

**External Review Report**

7<sup>th</sup> Cycle Program Review  
Department Asian American Studies  
College of Ethnic Studies  
San Francisco State University

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Dr. Gina Masequesmay  
Department of Asian American Studies  
CSU Northridge

Dr. Robyn Rodriguez  
Department of Asian American Studies  
University of California, Davis

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## 1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

As the first and largest Asian American Studies Department in the nation, San Francisco State's Asian American Studies Department commands the field with its thirteen nationally and/or internationally recognized and award-winning full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty and twenty lecturers. It leads in enrollment and often supports smaller departments in its College of Ethnic Studies at SFSU. AAS has a strong, interdisciplinary focus and offers the largest variety of in-depth courses on American ethnic groups and Asian American topics compared to other AAS departments and programs in the nation. All of the AAS courses, except for the three major core requirements, meet General Education requirements that enroll almost 2,500 students in fifty classes each semester. One outstanding characteristic of the department is its community engagement, as evidenced in its curriculum and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and by the fact that two of its faculty has won the national Community Engaged Scholar award from the Association of Asian American Studies in the last five years. SF State AAS also offers an MA program with over ten of its alumni now teaching its undergraduate program. It also offers "endless teaching and mentoring opportunities" to its undergrad majors in form of instructional aide and has created a teaching pipeline that has resulted in half of its graduates taking the education pathways.

The self-study report shows deep thought in planning a program that would carry out the program learning objectives that are student-centered. Both the self-study and our visits and talks with faculty and students confirm that the program is intentional in meeting the many needs of its students. The cohesion of faculty in this mission to empower students and their communities is the dynamics that other departments would envy to have. The passion to ensure student success does not stop at the academic realm but other aspects of students' life. Repeatedly students describe faculty as not just teacher but also counselor, advisor, healer and mentor. The dedication and commitment of faculty to guide students are reflected in the high scores of satisfactions on multiple categories from the AAS alumni survey.

Social justice guides faculty's pedagogy, planning and operations. The curriculum reflects this value of community-based praxis, and AAS faculty teach, mentor, and advise undergrad and graduate students closely and holistically. To meet the larger trend of decreased academic funding and the difficulty of commute in a city challenged by the housing crisis, food insecurity and gentrification, AAS has increased its offering of online courses. The socioeconomic challenges of its students are responded with an increase in high-impact first year experience courses. Winning the AANAPISI grant that funds ASPIRE has significantly helped to provide more professional development for faculty and as a result improve pedagogical alignment with the department's PLOs. Having funding for academic advisement and peer tutoring and mentoring has also helped AAS to serve the larger API campus community. Although AAS is facing faculty FERPing, it still offers the same number of courses by hiring from its MA program's alumni pool. Given that its majors and minors have grown, it will need to have new hires to replace but also to expand on its curriculum to meet the trends in the field and the needs of its local populations.

Economic adversities of San Francisco have created additional stress to student lives. In addition, our national return to blatant racism, sexism, cisheteropatriarchy and nativism has further destabilized the sense of security and belonging for our most vulnerable students. Students are in need of mental health services and AAS faculty stepped up to the challenge. The very generous and giving faculty; however, are spread thin. As the socioeconomic and political challenges worsen, these self-sacrificing practices of faculty will not be sustainable.

SFSU needs to step up to support and institutionalize and financially support best practices that AAS faculty is already doing to ensure student success. Future self-study reports need to have metrics to account for these services that faculty does (e.g., hold study sessions at their home to help underprepared students to learn how to write; housing homeless students; give students money for books).

## **2.0 PROGRAM QUALITY**

### **2.1 Program Planning:**

The five program learning outcomes (PLOs) for AAS reflect the mission of Ethnic Studies and attempt to meet the needs of Asian American students and communities. The 5 PLOs are: (1) Gain an interdisciplinary understanding of the histories, cultures, and racialization of Asian Americans; (2) Apply course concepts and critical theories and methodologies to identify the structural and ideological forces that shape the lives of Asian Americans; (3) Apply the skills and knowledge acquired toward the self-determination and empowerment of Asian American communities; (4) Develop values of social justice, equity, activism, and respect for differences; (5) Construct evidence-based and persuasive oral and written arguments with proper citations and support from multiple forms of knowledge, including community and academic resources.

