



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, H-314

800 N. State College Blvd., Fullerton, CA 92831-3547 / T 657-278-3731 / F 657-278-3306

8 May 2023

To: Dean Sheryl Fontaine, College of the Humanities and Social Sciences
From: Monica Hanna, Chair, Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies
Re: Chicana and Chicano Studies Chair's Response to Program Performance Review Team

Dear Dean Fontaine,

Our department is grateful to the PPR External Review Team—Dr. Brown-Coronel, Dr. Casillas, and Dr. Revilla—for their thorough and incisive review of our department. Below, I offer some responses to the review team's insights and recommendations. These thoughts are organized according to the categories shared by the review in their review dated April 17, 2023.

Curriculum

We appreciate the committee's assessment of departmental strengths reflected in their discussions with Chicana/o Studies majors and minors. We do indeed take pride in the skills acquisition, empowerment, community commitment, and content knowledge that our students gain through their coursework and time with us as majors and minors. We also take seriously the considerations and suggestions offered by the committee in relation to overlapping courses, the low unit major, course restructuring and alignment, advising, and possible MA certificate. I believe that the observations related to overlapping courses, course restructuring and alignment, and the low unit major, all fall roughly into the same category of work of reconsidering and updating our curriculum in relation to shifts in the field, our newly constituted faculty membership, and shifts in university requirements related to majors and GEs. This is a major focus of the department at this time, as this is work that we plan to focus on in depth during the near term (and of course this is part of the ongoing work of our department as with any healthy department). Our department will be addressing all of the issues discussed in the review during our facilitated curriculum retreat at the end of the spring semester 2023, with sustained efforts from fall 2023 and beyond. Alignment and overlap are key questions that we have begun considering as we have taken on with the creation of the Area F GE requirement, and we are discussing efforts to align multi-section courses, as well as to better identify areas of overlap with a more coherent and updated curriculum map. We will also continue working on pathways through the major, prerequisites, and other key areas of consideration noted by the reviewers. In terms of the suggestion related to our major being low unit, we will certainly discuss the option of adding courses that would be major-serving only (non-GE courses) and may also discuss how partnering with other departments to recruit double-majors may be fruitful as well if we maintain a relatively low unit count. The points the majors brought up about being in mostly GE courses that are not major-specific is one that we have already started thinking through but need to continue developing as our major-density in our courses shifts with the implementation of the new Ethnic Studies GE. For now, as an administrative step, I have

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started preserving space within our GE courses for our majors specifically, first so that they do not miss out on the ability to enroll in courses because of the popularity of our GE courses, and second so that there is the possibility of having a major/minor contingent in our courses that might help in the short-term while we do larger scale curricular and major development work in the longer term.

The point about advising is one that we are also taking into consideration as our advising model continues to evolve. Next year, our department is eager to participate in the new tandem advising model spearheaded by the college of the Humanities and Social Sciences, and we know that this will be an integral step in shifting how we advise our students moving forward. We hope that this new advising structure will free all of our faculty members to participate in the advising that we do best, including mentorship, guidance on the major and major courses, career paths, graduate school, and more.

Finally, in relation to the MA degree, this is certainly an option that is on our department's (and I believe the college's) radar, in particular in relation to preparing Ethnic Studies-qualified folks for the K-12 instructor pipeline and the professoriate. This type of work will require quite a bit of capacity-building and will necessitate partnership with the college and university. Considering our current capacity, as we continue to onboard with our 50% junior faculty, the implementation of the new Area F GE which now has us serving the entire university population, and the administration of the Mellon grant for the Latinx Lab for Storytelling and Social Justice, this project is one that we can begin developing in the short term but will most likely take the majority of the longer term (short term defined as 3 years and long term defined as 7 years by PPR guidelines) to fully flesh out. We look forward to discussions within the department and at the college, university, and CSU levels regarding the creation of an MA program.

Community-Building

This section of the review highlighted some key strengths of our department in terms of community-building. We particularly appreciate the committee's reflections on the classroom as a key site of community-building, and a space where we model community-building that can be applied outside of the university. We are very proud of our faculty's commitment to community-building and inclusivity. We intend to continue to support this faculty work materially and structurally.

