

Site Team Report
Program Performance Review
Department of Kinesiology
California State University, Fullerton
Spring 2023

We conducted a visit to the Department of Kinesiology on February 22, 2023, as part of California State University, Fullerton's Program Performance Review (PPR) of academic units. The site visit team consisted of two external experts, Dr. Tamar Semerjian, chair and professor in the Department of Kinesiology at San José State University, and Dr. Ray de Leon, professor in the School of Kinesiology at California State University, Los Angeles; and one internal reviewer, Dr. Jason Shepard, chair and professor of the Department of Communications at CSUF. This review is based on a Department self-study and our site visit, which included numerous meetings with faculty, students, staff and administrators.

It should be noted that much of the period under the review, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected all aspects of teaching and learning, so this is hardly a "normal" cycle for a typical PPR.

Overall Strengths and Challenges/Weaknesses

Strengths

- Multiple opportunities for students to engage in high impact programs and applied learning, including service learning and working with clients.
- Strong reputation for student preparedness for professional careers.
- Centers that have strong faculty interest, raise the profile of the department, and provide students with important opportunities beyond the classroom.
- A plan to provide reduced teaching loads for research-intensive faculty (moving to a 3-3 teaching load for faculty with active research agendas).
- Appreciative students who report faculty and advising staff care about their success and make themselves available.
- An advising system led by two lecturer faculty that manages huge advising loads with high student satisfaction that should be a model for other academic departments.
- A generally collegial faculty with a "relaxed climate" and a "non-competitive atmosphere."

- A collegial department chair who has broad experience in university affairs and relationships across the university.

Challenges and Weaknesses:

- High office staff turnover has affected many aspects of the department's ability to maintain high functionality.
- Lack of office staff dedicated to the department (shared with another department) remains a problem.
- Perceived inequities among faculty for supervising graduate students (some supervise many without additional workload reductions, while some supervise few or none) and lack of workload compensation for faculty who advise substantial numbers of graduate projects.
- COVID and increased virtual teaching has diminished the sense of community that leaves some junior faculty feeling disconnected to their colleagues.
- Bureaucratic functions that take up faculty time and are exacerbated by changing procedures, changing administrators, and lack of experienced staff.
- The Department generates disproportionately high FTES, but college support has been inconsistent and this may impact the progress of centers and programs.

Structure and Governance

The Department of Kinesiology (KNES) offers a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree and a Master of Science (MS) degree in Kinesiology. (The Department also offers a MS in Athletic Training that is outside the scope of this PPR as it undergoes a separate review).

The Department has department chair, Dr. Steve Walk, and a vice chair, Dr. John Gleaves. The department has a history of seeing its faculty serve in higher administration roles. Currently, two of the associate deans in the College of Health and Human Development are former KNES faculty.

KNES enjoys a strong reputation and is one of the largest academic departments at CSUF. In the 2021-2022 academic year, the department reported 1,976 undergraduate majors and 50 graduate majors with 27 tenured and tenure-track faculty, three faculty in the early retirement program, seven full-time lecturers, and 51 part-time lecturers.

Mission, Goals and Long-Term Planning

The Department identifies its mission as follows: “The Department of Kinesiology advances the understanding and practice of human movement across the lifespan within the context of a diverse and changing society”. It expresses the following vision statement: “We aspire to be a premier kinesiology department recognized nationally and internationally for our creation, dissemination, and application of high-quality knowledge related to human physical activity across the sub disciplines of kinesiology” through the cutting-edge delivery of well-rounded curricula, research, leadership, and by embracing diversity and inclusion and the highest integrity and ethical principles.

The department notes in its self-study that it is planning to engage in a strategic planning process in Spring 2023 to review and, if necessary, update its goals and strategies, beginning with a long-range planning process. This is appropriate timing given that the University is creating a new Strategic Plan to be in place in the 2024-25 academic year.

Among the priorities the Department has identified for the next 3-7 years include:

Short-term priorities:

- Develop a mission and vision, revise core program objectives, and set enrollment goals for the MS in Kinesiology.
- Streamline concentrations and align enrollment goals with department resources for the BS in Kinesiology.
- Improve faculty, staff, and advisor recruitment, retention, and workplace satisfaction.
- Maintain current instructional quality while implementing planned changes in teaching load.

