

January 22, 2015

**PROFESSOR FARRELL ACKERMAN, Director  
Human Development Program**

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Program Review for the Human Development Program

Dear Professor Ackerman,

The Undergraduate Council has discussed the Human Development Program's 2014 Program Review. The Council supports the findings and recommendations of the review subcommittee and appreciates the Program's response. We plan to check in on the initiatives proposed by the Program, including those to increase faculty cohesion and engagement, and revitalizing the honor's program. The Council would like to highlight the following:

- **HDP 1:** The Council reaffirms the need to teach HDP 1 more than once per year. We understand that the format of this course makes it challenging to teach multiple times but the demand is evident. The Program will need to reconsider the format if it continues to be a problem to offer it two or more times a year.
- **Faculty Hires:** While we were pleased to learn the Program had secured another shared faculty position, we encourage the Program to continue to seek a Socio-Cultural appointment. In addition to the department of Anthropology, we encourage you to speak with all of the related departments, including but not limited to Communication, Education Studies, Psychology and Sociology.

The Undergraduate Council will conduct its follow-up review of the Program in Winter Quarter 2016. At that time, our goal is to learn about the Program's progress in implementing the recommendations of the program review subcommittee. The Council extends its thanks to the Program for its engagement in this process and we look forward to the continued discussion.

Sincerely,



Geoff Cook, Vice Chair  
Undergraduate Council

cc: G. Boss L. Carver R. Continetti R. Rodriguez B. Sawrey M. Sidney

## **Undergraduate Program Review: Human Development**

### Review Committee:

Lisa M. Oakes, UC Davis

Margaret Schoeninger, UCSD

Laura Stevens, UCSD

### **Overview:**

On May 7, 2014, the review committee met at UCSD to conduct a review of the Human Development Program (HDP). HDP was established in 1995; the only prior review of the program took place in 2005. HDP is a unique interdisciplinary program whose mission is to foster the understanding of human development as seen from biological, psychological, and socio-cultural perspectives. As such, the program incorporates courses from the Departments of Anthropology, Biology, Cognitive Science, Communication, Ethnic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature, Psychology, Sociology, and Education Studies, as well as the Urban Studies and Planning Program. Human Development is a successful and wildly popular program that attracts students from all six of the UCSD colleges.

Human Development was originally intended to be a small, interdisciplinary undergraduate major providing a limited number of students with the possibility of tailoring their educational program to meet their individual needs and interests. When the program was launched in 1995, the maximum anticipated enrollment was about 100, and the program was structured accordingly. In the first five years of its existence, the demand for HDP grew beyond all expectations; in fall of 2000, the program had over 700 undergraduate majors, which made it one of the largest academic programs in the Division of Social Sciences. This crisis of popularity put strain on the program and led to an internal review of the curriculum by the HDP Executive Board in 2001. A pre-major was instituted, along with a revised curriculum in Fall 2001; the goals of this restructuring were to reduce the total number of students enrolled in the major and pre-major to the 300-350 range, and to streamline the curriculum in order to provide a more uniform and rigorous education for HDP majors. According to the self-study, the new regulations have been very successful in helping HDP achieve these goals. In the last five years, major enrollments have continued to increase incrementally but have remained between 300 and 400 students; at the time of this review, there were approximately 390 HDP majors. Since 2008, 550 Human Development majors have graduated from UCSD.

The academic program organization of HDP is clearly detailed in the thorough and eloquently written self-study; the general structure is as follows. Students wanting to declare the HDP major must meet pre-major requirements and apply for entrance into the HDP major. The pre-major requirements are intended to provide students with the basic background they need to complete courses in the major. All pre-major requirements are lower division courses; they include HDP 1, an introduction

to human lifespan development, two biology courses, two social science courses, one formal skills course, one statistics course, and one computer literacy course (the computer literacy will soon be replaced by a course that satisfies the campus Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) requirement). Once students are accepted into the major, requirements include two developmental methods course, four upper division core courses in human development, six developmental elective courses and a capstone senior seminar. Although many of the courses for the HDP major are taught in affiliate departments, a core set of courses are taught through the program.

For program administration, the staff of HDP includes a Management Services Officer (shared with the Department of Linguistics), together with two Student Affairs Officers. HDP has a full time Lecturer/Academic Coordinator, Dr. Clarissa Reese, who is dedicated to teaching HDP 191 (one of the core research methods courses) and recruiting and maintaining the field research sites. Since the University of California does not permit full time ladder-rank faculty positions to be housed within a program, most of the faculty involvement in the program comes from dedicated faculty from other departments interested in the educational mission of HDP. There are, however, two specially appointed faculty members holding 50/50 joint appointments in HDP (these faculty are shared with Cognitive Science and Psychology, respectively). A core group of faculty from a broad range of affiliate departments comprises the HDP Executive Committee; the current Program Director is Dr. Farrell Ackerman (Linguistics). The Executive Committee is very active, meeting two to three times a month to oversee program goals and progress, develop new initiatives and courses, and address problems.

