

Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo Gerontology, MS

The 2016-2017 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for Gerontology – MS program concluded with a culmination meeting on March 9, 2018.

The following people attended the meeting: Kari Knutson Miller (Provost), Pamella Oliver (AVPAP), Sheryl Fontaine (Dean, HSS), Lynn Sargeant (Associate Dean, HSS), Laura Zettel-Watson (Program Coordinator), Melanie Horn Mallers (Assistant Program Coordinator), Karen Wong (Academic Advisor and Internship Coordinator) and Su Swarat (Asst. VP for Institutional Effectiveness).

The Provost commended the program for its interdisciplinary curriculum and its commitment to providing students with High Impact Practices (HIPs). The next strategic plan likely includes goals on expanding interdisciplinary experiences and HIPs, which makes Gerontology's work well aligned with the university initiatives. The AVPAP also commended the program for offering high quality education and accomplishing much success with limited resources.

Major recommendations and concerns raised through the PPR process were discussed as follows:

1. Program enrollment, marketing and outreach:

- The AVPAP emphasized the importance of marketing and outreach in boosting program enrollment.
- The Program Coordinator acknowledged that an email outreach effort to alumni in 2014 led to an enrollment surge, but subsequent efforts have not been as successful.
- Enrollment aside, the Assistant Program Coordinator discussed the importance of improving the quality of admitted students. Multiple measures have been put in place to increase the rigor of the admission process, which led to fewer but better students. As a result, the graduation rate has increased significantly.
- The external reviewers recommended a dedicated recruiter/marketer for the program, but it is not feasible at this point. The Coordinator suggested that it might be possible to have a dedicated faculty member to attend grad fair or national conferences, as well as to meet with prospective students. The Associate Dean also recommended the program to work with the Dean's office to identify outreach strategies to boost enrollment, though a dedicated staff or faculty member still would be needed to execute these strategies.
- The Assistant Program Coordinator indicated that a "Geropolooza" event will take place in April to increase the visibility of the program.
- The Program Coordinator discussed the program's effort to establish smooth transfer pathways for students to transfer more units, and to outreach to high school students to encourage minors. The Associate Dean recommended the program to reach out to community colleges as well.
- The Program Coordinator expressed the need for more inter-departmental collaboration. Since half of the MS students come from CSUF undergraduate programs, the MS program relies on relevant department chairs to "get the word out" in terms of

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information sessions and application deadlines. Timely support on this regard would be very useful. The Associate Dean also recommended the program to work with the college Student Success Team for this purpose.

- The Program Coordinator indicated that a program name change request has been submitted – to change from Gerontology to “Aging Studies”, offering MS in Gerontology and Minor in Aging Studies. The name change may help clarify what the program is about and thus attract interested students better.

2. “Program of Merit” status:

- The Program Coordinator stated that much work has been done for the program to achieve the “Program of Merit” status with the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE). There is no governing or licensing body for Gerontology. The “Program of Merit” program offered by AGHE is a nationally recognized program for curricular distinctions, and thus the closest thing to accreditation. The Program Coordinator will submit application materials in Spring 2018 and anticipates that the program will achieve this status with minor revisions.
- The Dean inquired about the features of the program that make it a qualified candidate as a “Program of Merit”. The Program Coordinator cited program reputation, student employment rate, and faculty quality, commitment and dedication. The Assistant Program Coordinator discussed the strong partnership with the community, which allows students to work with and benefit from real local communities.

3. Data needs:

- The Program Coordinator voiced the need for better data on graduate programs. Record keeping has been a challenge for the program, including SOQ files and student record data.
- The program currently operates its office with part-time student assistants. The turnover and need for retraining creates both coordinator/advisor burden and lost “history”. The Dean indicated that the college is working to get some administrative support for the program by the fall, which would help with record keeping tasks. The AVPAP also stated that the Office of Graduate Studies and the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness could help providing data as well.

4. Program sustainability:

- The Program Coordinator recommended that the home department/college needs to recognize the faculty member’s hard work in this interdisciplinary program. If there is more recognition, more faculty are likely to participate, which will strengthen the interdisciplinary nature of the program. The Program Coordinator requested the Dean’s support in broaching this subject with other colleges/chairs.

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- The Dean stated that the current FTES-based funding model makes it difficult to support small programs without a “department home”. The growth needs to be intentional. She suggested the program to seek the possibility of having a donor or other philanthropic support for this interdisciplinary program.
 - The Program Coordinator expressed concerns with the sustainability of the coordinator position. The released time covers the time for administrative and maintenance tasks, but not for the marketing and expansion efforts that are required to grow the program.
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5. Classroom space:
- The Program Coordinator indicated that computer lab access for the graduate methods class is challenging.
 - The Dean recommended the program to reach out to MLL and see if their newly renovated lab could be shared. In addition, she suggested the program to seek a donor’s help for a laptop cart.

The Provost concluded the meeting by commending and thanking the contribution by the faculty to the students and the university.