

To: Sheryl Fontaine, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

From: Elaine Lewinnek, Acting Chair of the Department of American Studies

Date: September 10, 2015

Re: Chair's Response to Dean's Evaluation for Department of American Studies Program Performance Review

Thank you for your response to our comprehensive Program Performance Review in AY 2014-2015. We appreciate your recognition that we are a national leader in our field. Like you, we are proud of our department's strong record of excellent teaching, scholarship, and service to the College and the campus. We agree that our Learning Goals and Outcomes are well-developed, aligned to the curriculum, and sustainable. We also concur that our active and enthusiastic departmental culture has served us, our students, and the college well.

We welcome the Dean's suggestions to refine and develop our existing strengths. Indeed, some of the Dean's suggestions are items that we have already addressed since the visit of our PPR reviewers last spring. We are glad to know that the Dean and our department are thinking along similar lines.

Specifically, the Dean recommends that we:

- Develop a formal 3-year curriculum plan
 - We already do this informally and need to reflect carefully on how much formalization would serve our students.
- Look for further opportunities to "close the loop" in our assessment process
 - This is part of our ongoing assessment work and will continue.
- Refine the M.A. reading list
 - We began this process in Spring 2015, after the conclusion of the PPR process. We have formed committees who are currently sharing their recommendations to revise the MA exam.
- Explore ways to increase the visibility of our M.A. program
 - This, too, is an ongoing effort, served through multiple channels, including our faculty's prominence in their scholarly subfields, our department's growing presence on social media such as Facebook and Twitter, our connections to the Fulbright program, and hosting extensive campus visits for prospective students. The graduate chair and graduate studies committee will review our strategies for deepening recruitment.

- Partner with the H&SS success team to reach out to undeclared majors and local community college students, as well as to better track students once they become majors.
 - We look forward to doing so, as well as using the new EAB tool to also reach out to undeclared students and our majors. We hope to build on our existing efforts to recruit majors -- including through our Community College Advisement Board -- by further reaching out to counselors at our top community college feeder schools. We note that our external reviewers suggested designating release time for an Outreach Coordinator and would welcome that.
- Consult with the Center for Internships and Community Engagement to develop our internship program
 - We have already benefited from their ongoing partnership.
- Offer release time to the internship/HIP coordinators
 - We hope to do so if funds are available.
- Leverage our existing strengths as a center for student research and other recognized High Impact Practices
 - We look forward to doing so as we continue to share the story of the quality teaching of our department.
- Seek assistance from other offices in building on our already-effective communication with alumni
 - We look forward to doing this, especially to inform alumni of news such as the new Mike and Lucy Steiner Study Abroad Scholarship. After the conclusion of the PPR study, we also began to deepen our alumni connections through a new Alumni Profiles section on our webpage: http://amst.fullerton.edu/resources/alumni_profiles.asp
- Consider modifying the department's practice of having all faculty members serve as advisors
 - We discussed this with the Dean and reached consensus that our existing practices continue to work well, but we look forward to continuing the discussion, especially as we explore how to best reach students in the two semesters before graduation, to make sure they graduate in a timely manner. We will continue to ensure that all faculty advisors are up-to-date on changes in graduation requirements and new technologies for tracking student progress.
- Align our departmental hiring priorities with those of the provost
 - The university has supported all of our recent hires and we hope it will continue to do so. As our external PPR reviewers recommended, we expect to hire one or two additional tenure-track faculty members in the next two to four years, especially since one faculty member retired in 2015, another retires in 2016, and two others have begun the FERP program.
- Ensure that students who serve as graders complete FERPA training, while maintaining a careful distinction between students in a pedagogy course and Unit 11 Academic Student Employees
 - We do this and are happy to share our syllabi for students in AMST 596, American Studies Teaching Tutorial.
- Continue to seek additional space for student meetings

- After we met with the Dean, we began working with Paul Levesque, Brad Starr, and our ASCs to strategize the use of UH-210a while we wait for better space in UH to become available to support our enthusiastic American Studies community. Paul Levesque has noted that in the university space report for 6/29/14, UH-210a has been assigned to AMST and CPRL, but our ASCs report that other departments and units housed in UH and elsewhere still request to use that room every week and we have been accommodating them. It may be possible for those other groups to hold their meetings in UH-317 so that UH-210a could be devoted solely to AMST and CPRL faculty and students. We will continue to pursue this.

Thank you again for your feedback and guidance.