

Undergraduate Council Review of Academic Internship Program

February 2014

Background

The Academic Internship Program (AIP) is housed in Warren College and overseen by Provost Steven Adler, but it is open to all juniors and seniors on campus. There are many internship programs at UCSD, but AIP is the largest, serving 500-600 students per year. A distinguishing feature of the program is its academic component, which requires there to be a faculty advisor for every student participating in an internship. Thus, there is real-world experience and a faculty-advised deliverable, typically a research paper. In this way, students receive course credit for their internship. Students interested in AIP are aided by the advising staff to find both a suitable internship and a faculty advisor. The program has a large database of internships, which are carefully vetted. AIP also directs students to other internship programs on campus if those programs suit the students' needs better. There are 4 FTEs associated with the program (down from 6 at the last review).

The previous review of the program was done in 2006. Perhaps the main issue raised by the review committee at that time had to do with AIP being a competitor rather than a collaborator with other internship programs on campus (e.g., Career Services). By all accounts, AIP has addressed this concern admirably and continues to build partnerships with other programs, departments, divisions, and colleges on campus. We will return to this below.

To prepare this report, the committee met with the program faculty director (Provost Adler), program director (Tricia Taylor), faculty advisors, program partners (e.g., Career Services, UCDC), undergraduate students, advising staff, and the academic business officer. Notably, the committee did not meet with AIP's Faculty Advisory Board.

Program Strengths

There are several aspects of AIP that serve UCSD's goals well. The recent Educational Initiative, which aims to integrate practice and theory, is perfectly aligned with AIP's mission. In addition, Chancellor Khosla has voiced a desire for UCSD to be more engaged with the community, and the AIP internships are again perfectly suited to this goal. Thus, AIP plays an important role in two major, recent "calls to action" by UCSD administration.

Students are well served by AIP. The internships enrich students' undergraduate experience and facilitate networking with potential future employers. The required academic component ensures that students have one-on-one contact with a faculty member and, since there is a required writing component, students receive much needed additional writing experience with personal feedback from a faculty member. Most agree that writing is underserved at UCSD, making the writing component of the AIP experience all the more valuable. Faculty, in particular, think the writing component is a valuable part of the AIP experience. Throughout the entire process,

program and peer advisors do, by all accounts, an excellent job of helping students navigate the system and make the most of the opportunities available to them.

As noted above, AIP was criticized in the previous review for not collaborating with other internship programs on campus. Since then, however, AIP has embraced its role as facilitator. For example, AIP now plays a central role in UCDC (a system-wide program in which students do their internships in Washington, DC). Other new programs include the ERC Transfer Seminar, which is a collaboration with Eleanor Roosevelt College, and the Social Justice Practicum, which is through a partnership with the Critical Gender Studies program. Previously existing programs include Pacific Rim Experiences for Undergraduates (PRIME), UC Center Sacramento, which is a system-wide program (like UCDC, but takes place in Sacramento), the Public Service Minor (sponsored by Thurgood Marshall College), and AIP in the Classroom, a collaboration with individual faculty members and linked to a particular course. The committee members met with faculty and staff associated with many of the above programs, and there was uniform praise for AIP and the staff's willingness to provide assistance in the form of infrastructure, advising students, and sometimes selecting students. Furthermore, AIP continues to build partnerships on campus. AIP's response to the previous review is remarkable.

There is a related, but different, way in which AIP has taken more of a leadership role. There are several other internship programs on campus (outside of AIP), and AIP advisors point students in the direction of those programs if they serve the students' interests better. Thus, AIP staff are able to guide students to virtually any internship on campus. In this sense, AIP has made itself the best place to come on campus if a student is interested in an internship of any kind (not just academic). AIP's value to UCSD continues to increase.

Program Weaknesses

The committee did not see any glaring weaknesses in the program – and those involved with the program are to be commended for this. The changes implemented in AIP since the last review have resulted in a strong program. Some interrelated issues did emerge, however. One is that student awareness is low. Most students do not know about AIP, and of those who do know about it, many are unaware of its location on campus. This is keeping AIP from serving as many students as it could. Faculty awareness and participation are also lower than they should be, making it harder for students to find a good academic match. It seems to be that a relatively small number of faculty oversee a relatively large percentage of AIP students. This places an unfair burden on the participating faculty members and limits students' advisor options.

A related question is: What are AIP's expansion goals? Given UCSD's increased emphasis on experiential learning and community engagement, AIP is in a position of taking a (bigger) leadership role on campus. It was not clear to the committee if the goal is to have more students enroll in AIP courses, to build more bridges to other internship courses on campus, or something else. Importantly, the committee believes that AIP is in a position to do any or all of these things, and therefore AIP should think carefully about exactly what its goals are.