- A. The mission statement is clear and program goals, strengths and achievements are well aligned. The faculty recognizes that their mission is driven by the current state of the discipline of Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies more broadly but also by student needs and demands. Specifically, the program recognizes that students' desire for clear career pathways must be addressed, but equally important are students' identity formations. This is well reflected in the curriculum, hiring plans and extra-curricular programming (i.e. partnerships with other units on career planning; academic advising through ASPIRE, etc.). At the same time, the program is also responsive to the demands of the broader Asian American community (given the original aims of the founders of Ethnic Studies and the programs continued commitment to community-engagement); this too is reflected in the curriculum, hiring plans and extra-curricular programming.
- B. The level of involvement of the faculty impressed the reviewers in the program planning and frequency with which faculty members met and what appeared to have been a collective and collaborative effort. We were also struck by the fact that lecturers were invited to participate in program planning efforts and based on our meetings with them, they too were appreciative of being considered important stakeholders in program planning processes. The chair and TTK faculty, however, made sure to communicate to the lecturers that these were not required activities, but that their input was sought and welcomed. In some cases, lecturers were compensated for their participation in program planning related activities and that was appreciated.
- C. Alumni survey guided faculty in planning and refining the program objectives and methodologies to achieve them. The program had plans for exit interviews for alumni based on the 6th cycle CAM but it was unclear whether these were actually carried out systematically and what the specific timeframe for these surveys will be in the future. It was also unclear if surveys or interviews of current students occur.
- D. One of the more notable weaknesses related to program planning was to what extent the challenges and shortcomings of online courses were adequately documented and

then addressed. This is due, in part to a lack of survey and other kinds of assessment of current students. In our review, we found that majors felt that the current format of some online courses was sometimes antithetical to ethnic studies in the sense that these courses did not provide sufficient opportunities for students to interact with each other and with the faculty member in charge. Indeed, they felt that the communication lines were too unidirectional for some courses. Students recommend that online courses must create more mechanisms through which relationship building among students and between students and faculty are better facilitated and that they allow opportunities for deeper student engagement. Furthermore, students felt that some topics--like racism--are topics best done in face to face. Indeed, because so many AAS courses are also GE courses, majors note that non-AAS or ethnic studies students are coming into courses without sufficient base understandings of complex and sometimes controversial topics like race and thus can benefit from in-person discussions. Students were not completely dismissive of online course offering but believe the technology requires revisiting and in some cases, they require a combination of in-person and online interactions. As noted above, the clarity of the program's mission statement and the thoroughness of its program planning process have been used quite effectively in many other ways, with programs like ASPIRE created to address student needs and demands, the hiring of lecturers to address specific curricular gaps and plans for future TTK faculty hires clearly articulated.

## 2.2 Student Learning and Achievement

- A. As stated above, we found that the PLOs are clearly articulated and effectively drive program planning and assessment. This has resulted in high quality outcomes including strong major numbers, strong retention and graduation rates (graduation rates for AAS freshmen and transfer students exceed University rates), as well as exceptionally strong students. We were both struck, for example, by our interactions with both the majors and the MA students. They were incredibly bright, articulate and extremely well versed in key approaches and issues in the discipline. The students at SFSU's AAS, in many ways, rival if not surpass their counterparts at the UCs, which we attribute to the high quality of the program.
- B. The alumni survey showed the majority is satisfied with the program. Some students went on to graduate schools and some graduate students became part of the lecturers' pool.
- C. Time to graduation went down, according to TTK faculty, because AAS was able to offer more classes after the recession. The faculty (both TTK and lecturers) as well as the students identified numerous challenges to retention and graduation rates that have much less to do with program learning outcomes and more to do with unmet socioeconomic (need for employment due to high cost of housing and other living expenses as well as commuting costs, etc.) and mental health needs that the AAS faculty are ill-equipped to handle. This is reflected in the mean time to degree for AAS majors, which is 5.56 compared to the University's 4.99. AAS faculty individually and collectively--through the successful securing of AANAPISI grant funds--have begun to address some of these issues, but unless there is university-level commitment to sustaining these resources over the long-term, then API students (because the faculty serve BOTH AAS majors and API-identified, non-majors) will continue to be faced with challenges that can hamper retention and graduation. The collective efforts by faculty

