I became chair in Fall 2018. At that time, the Department was scheduled to begin the 7th Cycle Review so I began to search and compile pertinent documents and materials related to the review. Although the review has been postponed to the next year, the materials for the Review, or more precisely, the lack of such materials, has proven relevant to this assessment, i.e. assessment has been both a continuous and belated process in that we have begun to address a lack of departmental infrastructure over the entire year; consequently, we have been delayed in compiling a report for assessment because of it.

The lack of departmental infrastructure is tied intimately to how Jewish Studies came into existence at SF State; linked to the history of anti-semitism on campus, our faculty have focused primarily on getting students into our GE classrooms to demonstrate that Jewish Studies offers a necessary component not only to the University’s mission statement, but also to student life on campus. This has meant that curricular decisions have often been made in an ad hoc way to address a present context rather than in terms of long term planning. It has also meant that with our attention on anti-semitism on our campus, we have missed some institutional steps that we hope to correct during my tenure as chair.

I’ve attempted to supplement our foci to include

- Articulation of University benchmarks, aims, and policies.
- Emphasis on student success by providing examples of professionals with degrees in Jewish Studies who have created new career pathways, through the “Jewish Studies and . . .” lecture series.
- Development of a departmental infrastructure by drafting
  1. by-laws,
  2. a mission statement,
  3. lecturer evaluation criteria,
  4. reexamination of rtp
- Active Recruitment of majors and minors

While all of the above cannot be the subject of this report, I have included our mission statement to demonstrate how department faculty currently interpret the department’s aim for students. I’ve also included an assessment of our “Jewish Studies and . . .” series presentations and student response to this series. Since I had not intended to include information on the series initially, I didn’t conduct extensive empirical data collection. However, I can report generally on elements communicated to me by attendees. Finally, the Department views assessment to extend holistically beyond the classroom; therefore, we encourage student success both within our courses and outside of them through our lecture series. The series offer students the opportunity to see themselves as interlocutors and scholars within the Jewish Studies community.
I. Mission statement (see attachment)

While we used the University’s template, we had a bit of struggle between faculty about how to include the particularity of Jewish Studies while still adhering to University guidelines generally. Several senior faculty, who had a historical memory of the incidents of 2002, argued that the Mission Statement should reflect Jewish particularity as a key institutional boundary; for both senior and junior faculty, who joined the Department after 2010, and at a time of relative calm on campus, the Mission Statement needed to address how Jewish Studies could enhance students’ academic development. It needed to point to what students gained professionally from a degree in Jewish Studies. Additionally, another problem for us was the demonstration that Jewish Studies degrees actually contribute to student careers far beyond Judaic and Jewish community institutions, that the skills gained from the degree were fully transportable outside of the discipline. Hence the Department is now ready to submit the Mission Statement for review.

II. Jewish Studies and . . .

Consequently, I developed the above series. Its aim is to show students that a degree in Jewish Studies does not necessarily lead to a career in a synagogue. We had four scheduled events:

- Jewish Studies and the Ph.D in Literature;
- Jewish Studies and Food Writing;
- Jewish Studies and Disability Advocacy; and
- Jewish Studies and Academic Publishing.

Approximately 80-90 students attended these presentations and we solicited co-sponsors from across LCA. The series effectively put in students’ minds that the Jewish Studies degree was not exclusively for Jews, did not limit their professional aspirations, and could help students determine alternative paths to achieving their scholarly and professional aims. As the series continues into the next year, I have turned it over to my colleague, Rachel Gross, to manage it for the future.

Through these two strategies, the Mission Statement, and the corresponding lecture series, students explore how they can tailor their Jewish Studies degree to their personal goals. Moreover, the lecture series reinforces that student success requires students to use their imaginations, to look for alternative ways to achieve their aims, to hunt for the unexpected.

III. For the coming year

A. Faculty have voted to revise the PLOs. In a recent examination of our courses, we discovered that several courses did not articulate any of the PLOs as they were written.

B. Faculty have voted to revise and to add to our lower division curriculum.

C. Faculty have voted to develop a First Year Experience course