Long-term priorities:

- Revise graduate program (MS in Kinesiology) to increase quality and sustainability while meeting the needs of the community.
- Identify opportunities to improve the undergraduate experience (BS in Kinesiology).
- Continue to advance research to promote health and human performance.
- Create a supportive environment conducive to faculty and staff professional growth and development.
- Strengthen alumni relations.

Curriculum and Assessment

The undergraduate Kinesiology program offers a Bachelor of Science, and has 8 concentrations, as well as a minor in Kinesiology. Additionally the department supports the Physical Education Teacher Preparation Program which is completed through post-baccalaureate work in collaboration with the College of Education, Department of Secondary Education. The graduate program offers two masters degrees, one is the Masters of Science in Kinesiology which allows students to create their own study plans with guidance from the department, and the second is a Master of Science in Athletic Training

Faculty note several improvements to the curriculum in recent years, including making the general studies concentration more flexible. They also note improvements in the teacher education program that included re-alignment of “240 series” courses (KNES 240: Teaching Team Sports; KNES 241: Teaching Nontraditional Team Sports; KNES 242: Teaching Lifetime Physical Activity; and KESS 243: Teaching Human Movement Forms in Physical Education).

The self study notes that streamlining the 8 concentration areas for the BS in Kinesiology is a short term-priority and an intention to revise the MS in Kinesiology is a long term priority. The site team agrees streamlining concentrations and growing its graduate programs are important priorities.

Assessment

The Department has devoted significant attention to a system of curricular assessment that collects and uses data to inform curricular improvements. Faculty note that they tied student learning outcomes to core courses and physical activity courses. They also assign a faculty lead to multi-section courses to help new lecturers come on board and maintain consistency among sections. A recent example of “closing the loop” discussions included revamping the assessment in KNES 349: Measurement and Statistics, and a revision of the assessment tool to better tie questions to the student learning outcomes.

In-Person vs. Online Classes

Faculty noted concerns about the “balance” of in-person and online courses post-pandemic. One indicated a “massive growth in cheating” in online courses. Some faculty said students are demanding greater flexibility for courses that include more online sections. Some courses are better suited for online than others, faculty noted. One said “there are a lot of positives with online, and there are a lot of challenges.” One faculty said some students

openly admit “Oh, I had this course online and I didn’t learn anything.” If there is going to be an expansion of online courses, faculty need more substantive training.

Student Feedback

Both undergraduate and graduate students reported high levels of satisfaction with the program, curriculum, faculty, and staff.

Undergraduate students: “Everyone is very helpful,” said one student. Another said, “Our professors make themselves available to us.” Students said courses were generally available when they needed to register, although some said it was tough to find all classes available at convenient times to meet their varied schedules, particularly with work schedule conflicts. Many students said they were still adjusting the different modalities of in-person and online classes following the return to in-person learning as a result of the pandemic. Several said the course quality depended on the class and the instructor. Some appreciated increased online offerings, while one remarked, “it’s crazy that you can get a master’s degree at home in your pajamas.” Another said, “If you are online, you have to put yourself out a lot less.” Students said they received positive feedback about being a CSUF student from employers. One reported that an internship supervisor said that CSUF students were generally more equipped professionally. “That was really cool to hear,” the student said.

Graduate students: “The professors really want to help you,” one student said. Another said, “They are happy to help you, it’s not a chore for them.” Students said they felt like they got the support they needed for research, but that they weren’t hand-held through everything. “Not only do the faculty guide and teach us, but they teach us how to be independent as well.” One student said of their advisor, “He tells me the procedures, we go through it once, he’s available for questions, but he lets me take the lead.” One student commented that they didn’t know CSUF was “not an R1” university, which is a good reflection on the rigor of the graduate research program. Only one student noted concerns about faculty instruction, noting that in one class it felt like they were being taught too much by watching online videos. Other complaints included the low pay for graduate teaching associates.

