

External Review Report – BS & MS Kinesiology

California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

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The purpose of this external review of the BS and MS in Kinesiology and Health Promotion (KHP) is to provide an unbiased examination of the quality of education and service in the program, and to identify opportunities for improvement and growth. After carefully reviewing the program's Self Study, we took part in an on campus visit on April 27 and 28, 2023. We met with Alison Baski, Dean of the College of Science; with Kinesiology & Health Promotion, Dr. Laura Chase, Chair of the Department; with students in the program; with department faculty and adjunct faculty; and with the department staff. This report is divided into sections on strengths, challenges, and recommendations.

Strengths:

- **The Department Chair, Dr. Laura Chase, has created a climate of respect and equity.**

All stakeholders report a collegial working environment with ample collaboration which seems to be driven by the goal to create an optimal learning environment for students. Faculty, at all levels, noted agency and voice in departmental decisions, indicating use of shared governance. Faculty and staff have a strong commitment to the vision and direction of the department. An inclusive and responsive department climate is echoed across all stakeholder groups.

- **The Graduate Program and Credential Coordinator, Dr. Laura Killick, leads with vision and has a progressive approach to graduate education.**

Recently hired faculty and other factors have enabled growth in enrollment in the MS program. Timely revisions to the curriculum show investment in the vision of graduate education and credential programs. Students report a high level of satisfaction and appropriate student support.

- **Recent investment in laboratory space.**

The College of Science has supported KHP in acquiring and renovating existing space to create a brand new, state-of-the-art exercise science laboratory which will greatly expand hands-on learning opportunities for students and enable high-quality research. This new space in building 41 is scheduled to become available for use in the spring 2024 semester. The large facility will enable better collaboration and interdisciplinary work within KHP.

- **Updated curriculum with emphasis on inclusivity, justice, and “learn by doing”.**

We commend the department for taking on the work of revising the B.S. curriculum. Requiring all B.S. students to pass an adapted physical activity course increases inclusivity and exposure to diverse populations. Adding the options for coursework on health disparities and social justice is valued. There even seems to be plans for future growth in this area, by adding a course in sport, race, and social justice. These changes meet with the core values of the department and contribute to well educated graduates. There is ample opportunity to learn by doing in the laboratory courses, and also importantly through a newly added internship requirement. Further, the Motor Development Clinic provides an excellent opportunity for engaged learning.

- **Recent growth in students enrolled in the undergraduate and graduate degree programs and potential for future growth which is related to job market trends.**

Enrollment in the graduate program is 2-3-times higher in fall 2021, then the previous four years. Additionally, while there have been ups and downs from year to year, the undergraduate program has experienced about 10% enrollment growth since 2017. Presumably, this growth is slowed by the impacted major and the change of major policy. As a premier program in the health sciences at Cal Poly Pomona, with further resource allocation, KHP is well positioned for growth in numbers due to the high demand for training and careers in health related fields.

- **Alignment of institutional, program, and course learning outcomes that identify and determine the depth of content learning.**

There is a well developed alignment of learning outcomes from courses, to programs, and up to the institutional level. This alignment is facilitated through expanded course outlines which ensures longevity of the assessment plan and consistency across teaching sections.

Challenges (Threats and Weaknesses)

- **Level of support and underlying processes to enhance research and grant procurement and management.**

The level of support at each level of the grant process- identification, application, implementation/management, and closure/reporting- was identified as a barrier for faculty engagement in both internal and extramural funding opportunities.

- *[Example] Limited grantsmanship development opportunities for new faculty and support for budget narrative preparation was identified as a challenge.*
 - *[Impact] Faculty have elected to limit their engagement with extramural funding particularly as the primary investigator.*
 - *[Example] Concerns were raised regarding the indirect cost allocation policies.*
 - *[Impact] There is a perception that current policies do not provide incentives and support for future grant engagement- e.g. seed funding to move pilot projects to full submissions.*
- **[Institutional] Institutional Review Board (IRB) bottleneck, especially in summer, is negatively impacting time-to-degree for graduate students and ability for faculty to develop research agendas to their potential.**

Several of the tenured and tenure-track faculty indicated challenges with a timely review by the IRB. This was echoed by graduate students. The bottleneck has resulted in faculty reconsideration of student learning outcomes and delays in faculty-led research endeavors.

