

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-006-223

Program Review for BS Communication

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 02/27/2023

**Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded**

Date: 03/01/2023

Academic Senate

**Date: 03/08/2023
First Reading**

BACKGROUND:

As part of the University's planning cycle for academic programs, a self-study was prepared by the Communication Department. An external review team, consisting of Dr. Sarah Stone Watt from Pepperdine University and Dr. Jennifer Fleming from California State University, Long Beach, "visited" the department virtually on March 4, 2022, and in person on March 10, 2022. An internal review team, consisting of Julie Shen, University Library, and Dr. Kathryn McCulloch, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, "visited" the department virtually on March 17, 2022. After their visits, reports were prepared and submitted by the external and internal reviewers, after which both the Department and Dean prepared responses. The AP Committee has reviewed these responses.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Dr. Nell C. Horowitz, Chair, Communication Department

Dr. David Horner, Interim Dean, College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences

DISCUSSION and RECOMMENDATION:

The external reviewers were very positive in their appraisal of the department. They noted that the department has successfully implemented the suggestion from the previous program review to hire additional faculty to support student success and public relations.

The faculty were praised for their strong inclusive and collegial atmosphere and their dedication to their students' success, retention, and graduation despite the significant increase in majors and impact on faculty workload. Students expressed satisfaction with the faculty's commitment to academic advising, curriculum scaffolding, campus resources, students' professional development, and students' mental health. The external reviewers also commended the department on its adjunct faculty and lecturers' varied expertise and observed that the department has taken great lengths to ensure that these faculty and their contributions to the program are valued and that these faculty have access to ongoing professional development opportunities.

Additionally, the external reviewers praised the department's high impact practices such as experiential learning through internships, co-curricular activities, and the *Poly Post*, and their alignment with the University's polytechnic educational philosophy of "learn by doing." They emphasized the importance the faculty have placed on advising and the positive student feedback regarding this student-centered learning community focused on relationship building and mentorship.

The external reviewers also addressed challenges in the department, such as the following: faculty workload and need for increased tenure-track lines to support the growth of the department; salary inequity and space issues; technology inequities and student access to technology; additional staff support to handle growing number of students and faculty; clarity on vision and evolution of curriculum and additional adjunct

faculty and lecturer participation in these departmental conversations; and access to data for assessment of curriculum and student performance.

The internal reviewers agreed with the external reviewers' assessment of the faculty's commitment to the program's mission and vision of providing students with an inclusive polytechnic education and the faculty's highly collaborative work environment related to research and college and university-level initiatives. The internal reviewers noted the department's efforts in acquiring funds for peer tutors and referring students to other campus partners such as advising centers to bolster students' retention and graduation.

The internal reviewers also addressed challenges in the department, such as the following, which align with the challenges observed by the external reviewers: faculty workload; technology inequities and student access to technology; and access to data for assessment of curriculum and student performance.

The reviewers made recommendations in most of these areas and the department met to review these recommendations and develop their post self-study action plan. The Department and Dean's office were in broad agreement with the reviewers' comments and suggestions.

The department will focus on and prioritize implementation on the following interconnected categories to address the reviewers' suggestions: faculty support; staff support; and student success. The department noted that it was granted a search for an additional tenure-track line for Fall 2022 to alleviate the faculty workload. In addition, to follow the suggested "mixed" model of advising, a dedicated staff advisor was assigned to the department to also alleviate some of the advising responsibilities of the faculty. However, a system to sustain assigned time for faculty would also allow faculty to dedicate more time to advising and mentoring and hiring additional permanent staff would more sufficiently meet the needs of the growing number of students and faculty in the department.

The department's proposed actions are well-articulated and require few resources on behalf of the college but do require university resources and faculty time. These proposed actions are reasonable, but it is important to mention that the hiring of tenure-track faculty and permanent staff are decisions made at the Provost level, not the College level. To its credit, the department has a clear vision for its short-term and long-term priorities related to future faculty recruitment; staff recruitment; increasing space and access to technology for students, especially URM, first-generation, and Pell Grant students; and updating curriculum matrix discrepancies, data collection, and data assessment processes. The Dean will advocate for the department and recognizes the challenges faced by the department due to heavy faculty teaching and advising workload. The Dean is in support of the actions listed in the plan and noted the detail and extensiveness of the reviews.

The Academic Programs Committee commends the Communication Department on their good work, both in the operation of their BS program and in the preparation of a

thorough and thoughtful review that highlight issues of critical importance to both the department, the College, and the campus as a whole.