Response to External Review Report

7th Cycle Program Review
Department of Child and Adolescent Development
San Francisco State University

March 26, 2018

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On Behalf of the CAD Department

1. Introduction

The Department of Child and Adolescent Development (CAD) participated in the Seventh Cycle of Academic Program Reviews at San Francisco State University. It is the first time the CAD department has engaged in this program review, as it acquired department status only 10 years ago after being an interdisciplinary academic program housed in the Marian Wright Edelman Institute since 1999. The faculty and staff of the department thank the external review team for their thorough and insightful review report. Two external reviewers conducted a two-day campus visit on October 26 and 27, 2017. The timing of the external review was fortuitous and beneficial as it occurred while the department was engaged in a vigorous review of its curriculum and developing a variety of strategies for student success. Overall, faculty in the department found the external insights and recommendations to reflect our own consensus on the departmental strengths as well as the challenges we face, and the recommendations of the external reviewers parallel many of the elements of the departmental strategic plan.

This document presents our response to the reviewers' recommendations and plans for implementing the initiatives that are related to each recommendation. We intend to outline our goals - ambitious but achievable with adequate resources – and discuss them in the context of specific recommendations.

2. Summary of Findings by the External Reviewers and Department Response

The external reviewers commended the CAD department for the following:

- Dedicated faculty
- Faculty collegiality
- CAD curriculum

- Support for CAD students

In the external review report, the CAD faculty were described as “remarkably dedicated”, “very productive in both research and service”, “collegial”, “go far beyond reasonable expectations for service…despite vastly inadequate space and resource allocations”. We appreciate the review team’s recognition of the department’s talented and passionate faculty and their excellence in curricular work and student support. However, the reviewers also noted that “the number of service hours and commitments placed on faculty are likely unsustainable in the long-term.” We also agree that the department needs more resource allocations to sustain our dedicated work. Securing resources to further enhance the department strengths is directly linked to our goals, as described later in this document.

The specific recommendations and strategies for program improvement as developed by the external reviewers reflect the work we have already begun as well as the resources we should continue to seek. Recommendations include:

- Increase Developmental Content
- Increase Course Consistency
- Assigned Time
- Additional Tenure-Track Lines
- Allocated Space
- Increase High-Impact Practices

The department faculty have already initiated and plan to continue the work related to three recommendations listed above: enhance developmental content in CAD courses, improve course consistency, and increase high-impact practices. The remaining three recommendations,

however, are not issues that the CAD department has been able to adequately address in the past: assigned time, additional tenure-track lines, and allocated space.

1) Developmental Content

The external reviewers noted that there are only two courses (CAD 210 and CAD 410) specifically focusing on "development," and recommended that CAD 410 be expanded into a two-semester course sequence. Although the CAD core curriculum is designed to integrate developmental content across various core courses, we agree that this may not be evident in the current course descriptions. As stated in the self-study, the department began a major curricular alignment and scaffolding project in 2013. More specifically, we focused on developing the curriculum sequencing matrix to define the levels of student learning, based on the competencies, to take place in each upper division core course. In this process, in-depth discussions among faculty members explored the possibility of adding another development course (tentatively CAD 411), as the faculty acknowledged that CAD 410 is content-heavy and there is a need to strengthen and reinforce the developmental content. We did not pursue this option at the time due to the 45-unit requirement in the major. Developing and adding another course in the core requires a reduction in the units from each concentration.

However, we have continued our diligent efforts to improve the curriculum and submitted curricular revision proposals, which was shared with the external reviewers during their visit and subsequently approved to be effective in Fall 2018. The revised curriculum is fully compliant with Executive Order 1071 and includes additional courses in the core. As part of the ongoing curricular efforts, we plan to undertake the following tasks:

- Continue the course sequencing work with the revised curriculum and ensure the developmental content is effectively introduced, reinforced, applied, and practiced across CAD courses and clearly articulated in the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) of each course. This will ensure that our Program Learning Objective (PLO) #3, "to apply developmental, learning and cultural theories used in the context of the field," is fully met.
- Revisit the idea of adding a second development course in the core while keeping 45 units for the major. Reviewing courses in each concentration will help identify the areas that may be dropped from the concentration and integrated into a core course.