- *[Example] Students indicated delays in master thesis project reviews, particularly during the summer months.*
 - *[Impact] Delayed approvals have pushed graduate student data collection late into the fall semester and delayed degree completion as a result.*
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- **[Institutional] Hiring and replacement of new faculty and staff when vacancy occurs.**

The department has been able to sustain, and grow, enrollments during a period of uncertainty in higher education. New leadership in the graduate programs have resulted in substantial growth with additional capacity in this area. The department has largely been supported through reinvestments of positions and facility renovations, however there was concern raised about forthcoming faculty retirements and staffing replacements.

- *[Example] Two tenured faculty members are entering a phased retirement and one staff member position is currently vacant.*
- *[Impact] Departure of faculty will decrease availability of graduate mentors, research projects, and sustained curricular revitalization. Additionally, the staff position vacancy has stressed existing staff members and led to challenges in meeting deadlines and deliverables.*

- **[Institutional] Collaboration and coordination with other units for space utilization and scheduling courses.**

As with many Kinesiology programs, shared space and cross-disciplinary collaborations provide the opportunity for innovations and challenges. Stakeholders identified several examples of challenges with sharing facilities and coordinated class scheduling.

- *[Example] The Department of Athletics moved forward with renovation plans for a shared locker room space without consultation of the KHP department leadership.*
- *[Impact] The shared space is actively utilized by KHP faculty and staff, proceeding with planned redeployment of space solely to athletics would create equity issues across the departments.*
- *[Example] The KHP graduate students take coursework out of the department. During Spring 2023 there was an incident of a class, out of KHP, changing course meeting times that conflicted with required KHP coursework.*
- *[Impact] Several students noted challenges with readjusting their schedules to meet the unplanned change with at least one student unable to accommodate the change and likely needing to extend time to graduation.*

- **[College] Limited resources (e.g. WTUs) for graduate education.**

The graduate program has been successful in re-engaging faculty and growing enrollments. The growth is impacting existing capacity as a result of current workload allocation policies for the graduate program coordination. Additional resources will be needed to support future growth and sustain levels of student success and timely degree completion.

- **[Department] Continued work on closing the loop on assessments and a way of informing changes.**

The department has actively revised curricula and reimagined student learning outcomes. There is a need to complete assessment cycles ahead of future change to better understand the efficacy of prior changes on student learning and program outcome attainment.

- **[Departmental] Updating and or replacing old equipment, for example the DEXA.**

The department benefits from investments from the Dean with laboratory facilities and provides students with access to disciplinary appropriate equipment. However, some key pieces of equipment are reaching an end of their lifecycle. Continued investment in equipment is needed as enrollments grow and equipment age.

- *[Example] The Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) employed by the department is no longer serviceable by the manufacturer.*
- *[Impact] DEXA is a gold standard for bone density and body composition research. Students with experience utilizing DEXA are well-positioned for transitions to careers and graduate degree programs. Additionally, loss of the DEXA will negatively impact research opportunities of several of the faculty members in the department.*

Recommendations (Opportunities)

- **Develop and enhance websites to improve recruitment of students, especially into the graduate program.**

Several faculty members commented that there were limitations with the current website configuration related to content and navigation. Faculty comments about content, focused on the limitations in highlighting the innovative approaches that are currently being employed to ensure student success in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. Feedback on webpage navigation centered around difficulty to find and access relevant program information in a timely manner.

