Exercise Science and Sports Studies Department Meeting
21 October 2014

*1) What are the strengths of your department/program? What do you already do well?  Remember that these responses will be shared with the community at large, so please use this opportunity to brag a little bit.  What do you want people outside your department/program to know about your successes and strengths?*

-The content of the minor includes concepts from Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities. Our students have options depending on their interests.

-We have strong relationships with other departments (Biology, Nutrition, etc.). We are building strong relationships with departments like Education, Communication, Economics, and Global Business Leadership.

-Through our relationship with Coventry University (UK), we can offer students the opportunity to take courses and participate in a world-renown sports marketing and management program (which we don't have at CSB/SJU). The Coventry students also come to us to learn about and experience sport culture in the United States, in addition to experiencing the liberal arts education offered at CSB/SJU. (Janna is also leading the London Study Abroad program in the spring of 2016).

-We work with students to find ways for more students to complete a minor (rather than just taking a couple ESSS classes and then stopping). We are working to develop an alternative “inquiry and analysis” course and/or to modify existing courses to meet the needs and academic goals of the more social science minded students pursuing the minor.

-We are good at advising. We are very helpful in choosing courses, career guidance, and life advising.

-We support adjuncts (including coaches who teach) really well---we give them a lot of formative feedback and keep them accountable for teaching college-level courses.

-The three faculty members (Don, Mary, and Janna) have diverse backgrounds and skill sets, which is really good. They are good at different things which allows them to cover many different content areas in ESSS.

-The department is very functional. The three of them work well together.

-All three really do practice healthy living in their daily lives---gives them credibility among the students.

*2) What do you wish you could do better, or do more of?  What would it take (resources, support, etc.) for you to reach those goals?*

-We expose students to Natural Science, Humanities, and Social Science aspects of ESSS. Some students struggle with this, since they have different strengths. We need to continue to support them.

-We need to balance our high standards for writing with our workload---it is tough for us to spend so much time helping students improve their writing. Maybe a 2 credit "How to right scientifically" course could help students be more successful in upper division, writing intensive courses and alleviate the workload of teaching writing skills in those upper division courses.

-We assessed writing last year: we have a somewhat bimodal distribution. We need to figure out how to better support the weaker students.

-How do we help our ESL students when we are teaching courses that contain a fair amount of medical terminology? Similarly, other students who just have weaker writing backgrounds can struggle in writing-intensive courses like ours, and we want to continue improving how we support them.

-We would love more funding for the ESSS lab. We do not have research-grade equipment, and this limits the research that the faculty and students can do.

-We would love another faculty member. Among other things, we could spend time on the areas that really matter to us that are teaching intensive (i.e. research and writing).

-While not part of the ESSS Department specifically, we would like the Integrative Health Science major become a full-fledged major. We have a proposal ready to be submitted. However, we are currently exploring other methods of formalizing the Integrative Health Science major. As an example, we are exploring the option of joining up with the Natural Science major to offer an Integrative Health Science track.

*3) Leaving aside discipline specific knowledge, in what ways does your department/program best contribute to providing our students with a liberal education for their lives beyond college, as informed and engaged citizens, productive employees, ethical beings, etc.?*

-Our learning goals include effective writing, analytical thinking, ethical thinking, and oral communication. So our curriculum is set up to support liberal arts education. We intentionally intertwined ourselves with the mission of the college by deemphasizing content specific learning goals and shifted the focus to liberal arts related skills. So it is tough to figure out how this question is different than #1.

-We are very good at Integrative Learning. We are essentially an applied multidisciplinary science.

-We do research within courses and outside of courses. In classes, students read literature and do a mini-research study. They collect data and then answer questions based on the data. In other courses, students go through an IRB-type process. In Research Methods, they ask their own questions. Outside of class, faculty invite students to be part of faculty research projects.

-We expose students to both the Natural Science and Social Science parts of ESSS. We work to make sure they understand the multi-disciplinary nature of ESSS.

-For a small department, ESSS offers a relatively large number of CC-designated courses.

-We have strong standards on scientific or discipline specific writing; appropriate citations, etc. and oral communication.

-We have effectively integrated liberal arts into exercise science and sports studies curriculum. Exercise science and sports studies is inherently multi-disciplinary and integrative, lending itself to integrated learning.

*4) Are there ways in which you would like to see your department/program contribute to liberal education that so far it has not been able to?*

-The ESSS Department has purposefully created student learning goals and utilizes effective pedagogy to develop and maintain a curriculum that we believe is consistent with the best practices in liberal arts education. However, we would like to become an even more integral contributor to the Common Curriculum. We believe a shift toward a Common Curriculum that emphasizes academic skills, rather than disciplinary perspectives, would allow the ESSS Department to better support the Common Curriculum.