### **Strengths of the Human Development Program:**

Human Development is an extremely important major on campus. To quote from the previous program review:

*The concept of a Human Development Program is inspired, timely, and appropriate for an institution with the strengths of UCSD. There is little doubt that development is one of the key areas of intellectual exploration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century...There is also a growing recognition of the importance of technology in human education, cognition, and emotion. More and more, the fields of law, epidemiology, nursing, medicine, and many related disciplines are stressing how human development is central for the mission of these major professional fields. Clearly, human development is an area of national interest, and it is appropriate for a university of the quality of UCSD to spearhead a program preparing many of its graduates for a role in an area so relevant to our society.*

Indeed, HDP is a truly unique and interdisciplinary program whose mission is supported by dedicated core faculty, including linguists, psychologists, historians, and cognitive scientists. The program is tailored for a suite of pre-professional students, including, but not limited to, social workers, nurses, physicians assistants,

and physical therapists. If this program did not exist, and these students were forced to declare a Psychology or Anthropology major, for example, they would need to complete numerous additional courses to satisfy their major requirements. HDP students benefit from the flexibility and customization of the program and can overlap courses for major with those that prepare them for their profession.

The success of HDP is largely due to the impressive dedication of its core faculty and exemplary staff. The people involved in this program are truly committed to it and devote a tremendous amount of time and energy to making it the best program it can be; HDP's response to the previous program review is an excellent example of this. In particular, the 2005 review committee made several recommendations regarding the design of the program, student advising, and engaging and monitoring students. In the years since that review, the Executive Committee has taken steps to address the concerns of the reviewers and follow almost all of those recommendations. Of particular note is the recent redesign of the lower division course *The Introduction to Human Lifespan Development* (HDP1). Dr. Ackerman, who currently teaches HDP1, has made significant improvements to both the content and the structure of the course.

Yet another strength and unique aspect of the Human Development program is the emphasis on research and field research. Human Development majors are required to take two methods courses: *Experimental Projects in Human Development Research* (HDP 181) and *Field Research in Human Development* (HDP 191). HDP 181 offers a comprehensive introduction to the basic methods of empirical, laboratory-based research in human development. HDP 191 provides students a unique opportunity to participate in a research project in conjunction with a service unit in San Diego County that pertains to their future career plans. This applied research experience allows students to design, conduct, and comprehend their own empirical field research project. There are currently more than 50 affiliate research placement sites in the San Diego area, including clinical and health programs such as the Rady Children's Hospital, education programs such as Gompers Preparatory Academy and the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, and social programs such as Gary & Mary West Senior Wellness Center.

HDP 191 is an important opportunity for Human Development majors to have a qualitative research experience, but its value goes far beyond this. In this climate of emphasis on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, it should be noted that HDP 191 provides students with an authentic experience of diversity by taking advantage of the diversity of San Diego. When the review committee discussed this course with the undergraduate students who attended the review, it was clear that the experience of going out in the community and doing qualitative research gives them an invaluable insight. While describing their experiences, they sounded as though they had travelled outside of the boundaries of San Diego; they made comments such as, "My eyes were opened beyond the little world I am used to," and "I never knew people lived like that." The percentage of Human Development majors who participate in study abroad programs is relatively low (7% of majors in 2010-11),

and this could be perceived as a weakness of the program; but the study abroad numbers seem of little concern in light of the effect of these HDP 191 placements as evidenced by the aforementioned student comments.

The success of the field research experience is largely due to Dr. Clarissa Reese, whose dedication and efforts should be applauded. Dr. Reese single-handedly recruits and maintains the fifty plus field research sites for HDP191. In addition, she oversees and directs the teaching of HDP 181, which is taught by a temporary (but longstanding) lecturer. HDP 191 is offered 6 times per year (two sections per quarter), and during each offering, Dr. Reese meets with site sponsors and mentors and negotiates the field placement agreements and the content of the placement assignments. If problems arise with a particular student, the on-site mentors contact Dr. Reese, who then meets with the students to resolve any issues. Dr. Reese also conducts annual site visits of all placement sites, and maintains quarterly contact with all of the sites. During any given quarter, approximately 35 sites actively host UCSD students.

