

## **Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo Environmental Studies, MS**

The 2016-2017 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for Environmental Studies – MS program concluded with a culmination meeting on April 13, 2018.

The following people attended the meeting: Kari Knutson Miller (Provost), Lynn Sargeant (Associate Dean, HSS), Peter Fashing (Program Coordinator for Spring 2018), Andrea Patterson (Graduate Advisor), and Su Swarat (Asst. VP for Institutional Effectiveness).

The Provost commended the program for its healthy enrollment and continued aspiration for growth. The program has achieved excellent accomplishments with limited resources.

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

### 1. Student recruitment and enrollment:

- The Provost asked about program capacity. The Program Coordinator indicated that approximately 25 students would be a robust cohort, and the program could grow a little more.
- Both the Program Coordinator and the Graduate Advisor stated that there are several opportunities for growth. For example, the employment market for environmental studies is expanding, which helps attract students. There is also a consistent representation of teachers in the student population, another group that could be further increased.
- The Associate Dean stated that the college is eager to help the program with graduate student recruitment, and hopefully will have more resources to do so next year. She encouraged the program to be more deliberate in its recruitment effort, e.g. using a minor degree program or a certificate program as a recruitment pathway, and continuing presence and outreach at the “Welcome to Fullerton” day. She also encouraged the program council to identify long-term program growth goals, and develop a concrete plan (including time, resources, strategies, etc.).
- Both the Program Coordinator and the Associate Dean voiced the importance of revamping the program’s website. The college is committed to helping the program with website and marketing material development, but would like the program to identify “what makes the program special”. The website could highlight the wonderful alumni network, describe the diverse internship opportunities, and provide information to help students understand what courses are needed for the program.
- The Graduate Advisor stated that the program has taken a more proactive approach to track student enrollment to increase admission yield. All new students are matched with faculty advisors and are required to develop a mandatory study plan. These strategies have been helpful to boost student enrollment and success.
- The Graduate Advisor also discussed that while many students are part-time, a significant percentage of them desire to complete the program in two years, and are eager to take

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summer courses. The Associate Dean echoed the importance of summer course offerings, which are more likely to be taught by full-time faculty.

### 2. Practicing professionals as part-time faculty:

- The Program Coordinator stated that the program's part-time faculty are typically practicing professionals, which is a point of highlight for the program. Students gain practical experiences from these faculty, and often are employed by their companies. The balance between the full-time and part-time faculty ensures that students receive both theoretical knowledge and real-world experiences.
- The Graduate Advisor added that the link to companies through the part-time faculty also enhances the program's connection to the local community. The part-time faculty are a core component of the program, and they also help introduce new students (i.e. employees in their own companies) to the program.

### 3. Interdisciplinary program and inter-departmental collaboration:

- The Program Coordinator stated that the program's strength is its interdisciplinary nature.
- The Associate Dean pointed out that the challenge for interdisciplinary programs is the coordination and collaboration between colleges and departments. While the Graduate Advisor stated great relationships between the involved departments, the Program Coordinator indicated that the recognition of faculty involvement in the RTP process by their home departments varies.
- The AVPIE asked whether the collaboration helped with student recruitment. The Program Coordinator responded that it has not been deliberate, but the program has received student recommendations and referrals from many departments, which helped increase student diversity.

### 4. Program assessment:

- The Provost asked about the status of program assessment. The Graduate Advisor responded that the program follows a 3yr assessment cycle, and the Year 1 results were positive. The program conducted an Exit Survey, which yielded favorable findings. The program would like to launch an Alumni Survey as well.
- The Provost recommended the inclusion of alumni in the program's Advisory Council.

### 5. Program leadership and sustainability:

- The Graduate Advisor emphasized that in order to make the program sustainable, targeted release time (for tasks such as handbook development, website revamp and assessment) is needed. A lot of work is done in the summer, which also needs resource support.
- The Associate Dean recommended the program to *quantify* its needs for support in terms of time commitment and resource required. A specific multi-year plan would be useful

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both for the program and for the college as they work together on future resource allocation.

The Provost concluded the meeting by commending the faculty's commitment to the program and the program's contribution to the university.