July 1, 2020

Mary Coughlan, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
Office of the Provost

Ari Kelman, Interim Dean
College of Letters and Science

Keith Watenpaugh, Advisor
Human Rights
College of Letters and Science

Re: Cluster 6 Undergraduate Instruction and Program Review: Human Rights Minor

At its meeting on May 1, the Undergraduate Council (UGC) considered the Undergraduate Instruction and Program Review (UIPR) Committee Report on the Human Rights Minor Undergraduate Program as presented by UIPR Chair Victoria Cross on behalf of Professor Rex Stem for the review. The associated reports are enclosed.

UIPR summarizes the findings of the review of the Human Rights Minor as follows:

**Strengths**
- Minor has students enrolled from various fields of study.
- Class sizes have increased and number of courses taught under Human Rights.
- Minor has an involved program committee who has expanded the minor and are considering assembling a proposal for a major.
- Faculty encourage internships and study abroad opportunities related to the minor.

**Weaknesses and Concerns**
- Minor relies heavily on outside faculty and department support.
- The minor has no common space for students and/or events.
- Enrollment for the minor could benefit from more gender diversity.

Undergraduate council lauds the well-functioning steering committee, essential for the health and growth of any interdepartmental program and has determined the following recommendations and requests one letter signed by each addressee by February 12, 2021. Please send the response to Mary Vasquez at mppvaseuz@ucdavis.edu.

**Recommendations**

**To the Provost and the Dean of the College of Letters and Science:**
- We would like to emphasize the lack of physical space for the Human Rights Minor as a constraint to its development.
- The lack of any Associate Professors as seen in Budget and Institutional Analysis Appendix B, coupled with one fifth of program faculty nearing retirement age suggest the urgency of coordinated planning to secure adequate resources for covering teaching loads within the program, given its interdepartmental structure.

**To the Program, Provost and the Dean of the College of Letters and Science:**
- The program is encouraged to address realistically and fairly the pace at which the program should grow, jointly with the faculty on the program committee, the Dean, and—to the degree to which a new cross-unit major is under consideration—the Provost.
This working agreement should address the means of securing teaching capacity for Human Rights courses, the potential for the development of the minor into a major (and consequent allocation of space), and the potential for direct faculty lines in Human Rights Studies.

Undergraduate Council requests that this transmittal letter and accompanying reports are made available to all program faculty members.

Sincerely,

Katheryn N. Russ, Chair
Undergraduate Council


c: Kristin Lagattuta, Chair, Davis Division Academic Senate
Edwin Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division Academic Senate
Claire Waters, Faculty Advisor to the Dean, College of Letters and Science
Carolyn Thomas, Vice Provost and Dean, Undergraduate Education
Matt Traxler, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Planning, Undergraduate Education
Victoria Cross, Chair, Undergraduate Instruction and Program Review Subcommittee
Theresa Costa, Analyst, Undergraduate Instruction and Program Review Subcommittee
Mary Vasquez, Analyst, Undergraduate Council
A. Colin Cameron, Faculty Executive Committee Chair, College of Letters and Science
OVERALL ASSESSMENT: The Human Rights Minor was significantly redesigned and expanded in 2015. This is the first time the minor has undergone program review. The minor requires five total courses at the upper division level (a popular introductory lower division course does not count toward the minor): a core course (HMR 134), three other HMR courses, and one elective in a related field. Enrollments have increased significantly since 2015 and the faculty on the program committee have ambitions for further expansion. The Human Rights Minor is an interdepartmental program that draws its teaching faculty from a range of existing departments on campus and does not have dedicated faculty lines (FTE), though the Program Director currently teaches all of his courses in the program. Overall, the minor appears stable and healthy, with plans for further growth.

STRENGTHS:
- The minor draws interest from students across a wide range of majors across campus, primarily from the social sciences but also from the humanities and hard sciences. Class sizes have increased and the number of courses taught under the HMR rubric has increased.
- The minor has an involved program committee comprising ten faculty members who have expanded and strengthened the minor in recent years. Plans to continue the expansion of the minor, possibly into a major or co-major, are actively being developed.
- The minor encourages internships and study abroad opportunities related to the minor, and the faculty are eager to increase such opportunities for students.