Recommendations

We want to reiterate that the faculty, staff, and student advisors involved in AIP are doing an excellent job, and the program is, without question, a valuable asset to UCSD. Nonetheless, the committee did note some issues that should be addressed. The AIP staff are reflective and dedicated, and we feel confident that they will consider carefully the committee's suggestions.

1. Clarify long-term goals. Because UCSD is currently emphasizing experiential learning and community engagement, AIP is poised to take a bigger leadership role on campus. The question is: What should that role be? Whether it is enrolling more students in AIP courses, facilitating other internship programs, absorbing other programs, or building additional partnerships, the time is right for AIP to take a long-term perspective on its role at UCSD. For example, what is the current capacity of AIP in terms of number of students, and what could/should this number be in 5 years? In 10 years? In 15 years? While the program has come a long way since its previous review and continues to improve (e.g., building new partnerships on campus), the committee feels that long-term planning is crucial and that AIP should aim high.

2. Increase student awareness. This appears to be a constant problem for AIP. We know this is difficult because of the sheer number of campus organizations vying for students' limited attention, but solutions need to be found. One suggestion is to use undergraduate peer advisors to help spread the word through their individual social networks.

3. Increase faculty awareness. In doing this, AIP could focus on the department level, rather than trying to target the faculty as a whole. Tailor the message based on department needs and interests. Perhaps give a 15-min presentation to each department at a faculty meeting to let the faculty know what AIP does and why it's important. Telling faculty about "AIP in the Classroom" could be a boon for AIP. The committee members suspect that few faculty members know about this and that many would find it to be a useful and fun addition to a course.

4. Consider offering AIP to freshman and sophomores (AIP 97). Some underclassmen might be ready for AIP.

5. Sponsor a student symposium for that year's AIP students to share what they learned. This would connect AIP students and at the same time incentivize faculty and students to deliver high quality work.

6. Help students maintain a connection with their internship sponsors. It is unclear how much of a role AIP should play here, but they should at least advise students about what to do after the internship is over.

7. Make Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) positions be two years rather than one year. This would ensure more experience on the Board, aid institutional memory, and help the Board get off to a faster start each academic year. However, there is an important caveat. The FAB members were not available to meet with the committee (though we did meet one member in a different role), which raised concerns. The FAB's role and effectiveness were not clear to the committee. Thus,

before lengthening the membership tenure, AIP needs to clarify the role of the FAB and ensure that the Board is meeting its responsibilities.

8. Coordinate with departments and colleges so that students' AIP experience counts toward major or general education requirements. As it stands now, some students are only able to receive general elective credit.

9. Take a more active role in facilitating the writing component of the program. There are writing resources on campus, and the students should be encouraged, if not required, to make use of them. At the beginning of the quarter, it might be useful to have a short (one hour) introductory seminar on how to write a research paper. This could perhaps be combined with a professional development seminar.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Professor Deborah Yelon, Division of Biological Sciences, UCSD

Professor Craig McKenzie, Rady School of Management and Department of Psychology, UCSD
(Chair)

July 1, 2014

**PROFESSOR STEVEN ADLER, Director
Academic Internship Program**

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Program Review for the Academic Internship Program

Dear Professor Adler,

The Undergraduate Council has discussed the Academic Internship Program's 2014 Undergraduate Program Review. The Council supports the findings and recommendations of the review subcommittee and appreciates the thoughtful and proactive response from the Program. The Council's comments centered on the following:

- **Long term planning:** The Council suggests the AIP faculty advisory board draft long-term goals for the continued health and potential expansion of the program.
- **Faculty Advisory Board:** The Council agrees that a two-year appointment to the faculty advisory board may assist with continuity and planning. In addition, the Council recommends that the Director of AIP appoints the faculty advisory board and Committee on Committees reviews the Director's choices.
- **Publicizing to students:** Given the value of experiential learning, the Council urges AIP to continue its efforts with student publicity.
- **Engaging faculty:** The Council echoes the review committee's findings that faculty may be unaware of the opportunities to be involved in a partnership with AIP and the potential benefits to the faculty. Perhaps an information campaign for faculty can be launched and previous faculty partners can assist in advertising the merits of AIP. Another suggestion is to include tips for faculty on your website on how to be recognized for partnership with AIP (e.g adding it to their UCSD BioBib).

The Council applauds the campus relationships that the Program has cultivated since its last review. The Council will conduct its follow-up review of the Program in Spring Quarter 2015. 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,



James Nieh, Chair
Undergraduate Council

cc: G. Boss
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