

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM REVIEW: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

College of Professional Studies

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Preface

Drs. Larry M. Starr and David W. Jamieson reviewed the Master of Science in Organization Development program (MSOD) in spring 2007. Dr. Donald Palmer, Professor at UC Davis School of Management, was unable to complete the review process due to a personal conflict. Dr. Starr is Professor of Management at the University of Pennsylvania, and Dr. Jamieson is President of Jamieson Consulting Group, a leading consulting company in the field of organization development and leadership.

The review team read the self-study prepared by the MSOD program Director, Dr. Sharon Wagner and her full-time faculty, Drs. Sylvia Flatt and Mark Lusnar. The faculty were assisted by Frank Gigliotti, program assistant, and the staff in CPS Operations. The review team reviewed supporting documentation, including course syllabi, enrollment and revenue trends, marketing materials, and other relevant materials. They visited the University of San Francisco March 19-22, 2007. During their campus visit, they met with the full-time faculty, a representative sample of the adjunct faculty and students, staff, and the deans. They held a conference telephone conversation with Regional Program Directors, Desiree Shaw (San Ramon) and Maia Rabinov (South Bay), and academic advisor Caryl Mutti (South Bay campus).

The final report was submitted to the deans' office May 3, 2007. In the time since the review team visited the campus and submitted their report there have been significant and unanticipated changes in the MSOD program that should be noted in this summary report. The three full-time MSOD faculty, including Director Sharon Wagner, resigned from the University. Their resignations are unrelated to the program review. Coincidentally, Sylvia Flatt and Sharon Wagner each were offered positions they could not refuse, and Mark Lusnar returned full-time to his lucrative consulting practice. These three faculty have been instrumental in building a very successful program that is among the best academic programs in the College, as reflected in the reviewers' report. While they will be missed, I am pleased to report that we successfully recruited three faculty who are proven scholars and teachers. They will join the University in September. Dr. Richard Stackman, program Director for the undergraduate Organizational Behavior and Leadership program, will also serve as Director of

the MSOD program, effective June 2007. A goal of mine has been to bring the undergraduate OBL and graduate OD programs under one director inasmuch as they are related fields. I believe the two programs and their respective faculty will benefit from working together. The three resignations made it possible to realize this goal.

1. How did the external review team rate the quality of the graduate Organization Development program? How does the program compare with top-tier programs nationally?

The review team found the MSOD program to be of high quality as defined by its core curriculum, which is in compliance with the Academy of Management standards for organization development; the quality of its full- and part-time faculty; entrance requirements for admission into the program; and, that the program is only one of three that serves a need in the greater Bay Area community. Overall, the reviewers would rate the MSOD as **very good**. They write: “The USF MSOD program has created a graduate degree with good quality, high convenience, and which offers an important and valuable service to the greater Bay Area.” (p. 30) The review team noted that the MSOD program is only one of three in the greater Bay Area. While they did not compare the quality of the MSOD program to these programs, or other programs nationally, they concluded the program makes an important contribution to educating future organization development practitioners.

The reviewers qualify their assessment however when they write, “We believe, with some creativity and adjustment of resources, that opportunities exist to enhance much of what is currently being done, shore up some weak aspects, and leverage strengths and assets to further improve quality.” (p. 30) Among the assets identified by the reviewers are:

- Set of core OD courses aligned with the Academy of Management competencies
- Multiple locations
- Faculty competencies and quality
- Alumni support and commitment
- MS degree
- CPS support and commitment

2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process? What are the program’s strengths?

Curriculum: They recommend refreshing the curriculum to create a more future-oriented focus. Specifically, they encourage the faculty to redesign MSOD 600 (Organizational Behavior, Diagnosis, and Change), expand field work, expand relevant topics to include coaching, technology, and global perspectives, and reduce “undergraduate didactic” approach to student evaluation—namely, less tests and more integrative papers and other assignments.

Student Advising: They encourage the faculty and staff to create more mentoring opportunities that would include mentoring by alumni and adjunct faculty. The mentoring should support the personal objectives of students while they attend the program, as well as future career development.