2) Course Consistency

The external reviewers pointed out 1) the extreme variety of classes within concentrations and 2) inconsistency in the course content among different sections of the same course. The department faculty have expressed the same concerns and sought to find solutions. Challenges related to these issues include 1) the interdisciplinary nature of our curriculum, especially for concentrations and 2) the small number of tenured and tenure-track faculty who can teach courses consistently.

When the CAD program was first implemented, the entire curriculum was interdisciplinary, completely relying on other departments except for one course (CAD 300), and the total units in the major ranged from 43 to 56. With recent curricular revisions, the core curriculum includes CAD courses only; however, each concentration still remains interdisciplinary. It should be noted that each time we make curriculum changes, it requires thoughtful consideration and consultations with other departments as they may be affected

by our revisions. As suggested by the external review team, we will consider dropping some of the course options in the concentrations to reduce the number of concentration courses for the program consistency and student success. In doing this, we will ensure we work collaboratively and communicate clearly with those partner programs and departments.

We also plan to address the inconsistency among different sections of core courses. In addition to having a small number of faculty, the department has experienced significant faculty turnover and transitions. Five untenured faculty left the university in the past 10 years. Given that there are only five tenured/tenure-track lines, this was a critical change over a short time period, which affected the continuity of work. In addition, the department's tenure density as of Spring 2018 is 45.71%, indicating that a large number of CAD courses are taught by lecturers. With the exception of one full-time lecturer, most of our lecturers are part-time and relatively new, which creates issues of course inconsistency. As we recognized such problems, the following tasks will be undertaken:

- Develop a CAD lecturer manual to articulate key information such as course expectations, department policies, syllabus templates, and the importance of adherence to PLOs and SLOs for each course.
- Review all core courses to define key content, assignments, readings, and assessment, and standardize syllabi for each core course. Aligning signature assignments and key readings will ensure to increase consistency and maintain the competencies and SLOs.

3) Assigned Time

As emphasized in both the self-study and the external review report, it is a critical goal of the CAD department to receive additional assigned time to enable the substantial

administrative and service work. Currently, the only official assigned time in the department is .20 for the Chair. One course release per semester for the Department Chair and no assigned time for the Associate Chair are inadequate to efficiently operate the department and support almost 400 majors. The number of CAD students will further increase with loss of impaction in Fall 2019 and it is critical to secure extensive assigned time to ensure and sustain continued student success.

The external reviewers strongly recommended the increased assigned time including summer hours for the Department Chair, dedicated assigned time for the Associate Chair, and additional assigned time to be allocated for faculty advising. Currently each tenured/tenure-track faculty offer three weekly hours of advising and also offer more individual advising based on student needs. This is in addition to substantial meeting/communication time the faculty already spend to support the students in their classes. Despite the dedicated faculty and their efforts to advise and support the students, advising in the department is still limited given the demand. We wholeheartedly agree with the external reviewers' recommendations on the assigned time and thank them for reiterating the importance of this type of support for the continued success of the department and its students.

4) Additional Tenure-Track Lines

The urgent need for additional tenure-track faculty has been extensively documented in the self-study and the external review report. The current faculty size is already inadequate, as articulated in the external review report, and will be further challenged by the expected enrollment growth and advising loads to accompany the removal of impaction. It should be noted that the department had over 600 majors before impaction and it is anticipated that we

will quickly reach a similar number or higher. As aforementioned, the department's current tenure density is only 45.71% and it is a critical goal of the department to add multiple new tenure-track faculty to adequately support a solid curriculum and advising for student success. We will submit two faculty hiring requests this year, which is also aligned with the external reviewers' recommendations:

- Position #1: Assistant Professor in Early Childhood (EC) with preferred expertise in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education or dual-language learners. Although several faculty in the department have specialty in early childhood, the large number of majors in the EC concentration (representing almost 60% of the department's majors) and an increasing state-wide and national emphasis on the urgent need for highly trained early childhood teachers require an additional faculty. The new faculty in EC will assist with the teaching and advising work load as well as the heavy service demand required of faculty in the EC field.
- Position #2: Assistant Professor in Learning and Human Development with a focus on community-based research with school age children, education equity, and macro-political phenomena. This request is based upon the need for faculty with expertise in not only child and adolescent development, but with in-depth knowledge and experience working with families in community settings, diverse family configurations, and community-based programs that serve young children, school aged children, adolescents, emerging adults, and their families.

