

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA
ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
REPORT TO
THE ACADEMIC SENATE
AP-001-212

Program Review for BA Psychology and MS Psychology

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 09/01/2021

Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded

Date: 10/13/2021

Academic Senate

Date: 10/20/2021
First Reading

BACKGROUND:

As part of the University's seven-year planning cycle for all programs, a self-study was prepared by the Department of Psychology. An external review team, consisting of Brigitte K. Matthies, Ph.D. (UCLA) and Ronald E. Riggio, Ph.D. (Claremont McKenna College), visited the department virtually (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) on March 11-12, 2021. 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. Erika DeJonghe, Chair, Department of Psychology
Dr. Sara Langford, Program Review Chair, Department of Psychology
Dr. Sara Garver, Interim Dean, College of Letter Arts and Social Science

DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATION:

The external reviewers were very positive in their appraisal of the department. Of especial note was the department's well-designed curriculum, meeting the goals set by the American Psychological Association. They also praised the department for implementing a new course, Careers in Psychology (PSY 2222), to further help students understand the paths to graduate education and/or employment with a psychology degree. The reviewers also praised the department's faculty for being a cohesive group dedicated to promoting student success and to the continuous improvement of the program. The reviewers interacted with students and stated the high level of satisfaction among the students.

The challenges noted by the reviewers were not shortcomings of the department's work, but rather resource issues facing many departments on campus. First and foremost was a shortage of tenure-track faculty creating a high level of students to faculty ratio (100:1). Students expressed a desire for access to more hands-on-experiences, a challenge that is clearly related to the high student to faculty ratio and the limited availability of faculty to provide such experiences. The reviewers also pointed out to the existence of bottle neck courses in the curriculum, which may interfere with timely graduation of students.

The Department and Dean's office were in broad agreement with the reviewers' comments and suggestions. The department and college agree that impaction will help but will not be sufficient to reduce the student to faculty ratio, and are committed to advocate for more tenure-track hiring, increase staff support, and continue to support the success of students through curriculum redesign and mentoring programs. However, the AP Committee notes that without more tenure-track faculty hiring (a matter beyond the control of the Dean) it will be challenging to make major progress in many of these areas. The AP Committee also notes that processes around program impaction, and a need for transparency and collaboration with departments, have received attention in the Senate of late. This program review highlights the way that a thoughtful application of impaction status may be useful for challenges of student/faculty ratios.

Finally, the AP Committee notes that this is Psychology's first program review since the splitting of the former Psychology and Sociology Department. The split raised no apparent issues in the program review, a sign of a healthy program that has adjusted well to its new independent status.

The Academic Programs Committee commends the Department of Psychology on their good work, both in the operation of their BA and MS programs and in the preparation of a thorough and thoughtful review that highlights issues of critical importance to both their department and the campus as a whole.