In relation to community-building and faculty governance, the PPR committee makes an important point that I certainly take to heart in my leadership position: "On the one hand, including junior faculty offers transparency and inclusion, but risks assigning untenured faculty with extensive administrative service of weekly meetings to update personnel guidelines. Instead, we recommend that the senior faculty update the guidelines, and invite junior scholars to give feedback twice a semester." While the DPS (Department Personnel Standards) revision process is different than described by the committee here, the committee's larger question is valid and one that I think about a lot: How do we incorporate and include our junior faculty in governance without overburdening them? This year has seen

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our department working to gain our footing in this regard with an unprecedented number of new additions to the faculty. We are doing quite a bit of informal onboarding that we are working to formalize and institutionalize (for example, the creation of RTP workshops, check-ins, and a novel DPS revision format). While we do not want to “protect” our junior faculty out of having agency in the formation of the department in which we are confident they will eventually become senior faculty, we do still want to prevent burnout to ensure that we retain their talents. As a smaller department, we do have to rely on all of our tenured and tenure-track faculty for intense service, but we certainly take the point that we need to be mindful of sustainability and retention. To that end, we had a senior faculty member take on the overall responsibility of DPS revisions this spring while maintaining a consultation structure with each faculty member (senior and junior). We also lowered the number of full faculty meetings (down to one meeting every other week). Additionally, we are having more intentional discussions at this time about committee service in relation to sustainability. This work is ongoing and I hope to create spaces whereby our faculty at all levels can express their needs and limits in order to sustain our energies for the important work ahead. We also support the committee’s recommendations regarding the need for college- and/or university-wide mentorship options for faculty specifically targeted at the retention of first-generation faculty of color and LGBTQ+ faculty.

Faculty

We deeply appreciate the committee’s positive comments related to our department’s tenured/tenure-track and lecturer faculty. We are very proud of our faculty and its growth since the last PPR period. We are grateful for their enthusiasm and commitment to the department and especially the students. Suggestions from the committee came in relation to onboarding and integration of junior faculty and lecturer faculty. We support the committee’s points about supporting untenured faculty, particularly those going up for early tenure. This may be addressed in our DPS revisions, and is also potentially something to address when it comes to committee work in thinking through the DPC’s (Department Personnel Committee) charge. Related to lecturer faculty, we wholeheartedly agree that we should better integrate the considerable talents and commitment of our lecturer faculty. We do indeed plan to continue better integrating our faculty into our departmental committees and meetings. We have already done a bit of this during AY 2022-23, for example including a lecturer in our assessment committee, but we hope to do more and continue empowering faculty through our ongoing pedagogical workshop development, committees, and more. We hope to institute more information sharing as well, either through lecturer-specific meetings, or the integration of lecturers in regular faculty meetings that have until now been tenured/tenure-track faculty only.

Governance and Department Operations

We take seriously the committee’s recommendation that we institute policies and procedures. Indeed, this is one of the focus items that emerged from our Summer 2022 strategic planning meeting. We have already done considerable work in updating the DPS with Dr. Nuñez shepherding us through the process with full T/TT faculty input. We will consider the committee’s recommendation to invite junior faculty feedback as part of the DPC’s

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committee obligations. We have also already instituted one of the committee's recommendations by creating a compensation structure for participation in this summer's departmental retreat.

We can also certainly work to create a better timeline with manageable goals related to department meetings. In Fall 2022, we had an experimental semester of weekly departmental meetings that we recognized would not be a standard, but rather an exception as we gained our footing. In Spring 2023, we went down to meeting every other week. We will most likely stick with meeting every other week, as meeting any less frequently would lead to a considerable lag in our ability to make decisions and stay on top of the important changes that are happening at the moment.

We also take to heart the committee's recommendation for email guidelines and department community agreements. This is a discussion we started this year and need to concretize in AY 2023-24. We very much appreciate the committee's sharing of sample agreements and communication guidelines.

In relation to staffing, we certainly support the committee's point that we need additional staffing to be able to carry out basic functions and grow. The PPR committee visited us during an especially challenging staffing moment when we had already been without a permanent ASCII for several months. Unfortunately, the situation has not changed and has in fact gotten worse, as we lost the temporary assistance we had from a valuable colleague. We are now down to no ASCII and only an ASAI and student assistants (many of the latter of whom will be done this month). We will be relying very much on college and university help in regards to finding staffing solutions that will allow us to grow and alleviate the burnout we are feeling, particularly at the leadership level but throughout the department as we are taking on considerable administrative duties and/or having to reduce our activities because of staffing limitations.

Again, we are very grateful to the review committee for their thoughtful consideration and care in visiting with our department constituencies and reviewing our submitted materials. We look forward to continuing dialogue as we continue to bolster our strengths and address areas for improvement indicated by the review.

Best regards,

Monica D. Hanna
Chair and Associate Professor, Chicana and Chicano Studies

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