



January 15, 2019

TO: Dr. Horacio Ferriz, Chairperson, Department of Physics, Physical Sciences, and Geology

FROM: Kimberly Greer, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs *Kimberly Greer*

CC: Dean David Evans and Program Faculty

RE: Geology Academic Program Review – Preliminary Letter

Thank you for joining me to discuss the Academic Program Review for the Geology program. It was a pleasure to read the self-study and talk with you about the future of your program. While the self-study was concluded on 2/15/16 the APR meeting was finally held on 12/14/18 after a period of revision. Dean David Evans, Dr. Marty Giaramita and Dr. Rob Rogers joined us for this review. Please note that I have identified this as a preliminary letter because we requested your implementation plan during the winter break and I want to make sure all program faculty members have time to fully review and discuss the proposed implementation plan. If you determine that you want to make additional revisions to the plan, I can revise this letter if necessary.

I commend you and your department colleagues for your obvious dedication to students and their academic and career success. Your faculty are committed to excellence in teaching and are focused on preparing students to successfully complete the professional licensing exam. Students in your program are broadly trained in the discipline. I am especially grateful for the number of high impact practices (e.g., field work and undergraduate research) afforded your majors.

During our meeting, we had the opportunity to discuss a number of important relevant topics that were included in the self-study. For example, faculty shared their perceptions of limited resources available for the program. We discussed the need to upgrade computers and provide increased lab technician support. As a result of this conversation, Dean Evans and I pledged to upgrade 20 computers utilized by the program this year. Unfortunately hiring a technician specifically for Geology is not feasible at this time. Therefore, I encourage Dean Evans to ensure that the new technician hired for the physics program provides an appropriate level of support to Geology.

We also talked about the prioritization of new Tenure Track lines in the department. I am pleased to see that following the discussion, you ranked the Earth Science Education position as the first hiring priority, followed by Geochemistry and Atmospheric/Climate Science as other specializations you would like to bring to Stan State. Dean Evans and I agree that there is significant potential for adding a future TT position with expertise in Earth Science. As was noted in the self-study and in our discussion, there is a need for K-12 Earth Science educators in the Central Valley. Such a position could also create interesting opportunities for collaboration in teaching and research with colleagues in the Geography program. When we are able to add a TT line in Geology, I will ask that program faculty work to create a culture of communication and transparency in geology that would make such a position attractive to candidates.

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Lastly, one other topic we discussed was the fact that while external reviewers were not invited to participate in the program review, Geology faculty members would still like to invite colleagues from Sonoma and Bakersfield to discuss several topics of interest, including, but not limited to, succession planning and envisioning the future for the geology program at Stan State. I hope you will invite these discipline colleagues for a visit.

I sincerely appreciate that your program places an emphasis on assessment of program learning outcomes and recognize your commitment to preparing your students for fulfilling careers in the field. I strongly encourage you and program faculty to meet with Erin Littlepage, Assessment Specialist and Dr. Stuart Wooley, Faculty Fellow for Assessment, to discuss ways to strengthen and enhance your assessment strategy. Currently, your 7-year implementation plan only indicates assessment of 4 of 19 program learning outcomes (PLOs), however, all PLOs should be assessed at least once during the 7-year cycle. Generally, our assessment team recommends no more than 5-7 outcomes, unless tied to specialized accreditation standards. I know they would like to meet with you to discuss developing a 7-year outline for the assessment of all PLOs, considering a reduction in the number of PLOs and exploring the development of assessment methods and any resources required to complete the assessment(s). I would be happy to have them contact you to discuss assessment after the start of spring semester.

In closing, I want to thank you and your colleagues for your effort in participating in the academic program review, including submission of annual reports. While APRs and Annual Reports are a commitment of time, they are critically important to the health and quality of our academic programs. The Geology program is approved for continuance with specified modifications and under conditions noted (development of a revised assessment plan); I look forward to supporting your work.

Cc: Dean David Evans and Geology Program Faculty