- have lead to a decrease in graduation time for both undergraduate and graduate students, with MA students' rate being lower than the university.
- D. The development of online courses is also meant to address broader student needs but AAS majors find some of these courses to be limited in terms of addressing AAS PLOs and suggest that hybrid formats may be best for some courses, as discussed above. Students also articulated a desire for ethnic specific courses, more hand-on courses (specifically in the creation of media/media workshops) and more opportunities to work on faculty research. They also want to participate in the national meetings of the Association for Asian American Studies to be better informed about trends in the field. Lack of assessment tools for current students, as we note above, meant that faculty were not fully aware of these demands on the part of majors, but given the receptiveness and sensitivity of AAS faculty to student needs, we are confident that these issues will be addressed in the future.
- E. Indeed, we observed that TTK faculty have very close relationships to students. As one student described them, the AAS "Faculty are therapists, counselors, healers all in one." However, this close relationship also meant that TTK faculty felt especially taxed for having to support both majors and non-majors' (which, it should be noted, includes ELL and international students) socioeconomic and emotional well-being as well as the unevenness of their academic preparation for college in the K-12 system. Faculty describe how they sometimes find themselves offering one-on-one tutoring sessions, for example because existing campus academic services fail to understand how to tutor students on the topic of ethnic studies or because existing academic services employ staff without sufficient cultural competency to deal with API students. Similarly, both faculty and students describe how due to the lack of API mental health professionals, students seek emotional support from faculty even though the faculty are not trained mental health professionals. Between ASPIRE and other campus collaborations, however, AAS has tried to better address these issues. Moreover, they have addressed majors' desire for career pipelines through community-based internships, which have been positively received by students. AAS has also recently introduced an alumni mentorship program but it is still too early to assess its outcomes. The close "family" relationships that the AAS faculty cultivates with majors, it should be notes, means that even when they graduate, alums seek AAS faculty counsel on academic and career matters, which also adds to faculty members' everyday workloads. Meanwhile the high satisfaction rate of alums means that they are recommending the program to other students that then drive up demand for AAS but which cannot fully be addressed without more TTK faculty lines.
- F. The faculty were very cognizant of high-impact teaching practices and used ASPIRE to improve pedagogical practices for both TTK faculty and lecturers, especially since all of the faculty face the challenge of increasing class sizes due to insufficient TTK faculty lines. Faculty agrees that more TTK lines would go a long way towards enhancing the learning experience for students. As indicated it earlier sections, exploring best practices with respect to online courses may be needed. Students suggested, for example, that videos of lectures that include class discussions might be useful for facilitating the engagement of students who are participating in a course virtually.
- G. AAS offers numerous programs to address student learning and achievement for both majors and non-majors. ASPIRE is the main program doing that. It offers physical space and opportunities for peer tutoring to assist with academic achievement and AAS students are taking advantage of these services, however, there is a sense that ASPIRE

needs more promotion among the broader campus community. An additional mechanism by which the program has supported student learning and achievement is through the instructional assistant (IA) program. However, department can be more intentional about thinking about IA opportunities as a career pipeline since they play a dual role of teaching assistant and student. Better engaging IAs in program planning, for example,, is a form of professional development and career pipelining.