Not surprisingly, HDP boasts an extremely high level of student satisfaction. Statistics from student surveys compare favorably with those of the aggregated Social Sciences departments/programs; the self-study includes detailed statistics. Two highlights from the UCUES data from September 2012 are: 92% satisfied with “quality of upper division courses” compared to 86.7% for all other Social Sciences, and 91.4% satisfied with “advising by departmental staff”, compared to 85% for all other Social Sciences. According to data from UCSD Course and Professor Evaluations (CAPE’s), the mean and median approval ratings for instructors of HDP courses over the past five years are 89% and 92%, respectively. The feedback from the six undergraduate Human Development majors who attended the review was unanimously positive.

### **Weaknesses of the Human Development Program:**

The primary weaknesses of the Human Development Program are the result of inadequate resources.

In particular, there is simply not enough dedicated faculty effort to teach the HDP courses. As a consequence, there remain concerns about the primary course requirements offered by this program -- HDP1 and HPD150 (the capstone seminar). The previous review raised two major concerns that the program has been unable to address, and this review committee shares these concerns:

- HDP1, which is required before students can declare a major and is required for all other courses, is currently offered only once per year. This course should be offered more than once per year. HDP1 currently creates a problem for junior transfers and students who switch from another major to HDP during their third year; students in these two groups often cannot take the course during their junior year, thus resulting in a significant number of

pre-majors who do not declare their major until their senior year and consequently are ineligible for the Honors Program (if they expect to complete their degree in four years).

- HDP150 (the capstone seminar) is most often taught by temporary lecturers and occasionally by Associate Instructors. Given that it is a capstone seminar and the goal is to expose students to an in-depth discussion of an area of research, it is important that it be taught by faculty members. When temporary lecturers or Associate Instructors teach this course instead of seasoned researchers, the students are missing out on an opportunity to engage in high-quality interactions with a faculty member about a content area.<sup>1</sup>

In order to address this critical weakness, in addition to their requests for new hires, HDP may consider the following suggestions:

- Ladder rank faculty -- and departments -- could be incentivized to teach HDP courses by repurposing the funds currently being used to staff these courses with temporary lecturers to "buy-out" of the faculty member's teaching. That is, rather than using the funds to hire a temporary lecturer or Associate Instructor to teach an HDP course, the funds could be used to hire such an instructor to teach a more appropriate course in the faculty member's department, freeing up the faculty member to teach the HDP course. Departments could also offer a small research stipend to faculty for teaching HDP courses.
- HDP may consider part time appointments of continuing lecturers. Although such appointments can be undone if needs change, the lecturers would benefit from some stability of employment. The courses would benefit from consistency as well as the insight and experience of instructors who have taught them multiple times.
- HDP1 could be offered during the summer session, although this review committee is aware of and appreciates that the structure of the course and nature of its content present challenges to summer offerings. Professor Farrell has done an excellent job restructuring the course so it does not rely as heavily on guest lecturers as it did in the past, but even with the reformatting, guest lectures are an important part of the course. Thus, HDP is encouraged to consider alternative means for providing content that would make it possible to offer this critical course more than once per year. For example, there may be ways to reduce -- or even eliminate -- the need for "live" guest speakers by integrating online/recorded lectures into HDP1.

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<sup>1</sup> Ideally, HDP 181 would be taught by ladder rank or permanent program faculty as well, but this is not as much of a concern since Dr. Reese oversees and directs the teaching of that course.

The second weakness noted by this review committee is the lack of administrative resources for the program. The commitment of the administrative staff is a great strength of HDP, but the administrative staff are completely overwhelmed, particularly the advising staff. The situation is dire; HDP is an advising intense program, yet the advising staff members are being forced to relegate student advising to answering phones and getting mail. To address this critical weakness, the review committee strongly supports HDP's request for funds to hire an Administrative Assistant (AA). The hire of an AA would have several positive consequences:

- The staff provided the reviewers with a list of processes that they could complete if they had more help, including but not limited to: data entry, purging files, office maintenance, alumni outreach and engagement, coordinating events to increase faculty interaction, developing networking relationships, intensive career advising, advertising HDP at local community colleges.
- The presence of an AA would allow HDP and SDSU to resurrect their very successful and mutually beneficial "Student Advising Mentorship Program" in which HDP hosts a Master's Degree level intern from SDSU for intervals of at least one year, who can take on caseload of students and mentor student club leaders.
- The AA would act as a conduit and facilitator for our efforts to increase interaction between community sites and HDP affiliate faculty.

