

Department of Asian American Studies
Department Response to Program Performance Review
College of Humanities and Social Sciences, CSUF
April 15, 2024

The Department of Asian American Studies (“ASAM”) thanks the Program Performance Review external team (“review team”) for their time and effort evaluating our department and submitting the External Review Report (“Report”). On February 16, 2024, review members Dr. YẾN Lê Espiritu (Distinguished Professor of Ethnic Studies, UCSD), Dr. Donna J. Nicol (Associate Dean of Personnel and Curriculum, CSU Long Beach), and Dr. Eugene M. Fujimoto (Associate Professor of Educational Leadership Development, CSU Fullerton) met with Interim Dean Dr. Jessica Yirush Stern, Interim Associate Dean for Student Relations Dr. Carl Wendt, ASAM faculty and lecturers, undergraduates and Ethnic Studies office staff. We are pleased that the review team noted the department’s “dynamic and vibrant community of teacher-scholars,” and noted our excellent department culture of establishing shared core values to create a “humanizing environment” and to practice “intentional communication.” This speaks to the high praise of our department as a “model of how we should be doing our work and deserve much needed support from the CSU and from CSUF. The members of this PPR Committee unanimously agree that the recommendations in this report will benefit not only the ASAM department, but CSUF and the CSU System as well.”

The Report contains the strengths, challenges, and recommendations for each of the sections of the PPR (“Content Requirements and Elements of the Self-study”). The report was shared with the ASAM faculty, and we concur with the review team’s observations and recommendations. Below is the department’s collective response to the recommendations.

Recommendations

I. Department/Program Mission, Goals, and Environment

- **Recommendations:** The administration needs to provide ASAM with an adequate number of faculty and staff in order for the department to implement the AREA F requirement. At the departmental level, we encourage the faculty to clearly outline the work of the department, and the expectations of the baseline roles and responsibilities of the faculty; to establish a shared governance structure and decision-making policy; and to develop the faculty for leadership positions. We recommend the creation of a vice chair position to assist with the chair’s responsibilities and to be prepared to succeed the chair. We also recommend increased incentives to make the chair position doable and more attractive to current faculty, such as additional release time.
- **ASAM’s Response to Recommendations:** We thank the reviewers for this recommendation, and we agree on the need to increase the number of faculty and staff to facilitate the success of implementing the AREA F requirement, and if we begin to articulate agreements to attract students from high schools and community colleges.

We agree the department needs to clearly outline roles and responsibilities and begin the conversation of shared governance structure and decision-making policy. We already met in March 2024 and aim to have a draft shared governance by the end of academic year 2024-2025. We also would like to emphasize the need to address Department Chair position description across the university, not just in HSS (or other Colleges as well). The Chair position has become a de facto managerial administrator's position without corresponding compensation, acknowledgment of workload, professional development, limits on position description and boundaries for health and sustainability.

II. Department/Program Description and Analysis

- **Recommendations:** We see a misalignment of what ASAM contributes and how the department is being evaluated. Research has consistently shown that interdisciplinary ethnic studies produce many benefits, including students who are more academically, civically, and politically engaged, social justice-minded, and community-oriented. And yet, the criteria for evaluating ethnic studies continue to be narrow, relying principally on the number of graduate majors. We encourage the administration to create more appropriate criteria to better capture the contributions of ASAM to the university, including properly valuing student mentorship and community work in faculty reviews, and considering the overall number of students that the department serves, and not only the number of majors. The administration also needs to be attentive to foster the intellectual growth of the department, so that it does not become primarily a service department. We recommend the department develop a rotating schedule assigning lower division courses to faculty that would allow for balance in full time faculty teaching in upper division courses as well.
- **ASAM's Response to Recommendations:** We concur with the review team's observations and recommendations and offer suggestions to expand metrics that determine department's worth beyond simply counting majors. For example, size of GE "footprint" (FTES), level and intensities of high-impact practices in our pedagogy, culturally taxation work such as mentoring, advising on graduate school, community, and civic engagement at multiple levels: intra-campus partnerships such as with APARC and AAPIFSA, inter-campus/intra-system work – CSU Ethnic Studies liaison work, and external partnerships with numerous community-based organizations.

III. Documentation of Student Academic Achievement and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

- **Recommendations:** We recommend increasing the size of the assessment committee to three faculty (possibly a lecturer faculty member who are compensated through a stipend) in anticipation of the increased workload of assessing large-enrolled courses like ASAM 101. We also recommend involving students in the assessment process by

way of writing a reflexive essay about their learning and engagement through ASAM in their upper-division core courses, either ASAM 307 or ETHN 490.

