

## **Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo**

### **Department of Sociology**

The 2013-2014 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for Department of Sociology concluded with a culmination meeting on April 10, 2015.

During the meeting, the program was commended for the significant progress made since the last PPR, which includes:

1. The Sociology Department is a strong academic unit that does an excellent job of meeting the needs of their undergraduate and graduate majors.
2. Faculty members are first-rate, and are productive as teachers and scholars.
3. There is high collegiality, genuine commitment, and admirable diversity in the faculty's background and research interests.

The major recommendations and concerns raised through the PPR process were discussed. Suggestions on how to address them were provided:

1. Hire additional faculty in areas described in the self-study, especially considering those who engage in quantitative research.
  - The department has received one approved position, and would like one more. It also would like to receive permission from the college soon to advertise the approved position.
  - The college is currently working on getting the department one more position, and is working with HR to process the approved position. The permission to advertise should be granted soon.
2. Hire part-time faculty in a timely manner, and utilize a variety of resources to support them and evaluate them beyond SOQs:
  - The department reported that part-time faculty used to receive notification 2 weeks before classes start. The department improved its practice by informing the part-time faculty what the hiring plan is so that they can be prepared.
  - The department is grateful for the professional development support from the Dean's Office to the part-time faculty. The college plans to continue this support, and the university will also provide professional development to part-time faculty through FDC.
  - The department is considering the HHD model of giving one part-time faculty member 6-9 WTUs to take on student advising, in order to make advising more accessible to students. The college will work with the department on the feasibility and administrative details of this proposed position.
  - The department is in the process of revising SOQ to include measurement on critical pedagogy and elements of online teaching. Upon approval, the department plans to compare student responses before and after the change to evaluate the efficacy of the revised SOQ.

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- The department does not intend to administer SOQ online, as faculty are concerned with the issue of low response rate, the length of the rating window, and the lack of control over timing. The college will facilitate a conversation among all departments to explore the possibility of a common SOQ (content and format) at the college level.
3. Work with the Dean's Office to create departmental leadership that is stable, enduring, and informed.
    - The department had significant issues with the previous ASC. There was great tension between the ASC and the last 3 chairs. The ASC has left in December, which helped alleviate the problem. However, the department expressed the need for a permanent replacement as soon as possible. The college acknowledged the need, and searches are currently taking place.
    - Both the department and the college expressed the desire for a more efficient hiring process at the university. The university is currently working to streamline the process.
    - The current chair is commended for her strong leadership and extensive management experiences. The department is now in good hands.
    - The college is offering professional development to all ASCs and ASAs in HSS this year through monthly meetings. The college is considering a consultant-facilitated retreat for all ASCs and ASAs, as well as chairs, to ensure smooth working relationship.
  4. Examine causes of the substantial attrition rate of new faculty hired after 2006:
    - The department experienced significant attrition of newly hired faculty in the last few years. The department reported that it is partly due to the previous ASC who did not support new hires, particularly faculty of color. Another factor is the mismatch between the teaching focus at CSUF and faculty who want to be at a research institution.
    - The department has changed its strategy in the recent hires, and focused more on faculty members whose priority is teaching and student education.
  5. Ensure equitable distribution of mentoring and committee responsibilities for MA projects, theses, and exams:
    - The department expressed that it would be challenging to connect students to faculty at the time of admission based on research interest, as students' research interest changes overtime. Such matching would also narrow the student candidate pool too much.
    - The department is currently exploring ways to reward faculty to take on mentoring and committee responsibilities, with the goal of offering course release time.
  6. Utilize department resources to reward department service, and recognize in the RTP process:
    - With only 9 faculty members, the amount of administrative mandates is overwhelming. In addition, the department has the challenge of having only 1 full professor, and only

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- 20% of him is available to the department. In other words, the department is run by junior faculty.
- The department is recommended to identify a strategy to formally encourage department service. The chair currently assigns committee work to faculty who do not supervise many theses, as an informal way to even out faculty responsibilities.
7. Reconsider the sequencing of MA courses and reconfigure SOCI 585:
    - The department recognizes the need to change the sequencing of MA courses – The professionalization course should take place before methods course, and the current sequence often is too late for students who want to do quantitative research.
    - The department graduate committee will consider this issue again. It would be ideal to engage a quantitative or research methods person to help with this re-sequencing effort. Ultimately, the department desires a year-long course requiring the application of both quantitative and qualitative methods.
  8. Continue to revise undergraduate curriculum, integrate HIPs, and consider reinstating capstone course:
    - The college commends the department for proposing several innovative courses. One outstanding example is “Sociology Strategies for Career Success”, a special course starting in Fall 2015. The course integrates rich sociology theories, and at the same time, addresses practical concerns of career preparation.
    - The department is moving away from the FTES or GE-focused model, and relies on assessment data to gauge course effectiveness. This is an excellent move that will prepare the department well in the outcomes-based funding model.
    - The department also found the use of portfolios with part-time faculty very helpful, not only as a reflective exercise, but also as an accountability mechanism.
    - The department narrowed down their concentrations from 6 to 3 last year, making the concentrations more distinctive from each other.
    - The department has 3 faculty members who are highly committed to HIPs, and the rest of the faculty are encouraged to model after them.
  9. Build on current assessment efforts by demonstrating how evidence is used to reshape their undergraduate and graduate curriculum, and create a program-based assessment experience that measures undergraduate mastery of student learning outcomes:
    - The chair reported that the faculty are on board with assessment. They recognize the amount of work involved, but are committed to the idea of using assessment data to improve practice.
    - The department proposed new mission and SLOs at last year’s faculty retreat, and combined assessment and curriculum committee to encourage “closing the loop”. The planned next step is to complete the curriculum map.
  10. Need access to large classroom space and dedicated computer laboratory space:
    - The department expressed strong need for large classroom space and computer lab space

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- (to teach statistics).
  - The department is completing the development of a database that tracks past enrollment data and faculty scheduling preferences. These data will greatly help the chair balance course offerings and space needs. This approach will be shared with other departments once completed.
  - The university recognizes the classroom space need. The university space committee will release a report next week, and the college and the department should work together to discuss classroom issues after reviewing the report.
  - The college recommended the idea of using portable laptops, and the strategy of ‘stretching’ out the class schedule to go beyond Monday-Thursday 10am-2pm. The college is considering having a “GE block” on Fridays and Saturdays to encourage student enrollment on these under-utilized days.
11. Have requested Irvine campus expansion to include training rooms with two-way mirrors for practicums.
- The department is working with the Irvine campus to start a sociology major there.
  - The department has also requested a training room on the Irvine campus to help students develop interview skills. The university is considering the request as part of the Irvine expansion plan.