Adjunct Faculty: The full-time faculty should frequently consult the adjunct faculty in curriculum development, including topics of current interest and relevance in the field. The program should better cultivate adjunct faculty networks to facilitate students becoming connected to the OD community. They strongly encouraged the faculty to create a core advisory group consisting of leaders in the OD profession.

Website: Improve the design and content of the MSOD website to increase information relevant to the program and OD profession, including faculty (full – and part-time) bios; sample syllabi; testimonials regarding the benefits of the program; and, potential application of applied scholarship.

Branding and Marketing: The MSOD program needs to be distinguished from the other two Bay Area programs. The website and printed program materials should highlight the distinctions, which may include the program’s emphasis on ethics in the spirit of USF’s Mission and values.

Strategic Planning: CPS should consider offering fewer cohorts in an effort to increase average class size. They also suggest weekend offerings and linking the MSOD program to other graduate programs offered by the College in the form of concentrations or elective courses. Finally, they strongly recommend developing an intensive new student orientation similar to orientations that most MBA programs offer to their students. In general, the reviewers encourage the MSOD faculty and the dean to engage a selected stakeholder group in a strategic development plan that, in their words, “could address its market positioning, unique design, competitive advantages, and quality improvement initiatives.” (p.

30) A strategic plan may help to move from an incremental approach to improving the program and differentiating it from the competition.

The program's strengths or assets are identified above (see item #1).

3. In the opinion of the external review team is the program following the University's strategic initiatives in that it is:

- **Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty of outstanding teachers and scholars.**

The review team notes that "recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty of outstanding teachers and scholars is adequately being met." (p. 31) They caution, however, that "diversity should be considered an important criterion when hiring the next full-time faculty member and any core adjunct faculty." (p. 31) The three replacement faculty for Sharon, Sylvia and Mark consist of two women and one male. We were unable to recruit any faculty of color. It is important to note, however, that all three are term faculty, with one year contracts. It is anticipated that at least one, and perhaps all three, position will be converted to probationary and a national search will commence in the fall.

The external reviewers think that the program and College are "enrolling, supporting, and graduating a diverse student body." (p. 31) However, they recommend giving even more attention to the enrollment process to increase the "number of applicants and allow for more demographically-driven target marketing and recruiting." (p. 31)

- **Providing the environment necessary to promote student learning in the program.**

The review team believes the MSOD program and CPS are doing an excellent job of serving the students. "Students are receiving a fine education from a faculty with expert credentials and in facilities that support academic learning." (p. 31) Their recommendations are meant to enhance what, in their view, is a quality program.

- **Contributing to the goal of making the University of San Francisco a premier Jesuit Catholic urban university?**

The external review team found that the MSOD program contributes to the goal of making USF a premier Jesuit Catholic urban university. The inclusion of ethics across the curriculum is

particularly important in addressing organization development and change in today's climate.

4. What is the timetable for the implementation of the external review team's recommendations for the program improvements?

We agree with the review teams' recommendations and with their assessment that the program is academically strong and serves the community in the critical field of organizational development and change. We acknowledge that the MSOD program faces the daunting task of maintaining current academic quality while addressing the areas needing improvement and assimilating three new full-time faculty and a new program director.

We are confident Dr. Richard Stackman will provide the leadership necessary to implement the necessary changes to the curriculum, student advising, mentoring, and marketing identified in the review team's report. Dr. Stackman already has met with the three new faculty to discuss the report and to outline steps to be taken in the 2007-2008 academic year in response to the reviewers' recommendations. Richard successfully transformed the undergraduate Organizational Behavior and Leadership program based in part of its five year program review. Richard established an advisory board for the undergraduate program, and he expects to do the same for the MSOD program.

We anticipate each of the recommendations will be implemented by the end of the 2007-2008 academic year. The MSOD program, already a very good program, will be even better under the leadership of Dr. Stackman and with the assistance of the three full-time faculty and an accomplished group of core adjunct faculty.