

To: Academic Program Review Committee
From: Department of Africana Studies
Subject: AY 17-18 Program Review Response

In its 50th year, our nation's first Department of Black/ Africana Studies at a four-year university concurs with the recommendations of the external program reviewers. The external reviewers meticulously outline how the Department of Africana Studies continued to advance, innovate and even lead efforts for student degree completion and success in spite of systemic underfunding and other barriers presented through neglect over the past decade. The external review explicitly outlines how the department has met and/or surpassed each goal outlined in previous program reviews. The reviewers also charge the SF State university campus leadership outside of the department with their responsibilities in joint growth and development that helps the campus and CSU mission. These recommendations are even more urgent and salient given published research on how much Africana studies supports student success, wellbeing and degree-completion— areas in which recent CSU reports have noted our unique effectiveness (cf., “the Africana Studies Effect,” 2018) on positive outcomes concerning these issues of great need. As such, **the department concurs with the recommendations of the external reviewers.** The reviewers state that the recommendations “for the university stress a triple requirement for actualized support as indicated in our original meeting with administrators: policy, resources and programmatic initiatives.” That is, many of these requests were in the last external review, yet they remain unfulfilled by campus leadership; therefore, we request urgent attention to the following items cited directly from the program review report:

- full-time professional clerical/administrative support; [*that requires an additional part-time hire of 20 hours per week*];
- additional support for Africana Studies research and travel critical to the work and mission of the department and university and consistent with *concerns for equity and the awesome burdens lack of funds place on junior and senior faculty concerned with issues of retention, promotion and currency*;
- *placing the department on a priority list of departments to receive increased space when it becomes available and that innovative thinking go into creating temporary alternatives which relieve the restrictive cramping now experienced*;
- **support for the Africana Studies proposal for a stand-alone M.A. critical to its continued and expanded serving the interests and needs of the students and discipline**, and support for an eventual doctoral program with Africana Studies, as part of the priority to reaffirm the historical status and role of Africana Studies at SFSU.

The external reviewers continue, “in light of the above recommendations and in support of the constantly developmental needs of the department,”

- **allocation of four new hires in vital areas of curricular enhancement as determined by the department**; [The Department has requested hires in Africana political economy, Black queer theory; Africana biological and/or physical sciences; continental African archeology and/or historiographer]
- **added resources given to the department in its continuing advancement of faculty and student technological competence and engagement**; [This is an area in which the

department has been an invisible leader concerning CSU-wide initiatives and policy; Chair notes that while there have been certain areas of growth and support, severe technical equipment and software neglect was uncovered in AY 17-18 with an outstanding list of service requests initiated in August 2017 that *were not fully* addressed until February 2018, and many of those original requests remain unresolved. This digital divide impacts productivity and it is not optimal for the Africana Studies Department's full participation in technological governance and support systems—such as “footprints” and other ticket-management tools utilized through service@sfsu.edu.]

- **development of additional ways to promote Africana Studies in terms of its unique history and its distinct and valuable contribution to the academic and social project; and finally,**
- **a major and definitive series of events in collaboration and cooperation to mark the historical milestone of 50 years of the *discipline*, using on-campus, commercial and social media, to advertise and engage over an extended period of time before the culminating series of events. Included in this recommendation is that the Department of Africana Studies be designated a SFSU historical site, enhanced by the university's embrace of its uniqueness in both academic and social activist history.**

The reviewers note that the self-study gives evidence of the department's action on recommendations from the previous program review. They list many achievements, including but not limited to:

- name change to Africana Studies;
- development of capstone courses;
- development of womanist emphasis;
- M.A. degree Africana Studies proposal;
- designation of robust undergraduate advising procedure;
- technological literacy curricular requirements and continued innovation concerning related departmental technology policies and praxis;
- increased collaboration across departments [and colleges] in several significant areas;
- efforts in “developing innovative pathways for students to double major and minor in Africana Studies across the university”;
- faculty awards, external recognition of faculty effectiveness and distinction in research, teaching and service.

The reviewers applauded the Africana Studies faculty and further recommend the department to continue innovating. The reviewers also urged that the department continue seeking funding from the university for that which has gone uncompensated and/or is in dire need of investment.

Indeed, the Department of Africana Studies has consistently produced significant and empirical evidence concerning its salience to SF State campus and CSU-wide goals concerning equitable degree completion and student success. The Africana Studies Department is the platinum standard concerning the mission of the CSU-wide Student Success and Graduation Initiatives. Prior to opportunity for funding programs, such as the First Year Experience, this

Department launched research-based pilot programs with Residential Life and Housing forming first year experience floors, which linked dormitory living and learning communities with lower-division GE courses in Africana studies. The Hiphop Living and Learning Floor was paired with “Hip Hop Workshop: Hiphop, Globalization and the Politics of Identity” in 2013, with the inaugural floor opening in Fall 2014. The Afrocentric Living and Learning Community was the product of student demand in 2015, it is paired with the lower-division GE D1 requirement, Africana Studies 101 (Introduction to Africana Studies), and it opened in Fall of 2017. Both floors are to continue in AY 18-19.

The reviewers concluded with the statement:

This review and report was carried out and written with the distinct understanding gained from faculty, students and university administrators that there is a shared commitment to the sustainment, support and advancement of Africana Studies as a university, communal and public good. In order for Africana Studies to continuously advance and serve the needs and interests of the students, contribute meaningfully and distinctively to the university’s mission and stay on the cutting edge of the discipline, active and effective cooperation between all is vital, even indispensable. We are confident that all interests can be served and established goals achieve collaborative and cooperative process and practice. The will is there to be strengthened; the work is there to be increased; and the goals are there to be achieved.

They continue:

*In conclusion, both the Department of Africana Studies and the university stand at a **critical juncture** in their shared history and relationship to the first Black/Africana Studies program and department in the U.S. It is the 50th Anniversary and a context for bold and creative thinking and planning in the move forward. It is, of course, the shared responsibility to live up to its claim to radical and innovative thinking and actions and “make definitive things happen”. Thus, it is our considered judgment that collaborating and working cooperatively will not only allow the department and university to seize the initiative and **take full advantage of this historical moment, but also advance the shared goals and mission of the department and university**. We are pleased to offer this review as a contribution to this process and its shared goals and are greatly impressed by the possibilities in it for the department, the university and the discipline we share.*

The Department has proven how creativity and talent are galvanized for growth – even in absence of support and partnership. Imagine the possibilities we could achieve when these recommendations are affirmed and implemented. We look forward to a response from APRC.