



College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Office of the Dean
P.O. Box 6850
Fullerton, CA 92834-6850
T (657) 278-3528 / F (657) 657-278-5898

To: Su Swarat, Associate Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness

From: Dr. Sheryl Fontaine, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences and Associate Dean of Student Relations, Dr. Jessica Stern

Date: July 28, 2023

Subject: Dean's Summary and Evaluation of the BA in Ethnic Studies, Chicana/o Studies

The Department of Chicana/o Studies celebrated its 50 year anniversary on campus during the pandemic. This is a critically important department to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the university. They currently have eight tenure/tenure-track faculty. Since their last review they have added three new tenure-track faculty lines and gained four new faculty members who bring with them exciting new research agendas (They released one faculty member, Dr. Patricia Pérez, to an administrative role). They offer a BA in Ethnic Studies, Chicana/o Studies Concentration, a minor, and a graduate-level course that is part of the History MA concentration in Chicana/o Studies. As of the Spring 2023 census they have 31 majors and 84 minors. In that same semester, they filled 1575 seats in their courses, a testament to the essential role they play across the General Education curriculum.

Dean Sheryl Fontaine, Associate Dean Jessica Stern, Chair Monica Hanna and Vice Chair Eddy Alvarez met on May 18 to discuss the Self Study, External Review Team (ERT) report, and Department's response to that report. In the remainder of this memo we record and build on that discussion about the department's short and long term priorities.

Curriculum

Much of our conversation on May 18 focused on curriculum, which will be their strategic focus this coming year. When we met, they were preparing for an early-June retreat on curriculum. The department is dedicated to revising the curriculum to incorporate the specialties of their new faculty. The \$1.2 million Mellon Mays Grant for the Latinx Labs will catapult some of these curricular plans, with courses being designed in Dressing Latinx, Healing Justice, Jotería Oral Histories, Bioethics, Digital Mapping, and Non-Fiction Narratives. As the External Review Team noted, the department embraces the Lab, and junior faculty are eager to increase their involvement. The embrace of community-engaged, public-facing research and teaching is in line a broader mission in the College to promote research and teaching that connects to our local community and values the



expertise of our students—the majority of whom are Latinx. We also see a great opportunity to support in-service and future teachers who will be responsible for providing the new Ethnic Studies K-12 courses, and we hope that the department can prioritize development in this area as well. Indeed, this summer Dr. Obando and Dr. Marie Nubia-Feliciano are joining with faculty from the College of Education to develop in-service teacher training in Ethnic Studies.

We agree with the External Review Team recommendation to scaffold courses intended for the major should be a high priority. Such a change would provide CHIC majors with a curriculum that builds from introductory theories and content to coursework that allows them to creatively apply theories and methods creatively to source material. It is difficult for students to achieve a mastery level in courses that are doing double-duty as major/minor and GE courses and how difficult it can be for instructors of those courses who cannot assume that all students have a baseline of knowledge. We recommend that the department strategically offer a couple of non-GE courses each semester and add scaffolding through course numbering and pre-requisites. They can also add more structure through their curriculum requirements.. If need be, they can take courses that they want to be exclusively for the major/minor out of GE areas. Changing the major requirements would create better pipelines for specific courses and make it more likely these major courses will fill. One example of what we are recommending would be instead of requiring 12 upper-division CHIC courses, the program can specify 3 of those units be at the 400-level. To add more breathing room for major-only classes to run even if they don't have hefty enrollment, the department could consider raising the cap on seats in Area F courses to the college-norm of 40 for lower-division GE (instead of 35). We underline that as the Department settles on its curricular goals, the Associate Dean of Students will gladly help the Department operationalize and implement these goals.

Of course, our hope is that the number of CHIC majors and minors will grow while more students are introduced to Chicana/o Studies through the Area F requirement and the Latinx Lab initiatives which expose the power of the major/minor. Reports from the first Social Justice Summer Institute, which is part of the Latinx Lab, suggest that these high impact practices will attract minors and majors. The care that CHIC is taking with the Area F requirement will, we anticipate also work to grow the major and minor. As the Self Study lays out, the department has partnered with the other Ethnic Studies departments, invested in assessing Area F courses (which is not required, but voluntary), and used these findings to design syllabi templates to ensure Area F courses are clearly meeting the learning goals. The department will meet regularly to collect model assignments to ensure Area F courses are helping students master core competencies.

