

**AMERICAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT**  
**CHAIR’S RESPONSE TO THE**  
**PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REVIEW EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM REPORT**

I very much appreciate the outstanding and extremely helpful report prepared by the American Studies Department’s External Review Team—Lana Dalley (Chair of English, CSUF), Edward Blum (History, San Diego State University), and Eric Sandeen (Former Chair of American Studies, University of Wyoming). During their site visit on March 10, 2015, in addition to meeting with the Dean and Associate Dean, these External Reviewers met with American Studies tenured faculty, untenured faculty, adjunct faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates. At each of these meetings, they not only listened carefully but also offered many excellent suggestions.

The External Review Team Report includes nine specific recommendations. I’ve shared these recommendations with the American Studies faculty and will address our responses to each individually below:

1. We strongly agree with the External Review Team’s recommendation concerning the need for additional release time to establish a new American Studies Internship program. As their Report states, our field is “rich with opportunities” for such a program, both in the private and the public sector; however, as they also note, the “development of these connections, the articulation of the necessary agreements, and the pedagogy surrounding these experiential elements require the attention of a designated position.” We agree that the initial work needed to establish such a program will be labor- and time-intensive, and thus requires designated release time for a faculty member. To create this Internship and

set it on a sound foundation, one faculty member would need to receive 3 units of designated release time, either from the Dean's Office or from the Center for Internships and Community Engagement. This would create a new High Impact Practice that would advance the University's Strategic Plan.

2. We agree with the Review Team's suggestion that designated release time for an "Outreach Coordinator" would be very valuable. We also concur with its recommendation to "harness the considerable enthusiasm of current American Studies majors" by organizing visits to local high schools. This is an excellent suggestion; it too, however, needs to be carefully organized and coordinated.
3. We agree with the need for more office space for our lecturers. (This semester we have 19 adjunct faculty members assigned to 5 rooms.) However, we also hope to keep our adjunct faculty in offices close to one another, as this has helped to build a sense of community among them.
4. Finding a dedicated space for meetings that could also serve as our student lounge is a high priority. We have a very active American Studies Student Association that would make excellent use of such a space. This is especially crucial on a large commuter campus like this one.
5. The Review Team recommends that we consider a third option for the MA degree; this option might include some combination of written research, field experiences, or digital

projects. (At present we offer two options: an M.A. Thesis or an M.A. Examination.)  
This is an idea worth thinking about, and which we'll discuss at a future meeting.

6. We concur with the suggestion that we develop a means of regularly updating our MA Comprehensive Examination required reading lists, focusing especially on adding recent works of scholarship. We have already begun to implement such a process this semester by organizing subcommittees to reexamine each of our M.A. reading list subfields.
7. This Report recommends hiring 1 or 2 additional tenure-track faculty members in the next 2-4 years. This is consistent with our long-term plan for additional hiring, particularly since one faculty member will be retiring this year and another next year, while two others will begin the FERP program in fall 2015.
8. The Review Team recommends that we consider monetary compensation for teaching assistants. We agree with the idea of paying graders if funds are available and if these funds are not needed to support adjunct faculty.
9. We agree with the Review Team's recommendation that we try to promote international exchanges for our students, and that this might best be done in conjunction with other CSUF entities. Our graduate program in particular often attracts international students, including Fulbright scholars. We're very interested in exploring ways to increase the number of foreign students studying American Studies at CSUF, as well as ways to make it easier for CSUF students to study abroad.

In sum, all nine of these recommendations contain valuable suggestions. We also appreciate the External Review Team's statements about this department's national standing, as well as its recognition that this standing has resulted from emphasizing excellent teaching, supporting first-rate research and publications, and nurturing a strong sense of community among faculty, students, and alumni. In supplying an interdisciplinary as well as an outsider's perspective on the work of the American Studies department, the report of this External Review Team is extremely suggestive and very helpful.