

## **Response to external review report, PACE: CJS and USP**

School of Public Affairs and Civic Engagement

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### **1. Introduction**

The School of Public Affairs and Civic Engagement was visited by three external reviewers in November 2017, two of whom submitted an evaluation of the school and two of its programs: Criminal Justice Studies and Urban Studies and Planning. In general, faculty in the school found the insights and recommendations of the external reviewers to reflect our own consensus around the general issues, opportunities and challenges faced by the school. We take this opportunity to provide our response to the external reviewers' report and lay out our plan for adopting their recommendations over the coming years.

### **2. PACE recommendations**

Recommendations for the School of Public Affairs and Civic Engagement (PACE) developed by the external reviewers reflect the work school faculty have already begun. Recommendations include:

- Continue to explore curricular integration
- Explore joint faculty hires
- Develop a stronger PACE-wide intellectual culture
- Continue to develop a strong governance structure
- Provide appropriate compensation for program coordinators
- Ensure adequate staff

We have already begun, and plan to continue, recommendations to explore curricular integration, seek joint faculty hires, and develop a strong governance structure. To date, we have worked as a faculty to develop three core courses that could potentially be adopted by PACE undergraduate programs. We have also begun to explore curricular integration at the graduate level, though these explorations continue to be in the exploratory stage. We hope to continue these talks in a future, with the aim of further developing PACE cohesion and identity and providing students an interdisciplinary approach to the issues and challenges of the twenty-first century.

Additionally, PACE has already sought joint faculty hires, and plans to continue to develop school-wide hiring plans in the future. Over the past year, we were very generously granted three additional tenure-track lines to address retirements and enrollment growth in our programs. Each of these positions was developed in consultation and collaboration with the entire faculty, who all had the opportunity to shape the position description, vote on the importance of the position to PACE and its programs, and ultimately, determine which positions to request for potential funding. The success of this approach is demonstrated in the three excellent hires we were able to secure across the PACE programs, each of whom can serve multiple programs and who will be joining the faculty in Fall 2018. Plans to continue building curricular integration are already underway and enabled through our intentional growth of the School with interdisciplinary public affairs scholars.

PACE continues to develop its governance structure as well. Already, PACE has developed a set of bylaws, that articulate a division of responsibilities between the program and the school, and key governance structures. We have adopted policies governing faculty peer-evaluations, post-tenure review, and decision making. We are in the process of developing additional policies related to service and course scheduling; creation of additional polices and plans for future review of existing ones are opportunities to continue building a strong governance structure in PACE.

Two of the recommendations, however, are not issues that PACE has been able to adequately address: providing appropriate compensation for program coordinators and ensuring adequate staff. The history of PACE is such that several departments and one program were merged into a single school. This meant, as articulated in the self-study, that many programs lost their departmental status, and thus, their administrative “chair” position. For these programs, faculty who served in the chair role were effectively stripped of their status, renamed program coordinators, and asked to serve in the chair role without a chair stipend or assigned time. At the inception of PACE, the director was not from any of the program faculties, and thus served as the administrative head while the former chairs continued in their roles, without compensation, title, or university recognition.

Since that time, the organization of the school has sought to relieve the burden on uncompensated program coordinators by providing for some program administrative support centralized in the PACE director position. However, that has led to some difficulty “preserv[ing] the integrity of individual programs and the quality of instruction that occurs within them.” As the external reviewers concluded, “such quality is difficult to perpetuate without a program co-ordinator able to concentrate attention on curricular development and planning...”

Since the inception of the school, we have sought to belabor this very point—the very goal of student success depends on strong programs. Programs that have large student bodies, such as the ones in PACE, also require an intensive amount of student-centered work, an issue discussed in greater depth in the discussion of recommendations for Criminal Justice Studies below. While there are some administrative efficiencies that can be garnered through centralization, there continues to be an incredible amount of work required at the program level. Internally, we have sought to deal with this by assigning supervisory courses to faculty who agree to become program coordinators. This, however, is not a course release and does not substantially decrease the day-to-day instructional workload of faculty who volunteer for these positions. This means that programs and the School in general are often left struggling with the excessive workload that PACE faculty grapple with, something borne out in our self-study and evident throughout the external reviewer report.

For these reasons, **it is a critical goal of PACE faculty to ensure appropriate compensation for program coordination through formal release time for program faculty.** While supervisory courses provide a modicum of compensation for this role internally, this is a serious inequity from other programs who can use supervisory courses not to compensate (de facto, in our case) chairs, but to increase the ability of faculty as a whole to participate in program governance. Currently, we are without this ability and we find it critical that PACE programs be provided appropriate compensation in the form of course releases for coordinating the curricular cohesion of PACE’s excellent programs.

