



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LONG BEACH
VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Department Chair/Program Director: Brett Mizelle Date: 7/8/2021
Brett Mizelle

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David Wallace

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Jody Cormack



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American Studies Program

College of Liberal Arts

June 2021 (for 2017-18 review)

This Memorandum of Understanding outlines the consensus reached by the American Studies Program, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recent program review (self-study and external review in fall 2017, and UPRC report in January, 2018). It describes the goals to be achieved, and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU to achieve these goals, during the next program review cycle. Progress toward goals is to be addressed in an annual report.

The American Studies Program is an interdisciplinary program designed to provide students with critical study of diverse perspectives of American history and culture. It offers a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and an American Studies Minor. The program has faculty contributing from a variety of Departments, required courses in History and English, and up to 15 units (5 courses) that are customized to the individual student specialization. The Department was last reviewed in 2007, with an MOU in 2010.

A number of strengths were identified in the reports:

- There have been dramatic changes in the American Studies program in the last decade. There are now 12 courses within the American Studies Program (AMST) including core courses that are routinely taught.
- Student enrollment is increasing, with FTES increased from 25.8% in 2013 to 56.8% in 2017. The number of majors has gone from 58 (2012) to 83 (2016). The Program has positioned itself as a viable degree option for students who are switching majors due to the low number of units required for the major (36). The FTES for GE courses has also increased.
- The Program hired 2 new Tenure Track faculty who are assigned full time to American Studies, Dr. Justin Gomez and Dr. Preeti Sharma. As they move through the RTP process, the program will have to address the service needs of managing an RTP process without having any tenured faculty serving full time. All other faculty, including Program Director Dr. Brett Mizelle, share at least part of their time with other departments in the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) including History, Ethnic Studies, English, Communications, Liberal Studies, and others.

Areas of Concern and Opportunities for Development were noted in the reports:

- For both native and transfer students, the average units earned has gone down,

however the average years to graduation has increased in the same time period. Because the American Studies degree is sometimes the “last resort” (as stated in the self-study) for students, time to degree can be long. However, as stated in the external report, one of the strengths of the program is the contribution to the university to higher graduation rates overall.

- The self-report acknowledges that growth “has clearly outpaced its current student learning outcomes and assessment plan” and concurs with the 2014 Program Learning Outcomes Alignment report that learning outcomes, “should be articulated using more active and clear language.” They also note the specific challenge with being interdisciplinary creates reliance on other departments and limits assessment opportunities. The external review stated that the program is lacking in formalization as reflected in the absence of assessment reports since 2010.
- The major changes planned before next review include: further expansion of AMST courses, including 100- and 200- level courses and upper division electives; pursue status as a formalized department which will require the hiring of additional tenure-track faculty; and, the development and implementation of regular, annual assessments both of student progress toward learning goals and of curriculum itself. These goals will need to be coordinated with the College and University to plan for appropriate resource allocation.

It is therefore agreed that:

1. The Program will consult with the Director of Program Review and Assessment to develop appropriate alignment of SLOs, PLOs, and ILOs, and to develop an assessment plan. Student/Program learning outcomes should be more specific to AMST, and be explicitly incorporated in all extant AMST courses.
2. The Program will provide an annual update (due June 1) on progress made towards the actions agreed to in this MOU to the CLA dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Director of Program Review and Assessment. The review cycle will be seven years beyond your previous review cycle from 2018-2025. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2025 for a 2025-2026 Academic Year review process.
3. Update the AMST website to reflect current and complete program information.
4. The Program will develop a clear and explicit RTP process for Drs. Gomer and Sharma (and any future tenure-track hires) which identifies criteria for performance and specifically identifies a qualified Program committee.
5. The Program will collaborate with ATLAS to determine how they may bring majors into the program sooner, which would in turn reduce time to graduation.
6. The Program will coordinate with the College to develop and implement a strategy addressing the implications of growth in curricula offerings and the potential hiring of new faculty.