While the External Review Team described CHIC as a found major/minor, we also believe that the department could grow its FTF majors significantly by increasing the number of students who are admitted into CHIC to accept their admission and grow its UDT by creating stronger relationships with local Community Colleges, building on the effort that Dean Fontaine initiated last year by inviting Fullerton College Ethnic Studies faculty and administrators to a meeting with our Ethnic



Studies chairs. As Table 1 in the Self Study Appendix shows, and as the Self Study acknowledges, over 20 prospective CHIC first years and over 15 CHIC transfers are admitted to CSUF each year, but only a couple in each pool accept their admission and/or enroll at CSUF. The College will be developing our college and department promotional materials and initiatives this year, and we look forward to working with CHIC on helping more of these students choose CSUF.

Community Building and Faculty

We join with the External Review Team in applauding the department for adopting processes that encourage collaboration and collegiality. During our May 18 meeting we spoke at length about Chair Monica Hanna's very intentional and transparent approach to making committee assignments. The department practices are in line with the College goal of creating equitable workloads—while trying as much as possible to avoid cultural taxation—by making work visible and adopting collegial governance guidelines that address items such as the process for making committee assignments, course rotations, office assignments, and professional development fund distribution, to name a few of the topics. We applaud CHIC for embracing this project and note that most of the topics that the External Review Team identified as needing clarity (course assignments and releases, committee assignments) are required components of the Department Collegial Governance Guidelines. The department could also explore best practices for two topics that are not part of the required guidelines: email guidelines and department committee agreements.

We also acknowledge the External Review Team's observation that it can be hard to balance collaboration with protecting faculty's time. As Dr. Hanna clarified in her response, while the department did experiment with a weekly meeting pattern, they have since moved to a bi-monthly pattern. They also limit the committee membership of junior faculty to two committees.

Governance and Department Operations

Staff: The Dean's office agrees that the department needs more staff support, and we have been working deliberately over the last year to identify the best structure for the administrative support: separate ASCs for each department or one ASC for the the three departments and an ASA for each program, or something else. After the long-term ASC in that office accepted a position in Pollak Library, long-term planning was delayed as we sought short term support. Unfortunately, both short and long-term administrative positions have been very difficult to fill. The deans office was able to bring a retired annuitant in to help, and, this summer, we were able to hire a permanent ASCII who will now be trained by the retired annuitant. We are hopeful that having this position in place (and the perspective of the retired annuitant and a new HR Manager in the DO, we will have a long-term staffing plan finalized by the end of the Fall semester.



College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Office of the Dean
P.O. Box 6850
Fullerton, CA 92834-6850
T (657) 278-3528 / F (657) 657-278-5898

Area F Allocation: Each year the College receives \$900,000 in baseline dollars to support the Ethnic Studies requirement. That money, according to the Chancellor's Office, is meant to offset the cost of the "instructional, administrative, and one-time Associate Degree for Transfer review activities" required to offer an Ethnic Studies course to every CSU student (Coded Memo B, 2021-02). In discussion with the three department chairs in late Summer/early Fall 2021 (when we were first made aware of these funds) we identified space and staff as the two major areas where we needed to build capacity in order to serve the Area F demand. To ensure that funds are available when the campus identifies space to the ES departments (CSUF traditionally places the majority of renovation costs on the colleges/departments) \$600,000 per year will be placed into an account marked for these purposes until we have collected \$1M (a guestimated cost for anticipated renovations). Once this goal has been reached, the baseline dollars will be available for the departments. Currently, the remaining \$300,000 is tagged as Area F funds and distributed equally to the three departments to use in ways they identify as necessary to offer quality Area F courses.

To date, Area F funds have supported curricular development, advising, and programming. As the student demand and (we hope) the major grow, we anticipate it will be needed in the future for tenure track lines to expand instruction and the curriculum. The deans office will continue to provide each of the three departments will details on the funds that are available and encourage conversations within and among the departments and the deans office around most efficient and impactful use of the baseline dollars.

We are also pleased CHIC has agreed to participate in the HSS Tandem Advisor Program. They have been assigned an advisor who will have capacity to advise all of the CHIC majors and minors on their graduation requirements, campus resources and processes, and other academic advising topics. The Tandem Advisor is currently in training and will be able to start advising in Fall 23.

In summary, we feel that the Chicana/o Studies program is at an exciting, innovative moment in its history. We thank the former and current members of the department for creating a clear identity and collaborative community that will carry the department into the future with a structured and innovative curriculum supported by remarkable teachers and scholars who will inspire students across the campus for the next 50 years and beyond.