



UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
GREEN BAY

Date: December 2, 2016

To: Greg Davis
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

From: Scott Furlong
Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Re: Report on the Democracy and Justice Studies Program Review

I have examined the Self-Study Report prepared by the Democracy and Justice Studies (DJS) program, as well as the Program Review conducted by the Academic Affairs Council. Based on my examination of these materials I recommend continuation of the program. Specific comments that I made to the DJS faculty include the following:

1. DJS has strong faculty committed to their students and research pursuits. There has been significant faculty turnover since the last review (as SCD), but the new faculty have brought important perspectives to the unit. The faculty's role in scholarship, teaching and service is to be commended. The lecture series sponsored by the Center for History and Social Change provides an important intellectual aspect to the campus and community.
2. DJS has a good set of learning outcomes and assessment plan that uses multiple methods to assess student learning and its relationship to the learning outcomes. The one item I will note is that it is unclear in the self-study how the unit is closing the loop.
3. The number of majors within the DJS program has ranged between 79-95 students. It has been down a bit in recent years perhaps due to university-wide enrollment issues. Its emphasis in Law and Justice Studies is particularly strong. In addition, the DJS program is a large contributor to the general education program.
4. The AAC raised some issues regarding the curriculum within the DJS emphases. I suggested the program look at this and consider making the emphases more distinctive from each other. In addition, it's been a few years since the overhaul of their curriculum and it may be time to make adjustments particularly given their new faculty.

Assessment:

DJS has a good set of learning outcomes and uses multiple assessment techniques. They have used knowledge testing, essay testing, internship program evaluations, and their capstone course to directly assess student success in meeting the learning outcomes. They are considering using authentic assessment through a portfolio or other means but have not yet adopted this. They are also using the senior survey and alumni survey results to some extent. Most students appear to meet or exceed the standards set. If there is one area that may be assessed a bit lower than others, it is Objective #2 “Conducts rigorous research on an important question, using proper documentation and appropriate methods.” This particular was scored a bit lower than the others. It was a bit unclear from the self-study how the results of the assessment are being used by the unit to make adjustment (if necessary) or in other words, to close the loop. This could be due to the relatively new curriculum, but I would like some information about this. Otherwise, I believe the DJS assessment method to be quite thorough and could represent a model for other units.

Curriculum Development/General Education:

Since the last review by SCD, DJS made significant changes to their curriculum. There were a number of elements to this change including the development of a new course Introduction to Democracy and Justice Studies, which serves as a gateway to the major as well as a social science general education class.

The AAC notes some concern with the number of emphases and whether or not they are “distinct enough” from each other. They note that this can cause some confusion with students in course selection, and suggest that the emphases be more unique from each other. I have spoken to the DJS about this issue in the past, and the program argues that the intensive advising done by faculty addresses some of these concerns. Saying that, I do tend to agree with the AAC regarding the distinctiveness of each emphasis. Generally, the upper level electives for all of the emphases are the same, which provides a lot of flexibility for students, but perhaps less coherency within the emphasis. DJS should consider this issue when examining their curriculum.

In the last program review for SCD, the AAC noted the smaller enrollments in emphases outside of Law and Justice Studies. Now that the DJS program has a few years under its belt, they may want to consider merging or eliminating some of the smaller areas in order best serve students, the program, and the university.

Within its existing curriculum, the faculty have been very open to innovations in the classroom. A number of them have participated in the Teaching Scholars program, the First Year Seminar program, and other teaching enhancement projects.

In summary, Democracy and Justice Studies is a strong and unique program with dedicated and renowned faculty whose scholarly output is one of the strongest on campus.

Cc: Mimi Kubsch, Academic Affairs Council
Clif Ganyard, Associate Provost