The review team read the self-study written by the faculty in the Department; reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; conducted class visits; interviewed faculty, students and staff; and met with the Dean, Associate Deans and other relevant members of the campus community. Prior to their visit, the reviewers were provided with USF’s Vision, Mission, Values Statement, the Department’s self-study and other university materials.

1. How did the external review committee rate the quality of the program: excellent, very good, good, adequate, or poor? How does the program compare with benchmark top-tier programs nationally? Please provide a brief rationale for the external review committee’s rating.

   The committee does not give an explicit rating, but states that: “Overall the Department of Mathematics is VERY GOOD, collegial, and especially strong in teaching. This department is poised to become quite strong and it is our sincere desire that our recommendations may prove useful and, even if they cannot be implemented outright, at least facilitate discussion about future directions.” The rating of very good is supported by additional statements by the reviewers: “We find that the department faculty offers a sound mathematical experience for undergraduate majors, on par with many strong programs in the United States.” The “core of the mathematics department,” the long-term tenure-track faculty, is “excellent.”

2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?

   Both the Department and the reviewers identified the following needs for the Department:
   • Additional full-time faculty to reduce reliance on adjuncts
   • More/better office and communal space
   • Increase in the number of majors

   The reviewers noted that these three areas are interlinked and that both the Department and the University would be stronger for these changes.
3. **What specific recommendations for improving the program’s quality has the external review committee made to the Dean?**

   - Create a comprehensive plan for increasing the number of majors (the reviewers offer specific suggestions)
   - Develop a proposal for additional full-time lines that both reduces dependence on adjuncts and also advances the Department’s research areas and collaborations with other departments
   - Build stronger ties with other departments (e.g., Computer Science, Economics), programs (e.g., DDPT in SOE) and offices (Admissions, Career Services)
   - Introduce peer observation of teaching, particularly for adjuncts
   - Develop mechanisms to increase and reward undergraduate research and/or theses
   - Develop better connections with Admissions
   - Improved office space, as well as access to a computer lab and communal space for majors and faculty
   - Reducing the number of service courses

4. **In the opinion of the external review committee is the program following the University’s strategic initiative in that it is:**

   *Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty of outstanding teachers and scholars.*

   The reviewers strongly emphasize the devotion to teaching among the full-time and core adjunct faculty. They also express concern that an overreliance on adjuncts dilutes this. “There is no question that the talent and collegiality of the department is superb and the university stands to gain by increasing the department's visibility and influence on and off campus.”

   The reviewers noted that two most recent hires bring “a small measure of gender diversity to the group” which is “critically important…at an institution whose students are 70% women.” The new faculty members reported positively about the mentoring experiences in the Department.

   The faculty were praised for their “great many well known works of mathematical exposition, some of which are widely accepted textbooks” that “put USF on the mathematical map, emanate from the department’s strength in teaching” and “should continued to be valued as an especially appropriate kind of scholarship for this type of department.”

   *Enrolling, supporting and graduating a diverse student body that demonstrates high academic achievement, strong leadership capabilities, a concern for others, and a sense of responsibility for the weak and vulnerable.*

   The reviewers emphasize the strength of the program, and encourage the College to help attract more students as majors or minors.

   *Providing the environment necessary to promote student learning in the program.*

   The devotion to teaching and curricular development is stressed repeatedly.
5. In what way is the program contributing to the goal of making the University of San Francisco a premier Jesuit, Catholic urban university with a global perspective that educates leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world?

The reviewers noted the Department’s “significant and well-known commitment to community outreach” and discussed both the high educational quality of the program and also the commitment to social justice as seen in the Bay Area Math Olympiad, the Fusion Project, the math circles and math meets.

6. What is the timetable for the response to the external review committee’s recommendations for program improvement? What can the Office of the Provost do to appropriately respond to the review?

The next step is for the Dean and Associate Dean to meet with the Department and discuss the report. Based on the reviewers’ suggestions, three concrete things the Provost can do are to help Math secure additional full-time positions, assist in building bridges with Admissions, and dedicate resources for undergraduate research.

7. What general comments or issues, if any, are crucial to understanding the reviewers report?

The reviewers and Department are in agreement as to their major challenges: space, overreliance on adjuncts, and need for more majors. The Department functions very well – the reviewers note that their general affability may be a reason for their comparative lack of resources.

In addition to the recommendations to the Dean, the reviewers also make recommendations to the Department itself, including improving their public presence, increased recruitment of potential majors in introductory courses, and developing upper-level courses that mesh with faculty strengths.

The reviewers concluded their report with statements about the Math Department’s crucial role in creating an academically rigorous climate at the university and in USF’s commitment to “become one of the finest liberal arts institutions in the nation.”