Second, **it is also a critical goal of equal importance to increase the amount of staffing in the school.** Currently, the student body of PACE is equal to the student enrollment in SF State’s two smallest colleges combined! Yet, our program faculty are accorded neither compensation nor course

releases for the curricular administration we are asked to do, and our administrative support is limited to just three full-time staff people. This means that an entire staff person is often dedicated entirely each day to just answering student inquiries, while two others are left to take on the additional and plentiful administrative tasks that a school of our size demands.

Complicating the issue of inadequate staffing is the amount of “high level...hands-on involvement between faculty and students” in the school, faculty whom are described by students as “caring and eager to help.” As the external reviewers noted, “this was one of the most compelling of the testimonies we heard from the students we met.” This, however, places considerable pressure on our faculty, which then redounds on staff and the administrative hub of PACE. Students frequently stop by the office, ask questions about advising, but then are often met with the need to come back at another time to accommodate a faculty advisors’ office hour.

Further administrative staffing to support the daily operations of the school is greatly needed in PACE, as noted by the external reviewers. Reviewers cite the need for a staff advisor, writing that they “strongly encourage[d] any and all means to enable program staff to attend to student advising needs.” This allocation would be an incredible opportunity to increase the ability of the School to encourage and foster student success in its programs. Instead of meeting further bureaucratic hurdles, a key driver of students leaving the university, students would be met with an administrative office that could adequately address their needs.

Further administrative allocation would also allow the school to more fully develop its internal student support services. Additional staff would increase our ability to increase school communication with its constituents, increase opportunities for student professional development, and provide for a greater sense of student life throughout the school. While faculty are already doing an enormous and exceptional job with their currently limited resources, **to ensure and sustain continued student success throughout the school, increased staff allocation, as well as compensated program coordination, are essential.** We thank the external reviewers for helping us to articulate and communicate just how important these allocations are to the continued success of PACE and its programs.

### 3. Criminal Justice Studies recommendations

Recommendation developed specifically for the Criminal Justice Studies (CJS) program centered primarily on addressing the struggles that the program has encountered over the past decade. As described in detail in the self-study, CJS has been challenged by its enrollment growth, which at one point meant that the program had over 850 majors with just two tenure-track faculty. This led the department (CJS enjoyed department status at the time) to declare impaction and limit enrollment in the program. Recently, with additional faculty resources, the program suspended impaction at the local campus level and began admitting all students eligible for the university into the major. In just one application cycle, enrollment in the major has almost doubled and the faculty to student major ratio has grown again to 1:160. For this reason, CJS has decided not to formally remove impaction and continue on informal suspension status over the next year.

External reviewers noted this explosion in CJS enrollment, and this is key to understanding and planning for the recommendations they provided. In particular, the external reviewers recommended that CJS:

- Map student learning objectives to required courses in the catalog description
- Create a required lower-division course
- Require a single research methods course
- Re-evaluate the list of CJS electives in other programs
- Reinstate the area requirements or restructure area requirements
- Study the implication of making CJS elective unit-hours consistent
- Create a list of approved internships
- Hire additional faculty
- Periodically reassess enrollment and enrollment-management options

Already, the program faculty have begun working on several of these, and plan to continue to work towards adopting additional recommendations in the immediate future.

In particular, faculty began with the self-study to articulate a revised curriculum that would address many of the external reviewer recommendations. Our current curriculum was based on several considerations, two of which were paramount: a desire to provide an interdisciplinary critical crime, law and justice curriculum while also accommodating a large number of majors with a small number of faculty. As such, our curriculum heavily depends on courses across the university, and currently, CJS allows for eight out of the eleven courses required to complete the major to come from other departments. The curricular issues identified by the external reviewers thus stem not from a lack of desire to provide a high-quality curriculum for our students, but from the very real need to move students through our program in a timely fashion.

Through the self-study process, we identified several issues in our program and plan to continue to develop mechanisms to ensure student learning outcomes, and grow our faculty and staff resources. In January 2018, program faculty undertook an exercise to begin mapping student learning outcomes to required courses in the curriculum. This inevitably led us to what will be our primary work this semester—articulating a curriculum that more adequately ensures our program learning outcomes and students’ methodological reasoning capabilities. To this end, we’ve begun developing a revised curriculum that will include requirements for students to take both an introductory and advanced research methods course. This two-course sequence would introduce students to knowledge and data literacy, while also providing an opportunity to instruct students on the tactics, techniques, and importantly, critiques, of social scientific knowledge production. Further, this new curriculum would integrate the PACE undergraduate core, providing for two courses in the lower division that would introduce students to the skills and content necessary for success in the major.