## 2.3 The Curriculum

### 2.3.1 *The Undergraduate Program*

- A. The department offers a very healthy variety of courses and has ensured that nearly all are aligned with university GE requirements. AAS clearly provides an important service not only to its majors, but also for students across the university. Majors, however, expressed some concern that because nearly all AAS courses are also GE courses, they are not able to dive deeper into a course topic because faculty were required to provide basic introduction to Asian American studies concepts and histories for non-majors at the start of every course. Given AAS' very strong enrollment numbers across course offerings, it seems, that the department has opportunities to offer courses delimited to majors and/or to majors and College of Ethnic Studies majors.
- B. AAS relies on courses primarily offered in the department for major fulfillment. One issue, however, is only one writing course (GWAR) allows AAS major to interact with other College majors. AAS majors expressed a keen interest in having more courses with other College (i.e. Ethnic Studies) majors and would like other Ethnic Studies courses count towards the fulfillment of their major requirements.
- C. The program has been very mindful of ensuring that nearly all of its courses fulfill GE requirements and it has also ensured that a sufficient array of courses is offered to ensure that students can meet their core and major requirements. However, as stated in the above section (A and B), students also feel as if the alignment of AAS courses with GE requirements has meant that students have insufficient opportunities to connect with other AAS majors as well as Ethnic Studies majors.
- D. AAS faculty is very cognizant of courses with high % of DFWs and there is a consensus among both faculty and students that this is anomalous and mainly attributable to specific formats (i.e. some online courses) and specific faculty personalities. Measures are being taken to address some of these issues where it is possible.
- E. AAS chair attempts to work closely with TTK faculty and lecturers on course scheduling. There were some concerns voiced by lecturers, however, that in the program's bid to ensure that all AAS courses meet GE requirements, some courses were "forced" to fit into GE requirements without valuing lecturers' long-experience in teaching and refining particular courses or their professional expertise, or that some decisions regarding specific course offerings were made at the last minute and thus lecturers felt as if their autonomy and experience was being undervalued. Moreover, lecturers and students alike felt that by making courses more popular (i.e. meeting GE requirements), course content could become diluted.
- F. The GWAR seems successful from the perspective of both faculty and students. Indeed, that the GWAR brings students from across the College together was identified as one of its strengths.

- G. We were unable to assess culminating experience/capstone course(s) during our site visit. We suggest that the AAS introduce measure to more thoroughly assess the capstone course.
- H. The AAS has ensured that there is close articulation between community college course offerings and AAS courses. Since AAS accepts nearly all community college courses in ethnic studies and the major is heavily based on upper division courses, community college students who have lower division-equivalent courses in community college can still get into the major.
- H. The fact that so many courses are GE courses allows more native and transfer students to become majors, as indicated by AAS' strong major numbers. However, AAS faculty also find that since students are generally unfamiliar with Asian American Studies as a field, they come to department too late in their academic careers and find themselves unable to pursue the major. The department might want to assess student pathways into the major.
- I. As mentioned earlier, our sense is that the faculty is very sensitive to students' input. Even over the course of our visit, observations we made and suggestions we heard from meetings with students and lecturers were taken in by the TTK faculty and discussions of plans to address them were made almost immediately. We are confident that upon close review of this report, the department will make plans to improve the curriculum as needed.

### **2.3.2 The Graduate Program**

- A. A relatively recent review of the graduate program has been done (2016) and specific changes have been introduced to the program in response.
- B. Admission and enrollment to the graduate program have experienced an increase and this is attributed to changes introduced following the 2016 review which included, for example, reaching out to undergraduate majors with high GPAs and revamping the department's website.
- C. Graduate students had feedback on the curriculum that was in some ways contradictory but it may be attributable to the fact that the program changes instituted following the 2016 review are only now being better realized:
  - a. While students appreciated that courses are scheduled from 4-7PM thus allowing those who are working to take classes, they voiced concern that there was a discrepancy between what is actually offered and what's promised in the graduate student handbook which has led to some confusion about what the program's requirements are.
  - b. Though students recognize that the curriculum is meant to scaffold students' progression and they feel coherence across the courses in terms of graduate curriculum design, in practice, course availability can be limited and many have to take courses out of sequence.
  - c. Some students felt that specific graduate course offerings were lacking in content and substance. For instance, one student felt that the research methods course did not suffice because first, quantitative methods were not fully covered and second, the course focused mainly on research design and did not give students enough of a chance to put research methods into practice. The student needed to supplement their methods training with courses outside of AAS. Another student who aims to pursue a doctorate felt that the MA program is not sufficiently rigorous and not sure if they are being prepared enough for doctoral

