

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, HAYWARD

DESIGNATION CODE: 98-99 CAPR 6

DATE SUBMITTED: March 4, 1999

TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: The Committee on Academic Planning and Resources

SUBJECT: Five-year Program Review for the Speech Communication Department

ACTION

REQUESTED: Approval of the CAPR Program Review of the Speech Communication Department

At its meeting of February 4, 1999, CAPR met with Dan Prentice, Chair of the Speech Communication Department, to discuss the Department's response to the external review of the department which was conducted by Dr. Raymond Zeuschner, Professor of Speech Communication at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, in January 1998. The department discussed Dr. Zeuschner's recommendations which addressed six areas of the program, over the course of several department meetings, and, overall, found Dr. Zeuschner's review to be helpful.

The reviewer spent two days on campus interviewing faculty, staff, students and administrators, in addition to reviewing several years of departmental self-studies and reviews, course syllabi, schedules, evaluation data and CAPR reports. His main finding was that the department was "doing well in nearly every aspect reviewed, but finds itself poised at a complex and stressful juncture." Dr. Zeuschner noted that the department is a "program of much obvious strength and greater potential" but that it suffers from "stress throughout the system brought on by decreasing faculty, inadequate facilities, lack of staff support", and other factors. His report focused on six areas:

FACILITIES: In his findings he noted that the department is operating in limited facilities with inadequate space to meet the needs of the Speech Lab, the Forensics Team, the faculty and graduate students.

CURRICULUM: He commended the department for its curriculum but also expressed concern that the number of options and multiple track majors may be spreading the faculty too thin, given tenure-track positions lost. He recommended that the department explore common curriculum issues with Mass Communication, specifically "joint minors, majors and even graduate programs (which) might be ways to discover common working abilities without putting departmental structures in the lead."

FACULTY: The reviewer commended the department for having "one of the finest collections of talent in the CSU", but notes that lost positions and faculty assignments outside of the department add another layer of stress and pressure. The reviewer recommended the creation of one or two position descriptions for new tenure track hires (one of which would be devoted to Forensics), which would receive administrative support for position allocations.

STAFF: The reviewer noted that office staff exhibit "a friendly and caring face", but because they are shared by two departments (Speech Communication and Theatre Arts),

this creates stress as well. He recommended the creation of a "staff development policy to encourage office staff to enhance and refresh their skills and knowledge" and the addition of student assistant support.

STUDENTS: The reviewer noted the quality and energy of the department's students, as well as a healthy and dynamic enrollment. When meeting Dr. Zeuschner, students expressed support for the department and praise for the faculty, but also noted a sense of disconnection and a desire for an applied dimension of their work through internships. The reviewer suggested that an expanded Forensics program and other activities would be effective outreach devices to attract students to the department from across campus, as would an Applied Communication option which might be developed jointly with Mass Communication. He further recommended department sponsorship of student clubs as well as an expanded internship program.

ADMINISTRATION: In interviews with Senior Administrators the reviewer noted both praise and support for the department and faculty, particularly its scholarship and contributions, as well as "dissatisfaction" with the current state of the department. Administrative interest in the idea of a merger of Speech Communication with Mass Communication was a common theme expressed, and the reviewer urged the department to consider an "acceptable route" to focus on "educational, curricular issues as a foundation."

The reviewer identified the need for administrative support for a comprehensive and ongoing staff development program, the restoration of FTEF to the 1993 level and the inclusion of space for a designated Speech Lab and other facilities identified in the report in the Campus Facilities Master Plan.

SPEECH COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT RESPONSE

Dr. Prentice expressed the department's belief that the review provided useful feedback to the department but that there is a marked difference between the CSUH culture and the culture at San Luis Obispo to which the reviewer frequently compared the department and its programs. Summarized below are the department's responses to Dr. Zeuschner's observations and recommendations.

- The faculty concurred with the reviewer regarding the inadequacy of departmental facilities and space, but see no immediate solution to the space problem. Without major renovations in Robinson Hall, no space is likely to be found for both the Communications Lab and an adequately-sized Forensics Team Room to exist. The department acknowledges the importance of a student lounge, especially because of the commuter nature of the campus, and urges the University to work with the department in solving this problem.

- The department consensus regarding the reviewer's comments on the curriculum is that the department is only in its third year since the curriculum was revised and thus, it is too early to assess the effect of the curriculum on student enrollment or the generation of majors. The Speech Communication Department continues to be interested in exploring curricular connections with other departments and a potential joint option or joint major with the Department of Mass Communication may hold some potential for both departments.

- The department agrees with the reviewer regarding the decline in faculty resources, the issue of workload and the resultant stress caused within the department. However, while the reviewer commented on the lack of "long term vision" due to this condition, the department disagrees and points to the department's strong Mission Statement" articulated in its 1997

annual report as well as its Strategic Plan instituted initially in 1994 and updated annually. However, without sufficient faculty resources, the vision cannot be enacted. To grow programmatically, the department must increase permanent faculty. In order to simply maintain the integrity of the major and the Master's program, the department is seeking authorization to conduct two tenure-track searches in 1999/2000.

- The department concurs that the reviewer made some useful suggestions about how to improve the office which serves two separate departments. While the chairs of the two departments appear to be working well together, staff "serving two masters" are often beset by frustration. The two chairs will work with staff to see how office layout, work space and load can be improved.

- The reviewer contributed a number of useful suggestions to increase student involvement in the department and to generate interest in the major. The department is working with Co-op Education to expand the number of students working internship programs, while a number of students work as interns in the Com Lab. The department's Five Year Self Study discusses existing programs for a number of the activities suggested by the reviewer, including student attendance at department meetings, club sponsorship, student attendance at professional meetings, sponsorship of speaking and debate tournaments. The department will continue to review the ideas put forth in Dr. Zeuschner's report to achieve improved success in this area.

- For years the department has considered a merger with Mass Communication. While in 1997 the department felt administrative pressure to merge, it voted against it. This pressure has continued, and as the reviewer noted, the department has felt itself "under attack and pressured." The department has implemented some of the reviewer's recommendations regarding the exploration of curricular rather than structural connections between the two departments, and to this end the Chairs of both departments are proposing a joint tenure-track position commencing in the Fall of 1999.

CAPR'S EVALUATION

In its meeting with the Speech Communication Chair, Dr. Dan Prentice, in February, CAPR members asked about space and facility needs, the resources required by the Forensics program, the department's participation in both high school forensics tournaments and judging as well as the Forensics Team's participation in state and national tournaments. Dr. Prentice stated that the Forensics Club, Pi Delta Kappa, has students from all majors and that the value of Forensics is promoted in other classes. While the department would like to see a stronger Forensics program, it currently lacks the faculty and space to dedicate this. In response to questions regarding connections with Mass Communication, Dr. Prentice responded that his department will continue to work with Mass Communication and that it remains open to common curricular developments. The issue of multiple tracks/options was raised, with Dr. Prentice responding that it is too soon after implementation of curricular revision to judge its efficacy. About one third of Speech Communication students pursue graduate degrees and most of the remaining go into community college or secondary teaching. A number of B.A. graduates "create their own jobs". Responding to questions about enrollment, Dr. Prentice observed that over the last five years enrollment has remained relatively stable, with between 60 and 70 undergraduate majors and 20+ graduate majors annually. Based on the department's Five Year Review and the department's response to it, CAPR accepts the Five Year Review of the Speech Communication Department and recommends the continuation of the Speech Communication Program without modification.