WEAKNESSES:
- Since the minor does not hold faculty lines of its own, it relies upon other Departments to support its instruction by loaning it teaching faculty. Currently the minor’s arrangements with supporting programs are sustaining the minor’s instruction, but future arrangements are fluid. If, for example, contributing faculty go on leave or accept other assignments in the University, there are not contingencies to replace their contributions to Human Rights Studies.
- The minor has no common space for students and events involved with the program.
- Enrollment in the minor is heavily skewed female (88% in 2018-2019), and that percentage has increased in the period under review. A more even gender balance would likely benefit the appeal and inclusivity of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:
The unresolved questions regarding the Human Rights minor are the pace and scale at which it should continue to grow. A commitment to address those questions realistically and fairly should be developed between the faculty on the program committee and the relevant administrative parties. This working agreement should address the means of securing teaching capacity for Human Rights courses, the potential for the development of the minor into a major (and consequent allocation of space), and the potential for direct faculty lines in Human Rights Studies.
January 2, 2020

Colleagues:

Please find attached a copy of the Interdepartmental Program in Human Rights Studies minor review and an assessment of key GE elements of the program’s courses.

As background, Human Rights Studies (HMR) is among the newest of degree-granting units on campus, having been established as an independent program only in 2015. At that time Human Rights Studies inherited the Human Rights Studies Minor, which had been administered as a joint project of History, Spanish and Portuguese, and Religious Studies.

The review data indicate that Human Rights Studies has enjoyed tremendous success and a robust and exciting program has emerged, that enriches undergraduate education across campus. Meanwhile, Human Rights Studies as a program has attracted positive attention to the university through outreach, research and broad collaborations with other units on campus, throughout the system and with other universities.

As this is the first review of the program, we had asked the Senate to authorize an external review team. Since HMR only delivers a minor, the Senate was unable to fulfill this request. Consequently, the program authorized me to reach out to Dr. Kathryn Libal of UConn’s Human Rights Initiative. Dr. Libal has led UConn’s program in Human Rights Studies for much of the last decade. UC Davis’ program is modeled to some extent on UConn’s. Dr. Libal visited the campus in late Fall and conducted a review based on the outline provided in this process. Her report is forthcoming in the next couple weeks, and I will forward it to the committee when it arrives. Among her most interesting preliminary findings is that UC Davis is the “site of one of the most vibrant interdisciplinary programs in the country.”

In addition to the data produced by the university, HMR conducted a survey of students enrolled in two large HMR courses (<300) one lower-division and one upper-division. I have included a rough visualization of those results. Among the most informative data points:

The top three reasons students take HMR courses were (aside from pursuing the minor)

- I find the courses interesting and important (77%)
- I want to make the world a better place (62%)
- I consider Human Rights Studies relevant to my choice of career (52%)

Despite the enormous popularity and wide-spread support for this program amongst the students, faculty and community, the program has not received the kind of support it will need to make progress into the next decade. In fact, since its inception as a program, and despite several requests to do so, there have been no substantive conversations between the leadership of the College of Letters and Sciences and HMR faculty on the program’s goals and needs. This “benign neglect” is a real problem and must be addressed with the help of Senate leadership.
Through this review process, we hope to explore ways to build on the solid foundation we have laid over the last 5 years. These include expanding HMR’s offerings in practical and career-oriented elements of human rights, human rights study abroad and internship opportunities, and human rights service-learning. This must be accompanied by new faculty lines, the ability of HMR to host full or partial FTEs. With those elements in place, UC Davis would be well-positioned to develop a co-major in Human Rights Studies.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our collective achievements and problems. I look forward to the next step in this process.

Sincerely:

Keith David Watenpaugh
Professor and Director
Human Rights Studies