



UNIVERSITY OF
SAN FRANCISCO

School of Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Academic Program
Review School of
Education

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM

Learning and Instruction
Learning and Instruction Doctoral Program

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

Dr. Thomas L. Good, Professor Emeritus
Educational Psychology, University of Arizona
Dr. Jacquelynne S Eccles, Distinguished Professor of
Education
University of California, Irvine

CAMPUS VISIT

May 4th and 5th, 2018

The external review team read the *Self Study* written by the faculty in USF's Learning and Instruction Department (L&I); 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 also provided with USF's Vision, Mission, Values Statement, and other materials provided by the department to augment the report.

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 committee gave the program a rating of **very good**. The review committee stated that the L&I department has consistently recruited, graduated, and placed students in important jobs. L&I graduates have the skills to address a range of important societal issues. However, the program curriculum does not represent the full range of core knowledge in educational psychology. The committee noted that the program would be greatly enhanced by adding other dimensions of educational psychology such as motivation, social emotional growth, digital learning environments, and social policy.

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

Social Justice.

The committee was aware of concerns that the L&I program was insensitive to issues of social justice. They examined this concern carefully, with the understanding that there are two prongs of a committed social justice program: teaching how to think about and document social justice issues and teaching students how to address these issues. They found that the department is very good at the latter. Alumni “are in virtual total agreement” that the program impacted their ability to better serve underserved populations around the world. However, it has not focused explicitly on teaching social justice.

Vision:

A critical issue facing the department is the current dissonance between the vision of the School of Education and the other programs in the school, and the L&I department. The committee perceived that this dissonance seemed to be exacerbated by a lack of communication. The report states that the school’s administration, and to some extent faculty from other programs within the school, feel that the L&I department has potentially useful resources for the school as it moves to strengthen its commitment to engaged scholarship. However, they also feel that the L&I department is indifferent to addressing its role in the school. The committee reports that the L&I department was hesitant to articulate a new vision given that most of the department faculty would retire within the next 5 to 7 years. The report states that the L&I department is now committed to articulating a vision of integration within the school and planning initiatives that enhance the school as a unit. However, at this point it is just a stated possibility.

Need for an Educational Psychology Program within the School of Education:

The committee urged that a School of Education must have a strong Educational Psychology program. They noted that Educational Psychology brings critical quantitative research skills, empirical and theoretical methods for designing teaching practices and evaluating programs, especially for special needs populations and other underserved populations, and provides a critical link to the field of education technology. Without these skills, among others, the social justice mission of the school will be undermined. The committee recommended that the school should look to strengthen this department and add faculty from a scientific social policy background.

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

Curriculum and Faculty Areas of Expertise:

The committee stressed that the current curriculum has great value, but that it does not represent the full range of skills within Educational Psychology. As stated above, they recommend that the curriculum be infused with: motivation, social emotional growth, digital learning environments, and social policy. They stated, “An enhanced L & I faculty would reciprocally enhance the college’s resources for addressing issues of inequality, racism, poverty and issues of social disruption.

Vision:

The committee stressed the need for the department to articulate a vision for better integration with the strategic goals of the School of Education. This is addressed fully in item #2 above.

Student Concerns:

Students noted that the classes were all very long, and uniformly in lecture format. They recommended that a variety of instructional formats be used by the program. As students of Educational Psychology, this feedback is especially pertinent.

Additionally, students said they felt a lack of connection with alumni from other cohorts. They also wanted to help with recruitment. The committee recommended that the program look into how to involve the alumni community more actively.

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

Yes, in that the program does a very good job at graduating students who are prepared to tackle important social justice issues through their work. The committee noted that the program “succeeds quite well” in equipping students to effectively increase social justice in California. The program is failing to meet the University’s strategic initiatives by failing to integrate with the School of Education’s vision and mission and by failing to teach students how to identify and document social justice issues.

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 a high-quality Educational Psychology program, a critical field in social justice work. Graduates of the program work to increase social justice throughout California. The students and alumni of the program seemed to unanimously agree that the program increased their ability to address the needs of underserved populations in their careers.

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 faculty to develop an Action Plan based on the Self Study and the External Reviewers' Report. This action plan will then be reviewed by the Dean and Associate Dean. The deans will scope resource implications and provide recommendations. Based on the agreed upon *Action Plan*, the Office of the Provost can assist the program by allocating necessary resources to implement those actions.

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

There are no additional comments or issues that are crucial to understanding the report.