

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
*Academic Program Review*

**Asian Studies**

**EXTERNAL REVIEWERS**

Don Baker, Professor of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia.  
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Sigur Center for Asian Studies, George Washington University.

**CAMPUS VISIT:**

March 3-5, 2010.

The review team read the self-study written by the faculty in the department; reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; conducted class visits; interviewed faculty, students and staff; and met with the Dean, Associate Deans and other relevant members of the campus community. Prior to their visit, the reviewers were provided with USF's Vision, Mission, Values Statement, the department's self-study and other university materials.

- 1. How did the external review committee rate the quality of the program – excellent, very good, good, adequate, or poor? How does the program compare with benchmark top-tier programs nationally? Please provide a brief rationale for the external review committee's rating.**
  - The Asian Studies program is very good, of the kind that would be expected at a top tier liberal arts college.
  - With some changes, USF could develop a “truly stellar and distinctive program in Asian Studies”.
  - The program provided a “high quality liberal arts education” to the students despite its reliance on other departments to fill out its curriculum.
  - Given the growing awareness of the importance of Asia in all areas of academia, the program is likely to see a steady increase in the number of majors.
  
- 2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?**
  - Asian Studies at USF is sometimes less than the sum of its parts.
  - Improve collaboration among faculty and units in Asian Studies and particularly with the Center for the Pacific Rim.
  - Take greater advantage of San Francisco's enviable location.
  - Address shortcomings in language instruction.
  - Expand faculty in key areas.
  
- 3. What specific recommendations for improving the program's quality has the external review committee made to the Dean?**

Curriculum and Instruction

- Being an interdisciplinary program, Asian Studies is at the mercy of other departments in terms of course offerings and this, together with advising loads, puts a heavy burden on the program director”.
- The major requirements display “a spread of methodological interdisciplinarity in gateway courses, an emphasis on language in the four semester requirement and a good acknowledgement of regional breath.”
- Increasing the number of capstones and internships will be difficult to sustain given the current system of faculty rewards for such enterprises.
- The creation of tracks within the major (by region and/or function) might lighten advising loads and give greater curricular cohesion.
- The program should have a Faculty Workshop with broad faculty participation to consider the expectations for the major, tracks, capstones, advising, etc.
- The program needs a regular and consistent directorship rotation.
- The four-semester language requirement can only be filled in Chinese and Japanese. To remedy this, Tagalog could be expanded. Furthermore, students interested in South Asia or mainland Southeast Asia may be deterred from Asian Studies by the limited language options – why would a student interested in India want to take four semesters of Chinese for example?
- Study abroad or summer study should be explored as an additional remedy for this problem. In addition, students with knowledge of another Asian language could be tested by ACTFL certified testers in order to authenticate proficiency.
- The University should discuss making study abroad for Asian Studies students mandatory.

#### Faculty and Administration

- Asian Studies has no FTE’s of its own but the reviewers felt that, given this, the faculty were unusually dedicated and committed to the program.
- There are gaps in the coverage of specialties important to Asian Studies. The reviewers felt that the Dean’s Office should encourage departments (especially in Sociology, Economics, Politics and the areas of Anthropology and Gender Studies) to hire candidates with some expertise in Asia.

#### Students

- Many students felt that study abroad had been a highlight in their college careers and they also enjoyed the Asian cultural opportunities presented by San Francisco though wished more even more classes took advantage of these opportunities.
- Students seemed unaware of some Asian Studies resources on campus such as the Ricci Institute and China Dialog.

#### Resources

- Greatest need is for time and space.
- More incentives need to be provided to encourage faculty to spend time creating a greater sense of community among those teaching Asian Studies.
- Lack of a fixed Asian Studies location contributes to fragmentation and lack of community.
- The School of Business and Professional Studies is a resource “that seems ripe for a mutually beneficial relationship with Asian Studies”.

#### Center for the Pacific Rim

- There is confusion as to the administrative role of the Center for the Pacific Rim vis-à-vis Asian Studies. This needs to be clarified.

- As a resource, the Center is far too removed from the undergraduate program. More coordination, communication and participation between the Center and other academic units in Asian Studies is needed.

**4. In the opinion of the external review committee is the program following the University's strategic initiative in that it is;**

*Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty of outstanding teachers and scholars.*

- The review team noted that the faculty were “scholars and educators engaged with their fields and working hard to juggle the responsibilities of scholarship, education and service.”
- That the faculty devote so much “time and energy to Asian Studies above and beyond their normal departmental responsibilities speaks to their dedication and sense of responsibility.”

*Enrolling, supporting and graduating a diverse student body that demonstrates high academic achievement, strong leadership capabilities, a concern for others, and a sense of responsibility for the weak and vulnerable.*

- The review team was impressed were impressed with the “excited and engaged” students that they met.

*Providing the environment necessary to promote student learning in the program.*

- The review team felt the program was very good and with some changes the University could develop a truly stellar and distinctive program in Asian Studies.

**5. In what way is the program contributing to the goal of making the University of San Francisco a premier Jesuit, Catholic urban university with a global perspective that educates leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world?**

- The review team found that Asian Studies was “well aligned with the mission of the University.”
- In conversations with students and faculty, there was “an emphasis on the values of social justice and service along with academic rigor and intellectual curiosity”.

**6. What is the timetable for the response to the external review committee's recommendations for program improvement? What can the Office of the Provost do to appropriately respond to the review?**

- Work with departments to hire faculty with teaching and research interests in Asian Studies.
- Improve collaboration and co-operation across the academic units studying Asia.
- Assist the programs as they seek to improve language instruction and acquisition.

**7. What general comments or issues, if any, are crucial to understanding the reviewers report?**

- The reviewers noted that Asian Studies at USF is sometimes less than the sum of its parts.
- Better exploitation of resources, thoughtful collaboration with other units and some modest investments will be the path to excellence.

