

#5- Additional Curriculum Changes Motivated Through Academic Program Review

Overview: Chico State's program review process requires academic programs to submit a self-study every five to seven years to their respective department chairs. Subsequently, the department asks a qualified external reviewer to read the self-study and conduct a site-visit. After the completion of the site visit, the external reviewer composes and sends the institution a written evaluation of the program's commendations and areas for improvement. Subsequently, the department writes a concluding essay that responds to the external review report, indicating strengths and areas for growth, including specific goals and objectives for improving the academic program over the next five to seven years. For undergraduate program reviews, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs then evaluates all of the materials and reports commendations and areas for growth to the Provost, who makes the final determination regarding the future of the program. For graduate program reviews, the Graduate Council evaluates all of the materials and reports commendations and areas of growth to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who then makes recommendations to the Vice Provost for Academic Programs or the Provost, who makes the final determination regarding the future of the program.

A significant component of the academic program review process is the evaluation of the curriculum and most academic programs (especially those conducted in the last year) include specific recommendations of curricular changes. Beyond Communication Design, the additional curriculum highlights changes made through other colleges as a result of the academic program review process:

- 1) **College of Agriculture – Animal Science:**
 - a) Re-engineer outcomes assessment plan, including:
 - i) Revising the program learning outcomes, beginning with a systematic evaluation of the extent to which the current outcomes address the WASC core competencies: written communication, oral communication, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy.
 - ii) Revision of outcome assessment methodology to evaluate discipline- and WASC-specific competencies.
 - b) Revise curriculum, including:
 - i) Add laboratories to lower division production courses without an upper division subsequent course (ANSC 272- Sheep Production; ANSC 273-Swine Production).
 - ii) Add a one unit, stand-alone laboratories such as ANSC 340(L): Livestock Reproduction Techniques or laboratory skills practicum.
 - iii) Modify the curriculum for areas where flipping the classroom may be appropriate to reinstitute hands-on learning (ex. AGRI 305 – Agricultural Genetics).
- 2) **College of Behavioral and Social Sciences – Child Development:**
 - a) Creation of two new courses based on alumni feedback of need and faculty expertise/involvement of current events (CHLD 321 Risk and Resilience in Development and CHLD 440 Issues in Assessment: Children and Families).
 - b) Based on student feedback, one faculty member was assigned the required internship courses as a way to enhance continuity across the curriculum.

- c) Creation of a second course in toddler development based on feedback from CHLD Advisory Council, based on changes in licensing and accreditation requirements for Head Star (CHLD 351 Toddler/Early Childhood Development).
- d) Increased emphasis on future career considerations based on feedback from alumni; worked with Career Center to incorporate mock interviews in Current Issues course.
- e) Based on faculty input, a ceiling was instituted on course capacities as a way of ensuring a better learning environment.

3) **Humanities and Fine Arts – History:**

- a) Increase the distinction between 300- and 400-level courses.
 - i) Only 300-level courses can be taught in a lecture/discussion format.
- b) New classification given to all 400-level, upper-division courses in the major.
 - i) Innovative, comparative, in-depth, tailored to faculty research, and taught in a seminar-like fashion.
- c) Majors are required to take upper-division courses across four disciplinary sub-areas,
 - i) Stresses from lack of faculty and intellectual cohesion are the main reasons for the change.
- d) Shift the focus of the two core courses (HIST 290 Historians and Historical Methodology and 490 Historical Research and Writing).
 - i) Previously, HIST 290 and 490 were taught around themes of interest to the instructor. Thematic approaches will now be the focus of only 400-level courses (but not 490).
 - (a) Because of this change, HIST 290 can become an even more rigorous and intensive methods class, concentrating particularly on instilling elementary writing and research skills, both of which are critical for History majors.
 - (b) HIST 490 is now devoted to Historiography writ large, that is, the study of the philosophy, History, and varieties of History. This more targeted focus should help History majors engage with the interdisciplinary and interconnected nature of the field.

4) **College of Natural Sciences – Physics:**

- a) Physics used its program review to conduct a deep analysis of its assessment practices and the relation to its curriculum.
- b) Some findings:
 - i) Redesigned the SLOs to be more in-line with national published reports and student feedback.
 - ii) Created a flipped classroom using on-line instructional materials, iClickers, and learning assistants for PHYS 204A (Mechanics).
 - iii) Created a flipped classroom, hybrid course, using course management software specifically designed for PHYS 327 (Electronics for Scientists).
 - iv) Altered the submission of lab reports to be in the format of a manuscript submission to *Applied Optics* for PHYS 450 (Optics).
 - v) One area of the curriculum to be strengthened is related to students' ability to increase their oral communication skills.

(a) PHYS 435A/B (Quantum Mechanics), 450 (Optics), and 451 (Lasers and Their Applications) were all deemed appropriate places to include more oral presentations.