A third weakness is the lack of cohesion among the faculty members affiliated with the program. Several changes within HDP over the past few years have contributed to this lack of cohesion. With the retirement of Joan Stiles, who was head of both HDP and the ORU Center for Human Development (CHD), the lines between HDP and CHD have become clearer, with the missions of both becoming better defined. This "separation" of HDP from CHD has had many positive consequences, but based on our conversations with the affiliate faculty, one negative consequence is that the faculty members are missing the cohesion that the CHD provided for them. One dozen faculty members attended the review, and the committee noticed that some of them were introducing themselves to one another. Creating/augmenting unity amongst affiliate faculty members, lecturers, and staff would only strengthen the program; to this end, the review committee suggests the following:

- Consider resurrecting a monthly brown bag lunch or seminar series to bring affiliate faculty together to discuss shared research or curricular interests.
- Consider calling quarterly meetings for affiliate faculty, lecturers, and staff.
- Consider partnering with Global Health, Public Health, and/or Education Studies for joint activities or a series of events. Students could also be invited to join.

A fourth weakness is that the Honors Program is under-subscribed, as was indicated by the previous review committee. During the 2013-14 academic year, only two

students completed the Honors Program; there were six students during 2012-13. During the current review, some of the affiliate faculty also expressed a desire to see improvements to the Honors Program. Given the limited resources of HDP, the review committee suggests that HDP investigate the possibility of Human Development majors piggybacking on Honors Programs in other departments such as Cognitive Science and Psychology. Additionally, if HDP were granted its request for an AA, perhaps the AA could help with the organization of the Honors Program.

Finally, as an interdisciplinary program, HDP relies heavily on other departments' curricular offerings and availability of courses, and this can make it difficult for students to fulfill their major requirements in a timely manner. Although this is not a striking weakness of the program, the review committee suggests that HDP may consider giving their students more options for how they can satisfy their requirements by augmenting their list of required courses to include some courses that are currently only accepted by petition. This is particularly relevant to the Biological Development requirements; more courses like ANBI 140 could be included in the list (biologically focused courses in departments outside of Biology). A decrease in the number of student petitions would also reduce the workload of the advising staff.

### **Recommendations:**

Despite substantial decreases in funding and increases in major enrollment, the Human Development Program manages to provide its majors with customized pre-professional tracks, personal attention, excellent career advising, and an invaluable educational experience. In order for this unique and extremely important program to continue to remain strong and achieve its mission, the program must have additional resources.

- 1) The review committee strongly supports HDP's request for a full-time LPSOE to deliver core, HDP laboratory courses, and language development.
- 2) The review committee strongly supports HDP's request for an FTE. The last such appointment was that of Leslie Carver in 2001. The teaching commitments to the program by ladder track faculty need to be refreshed. The Dean and University are encouraged to consider making joint appointments with teaching obligations to both HDP and another department. HDP specifically requests an FTE in cross-cultural development over the lifespan; departments mentioned during the review were Education Studies, Economics, Communication Studies, and Sociology.
- 3) The review committee strongly supports HDP's request for funds to hire an Administrative Assistant.
- 4) The review committee urges further restructuring of HDP1 to allow it to be offered more than once per year. This may include an online/recorded lectures



component, which would facilitate offering the content at any time during the year, including during the summer.

5) The review committee recommends taking steps to create/augment unity amongst affiliate faculty members, lecturers, and staff by organizing brown bag lunches, seminar series, and/or quarterly meetings. To the same end, HDP could explore the possibility of partnering with other programs/departments for joint activities.

7) The review committee recommends taking steps to increase participation in the Honors Program. In particular, the committee encourages the program to seek out potential partnerships with other programs such as Cognitive Science and Psychology to see if there are opportunities for HDP students to participate in honors courses, activities, etc. It seems it would be especially natural for HDP students conducting honors projects with faculty in Cognitive Science (e.g., Deak, Creel) or Psychology (e.g., Carver, Heyman) to participate in those departments' Honors Programs in some way. HDP is encouraged to explore these possibilities, as well as possibilities in other departments whose faculty participate in the training of HDP students.

8) The review committee suggests that HDP consider broadening the courses accepted for the HDP curriculum to increase the number of options for majors and reduce the number of petitions. If there are courses that students regularly petition to use to fulfill requirements, the program should consider adding them as courses that meet requirements.

9) The review committee suggests that HDP investigate the possibility of adding a B.S. degree as an option. Four of the six Human Development majors interviewed by the review committee stated that they wished they could graduate with a B.S. degree instead of a B.A. degree. Cognitive Science and Psychology have such an option in place and could be used as models.