- work (though this individual's peers explained that this may be due to the fact that the curriculum is meant to scaffold students' progression and that this particular individual will get more rigorous courses in future semesters).
- d. Some students felt that those with ethnic studies backgrounds do better in the program whereas people entering the program after a long hiatus seem to have a challenge transitioning back (arguably, the scaffolding that the program now provides might better address this issues; but then this can also lead some students feeling as if the courses are not rigorous enough).
  - e. Like the undergraduates, graduate students are interested in being able to take courses with other ethnic studies students.
  - f. Overall, graduate students were very appreciative of faculty mentorship, the scholarly and community networks faculty facilitate, and faculty commitment to their learning (including inviting them to serve as collaborators in faculty research; some of these research opportunities are unpaid, others are paid).
- D. Though the faculty indicated that they do feel somewhat challenged by multiple demands on their time (including the mentorship they are required to do for graduate students at other institutions--and this has to do with the prestige and visibility of the program and its faculty), graduate students seemed quite satisfied with the way faculty have been able to balance their workloads. Indeed, strong enrollment in the undergraduate level has allowed AAS to offer smaller graduate courses.
- E. Graduate students express satisfaction in the range of culminating experiences they can now pursue for the MA. They appreciate the flexibility of these experiences that they believe can allow them to better express creativity in their projects. They acknowledge that this is a new direction for the department and that the department is still working through processes to help students toward that end. Few have actually pursued alternatives to the traditional thesis. Moreover, because students are coming from more conventional intellectual environments they have trouble adjusting to a much more open and flexible academic context.
- F. As stated in section C.f. above, the graduate students generally feel very supported in terms of their academic and professional growth. In particular, students feel as if the program offers clear pathways for careers in teaching since they see many former MAs teaching in the program and since there are other paid and unpaid opportunities to teach while they are still in the graduate program. The students were also very appreciative of the newly set up iLearn tailored to their needs as graduate students.
- G. What plans are described to address any challenges or areas of growth
- a. Graduation rate has improved and is better than the university's because of faculty's commitment and involvement beyond their call of duty.

## 2.4 Faculty

- A. In the past 10 years, there has been a shift in culture and leadership. The younger faculty has created a culture of openness to professional development and innovation. With focus on GE, they are building a strong department with high enrollments and writing grants to develop programs that would help faculty to align with the program PLOs. ASPIRE, for example, provides stipends for lecturers to attend professional development workshops and to attend program planning retreats.
- B. The faculty is ethnically diverse and has both men and women in leadership roles. Only three faculty are not yet tenured while older faculty are FERPing. Faculty expertise is wide-ranging; however, there is a need for a queer studies faculty to work with MA

students who are working on queer projects. Currently, a queer lecturer is fulfilling this need of advising and guest lecturing in other classes on queer topics. It also appears that students would like a social scientist to offer courses on Southeast Asian Identities such as Vietnamese American Identities and Cambodian American Identities.

- C. The engagement of tenured and tenure-track faculty in scholarly work is solid and their wide-ranging services to the university and beyond may be underreported (e.g., housing homeless students); serving as dissertation or thesis committee members for students at other universities; they still have to mentor so many alumni and the university needs to consider how the university can support the alumni as well as current students.
- D. Workload for all faculty (TTK and lecturers) is exacerbated by students' socioeconomic and mental health issues due to limited services and programs offered by the university to address these needs. This is a matter we have raised in previous sections but deserves repeating here.
- E. While the differences in power and pay between lecturers and TTK faculty are a structural problem of the CSU, AAS faculty tried their best to include lecturers in program planning and course creation. The precarity of lecturers' lives; however, need a special means for lecturers' concerns to be freely communicated to the Chair. Perhaps the CFA can play a role of liaison to the chair to relay the concerns of lecturers. Lecturers can vote on their own representatives to meet with the CFA liaison once a month for concerns to be addressed. Another suggestion is to conduct a yearly anonymous survey of lecturers' needs and concerns.
  - a. Speaking with lecturers, they were not given a basic orientation when they were first hired. A "handbook" or list of resources to know who are their shop steward or lecturer representative is important; who they need to talk to understand their benefits and entitlement; and who are the people they need to contact for different academic concerns such as online course development tools, day-to-day course management or syllabi consultations.
  - b. The professional expertise that the lecturers bring to the job was sometimes not maximized. Lecturers express a sense of powerlessness in decision-making processes with respect to the curriculum despite attempts to include their perspectives.
- F. We have identified some challenges with respect to the quality of online teaching in previous sections (see 2.1.D above).
- G. There seems to be a good balance across faculty commitments to teaching, research and service. Indeed, the strong culture of community-engagement and to student support beyond the classroom may not be adequately measured by conventional metrics and thus how commitments impact faculty workload is difficult to quantify.
- H. Faculty recruitment plans, based on site visit, is clearly tied to curricular and programmatic needs, student success goals as well as trends in the field of Asian American Studies.
- I. There are informal peer mentoring and the chair meets with faculty going up for promotion to guide them through the process. Junior faculty has also developed their own peer support networks for promotion. There are opportunities for informal "training" to participate in faculty governance among TTK faculty members. Lecturers have some interest in pursuing a career path in universities but the possibilities are not fully articulated. On one hand, TTK faculty indicate that lecturer positions should just

be a stepping stone, on the other hand, lecturers may not have initially had an interest in university teaching as a career but came to develop a passion and commitment to it.