Advising

Two lecturer faculty, Julia Cappelli and Sarah Hamamoto, have primary responsibility to provide academic advising to KNES students. They indicate their “mission and responsibility [is] to provide all students access to quality and accurate advisement.”

Multiple pieces of data suggest they do a phenomenal job effectively using varied and holistic approaches. That they both teach as lecturers in the Department is an asset, providing them with a broad understanding of the curriculum and programming and establishing credibility with both faculty and students. They also are engaged in a number of “advising plus” activities that build community and engagement between faculty and students. The advisors noted their advising activities are enhanced by the continued support and participation of the chair and faculty.

Among the many strengths of this model:

- Students receive welcome, congratulatory emails and messages upon admission
- Students receive video messages that are engaging and effective
- Students are followed and tracked from admission to graduation by the same two lecturers
- Students know Julia and Sarah by name as their advising contacts
- Student surveys show extraordinarily high satisfaction regarding their advising from the KNES team
- Practices that include group advising and YouTube videos updated regularly

The university had been engaged in a significant restructuring to advising that raised many questions about the viability of KNES’ model. The dean acknowledged that the new model was “causing some disruption” for departments. He also acknowledged, “the advising structure we have now is amazing.” After our site visit, a change in provosts resulted in new discussions about advising models, and it remains unclear how forthcoming changes will affect KNES.

Facilities

The department’s programs are spread throughout one building that is shared among other departments and the University’s Athletics Department. While the building is not optimally arranged, the department’s spaces appear well maintained to the best of the department’s control. Faculty indicate a desire for “more classrooms, more offices, more labs, more space.” One notes, “We are a large faculty with a large student body. We really do not have the physical space to appropriately accommodate all of those students.”

Administrative support in managing the bureaucracy

A common theme among faculty who are engaged in extra-curricular and co-curricular programs is the time spent on managing the bureaucracy. “The lack of staff is a problem,” one faculty member noted. Another said, “We’re so understaffed that the staff stuff is a

main part of our jobs. The dean acknowledged that filling vacant staff positions “can’t be any more of a higher priority.” He acknowledged the “churn of staff” is a major problem.

The “bureaucracy creep” was another major complaint from faculty. “A huge amount of my work day is being taken up (by things) that are not teaching, research, and service,” another said. “We have 50 different electronic platforms” that we must learn to do things, another said.

Centers

The department’s centers appear to be an important part of student and faculty engagement with the curriculum, programs, and external partners.

The Center for Successful Aging led by Dr. Koren Fisher, provides hands-on training in working with older adults and is an important part of the gerokinesiology concentration. It provides internships and service-learning opportunities for undergraduates and teaching opportunities for graduate students. The center partners with community members and collects data on clients that can be used by students. Among the challenges the center faces include: 1) until this year, not having assigned time for the center director; 2) not connecting with students earlier in their academic career (some don’t get involved until their senior year) and 3) logistical issues such as parking fees that can inhibit community engagement opportunities.

The Center for Sport Performance aims to conduct, present and publish research and engage consultations related to improvements of sports performance through the application of sub-disciplines of kinesiology. The center is supported by multiple faculty and led by three, Dr. Jared Coburn, Dr. Andy Galpin, and Dr. Scott Lynn, none of whom receive assigned time for their work in the center. Center faculty indicate the center is valuable in providing real-life experiences for students in working with athletes and raising the profile of the department in athletic organizations and associations regionally and nationally. The center indicates conferences and workshops can generate revenue for the Department.

The Center for Sociocultural Sport and Olympics Research supports collaborative research and has three discrete programs: 1) offering an annual conference that brings outside speakers and recognizes outstanding scholars and leaders with awards; 2) organizing a Greece study abroad trip to study the Olympics; and 3) publishing a high-quality scholarly journal, the *Journal of Olympics Studies*. The center’s co-directors, John Gleaves and Dr. Toby Rider, neither of whom receive assigned time for their work with in the center. The center’s work and faculty collaboration were particularly impressive. Faculty noted challenges include bureaucratic procedures that make “difficult here to just get anything

done.” They worry that long term, “we have to figure out what is manageable within the workload we have.”