

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY RESPONSE
Program Review
Center for Academic and Student Achievement

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS
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Campus Visit
February 29, 2017 - March 1, 2017

Summary of Campus Visit

- 1. How did the external review committee rate the overall quality of the department - excellent, very good, good, adequate, or poor? How does the department compare with well established/recognized programs nationally? Please provide a brief rationale for the external review committee's rating.**

The external review committee rated the overall quality of CASA as very good. Minor improvements were suggested to achieve excellent status in the coming years as CASA develops and refines policies and practices in some areas. The following quotes summarize the reviewer's positive impressions:

"One-stop shops" and "student success centers" are not uncommon in higher education, but what distinguishes CASA is the striking consistency and potential synergy between its holistic, integrated services and USF's mission and Jesuit values."

"With additional fine-tuning and program development, CASA has the potential to serve as a model program worthy of emulation by other colleges and universities nationwide."

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

The following plans emerged from external review discussions:

- Develop new marketing/branding/communications plan to reduce confusion between the roles of faculty academic advisers and academic success coaches in a student's journey at USF
- Develop an internal Assessment plan that tracks, measures, and allows for benchmarking or comparative reporting to occur on a regular basis (i.e. retention risk factors/student support/outreach efforts by CASA)
- The university should engage in an assessment of the overall academic advising structure at USF as it relates to quality, nature, and consistency of practices, and areas for improvement or synergy

3. What specific recommendations for improving the department's quality has the external review committee made to the supervisor?

- Hire an increased number of academic success coaches (to lower student:coach ratio)
- Review current reporting structure, including supervision of units
- Clearly define and communicate the role of CASA and academic success coaches to the University community
- Hire a data analyst position to assist with the development of an assessment plan and application of interventions

4. In the opinion of the external review committee, is the department advancing the University's strategic initiatives and the divisional goals and commitments in the programs and services it offers?

The reviewers reported that CASA's mission of providing compassionate academic and personal support to foster students' holistic development embodies USF's overarching mission of integrated and holistic education and the Jesuit core value of *cura personalis* (care for the whole person).

The reviewers believe that CASA is functioning effectively as the university's integrative hub... "connecting and directing students to campus resources that support their success holistically." The work of CASA is in line with USF's mission to provide students the knowledge and skills needed to succeed as persons and professionals.

The reviewers spoke highly of CASA and believe CASA is positioned to be one of the university's signature programs. They stated that It would be difficult to find another program on campus whose purpose and practices enact the university's mission better than CASA. This synergistic connection might be more intentionally and visually showcased in the CASA center by strategic placement of posters or placards illustrating the alignment of CASA's mission with the university's mission and Jesuit values.

5. Is the department in compliance with professional accepted standards? What best practices have been adopted and implemented?

The committee reported that CASA's holistic approach is consistent with national research on student success indicating that promoting student retention and college completion requires a comprehensive approach—one that goes beyond just provision of academic/intellectual support to address the student as a whole person. The reviewers believed that the sample cases studies included in CASA's self-study vividly illustrate the range of "non-academic" issues that can impede students' persistence to graduation.

It was recommended that CASA administrators consider membership in professional organizations, such as the Association of Colleges for Tutoring and Learning Support (ACTLA) and/or Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA), to remain apprised of benchmarks and best practices for academic success coaching."

Response: Note several staff are already members of professional organizations, which include leadership positions.

6. Does the department have adequate space, personnel and budget to carry out its programs and services?

In order to deliver the type of holistic and compassionate mission driven support the reviewers recommended reducing the current 1:550 caseload of CASA coaches.

According to the Global Community for Academic Advising (NACADA), the recommended caseload for working with students in this capacity is approximately 1:300. Related to this point, many of the CASA academic success coaches noted that most student issues are complex and can often require anywhere from a half-day to more than a full day to resolve.

No specific comments about budget or space were made by the external reviewers.

7. a) Has the department identified appropriate learning outcomes and implemented assessment strategies to measure progress in this area?

CASA is currently developing student learning outcomes and assessment strategies in their action plan based on the feedback from the program review, and student data collected through their Salesforce platform.

Response: Associate Vice Provost, Shona Milazo, is a member of the Retention and Persistence Steering Committee and is working closely on providing a framework of strategies that have already begun to be implemented.

In collaboration with OAAS/CIPE, the following analyses include:

- *Characteristics of Unretained Students: A cross-sectional and longitudinal profile of undergraduate students who do not persist at USF (Fall 2016-Spring 2017 and Fall 2016-Fall 2017) analyzing Success Navigator survey success indicators and institutional data*
- *Characteristics of Unretained Students: Fall 2017-Spring 2018 analyzing Success Navigator survey success indicators, exit interviews and institutional data*

b) What is the timetable for the response to the external review committee's recommendations for program improvement?

The timetable for CASA's action plan progress review is three years (spring 2020), in preparation for the next program review in 2022.

c) What can the Vice Provost's Office do to appropriately respond to the review?

- Support the budget assist proposal submitted by CASA for the additional academic success coaches, as well as new data analyst position, to adequately support/scale with the student growth and needs anticipated over the next three years.
- Champion CASA's mission and vision to community partners, particularly to faculty/administration in the various colleges and departments.
- Review current reporting structure and supervision of units.

8. What general comments or issues, if any, are crucial to understanding the reviewer's report?

One of the reviewer's backgrounds involved significant work in first year programs; he is a recognized expert in this field. A substantial amount of feedback was written in the report about USF 101, a program that is not under the purview of CASA. The information has been shared with the Faculty Director for USF 101.