



TO: Jennifer Summit, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

FROM: Alvin N. Alvarez, Dean of the College of Health & Social Sciences

DATE: March 27, 2018

RE: Criminal Justice Studies and Urban Studies and Planning Seventh Cycle Dean's Response

The external reviewers for the seventh-cycle review of the Criminal Justice Studies (CJS) and Urban Studies and Planning (USP) Programs provide both laudatory comments as well as important and insightful recommendations for these programs' improvement. The external reviewers note of the CJS Program *"The CJS faculty are to be commended upon the enthusiasm that they bring to their instruction. The students are intrigued by the presentation of course material in their classes, appreciate the instructors' willingness to advise them both inside and outside of the classroom, and enjoy the content of their courses."* These reviewers also noted that *"The [USP] faculty exhibit an extraordinary commitment to teaching and community engagement, where that engagement becomes the living laboratory for students to learn by doing, assuming the role of consulting planners working with and on behalf of the community."* They also note the faculty's commitment to student success. I concur with these positive characterizations of the PACE faculty and I am appreciative of the thoroughness of the reports that have been generated as part of this seventh cycle of review.

In the spirit of programmatic improvement, the external reviewers offered the following general recommendations for the School of Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE):

1. Continue with the project of integrating PACE as an academic unit, including curricular integration. Along these lines it will be important to be mindful of individual program integrity as well as the integrity of the School of PACE as a whole. There needs to be attention paid to the delicate balance of the tension between what is good for individual programs and for the larger School of PACE.
2. Explore joint hires between CJS and USP (and potentially in other units of PACE).
3. Continue to develop a strong governance structure
4. Provide adequate compensation for program co-coordinators and ensure adequate staff

The CJS specific recommendations included:

1. Map student learning objectives to required courses
2. Create a lower-division course
3. Require a single research methods course
4. Re-evaluate the area requirements or restructure area requirements

5. Study the implications of making CJS elective unit-hours consistent
6. Create a list of approved internships
7. Hire additional faculty
8. Periodically reassess enrollment and enrollment-management options

The USP specific recommendations included:

1. Reflect the global orientation of the program in its mission statement
2. Continue to develop and implement the PSLO assessment plan
3. Explore opportunities to increase student access to the program
4. Continue to expand the disciplinary and professional diversity of faculty
5. Ensure adequate resources

Dean's Recommendation:

I appreciate both the efforts of the PACE self-study committee comprised of members of the CJS and USP faculty as well as the external reviewers for their work and insights. I especially appreciate the leadership of the Director of PACE – Dr. Elizabeth Brown - as well as the contributions of faculty in both programs. While I agree with many of the conclusions, plans, and goals outlined in the self study and the recommendations made by the external reviewers concerning both CJS and USP, I will focus on what I believe are priorities for PACE and these programs therein. First and foremost, I fully agree with the recommendation that PACE continue to strive to become more integrated. I specifically recommend that curricular innovations are developed and implemented to pull the school together on the one hand, but on the other hand not compromise the integrity of individual programs. This integrated balance between the School and its programs will need to be worked out through faculty collaborations and deep and meaningful conversations – which were well articulated by the external reviewers. Although additional tenure-track hires are a clear priority for PACE and all of its programs, such requests will be contingent on a number of factors including but not limited to: a) availability of funding, b) alignment with School, College, and University, and community priorities (i.e., enrollment demand, curricular need, workforce demands), as well as c) the continued interdisciplinary nature of faculty members' expertise and their ability to contribute to the integration of PACE as a School. Indeed, I also recommend that PACE look at its current constellation of faculty talent to examine possibilities of such faculty integration. Further, I would suggest other ways to work toward more integration, and perhaps initiating a task force comprised of members of all 5 units within PACE to generate ideas and a plan for continued integration over the next five years. With respect to compensation for program coordination and adequate staffing, I resonate with what I regard as a reasonable and well-articulated recommendation – particularly as a former program coordinator. However, it is important to note that as a normative practice throughout the College, program coordinators are not compensated and this work is regarded as part of their service duties. So, implementing such a recommendation raises issues around organizational equity and financial sustainability. As Academic Affairs refines its models for both instructional and non-instructional budgets, I would invite the School Director to discuss this concern further to explore what possibilities may exist.

Regarding recommendations for Criminal Justice Studies, I agree that mapping student learning outcomes to required courses is critical especially in an effort to ensure student success. Likewise, I recommend periodic re-evaluation of the area requirements and/or restructure area requirements. This is

important especially given that there are such few required “core” courses for the CJS major and it is important to better manage the curriculum and ensure currency in the field and so on. To this end, I applaud the School for exploring a two-course sequence that will include both introductory and advanced research methods courses that will help to anchor the curriculum for the program. I also suggest CJS hone its assessment measures. Additionally, I recommend periodically reassessing enrollment and enrollment-management strategies to insure that the quality of CJS curriculum – which is already quite high – remains as such. This will be important particularly given the popularity of the CJS major and the impact of increasing enrollment as the University moves away from impaction. Enrollment management is critical so as to not overtax, strain the faculty and support staff. With that said, I am grateful that CJS has been a model in accommodating the high number of students particularly over the past few years.

Concerning Urban Studies and Planning, I recommend reflecting the global orientation of the program in the program’s mission statement. This is not only a more faithful reflection of the nature of the program but it could also be an effective strategy in attracting students who wish to have a more global, international focus in their studies. I also recommend continuing to develop and implement the PSLO assessment plan to serve the students better and potentially tighten the curriculum and better articulate the USP coursework. Finally, it is critical to explore opportunities to increase student access to the program, which will be inextricably linked to creating a more robust USP program as well as to assist with student success. Particularly as the University works towards increasing its enrollment, strategies such as the creation of more lower division courses will be a key and welcome strategy towards increasing student retention and access. I am appreciative of the good work USP is doing and I hope that the recommendations provided by both myself and the external reviewers’ will make the USP program even stronger.