## 2.5 Resources

- A. Two of its faculty have won the national Community Engaged Scholar Award from the Association for Asian American Studies but to what extent these were accounted for as “resources” in the self-study or advertised on the AAS website is limited. It appears that the faculty can be important resources for connecting students and the university to their networks of community organizations but this may not be utilized well. For example, PEP (Pin@y Educational Partnerships) and other programs were not discussed enough but our sense is that they are faculty-generated programs that have trained a large network of Asian American-minded professionals and leaders that can be better built upon at the departmental level. We noted that AAS generates some CEL money and that it continues to be a primary source for funding office supplies and student assistant stipends.
- B. Sustainability is still an issue given the fact that the faculty is overworked providing extra non-teaching labor. The AANAPISI grant that starts ASPIRE has jumpstarted many projects to support students and provide professional development for faculty, especially lecturers. This helps the program to align with the PLOs. ASPIRE has also provided more study space for students on campus. We are happy to hear that the university will work with AAS to institutionally support the many services that AAS and ASPIRE are doing when AANAPISI funding runs dry.
- C. Support for online courses is inconsistent; last minute program changes without sufficient support; faculty have basically taken it upon themselves to figure out how to make the technology work better for pedagogical purposes; peer support among the faculty (without support for that work; unpaid labor) occurs because technical support is not sufficient.
- D. Office space of the chair is small and there is one Administrative Analyst/Specialist to handle all administrative matters for the department including budget, schedules of classes, student evaluations and records, management of paperwork to hire students and faculty, helping in event coordination including room reservation and food ordering, and day-to-day operations. The Admin. Analyst has two work-study students to help her. She has a cubicle in an office shared with other coordinators in cubicles. Having been in the department for 15 years, she is seasoned to handle new challenges that arise from changing rules and regulations. One of the constant challenge is handling all small and big projects resources that often go through the department as general fund.
- E. The university needs to hire more mental health workers who are culturally competent to address API student needs. It also needs to provide culturally sensitive materials and workers at the Career Center.
- F. Currently, faculty voted to use operation cost to hire IAs and use their extension money on operation costs. This means that sometimes, faculty has to buy their own papers and cartridges. We encourage finding out who is taking your extended education courses to better meet this population’s needs and increase your source of revenues.
- G. We suggest more evaluation of ways in which resources could be reallocated to improve operations or that operations could be changed to better use existing resources. We commend that there is more transparency with the budget and encourage continuous transparency practices at all levels.

## 2.6 The Program's Conclusions, Plans, and Goals

Overall, we believe that the program's conclusions, goals and plans, specifically the 5 strategic goals they have identified for themselves to be accomplished over the next 5 years are very well aligned with its self-study and our assessment. We summarize with commendations of your achievements and provide specific recommendations with respect to each of the five strategic goals below.

