

November 2, 2018

To: Provost Jennifer Summit, Dean Lori Beth Way, Dean Amy Sueyoshi, and the Academic Program Review Committee

From: Russell Jeung, Chair of Asian American Studies

Re: Response to the External Review of AAS

The Department of Asian American Studies appreciates the careful and thorough report made by our external reviewers, Prof. Robyn Rodriguez of UC Davis and Prof. Gina Masquemay of CSU Northridge. We especially are grateful for the acknowledgment that our program is a “standard bearer for other AAS programs with its cutting-edge theories, pedagogical practices, and advocacy for the community” and that we have developed “a clear and collective vision” of the faculty.

The department met to review the external review, and make the following responses to the review’s recommendations, which are italicized.

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.*

This position is now open to be filled.

- *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.*

We agree.

- *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.*

We agree, and may expand the disciplinary focus of the position depending on how other faculty hires fill needed areas in our program. This position is also significant because a large number of Filipino students are actively involved in student organizations on campus, for which our Filipino American faculty have historically served as faculty advisors. A large percentage of our MA students are also pursuing research in Filipino American studies and need support of tenure-track faculty.

- *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.*

The department considered each of these recommendations, and ranked the Urban Studies/Sustainability Studies and Disability Studies/Mental Health as the top priorities for our department following the four recommended positions.

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*

We agree with these recommendations, and also plan to work with the CFA representative for lectures to host annual "Know Your Entitlements" workshops to make transparent our hiring process.

- *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.*

We concur with these recommendations, and will consider adding a Special Topics course and/or an Education class to create another class for the majors.

- 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.*

We will examine further ways to provide MA students with teaching opportunities, depending on the space and funding for discussion sessions.

- 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.

We are open to establishing a race research and training institute if given university funding, but we do not currently have the time to make this recommendation a priority. We will work on updating our website to highlight our community engagement 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 scaffolded 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.*

We believe that our MA curriculum is appropriate as currently constructed, but will make other methods courses on campus available to students. We agree that funding of our graduate program should account for the advising we do.

- 3. Ensure student success with 100% of our majors having firm career plans by*
 - o We support all of the proposed plans with the additional recommendation regarding education/teaching and policy/community engaged pathways discussed above.*

Our department's new career training efforts have been implemented this semester.

- 4. Promote high impact practices in our pedagogy in every class, especially*
 - o 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.*
 - o 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.*

Our proposed online course policy, which is still under discussion, requires that our online courses be QLT-certified and meet CSU coursematch standards. We will host meetings with other AAS programs in the region to support the development of AAS.

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.*

We are taking a proactive leadership role in advocating for Ethnic Studies locally and statewide, starting with our legislative summit in March 2019.

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.*

We are exploring expanding our online courses, including an online AAS BA, in relation to our 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.*

We agree, and recommend that the University work with API Student Services to conduct the API student survey.

