

## **Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo American Studies, B.A., M.A. Programs**

The 2014-2015 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for the B.A. and M.A. Programs in American Studies concluded with a culmination meeting on February 19, 2016.

During the meeting, the program was commended for its significant accomplishments. The department is a national model, which is consistent with the university's mission and strategic plan. The Dean also described the program with the word "elegance", noting the healthy outlook of the department and the faculty's thoughtfulness, collegiality, and openness. The most notable accomplishments include:

1. The Department of American Studies is truly a model of excellence, both within the College of H&SS and on a national scale.
2. The department exhibits a remarkable degree of community and collegiality, offering faculty and students numerous opportunities to interact and be involved.
3. Faculty have published a significant body of research and have received local, regional, and national honors for teaching and community engagement.
4. The department offers an impressive array of classes, including a number of newly created courses that support the transnational turn within the broader discipline.
5. The department has made significant progress in implementing program-level assessment since its previous PPR.

The major recommendations and concerns raised through the PPR process were discussed. Suggestions on how to address them were provided:

1. Internship program:
  - The faculty discussed the intentions of establishing and expanding internship programs: 1) To provide career advisement to current students; 2) To allow students to demonstrate marketable skills; 3) To support university's initiatives on HIPs.
  - The faculty voiced that the major challenges are to expand awareness of the internship opportunities to the students, and to increase the number and types of internship sites to the students. The department is currently working with CICE and experienced departments such as Psychology, History, and Sociology to identify appropriate sites.
  - The faculty stated that there is sufficient student demand to build a strong internship program, but the program should not be required for all students, as student needs are different.
2. Student outreach:
  - For the B.A. program, as students rarely declare AMST as majors when they enter the university, introducing the program to students early on is critical. The department is working with IRAS to identify local high schools and community colleges to reach out to potential students. The department is also showcasing alumni accomplishments on the

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department website to help students understand the major. The department is also using EAB as a tool to identify and reach out to undeclared students.

- For the M.A. program, the department stated that many applicants come from current B.A. students. The faculty, particularly the graduate advisor, are actively engaged in recruitment of internal and external applicants. The department voiced the desire for more in-state tuition waivers, as well as earlier availabilities of these waivers. The number of in-state tuition waivers are very few, in comparison to the demands. But both the university and the college are working to improve the process so that availabilities of these waivers are notified sooner.
- The department was asked about its interest in international students. The faculty stated that the M.A. program regularly gets Fulbright international students, and has some partnerships with foreign institutions already. The department is encouraged to work with the college and the UEE/IPGE to facilitate outreach to international students.

### 3. M.A. program curriculum:

- The faculty stated that they make regular updates to the M.A. exam reading list.
- When asking about the portfolio option for M.A. students, the faculty stated that there has not been much student demand. The program is encouraged to explore existing portfolio options, e.g. English, Anthropology, to determine whether portfolio should be added as another option for M.A. students (in addition to comprehensive exam and thesis).

### 4. Curriculum rotation plan:

- The department has a clear curriculum rotation plan that students receive clear advisement on. The faculty ensure that every required course is offered every semester, with multiple sections/dates/times to accommodate student needs.
- The department offers at least 8 upper level electives per year, but do not have a fixed set of elective courses, because flexibility helps them accommodate faculty leaves, student interests, new faculty hires, and B.A. students who are transitioning into the M.A. program.

### 5. "Closing the loop":

- The department has a robust tradition in assessment, and conversations on assessment and "closing the loop" are ongoing. The department reported that only "small loops" have been identified so far, and they have been closed.
- The mid-level and senior-level course instructors are also regularly being asked to report observed issues, and changes have been made to address them.

### 6. Space requests:

- UH210A has been assigned to the department as conference space, which provided the much needed community space for students.
- The classroom space is a bigger issue. The current classroom allocation does not accommodate the large number of students and course sections needed.
- The college is currently re-evaluating within the college on college allocation, and the university will also consider the department's concerns.

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- The department is suggested to offer more Friday and Saturday classes, when classrooms are more available. The department stated that Friday only classes have been offered, but did not fill. The college recommended the department to explore the possibility of offering “sets” of GE courses with other colleges on Fridays and Saturdays. Possible partners include COMM and AFAM. The department is encouraged to talk with the Dean’s office to explore this approach further.

### **7. Faculty support:**

- The department requested 3-unit release time to coordinate the internship program. The college will take this request into consideration when working with the college budget committee, but the department is also encouraged to explore what other departments that offer internships do to sustain the program.
- The faculty currently receive \$1100 per faculty per year on travel (\$600 from the college, \$500 from the department), which is not sufficient. The college discussed the option of international travel grants, which is competitive. The university acknowledged that this is a campus-wide issue, and will strive to address.
- The college stated that there are a lot of sabbatical requests from faculty, which may not all be funded. The university is anticipating the release of impact statements in the next two weeks, which would provide a clearer picture of how many sabbatical requests can be funded for next year. The faculty stressed the importance for post-tenure sabbatical assurance.
- The department plans to hire 2 faculty for next year, and the college has forwarded the request to the Provost’s office.

### **8. Library requests:**

- The department is encouraged to work with other departments on campus who share similar needs on books, newspapers, magazines, etc. when contacting the library for resource access requests.

### **9. GE:**

- The faculty felt strongly that GE courses enrich student experiences, help them realize their talent, and broaden their major/career choices. The minimal unit requirement (60 units) for taking upper GE courses would limit student options greatly for programs such as AMST.
- The university acknowledged the concern, and stated that it will strive to implement policies while minimizing impact on the individual programs.
- The department and the college requested early conversations (perhaps in the form of a working group) on relevant policies. The university agreed to continue to engage departments and colleges in such conversations.