## 3.0 COMMENDATIONS OF STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1. SFSU AAS is an exemplary program that often serves as a standard bearer for other AAS programs with its cutting-edge theories, pedagogical practices, and advocacy for the community. It provides the largest variety of in-depth courses on American ethnic groups and Asian American topics compared to other AAS departments and programs in the nation.
2. AAS is the strongest department (in terms of size and enrollments) in its college and shares its resources with other programs (e.g., gave up faculty line on Pacific Islander Studies to RSS).
3. The self-study articulates a clear and collective vision of faculty in carrying out the mission of Ethnic Studies and in aligning their work with the PLOs. We are impressed at efforts to integrate lecturers in the planning process.
4. It nurtures highly impactful practices and programs (First Year Experience; ASPIRE; PEP) and produces exemplary students who graduate at a higher rate and have major contributions to the community.
5. It provides a wide-ranging curriculum that covers a full spectrum of GE courses. According to [an article in \*Inside Higher Ed\* on July 9, 2018 by Ashley Smith](#), Ethnic Studies courses help in retention and graduation of students. This means AAS is serving the larger campus community on retention and graduation.
6. Specifically, it has filled major gaps in the delivery of orientation and guidance for first generation college students. In addition to academic mentoring, faculty provides mental health services to highly socioeconomically stressed out students. Aside from Academic advisement, faculty also provides career planning and financial aid to students.
7. Faculty provides exceptional mentorship to students. Survey of alumni and conversations with current undergrad and grad students confirm that students are very satisfied with the program and faculty mentorship, academic advisement, counseling, and financial assistance.
8. Opportunities that create a career path toward the field of education include the IA program and the exceptional Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP) program as an education career pipeline. IA is one of the first opportunities for students to be socialized into the education field.
9. Over the years AAS has brought down the time to graduate for both undergraduate and graduate students. AAS majors graduate in a timely manner and at an exceptionally high rate. About 90% of majors are satisfied with career planning from AAS.
10. AAS faculty has garnered major awards, especially from the Association of Asian American Studies, the professional organization of the discipline, and they collaborate in innovative projects to address community needs.

## 4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

### 4.1 Department

In the next five years, AAS has prioritized these five strategic goals. The reviewers agree and have additional comments.

1. *Hire faculty to meet growing GE demand, to follow disciplinary trends, and to replace retiring faculty.*
  - Education and/or Youth (this faculty position has been approved to be hired in 2019-20). We concur given that 50% of the graduates go into the field of education. We recommend working closely with the College Dean to receive financial and other support to start a pipeline for AAS students to go into K-12 education as well as support credentialing in Ethnic Studies given local and state-wide efforts to mandate Ethnic Studies across the K-12 system.
  - Gender and/or Sexuality. We recommend Queer & Trans Studies specifically because many of the MA students are working on queer projects, there is interest in this topic among undergraduate students and this is an important area for the field of Asian American Studies. Currently, there is no TTK faculty expertise in this area. The program relies heavily on a lecturer to teach courses on this topic. It would also be advisable to hire another queer-identified faculty member with queer & trans studies expertise. Given the reality that many API students, regardless of major, tend to seek non-academic support (i.e. economic, emotional, mental health support) from the faculty, a queer-identified faculty member may be helpful to students who are queer identified.
  - Filipino American History and/or Cultural Studies. The Filipino line needs to be replaced and expanded because of the large population of Filipinos on campus and in the surrounding community.
  - Based on students needs and the growing field, two Southeast Asian American Studies or Refugee Studies (from a social science perspective) experts who specialize in Cambodian American studies and Vietnamese American studies would enrich the department ethnic-specific strength. These two areas can be combined with the Transpacific/Diasporic/Hemispheric Studies.
  - To reflect the region and community needs, we also recommend AAS to consider finding an expert on race and technology/gaming or on race, technology and entrepreneurship to take advantage of the Silicon Valley phenomenon.
  - A position in urban studies/sustainability/environmental studies would also respond to local needs (housing crisis; gentrification; environmental racism) and create more opportunities for community-based research.
  - Given the cross-cultural and multiracial social movements that are taking place, SFSU can benefit from have a scholar on social movements that has ties to community-based organizations and can offer students opportunities for service learning and/or internships.
  - To reflect the growing diversity of the field, AAS should also consider a scholar on race and disability studies. Perhaps a psychologist researching on Asian American mental health issues and understanding disability studies.

2. *Strengthen curriculum to follow disciplinary trends and to better prepare students for commitment to social justice, careers, and lifelong learning.*