- **ASAM's Response to Recommendations:** We concur with the review team's observations and recommendations for direct and indirect measures, specifically in the ASAM/ETHN 307 and ETHN 490. Also, as these courses are shared courses with the Departments of African American Studies, and Chicana and Chicano Studies, this would also require cross-department collaboration which creates additional challenges to department development, which often falls upon the department chair to address and implement.

IV. Faculty

- **Recommendations:** We strongly recommend that the administration considers providing ASAM with additional faculty to meet the department's growing responsibilities to the students, campus, and local communities. The faculty is at capacity; the department currently has 8 faculty but needs 12-15 faculty to grow the major, to serve the local communities, and to contribute to scholarship--all the goals that the administration expects the ASAM faculty to meet. With at least 3 faculty members close to retirement and the increased need for faculty capacity due to the statewide Ethnic Studies requirements, the department anticipates needing to hire 3-5 faculty members in the next 3-7 years. Additional faculty members are needed for the department's sustainable growth and stability. Internally, we recommend that the department develops a leadership pathway, such as creating a vice chair position with clear duties, in order to have a smooth leadership transition. We also believe that clear guidelines about workload distribution and departmental operations would enable the faculty to sustain the collegiality and productivity that they sincerely want for the department. Continued attention at the College and department level to ensure retention of tenure track faculty is crucial.
- **ASAM's Response to Recommendations:** We concur with the review team's observations and recommendations and emphasize the need for 5-7 faculty members in the next 3-7 years. Providing new faculty lines would enable the department to coordinate both intentional faculty development and department development. As mentioned in the first recommendation, we are collectively working to create clear guidelines about workload distribution.

V. Student Support and Advising

- **Recommendations:** We recommend retaining the faculty advising committee structure as is, but it needs to be made clear that tandem advising in the HSS Success Center is not a substitute for faculty advising in the major. Tandem advising should serve as a supplemental advising resource. Regarding ASAM faculty involvement with APARC events, mentoring students working on publications and conference presentations, study away and other high impact practices, we recommend university leadership track

the service activities of its faculty and work to either support ASAM faculty with additional course releases for service projects that dovetail into faculty research or teaching and/or work to equalize the service workload of smaller departments like ASAM by making sure large departments service workload is similar in size and depth.

- **ASAM's Response to Recommendations:** We agree with the review team the importance of faculty advising in the major, and plan to maintain this structure for our majors and minors. Our advising structure holistically supports our students and will make clear in the committee charge that tandem advising is for general curriculum requirements and should not be a substitute.

VI. Resources and Facilities

- **Recommendations:** We recommend moving the department (and its ethnic studies collaborators) to a significantly larger and centrally located space that reflects this group's contributions to the students and campus as a whole. This should include private office space for any student advising that is occurring, as well as increase if working space available for all part time faculty. We also recommend that the Area F funding not be used for capital improvements. This was not the intent of those funds, and if used in this way, will negatively affect the intended growth and development of this area. Capital improvements are the responsibility of the university. We recommend consulting faculty and staff on the most effective use of Area F funds.
- **ASAM's Response to Recommendations:** We concur with the review team's observations and recommendations and would like to emphasize the need to move to new space. Appropriate space for the department also facilitates faculty retention and recruitment.

VII. Long-term Plans

- **Recommendations:** The challenges are many, but not insurmountable if campus leadership recognizes the need for an abolitionist turn that would provide needed resources as identified; transform the assessment and resource allocation structure to reflect the actual human, community, and student centered work that is occurring in ASAM and related departments.

Our hope is that the campuses such as CSUF will recognize the need for this transformation and institutionally prioritize the needed staffing of both faculty and classified staff; the student centered and legally required office space to effectively advise and continue to build intra and inter ethnic community; fully support the curricular, infrastructural and human needs of this department; this would then allow CSUF to take a lead in building a transformed campus community that is less reliant on and dependent upon the racial capitalist structure and allow prioritization of the development of a humanistic, culturally relevant, and dynamic ecology, with ethnic studies (including ASAM) central to this development.

The opportunity is now to develop effective, transparent, and grass roots led movements to take back the university from the privatized incursion and extreme budget cuts that have led to the steep tuition rise and continued marginalization of some of our most humanistic and student centered programs such as ASAM.

They are a model of how we should be doing our work and deserve much needed support from the CSU and from CSUF. The members of this PPR Committee unanimously agree that the recommendations in this report will benefit not only the ASAM department, but CSUF and the CSU System as well.

- **ASAM's Response to Recommendations:** We concur with the review team's observations and recommendations and appreciate their high praise of our department.