As part of these revised curricular efforts, we are undertaking in the Spring 2018 semester several activities that further implement the recommendations of the external reviewers. In particular, we will be evaluating the list of criminal justice studies electives in other programs to ensure adherence to program goals and objectives. We will also be revising our curriculum to guarantee that students who graduate from our program will be guaranteed to take more than just two courses in common, a practice of the current curriculum. This will entail restructuring the area requirements to reflect our more intentional curricular design, and evaluating our current list of courses to determine which courses need to be developed in order to adequately implement our new curriculum. Our goal is to create new courses, revise existing ones, and submit a revised major curriculum by Fall 2018.

Support for this project has even been secured through the student success grant awarded to program faculty.

Support for the development of a new curriculum oriented towards ensuring students' academic and intellectual success, however, does not ensure that the program will have the adequate faculty resources to provide and support the curricular changes it necessitates. Part of the curricular issues stem from a history of being severely under-resourced, and we must urgently **“hire additional faculty”**, as recommended by the external reviewers to accommodate our growth and desire to deliver an excellent curriculum. Further, in the PACE recommendations, the external reviewers identified the “high level of demand for the CJS major” that “places notable pressure on faculty, who all do extensive advising, even at the assistant professor level.” To address, they recommend **“enabl[ing] program staff to attend to student advising needs...”**

This need for additional resources is felt urgently by the program faculty, who have long labored, as documented extensively in the self-study, under conditions marked by exceptional advising loads, course enrollments, and program service relative to others in PACE, CHSS, and across the university. External reviewers in particular call for CJS to be allowed to not only hire “more tenure-track faculty...because of its high enrollment”, but to also ideally allow **“new hires to come in at the Associate Professor rank.”** This, as the external reviewers note, would enable “them to immediately be able to help with the teaching, service, and advising needs of the program.”

CJS' ability to adequately serve our student body is further complicated by its lack of departmental status, and thus, dedicated faculty administrative time. Currently, like all units in PACE, there is no compensated CJS program coordinator. The use of supervisory courses to compensate the program coordinator is not sufficient to induce any faculty member to volunteer for the incredibly time-consuming and workload heavy assignment in CJS. As such, if a CJS faculty member was not the director of the school, it would be incredibly difficult to continue managing a major with a larger student enrollment than most other departments on campus. On campus, there exist programs that have considerably less enrollment, and even fewer faculty, but are accorded departmental status and university supported released time and compensation for the chair. This considerably hampers our ability to provide a quality curriculum, adequately serve our students, and grow our program in the necessary directions. Further, the recommendation to “periodically reassess enrollment and enrollment-management options” in order to come up with “ways to keep it at a manageable level” is a considerable undertaking. While CJS faculty continue to monitor enrollment, the implementation of extensive enrollment management strategies requires administrative resources.

The issues confronting CJS also present unique challenges for both the school and the position of CJS within it. CJS has sought to integrate with other PACE units not just to provide our students a cutting-edge curriculum, but to also leverage broader PACE resources. As such, CJS faculty have been at the forefront of efforts to further school integration, curricular coherence, and faculty growth. Two faculty members serve on the school curriculum committee. CJS faculty have worked on creating the PACE as a hub for civic engagement curriculum. Our faculty have been active in creating ideas for future faculty positions that serve not just CJS but other programs in PACE. CJS will also be the first program to adopt the PACE courses in its major curriculum, which provides not only the opportunity to provide an exceptional interdisciplinary orientation to the study of crime, law and justice, but also an opportunity to pull across the broader PACE faculty resources to serve CJS students. And a CJS faculty member serves as director of one of PACE's flagship student internship programs.

These efforts, however, are set amidst an organizational structure where CJS is almost three-quarters of the student body in PACE, but only about one quarter of the tenure-track faculty. This reflects incredible inequity across programs, with the student major to faculty ratio ranging from 1:160 in CJS to 1:53, 1:27, 1:24, and 1:7 in other PACE programs. The workload of CJS faculty relative to student enrollment is three times as much as the next highest program, and almost 23 times the lowest enrolled program. Further, as noted in the self-study, CJS students come from more disadvantaged backgrounds than the rest of PACE, CHSS and the university student body as a whole. The CJS student body is made up of predominantly of students from “underrepresented” backgrounds, yet, our program has also been successful in retaining and graduating students from these backgrounds at comparable or even better rates than non-“underrepresented minority” students.

Inevitably, an imbalance of this magnitude will present organizational issues for PACE and CJS. Integration—of faculty, students, and PACE-wide events—will likely lead to numerical dominance by CJS. This will likely increase concerns, as noted in the external review report, that PACE integration could lead to a diminished “integrity of individual programs and the quality of instruction that occurs within them.”

