

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-011-190

Program Review – BS Plant Science

Academic Programs Committee

Date: xx/xx/2020

Executive Committee  
Received and Forwarded

Date: 03/11/2020

Academic Senate

Date: 03/18/2020  
First Reading

**BACKGROUND:**

As part of the university's five-year planning cycle for all programs, a self-study was prepared by the Department of Plant Science, covering the academic years 2012/13 through 2018/19. An external review team, consisting of Dr. Charles Brummer from UC Davis and Dr. Gerald Holmes from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, visited the Plant Science Department on April 19, 2019. After their visit, a report was prepared and submitted by the external reviewers, after which both the Department and Dean prepared responses. The AP Committee has reviewed these responses.

**RESOURCES CONSULTED:**

Dr. Valerie Mellano, Chair of the Plant Science Department  
Dr. Peter Kilduff, Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture  
Dr. Lisa Kessler, Dean of the College of Agriculture

**DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATION:**

The external reviewers pointed out the exceptionally good work of the Plant Science Department. They highlighted the positive atmosphere that prevails among faculty and students. Their main concern was about faculty's being overwhelmed by the heavy workload. They strongly advised hiring one or two tenure-track faculty as soon as possible. Both the Department and the Dean agreed on this need.

Also, the reviewers recommended hiring additional staff to help with field-based teaching and research. The Dean's office suggested investigating involving graduate student assistants for this purpose. The reviewers encouraged the Department to update their website, and the Dean's office has offered some resources to this end.

Both the Dean's office and the reviewers encouraged the department to organize a retreat to assess, discuss and optimize curriculum offerings, to continue the program's practical agricultural orientation, and strive to continue incorporating new technologies. The reviewers recommended to have some faculty achieve professional licensing, which the Dean agreed to support through faculty development funds.

The Department, reviewers and Dean's office agreed on the importance of Spadra Farm as well as all AGRIsapes facilities for student practice and research. Also, continuing operations in off-campus sites such as Pine Tree Ranch, which help fund the former facilities. In addition, the reviewers and the Dean's office encourage the Department to create a more focused philanthropy plan.

Overall, the review is positive, pointing to a Department with sound fundamentals and a real commitment to working with students. Most areas of concern are resource concerns shared by all programs on campus. The Academic Programs Committee commends the Department of Plant Science on their work, both in the operation of their programs and in the preparation of a thorough and thoughtful review that highlights important issues.