



UNIVERSITY OF
SAN FRANCISCO

School of Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Academic Program
Review School of
Education

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM

International and Multicultural Education
TESOL Master of Arts Program

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

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CAMPUS VISIT

April 6th and 7th, 2018

The external review team read the *Self Study* written by the faculty in USF's International and Multicultural 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 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 **excellent**. One reviewer in the report stated, "The MA TESOL program at USF is outstanding, and it is hard for me to imagine any other joint certificate/MA doing a better job in the country." The second reviewer corroborated this rating of excellent and stated that the program has "potential for improvement to achieve a greater world renown reputation for USF, if acknowledged and supported by university trustees." The excellence of the program was attributed to the faculty, which is comprised of professionals with both expert academic and practitioner experience. The committee stated that the, "combination of academic and practitioner competences is an asset in the TESOL program and distinguishes it from TESOL programs around the U.S. and the world."

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

Curriculum and Instruction

The report commends the instructional excellence of the program noting it is a “strong and formidable curriculum not equaled at other institutions.” Program leadership is particularly strong: “A few words cannot capture the strength of the enthusiastic energy, program leadership, instructional skill and personalized mentoring that is provided by Dr. Sedique Popal.” The program has strong retention rates, which are particularly impressive given the variety of trends that continue to negatively impact international student enrollment. The review committee noted that students and alumni all report “personalized help with resumes, job seeking, and in securing voluntary practice teaching opportunities.”

Regarding areas for improvement, the report noted that the incoming student orientation should be strengthened. In addition, students need more support in conducting academic research and academic writing. A practicum should be added to the program. It was also noted that at the time of the review, TESOL students did not receive financial aid. This is in contrast to every other program at the School of Education. More financial aid funds should be made available to the program to address this inequity. Finally, the committee recommended that the teacher credential department explore the addition of a “single subject matter authorization in ELD,” recently established by the CTC for only single subject candidates

Faculty and Staff

The review committee noted that the faculty successfully combines scholarship and practitioner competencies, thereby distinguishing it from other TESOL programs. The report states, “Such a unique and deep balance of faculty preparation contributes positively to distinguishing the USF program from among even the best known TESOL departments in the SF Bay area and the U.S.” The program was also commended for its commitment to a diverse faculty.

The committee emphasized that the achievements of the program coordinator are “impressive, yet not sustainable.” At the time of the review, the committee stated that the program coordinator seemed to be “doing the work of at least three normal professors.”

Students

The report notes that students feel exceptionally supported by the program, and that the individualized support they receive goes beyond what the committee has seen at other universities. The support provided is “highly personalized.” Students report the “joys of the learning environments created in the classrooms where instruction takes place.” The committee also noted that there was a true sense of community among all those involved with the program. Regarding areas for improvement, the review committee stated that alumni hoped for a stronger connection after leaving the program.

Diversity

The committee commended the program on its commitment to diversity stating, “It would be difficult to imagine how such a small department might be more diverse.” They stated that the program coordinator’s efforts to recruit both a diverse faculty and a diverse student body was “beyond impressive.” However, again they noted that this level of work was unsustainable for one person.

Resources

The committee recommended that additional technological support would increase the ease of distance communication and instruction. They also noted that the program could consider distance education opportunities for growth. The report stated that given that the current program coordinator already has an international following on T.V., the TESOL program could target a more global student body.

Regarding staff, the report highlighted that less than one FTE is currently responsible for supporting the program and that due to the class schedule, this person is not on campus when most of the TESOL students are there.

The reviewers also noted that USF’s proximity to the Pacific Rim, and the necessity of English proficiency for the success in the professional and business world, create an opportunity for a partnership with external foundations. An exploration of external private funding opportunities (such as the Gates Foundation, the Clinton Foundation, etc.) and technological consultation is recommended.

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

In summary, the committee stated, “It is recommended that School of Education administrators advance timely recommendations to the university Trustees to prioritize the TESOL program for the necessary support, resources and departmental autonomy, for it to become a world renown hub for the preparation of practitioners of ESOL spanning elementary, secondary, university, and adult learners world-wide.”

Specifically, the committee suggested:

Staffing: That at least one FTE of support staff be devoted to the program. They urged that a staff member should be present when the majority of TESOL students are on campus. They also suggested that additional staffing would ease the unsustainable workload of the program coordinator. They also noted that the program has, “...achieved incredible success despite the absence of ranked tenure track faculty, or many of the resources and autonomy provided to other programs.”

Financial Aid: That more financial support be provided for TESOL student aid and scholarships. As already noted, the TESOL program had no financial aid funds allocated in recent years, in contrast to the other programs within the School of Education.

Marketing and Outreach: More marketing efforts be devoted to the program, specifically outreach to international students. The committee suggested marketing materials be developed in languages other than English. It was emphasized that ESL is a huge, and expanding, field and therefore the program has many opportunities to expand. Additionally, they suggested that distance programs be explored, as well as partnerships with external organizations.

Curriculum: The committee recommends revisiting the methodology course, as the feedback about that course was negative. They also recommended adding a practicum. As noted above, the committee suggested a “single subject matter authorization in ELD” be explored as a potential new pathway.

Alumni: The report encouraged the program to develop stronger relationships with alumni of the program by providing opportunities to reconnect and network. The committee recommended that the alumni office consider offering greater and more formal outreach to the TESOL alumni community.

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

Yes, the committee commended the program for its alignment with the University’s mission and goals. They stated, “The mission of the TESOL program is clearly aligned with the mission and strategic plan priorities of the university. This was evident in the documents prepared by the department, as well as in the climate of the school overall and in the live interviews held on site.”

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 values and goals of the university were well articulated at every level of program delivery, including staff, instructors, administrators, students, and alumni.” Alumni of the program heavily populate the instructional ranks of TESL programs throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. The report noted that improving access to language education makes the world a more just and humane place.

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 program coordinator 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.