The recommendations of the external reviewers considered as a group thus lead CJS faculty to consider how to accommodate curricular needs, further PACE goals, and ensure that CJS is adequately and comparatively resourced. To solely accommodate our current major growth and deliver our existing curriculum, we need at least twelve full-time faculty dedicated solely to delivering our curriculum (calculated based on current augment allocation). With future hires shared with other PACE programs, our increased faculty resources do not also easily translate into a full faculty course load for CJS. As such, while two faculty members oriented towards CJS will be joining in the fall, at least one will also be serving another program. And, as importantly noted by the external reviewers, two is not even close to enough to address our current curriculum, much less the curriculum that we need to implement to ensure student learning outcomes and continued student success. This suggests that CJS will continue to necessitate resources that may encroach on the ability of other programs to adequately address their desires for growth and development. This situation is potentially ripe for decreased morale and the development of organizational dysfunction within the school.

Recommendations coupled together thus suggest **a need to consider the role of CJS in PACE more broadly**. This consideration should plan for the eventual organizational question of how to accommodate a large entity, who would enjoy autonomy and departmental status under almost any other circumstances, while maintaining school morale, momentum, and integrity across all programs. This incredibly complex question has been grappled with for almost seven years by PACE faculty, and CJS faculty have sought to leverage the school to further serve our students. We find that these recommendations provide an opportunity for both PACE and the broader university to consider how to adequately address the issues facing the CJS program, while planning for and ensuring the continued positive morale, momentum, and shared principles of all PACE faculty.

#### **4. Urban Studies and Planning recommendations**

The Urban Studies and Program faculty appreciates and agrees with the many positive observations noted in the external reviewer report and will work towards addressing the specific

recommendations (pages 15-16) in the coming years. We wholeheartedly agree that “**securing adequate compensation to maintain a program coordinator** who can fulfill essential program-level administrative tasks, and advocate for the program’s interests, while also continuing to advance opportunities for interdisciplinary integration within PACE” is essential. USP has taken steps to provide this internally by designating the internship sequence, USP 603 & 604, to be given first priority to the program coordinator starting in Fall 2018, but it is still imperative, as mentioned previously, that the university provide adequate and appropriate compensation for program coordination.

Recommendations offered by the external reviewers in particular noted that the USP program should seek to:

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

Already, USP has begun to address several of these recommendations, and has plans to implement changes in response to the others in the near future. As part of program review self-study, USP already revised its mission statement and plans to integrate a global orientation statement in a future revision. At the PACE Spring 2018 faculty retreat, the USP program worked towards the development and implementation of a PSLO assessment plan. As the first step in this process, USP mapped PSLO to courses and considered where the PSLOs were introduced, developed and mastered. This mapping project will continue this semester, and USP will then use that data to consider whether there are any places where PSLOs are not adequately covered and make adjustments to its curriculum accordingly. Further, this mapping project will allow USP to identify places and key assignments in the curriculum where PSLOs can be assessed. This will serve as the basis for a comprehensive assessment plan, which will include developing assessment tools and a timeline for the analysis. PACE has also begun collecting alumni information school-wide and this information will be used to help support USP assessment of “how well USP graduates are prepared for professional practice.”

In order to increase student access to the program, we will begin offering our lower division course—USP 200: Changing cities—more regularly as a mechanism to recruit additional students to the major. Additionally, a PACE research methods course has been developed and will begin being offered in Spring 2019, and will provide students an introductory methods course that covers information literacy, introductory research skills, and will include an introduction to qualitative methods. USP faculty may in the future decide to complement this course with a second data analysis option based primarily in qualitative methods.

USP continues to work towards expanding the disciplinary and professional diversity of faculty by working with other PACE units to explore joint hires. In Fall 2018, a new tenure-track faculty member will join PACE who has expertise in three different PACE programs, one of which is USP. Additional suggestions for joint hires developed at the PACE level in Spring 2017 include collaborations between USP and CJS and USP and Gerontology. USP also already works to expand student access to a professionally diverse faculty by providing strong engagement with urban

planning and policy practitioners in the Bay Area through its USP 680: Senior Seminar course. With the new PACE initiative on applied housing research, a practitioner in the field of affordable housing will be identified to co-teach a course with a tenure-track faculty member, which will further support USP efforts to bring practitioners into the classroom.

Finally, USP continues to support efforts to ensure adequate resources for our students. As noted by the external reviewers, USP students would like access to GIS at home. USP currently provides ESRI authorization codes for a 1-year license to ArcGIS Desktop for students enrolled in our courses. Students are able to use this license at home as long as they have access to a person computer that meets minimum system requirements.

## **5. Conclusion**

As noted above, PACE and its programs are already well-positioned to take advantage of the recommendations and opportunities provided in the most recent external review. We have already begun to take action on several of the items, have plans to implement other items in the future, and in some cases, have even already implemented the recommendations. However, the issues of resource allocation to PACE remain paramount, and as noted through the report by external reviewers, without appropriate compensation for program coordination, additional faculty lines, and increased staffing allocation, the promise and potential of PACE will be in peril.