#### *Promoting and Supporting Diversity*

- Emphasize the program’s “intentional efforts of inclusivity and diversity” as part of any marketing campaigns for students and faculty advisors.
- Include “success stories” of current students and alumni in marketing campaigns for the PSCE minor, to “highlight the diversity of students, experiences, and opportunities” that the program holds.
- Coordinate with the Financial Aid office to identify aid, “preferably scholarships and fellowships,” dedicated to students pursuing a major in one of the areas that align with the PSCE minor, students committed to completing the minor, and students engaged with the McCarthy Center.

#### *Resources*

- Re-open discussion about the academic home of the PSCE minor: The reviewers noted that “it seems that it would benefit both Arts and Sciences and the McCarthy Center if the minor can have two homes: one in the McCarthy Center and the other in the Department of Arts and Science. In this way, the minor can have resources (mainly in terms of faculty and dean input) that are available to other minors on campus.”
- Locate a dedicated space (“even if temporary”) in a centrally located Arts and Sciences office for McCarthy Center staff who work closely with faculty advisors and CASA during peak advising times.
  - Such will “raise the visibility of the program, and provide access to McCarthy Center staff” that can address students’ concerns and advising needs in real time.
- Partner more intentionally with Living Learning Communities (LLCs), especially those that already have relationships with the McCarthy Center, for example, the Esther Madríz Diversity Scholars.
  - Channeling students from LLCs as “either required courses or an optional track” will “help with enrollment, ensure growing numbers, and offer the excellent programming found in PSCE to students in LLCs whose mission and goals are so well aligned with the minor.”

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

a) *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.*

The PSCE program is “a core program addressing USF’s mission ‘to develop leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world.’” Reviewers noted that “both the McCarthy Center and PSCE [have] contributed to the shifting of the university-wide conversation and focus from a service learning model to a truly community engaged model,” one that educates students to “act locally,” and “in the service of others.” In doing so, they noted that “PSCE helps to disrupt [traditional models of service] that send students out to ‘serve’ or ‘save’ marginalized communities.” Instead, their PSCE education emphasizes “relationship building, reciprocity, and social change.”

b) *Offers demanding academic programs that challenge students to maximally expand and develop their intellectual and transformative educational experiences that will “act” them into new ways of thinking about the world and their role in it*

Reviewers felt that the PSCE minor's academic goals "are ambitious, yet viable," designed both to "complement the core curriculum of [their] major[s]," as well as "enhance students' co-curricular experiences." Its curriculum "fosters students' analytical abilities to contemplate civic issues and social change movements," and encourages students to "reflect on their commitments to community engagement framed by their personal social identities, values and beliefs as informed by formal education, and other lived experiences as engaged political and civic actors." Overall, the "courses in the PSCE minor are an excellent example of the USF mission of Social Justice," while helping to "prepare them for meaningful, active engagement with communities" in San Francisco and beyond.

- c) *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 felt that "diversity and inclusion are part of the structure and practice of the McCarthy Center initiatives and PSCE minor" -- these principles "guide curriculum design, recruitment and student support services." PSCE is enriched by "faculty from a variety of disciplines across the college," its Introduction and Capstone courses "purposively include a range of diverse authors and scholars," and its curriculum as a whole embeds diversity and inclusion in its various tracks. Additionally, the McCarthy leadership team not only encourages "traditionally underserved groups such as first-generation college students, Pell Grant recipients, and students of color to participate in their programming," but provides "access to groups and organizations that may otherwise be a challenge for many under resourced students." Reviewers noted this to be a unique, and evident strength of the program.

- 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 PSCE program is "clearly in line with the social justice mission of the University of San Francisco, and its goal of educating students "who will fashion a more humane and just world." Its program "is reflective of key Jesuit values, particularly of social responsibility, culture of service, and learning as a humanizing, social activity." Reviewers also noted that the PSCE minor was even "routinely described as the most 'USF-y' of academic offerings" during their campus visit, due to its "intentional partnerships with community organizations and modeling of leadership and civic engagement tied to social justice.

- 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 McCarthy Center/PSCE leadership team and advisory board and discuss the action plan based on the self-study and reviewers' report. Based on the reviewer's suggestions, the Office of the Provost could assist the program by supporting: increased resources and visibility (i.e., marketing) for the PSCE minor, as well as at least one dedicated faculty line.

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

None.