



College of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Office of the Dean  
P.O. Box 6850  
Fullerton, CA 92834-6850  
T (657) 278-3528 / F (657) 657-278-5898

To: Su Swarat, Director of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness

From: Sheryl Fontaine, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Subject: Dean's Evaluation: Gerontology M.S. Program Performance Review

The Gerontology M.S. Program completed a comprehensive Program Performance Review in AY 2016-17. The program's self-study, the report of the External Review Committee, and the Chair's Response are attached to this report.

The Program Performance Review process included a detailed self-analysis that examined the program's short and long-term goals, its staffing and operations, curricular structure and assessment program, support for student success and advising, and the resources and facilities available to support its key functions as a center for student and faculty scholarship. The A thoughtful review by a team of highly qualified specialists with expertise in the field paid particular attention to the challenges and opportunities presented by a graduate only program. Review team members included Dr. Susan Charles (Department of Psychology and Social Behavior, UC Riverside), Dr. Kelly Niles-Yokum (Department of Public and Health Administration, University of La Verne), and Dr. Dana Rutledge (School of Nursing, CSUF).

The CSUF Gerontology M.S. Program is a multi-disciplinary academic unit; although housed in and supported by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, it engages faculty members from across campus in the collaborative study of aging. In addition to its role in interdisciplinary graduate education, the Gerontology Program offers and undergraduate minor and participates in the General Education curriculum. As a result, although its primary focus is on the training of specialists in the field at the graduate level, the program is also broadly involved in the intellectual and pedagogical life of the campus. In this context, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences is pleased to offer the following commendations and recommendations:

### **Commendations**

The Gerontology Program offers a high-quality curriculum and multidisciplinary training for both undergraduate minors and graduate students.

The Program Council and affiliated faculty are deeply committed to the Gerontology Program and are generous with their time and expertise.

The Program Council is well established and effective as a collegial body that provides direction to the Program and its students.



The Program is actively working to promote the program in the community and future students and to achieve Program of Merit status and accreditation through the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education.

### **Recommendations**

The Program Council should develop or update a job description for the Coordinator, Associate Coordinators, Program Advisor, and graduate assistant(s) that includes a detailed time estimate for their duties. Following a review of this document with the Program Coordinator, the H&SS Dean's Office will explore ways to balance available resources and program needs.

The Program Council should explore ways to collaborate with and build ties to other campus programs that focus on issues of aging to foster mutual support.

Building on their current outreach efforts, the Program Council and Coordinator should collaborate with the H&SS Marketing Specialist and the H&SS Student Success Team to develop comprehensive short and long-term plans and associated materials for marketing, outreach, recruiting, and advising that take into account the need for a coordinated, cross-disciplinary effort to promote both the undergraduate minor and the M.S. in Gerontology.

The Program Coordinator should work with the Dean's Office to determine whether a larger classroom (40+ student capacity) might be available for the Program's undergraduate course offerings.

The external review team noted the lack of institutional support for data analytics for graduate programs. Many campus data tools do not track graduate student performance (retention and graduate rates, etc.). Both the dean's office and the program coordinator can reach out the Director of Graduate Programs to urge that the extension of analytics tools for assisting in the tracking and advising of graduate students become a campus priority.

### **Support for interdisciplinary and cross-college programs**

The external reviewers identified challenges specific to the support and development of an interdisciplinary graduate program housed in one academic college (H&SS), but which involves the collaboration of faculty from several colleges. To date, financial and logistical support has been provided by H&SS, but more direct support from other participating colleges would strengthen the program. Securing such support would be challenging, particularly in a time of restricted budgets and must include conversations among the faculty and chairs of participating departments as well as among the respective Deans. In addition, agreements recognizing faculty contributions to the Gerontology Program as part of the RTP process in all participating colleges would honor the significance of interdisciplinary research and teaching at CSUF.