5) Allocated Space

The external reviewers pointed out the inadequate space allocation for the CAD department. While being cognizant of the limited space issues widely prevalent on campus, the size and scope of physical space currently allocated to the CAD department present many challenges. The department has four offices that are shared by all tenure-track faculty and lecturers. The Chair uses a small side room attached to the department office. As of Spring 2018, we have 17 part-time lecturers in addition to tenured/tenure-track faculty. Some lecturers have access to other office space on campus but we still need to accommodate a large number of lecturers with only four offices. Other than the five offices including the department office, we do not have any additional space such as meeting rooms or storage space. Currently, one of the four offices is partially used as storage space due to the small size of the department office. As recommended by the external reviewers, the department will greatly benefit from increased space, especially to provide academic and social support for the large number of majors.

6) Increase High-Impact Practices (HIPs)

The external reviewers shared the concern that the department did not have data to assess the effectiveness of HIPs, and recommended a more systematic approach in relation to student learning and achievement. It was also noted that ending impaction may allow native freshmen to declare the major upon entry to the university, and suggested the department consider academic and co-curricular programming for lower-division students.

We have already begun to address this recommendation and have plans to implement several initiatives to increase HIPs, listed as follows:

- The CAD Curriculum Committee has reviewed all lower division courses (CAD 210, 215, and 260) to identify impediments to student success. While uncommon,

course failure rate in the CAD major occurs almost exclusively in our lower division courses. We have gathered information from past instructors on possible causes and plan to use this information to revise these three courses.

- We plan to more frequently assign tenured/tenure-track faculty to lower division courses, enhancing the connections and relationships between lower division students and the department.
- We are also carefully considering the option to admit students into the major rather than into the pre-major, helping students feel more invested in the university as well as effectively providing the students with necessary advising and tools for success during their first year. To achieve these goals, appropriate resource allocations such as an increased number of tenure-track faculty positions and additional assigned time for advising are paramount.
- The department's Student Success Committee has been created and all full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty participate as committee members. The Committee has explored various strategies to support student success and to increase HIPs. Examples of the initiatives we have implemented in the past year include: a) open house for all pre-CAD and CAD students, b) using internship application data to determine how many and which courses should be offered to reduce bottleneck preventing on-time graduation, c) examining Ad Astra data to determine which courses had students with failing grades, d) graduation application workshops for all students, e) group advising in all sections of CAD 410, f) creating a CAD Student Club, g) target advising for students facing academic probation and those with GPAs under 2.5. We will continue these

practices and develop more strategies to effectively provide support and resources for all students.

- We plan to more systematically collect data to evaluate the program and student outcomes. Prior to and concurrent with the external review process, the department engaged in the program assessment activities governed by the university's Division of Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning. In previous years, we have completed the first two stages in the five assessment activities: 1) Mission Statement and 2) Program Learning Goals. This year we are assessing 3) Curriculum Map. We will continue to work on 4) Assessment Findings and 5) Closing the Loop in coming years.

3. Conclusion

The faculty in the CAD department thank the external review team for their time and support throughout this review process and the recommendations they have made. As a result of the self-study, external reviewers' visit and their subsequent report, we feel that we have identified areas of improvement to which we can commit time and effort. We concur with the reviewers' recommendations and believe that our work based on those recommendations will strengthen the department as we move forward. As articulated in this document, we have been taking, and continue to add to, initiatives that are relevant to the recommendations made by the external review team. However, there are still issues over which we have little control – those resource allocations. We are hoping that some of these resource shortfalls will be addressed by the university as we grow with more students and continue our dedicated work.