



UNIVERSITY OF
SAN FRANCISCO

School of Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Academic Program
Review School of
Education

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM

Organization and Leadership Program
Organization and Leadership Master of Arts and Doctorate
Programs

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

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CAMPUS VISIT

May 3rd and 4th, 2018

The external review team read the *Self Study* written by the faculty in USF's Organization and Leadership Department (O&L); 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 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 committee gave the program a rating of **very good**. The committee stated that the program could move to **excellent** in the years ahead if completion and graduation rates are improved. They attributed the rating of very good to the fact that the diverse, actively engaged faculty and the program's commitment to social justice.

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

Social Justice.

The committee stated, “The program’s social justice goals are probably among the most progressive and honorable in the country.” The program, and the SOE, are on the “cutting edge” and leading the country in this regard. This commitment was echoed by every stakeholder who spoke with the committee during the site visit. The program quality is strong, and the commitment to social justice “may give it a comparable edge” to other programs in the country. Recently, the program has been considering revising its application review process to focus on only accepting students who reflect this commitment to social justice in their application materials. The Dean has supported this proposal, and the committee applauded this strategy while noting that like many admissions related initiatives, it will take a few years to see how this will affect the program.

Faculty:

The committee stated that perhaps the most significant feature of the program is the faculty, which is commendably diverse. The O&L faculty is notably junior, but there seem to be strong professional development opportunities both at the SOE and across the University. The O&L faculty are greatly involved in curricular and procedural program improvement aimed at achieving its social justice mission; they are also notably involved in service positions across the University. It is important that service is granted much weight in the tenure and review process. The faculty has an impressively active research agenda. The faculty are “on the cutting edge of issues and challenges facing education and the community they serve.”

Student Support:

A third critical theme that emerged from the report was the need to improve student support structures. The report identified areas for improvement including a need to follow up with students who stop out of the program, revisiting the quality of the seminars, inconsistent advising, and orientation quality. The onboarding process for both MA and EdD students needs to be stronger, and the committee suggested that a full-day orientation be considered, while noting that the School of Management at USF currently takes this approach. Advising seems to be inconsistent, and critically students identified that the most successful students are those who have a strong relationship with their advisor: “When asked what could be done to help boost the graduation rates in the SOE, students said that advising is key.”

Staff Support:

The committee noted that one of the most consistent themes in the review was the need for enhanced staff support. The current staff member was praised, stating she “seemed amazing, committed, and well-liked by people across all stakeholder groups.” However, the goal of boosting graduation rates cannot fall on one person. The report urged the SOE to look at its current structure and consider adding an additional staff member, utilizing alumni, or designing other ways to provide critical student support. The committee specifically highlighted the need for a staff member with “specialized skills to tackle issues

related to advising, student retention and persistence, and degree completion, and identify and create visionary strategies (i.e., collecting alumni information and following up with them, promote more student engagement service projects) to engage the pool of already existing SOE resources.”

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

Social Justice Mission:

The committee recommended that the program “continue to capitalize on its already established reputation using marketing materials, website, etc. highlighting the work of faculty and students.

Retention and Student Success:

The committee recommended that, given this an issue across the SOE, a deep, action-oriented self-study on student success be developed answering questions such as: “How is student success produced in the SOE O&L program? What might be adjusted along the way, implemented, and reflected upon and revisited again after looking at data, to produce student success?”

Regarding on-boarding the committee recommended: “Consider a full day orientation. For MA and EdD students, consider specific workshops on APA style, graduate writing, expectations, and SPSS, prior to the start of classes. There was also a disconnection between getting accepted and knowing what is needed to start and be successful.”

Advising quality varied. The committee recommended training faculty on advising goals and best practices.

Finally, as noted in item #2, the committee strongly recommended that the SOE dedicate an additional staff member dedicated to student retention, success, and engagement.

Curriculum:

The committee recommended that the course schedule be reviewed as some course offerings currently conflict in a way that impedes student progress. Additionally, they noted that there seemed to be inconsistency in quality across courses, especially in regards to the critical thesis/dissertation courses EDUC 790 and EDUC 791.

Alumni:

The report notes, “Alumni were interested in more opportunities for meaningful engagement by the program. To meet this need and work toward boosting student success, consider hiring alumni as coaches to help support students such as a writing coach/literature review coach, SPSS coach, IRB coach, etc. Alumni can be hired on a contract, short-term, hourly basis. You can pilot this structure for one academic year to determine its effectiveness.”

Student Voice:

Finally, the report recommended that the program revisit the current procedures for listening and addressing student feedback. The program currently holds occasional student lunches to collect feedback, and while the effort is commendable it may not be producing the desired outcome.

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

Yes, as stated above, the O&L program is clearly aligned with the University's strategic initiatives, especially as they relate to the University's social justice mission.

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?

As stated above, every stakeholder involved with the O&L program showed a clear commitment to social justice. The social justice mission is coherent and clearly demonstrated. The program, and the School of Education, is clearly leading the country in explicitly advancing a social justice agenda.

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.