

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-014-190

Program Review – BA Science, Technology and Society

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 Science, Technology and Society (STS) Program (housed in the Department of Philosophy). An external review team, consisting of Dr. Colin Milburn (Chair in Science and the Humanities and Director, Science and Technology Studies Program) from UC Davis and Dr. Noah Zerbe (Professor of Politics) from Humboldt State University, visited the STS Program on March 21, 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. Peter W. Ross, Director of Science, Technology and Society

Dr. Iris S. Levine, Dean of College of Letter Arts and Social Science

**DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATION:**

The external reviewers were overall positive in their appraisal of the STS Program at Cal Poly Pomona. They mentioned that the STS program perfectly embodies the polytechnic identity that is promoted by our campus. They also commended CPP for increasing access to STS studies to a broader range of students within California (as the only other public program in the state is housed at UC Davis). They were impressed with the Program's director, the appealing and well-developed program, and the fact that most students graduating from the STS program find rewarding careers after graduation. The reviewers had several suggestions, including strategic hiring, support of interdisciplinary work, and the restructuring of some of the curriculum. These are common issues / concerns for all departments / programs across campus, and it is significant that reviewers from peer programs concur with the need for more tenure-track hiring and more instructional and research space for working with students.

The reviewers recommended increasing the program administration and support. Currently, the Program relies too heavily on the Director and this model is unsustainable. The reviewers also mentioned students feeling a lack of sense of community. Currently, there is not a regular research seminar series or any type of regular gathering with faculty and students. The reviewers recommend a reasonable amount of funding should be made to the STS Program to develop seminar series as well as social gatherings to enhance the visibility of the Program at CPP. The Dean's office agreed with the reviewers' comments but also mentioned that because STS is so interdisciplinary (involving several departments outside of CLASS), many of these suggestions will require changes across the University.

The Program Director and Dean's office were in broad agreement with the reviewers' comments and suggestions. Overall, the review is positive, pointing to a Program with sound fundamentals and 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 STS Program on their work, both in the operation of their program and in the preparation of a thorough and thoughtful review that highlights important issues.