- Student surveys:
  - i. Alumni and graduating seniors: To ensure that PLOs are being adequately addressed, we recommend not only continuing to survey alumni, but to establish specific timelines for exit interviews for graduating seniors (this can be done, perhaps, at the end of a capstone course or seminars).
- Current students should be surveyed regularly:
  - i. The reviewers note that surveys or focus-groups of current students and even instructional aides (IAs) assessing their learning and achievement can be conducted in the future to better ascertain student needs and to help shape program planning
- Lecturer surveys:
  - i. We recommend that the department conduct an annual survey of lecturers to help in planning and enhancing the program;
  - ii. We suggest that AAS explore having a union rep for lecturers meet regularly with the chair to address lecturers' collective workplace and related issues since these have impacts on curriculum delivery
- Undergraduate Curriculum
  - i. More AAS and Ethnic Studies focused course experiences:
    1. Given students' input, we suggest that AAS allow for one upper-division course section to be a lower cap and be limited to AAS majors, minors and other ES students. Such a course must be face-to-face because there are only 3 senior courses that are not GE and students want the opportunities for more in-depth and nuanced discussions.
    2. We recommend too that FSR be lowered especially in the above upper-division courses. Given the AAS' high enrollments overall, it seems like this is doable.
    3. We recommend that AAS consider having more Ethnic Studies courses count toward the major.
  - ii. Clearer education/teaching pipeline:
    1. To address the above point (i), we suggest providing discussion sections with MA students as facilitators for AAS and ES majors and minors in upper-division courses. Training of MA students to be discussion leaders would also be a good opportunity to socialize them into the education field, which is something they desire. These trainings of MA students or even advanced undergrad majors and minors can also make more efficient the use of IA funds and ensure a clearer pathway into the profession of teaching for undergrad and graduate students.
  - iii. Policy and community engagement pipeline:
    1. AAS is poised to work with legislators and policy makers on local issues given faculty's deep level of community-engagement. Indeed, faculty community-engagement work should be better highlights on the department's website and mechanisms that would allow students to plug into those projects would be ideal.

Perhaps collaborate with the other programs in the college to create a race research and training institute that would train professionals (tech, political) on race issues at the workplace or with specific districts with high populations of working people of color. This institute can provide students with research opportunities and professional development into HR or political work.

- iv. Graduate Curriculum
  - v. Aside from the research method course that is more of a survey and about research design than an opportunity to practice different methods. Make it a two-semester series course with methodologies in the first semester and practices of various research methods in the second. This can be scaffold into the MA thesis project.
  - vi. The Students to Faculty Ratio (SFR) used for funding graduate studies program should be different from the SFR used for funding undergraduate studies program. Graduate courses demand a low enrollment cap and should not be achieved at the expense of increasing SFR for undergraduate courses.
  - vii. Do not change schedule of classes last minute because that can throw off students' plan and the scaffold curriculum.
3. *Ensure student success with 100% of our majors having firm career plans by*
    - We support all of the proposed plans with the additional recommendation regarding education/teaching and policy/community engaged pathways discussed above.
  4. *Promote high impact practices in our pedagogy in every class, especially*
    - We recommend that online courses be reviewed to determine which ones may be better accomplished in hybrid formats and/or converted back to traditional, face-to-face courses.
    - Also, we recommend that AAS try to collaborate with Asian American Studies programs and departments in the region on study tours, joint workshops, etc to strengthen best pedagogical practices.
  5. *Strengthen a sense of family and community among students, faculty, staff and alumni through*
    - We recommend that as part of its work in advocating for Ethnic Studies locally and statewide, AAS make plans to play an intentional and active role in the CSU Ethnic Studies Council if it is not already doing so as well as the Ethnic Studies Now coalition.

Additional recommendation on resource generation

- We note that AAS has quite a number of CEL students. We recommend that AAS survey these students to see what sort of the demand for these classes is and capitalize on that interest.
- Additionally, we recommend that AAS build on its national reputation, its alumni base, and extensive community networks to strategize about fundraising.

## 4.2 University

Beyond the specific recommendations that we offer to AAS, we do believe that based on the insights we gleaned from students, lecturers and faculty, there are college, or better university level recommendations that we would make:

- A. The university needs to take a lead in surveying API students (or students more broadly) to assess socioeconomic and mental health challenges they are facing, to determine to what extent existing university academic, mental health and etc. services are culturally appropriate.
- B. The university needs to take a lead in surveying faculty to determine what percentage of their workload is actually devoted to non-academic concerns, how much they devote to community engagement and how much they provide service to the field by servicing alumni and students from other institutions. We are concerned that the kinds of labor performed by AAS and perhaps Ethnic Studies faculty more broadly is not adequately accounted for. The university can support these faculty members, who are likely to also be members of underrepresented groups, by generating data that compares their workloads to other members of the faculty and introducing the support (whether it is in the form of salary compensation or other kinds of support) necessary to ensure an equitable division of labor across the faculty.