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TO: Jennifer Summit, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Jane Dewitt, Associate Dean, Academic Planning

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

DATE: November 4, 2019

RE: Sexuality Studies (SXS) Seventh Cycle Dean's Response

I am pleased that the external reviewers offer both congratulatory remarks as well as recommendations for improving our Sexuality Studies master's degree and undergraduate minor fields of study. In the beginning of their report, the reviewers indicated, *"This program has a rich and storied history, and it continues to enjoy national prestige. At every moment throughout our visit, the collective investment in the success of the Sexuality Studies program was evident: faculty, students, and administrators believe that the program is valuable to the overall mission of SFSU and to the communities it serves throughout the campus and the City of San Francisco."* The reviewers also note that the Sexuality Studies program at SF State was the first of its kind in the nation in the 1970s to garner faculty resources to *"...create a multidisciplinary approach to the study of sexuality."* The reviewers also speak to how well the Sexuality Studies faculty have articulated the program's values and goals and how well they align with the university's mission. I was most pleased with the reviewers' feedback about how staunchly committed the faculty are to student success in various ways and how much our Sexuality Studies faculty care about their students in the general sexuality studies and LGBTQ minor programs as well as the graduate program.

The external reviewers offered the following recommendations for programmatic improvement of the sexuality studies program:

- Carefully examine the programmatic identity and provide a tighter connection between the program and the University;
- Strategic rethinking of the Sexuality Studies program in relation to being housed with the Department of Sociology; and
- Delink the Sexuality Studies program from the Department of Sociology. If this uncoupling is not possible, then it is highly recommended that the Department refashion its curriculum to better reflect the interdisciplinary nature of sexuality studies.

Dean's Recommendation:

Prior to making my recommendations concerning the Sexuality Studies (SXS) external program review, I extend my deep gratitude to the Sexuality Studies faculty who participated in the self-study process

and to the external reviewers who put substantive thought and effort into both their on-campus visit and their report. I appreciate the balanced view the reviewers presented and I take very seriously their recommendations for how the SXS Program can enhance its quality and visibility. On the whole, I agree with the external reviewers' recommendations. The first recommendation is that the SXS Program identity constitute a tighter connection with the University. I agree that this should be the case. I believe that it would be prudent for the SXS Program faculty to make a concerted effort to be more connected with the University to insure that the SXS Program increase its multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary footprint. I also agree with the reviewers when they indicated that the core courses in the program are solely within the social science framework and that this needs to be rethought to better reflect the multidisciplinary nature of the sexuality studies field in addition to the interests and needs of the students studying in the program.

In terms of rethinking sexuality studies being housed with the Department of Sociology, at this point a reorganization is not feasible. The College is grateful that the Department of Sociology agreed to serve as the administrative home to sexuality studies during the University's reorganization several years ago. It is likely that the program would have ceased to exist without the Department of Sociology's faculty being willing to house and teach several courses in the curriculum. With that said, I agree that with the placement of the sexuality studies program with the Department of Sociology, there has been a propensity to favor the sociological perspective of sexuality. This is a structural issue that would benefit from a concerted effort to encourage cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives in the program. Perhaps, a faculty member could champion this effort (e.g., call together faculty across campus to think through and plan how to infuse and strengthen cross-disciplinary sexuality courses in the program, rethink core courses in the sexuality studies minor programs and graduate program to reflect the multidisciplinary of the field, and develop sexuality research interest groups across the university). As in years past, it seems as though it would be helpful to have a faculty coordinator engage faculty across all of the colleges -- who have an interest in, or who teach sexuality courses and/or research in sexuality studies -- to come together to strengthen the program along interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary lines. This would better reflect how sexuality studies developed as a field and continues to evolve.

Perhaps, in the long term and with demonstrated efforts at increasing the interdisciplinary delivery of the program, it may be possible to explore an interdisciplinary center in the College in which SXS students could be housed and serve as a "hub" as the external reviewers suggested. But, at this time I would like to see efforts be directed at doing what is possible to encourage and see to fruition that more interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary be actualized as much as possible within the current structure. Variations of this structurally and operationally were successful in the 1980s and 1990s. I strongly suggest we do what is possible along these lines to make improvements to the program that would broaden and deepen its scope and add complexity to the program paradigmatically speaking.

In sum, I am impressed with the thoroughness of the seventh-cycle review of the Sexuality Studies Program and the insights that were generated as part of this review process. I appreciated reading about the highlights of the program in addition to the changes needed to make Sexuality Studies an even stronger program at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. I look forward to the ways in which the Sociology and Sexuality Studies department will attend to making Sexuality Studies even stronger than it is currently.