- **Prior investments and support have led to impactful growth. Maintaining staffing levels will allow for sustained and future growth.**

Several stakeholders (faculty, staff, and students) expressed gratitude for the financial support of Dean Baski's office that has remodeled existing and underutilized space to add a large laboratory that integrates curricular, research capacity (for faculty and students), and service components for department, University, and community. There were also conversations that highlighted the addition of new faculty lines that have addressed large faculty to student ratios and supported departmental growth (current and future). We encourage the College of Science at Cal Poly Pomona to continually monitor the growth of Kinesiology and Health Promotion programs and provide commensurate support that aligns with University processes.

- **Address institutional coordination with comprehensive policies on space allocation and scheduling of academic and non-academic units.**

One of the challenges related to scheduling facilities and courses that has been noted was the personnel changes across campus (and levels) that prevent continuity with scheduling and space allocation. When personnel change there may (or may not) be changes in knowledge and/or skills that ensure consistent and predictable decision making processes. Sometimes, these personnel changes have created a strain on academic and athletic reciprocal agreements. Prioritizing student learning and educational schedules in a climate of resource scarcity (e.g. funding and space) should take precedence.

- **Continue investment in professional growth of faculty and staff, including leadership succession and development.**

Professional development opportunities for faculty and staff ensures that knowledge and skills are relevant and timely for student success. Changes in personnel (staff and faculty departures or retirements) require adjustments to current workload configurations. When staff depart or retire additional training and financial compensation is needed for work-related adjustments to responsibilities. Replacing staff that have integral roles is necessary to help Kinesiology and Health Promotion function and meet current and future student needs. The program review team also noticed the time difference between later and early career faculty. We would encourage Cal Poly Pomona and the College of Science to monitor and plan for personnel changes (i.e., retirement) by developing and implementing transition plans related to potential deficiencies in faculty or staff (i.e., leadership, content expertise, and knowledge/skills) departures.

- **Further development of assessment tools and practices that measure learning and inform student success.**

Kinesiology and Health Promotion (KHP) has been commended for their curricular efforts to transition from quarter to semester programming as well as provide students with an updated curriculum. Several university processes related to the alignment of curriculum and student learning outcomes have been undertaken and implemented. However, we encourage the KHP faculty to further develop and refine an assessment process that considers baseline and end of semester measurements as well as an internal validation process that confirms student learning and achievement. There is further opportunity to develop, revise, and more regularly assess the MS in Kinesiology program.

- **Review historical equity gap data (e.g. course DFW, retention) to inform inclusive and culturally relevant pedagogies, as well as co-curricular support services.**

Review of both College and University data reveal that the Kinesiology and Health Promotion have integrated a culturally relevant and inclusive curriculum and instructional practices. Student feedback praised several faculty at both the undergraduate and graduate levels for their efforts and support. We have commended the KHP program for their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices as they might serve as an example for the College of Science and University on how to improve student success metrics. However, there is historical and consistent data (e.g., DFW rates, equity gap data, etc.) for a few courses that would benefit from implementing current KHP curricular DEI methods and practices used by many faculty.

- **When considering curricular change/growth, overlay (map) knowledge and skills related to employment trends and job market data.**

The Kinesiology and Health Promotion Department has updated their curriculum to reflect professional opportunities and faculty expertise. As the curricular programming evolves and changes over time, we encourage the KHP faculty to consider how curricular changes develop knowledge and skills related to workforce development and employment trends. Consider working with University and College infrastructure to track post graduation employment and/or professional metrics (e.g., certifications, licensure, etc.) that will facilitate student success conversations around curricular change.

- **Consider the establish of an advisory board that bridges institution, alumni, and industry**

Informally, all faculty and staff are involved in working with community partners and organizations to ensure student success. A future consideration might include a more formal advisory committee composed of representation from community partners, professional organizations, alumni, and current students (to name a few groups) that can provide feedback and offer insights related to improving student success.

Sincerely,

Reviewer 1: Hawley Almstedt, 5/15/2023

Reviewer 2: Brian Clocksin, 5/15/2023

Reviewer 3: Rock Braithwaite 5/15/2023