

Action Plan for the Undergraduate Program in

American Studies

December 2019

American Studies is an Undergraduate Program in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film

School Director: Peter Betjemann

American Studies is a Program at OSU Cascades

Academic Dean Julie Gess-Newsome

Cascades Faculty

Lead of American Studies: Neil Browne

Affiliated Faculty: Natalie Dollar, Elizabeth Marino, Nicholas Dahl, Kiel Fletcher, Jenna Goldsmith, Ellen Santasiero, Henry Sayre (Emeritus), Jim Foster (Emeritus)



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Review Report Recommendation #1

Expand Curriculum

- Move the program into more intersectional curricular areas: gender, social justice, education, community engagement and other possibilities, through hires as well as new relationships and innovative arrangements with other programs and colleagues at Cascades and Corvallis, etc.
- Hire full time or tenure track faculty who reflect the growing diversity in the student population to support curricular development.
- Consider first-year course experience at Cascades that could help feature what American Studies is and could lead to after graduation.
- Continue to link new AMS courses in the Baccalaureate Core curriculum.
- Develop 100- and 200-level AMS courses in coordination with useful curriculum developments, linked with Baccalaureate Core to introduce interdisciplinary and intersectional capacity and excitement in the 1st two years of AMS study— careful not to overbuild or over structure the major in ways that make it less flexible.
- Cultivate 300-level teaching opportunities by building relationships with colleagues who haven't yet engaged with AMS, to develop course offerings for majors, and be available to develop approaches to American cultural study as an emerging field.

Action	<p>We have set up a committee to re-envision American Studies. We have developed a curriculum that retains the core requirements while adding several intersectional options that include Pre-Law/Law & Society, Identities and Culture, Environments, Literary Studies, and a track that will complement the upcoming Elementary Education program at Cascades. The titles of the options are tentative at this point. The committee will meet one more time in January, solidify the curriculum, and plan to submit the CAT II for curriculum changes Winter Term 2020. Hopefully, we can launch the revised curriculum by Fall Term 2020</p> <p>We are in the process at this very moment hiring a tenure track American Studies professor with 10% of the duties in the low-residency MFA in Creative Writing at Cascades. This, of course, is a major advance for the program. The position will help us create synergies with the graduate program in Creative Writing. Our finalists all do significant work in gender and social justice fields. Part of the job description is for a scholar invested in public-facing work.</p> <p>First year and lower division AMS course will be developed further once we hire the new faculty member.</p> <p>The proposed options will help us reach out to faculty in other disciplines.</p>
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Review Report Recommendation #2

Strengthen Student Support

- Hire full time or tenure-track faculty who reflect the current and anticipated student population
- Embrace self-study's recommendation for "Themed Plans of Study" in coordination with Advising to provide cohesive guidance, from advising through instruction and mentoring, via targeted packet of courses, both to focus and guide students entering the program and to help guide senior students toward their career goals
- Differentiate this program by offering tracks, options, or foci linked with education, public health, writing, community engagement or other identified salient possibilities at Cascades. *Implications: supporting students; creating synergies/expanding curricula; etc.*
- Renew and expand opportunities for active learning community life including monthly seminar meetings over lunch or elsewhere between students and AMS faculty, and among faculty colleagues.

Action	<p>See Above. We are in the process of hiring a tenure-track faculty member in AMS.</p> <p>See above. We are creating at this very moment "Themed Plans of Study." At this point we are calling them "Options," with the intent of having them transcript visible. The options listed above are linked to education, community engagement, and literary studies and writing. At this point nearly 50% of our students have stated interest in Law School, so we have added a Pre-Law/Law and Society option.</p> <p>In Fall Term 2019 Neil Browne and Natalie Dollar held a pilot seminar with their students from AMS 350: American Culture and the Vietnam Experience and COMM 427: Cultural Codes in Communication. The seminar was focused on music of the Vietnam era. While it was very successful for the students who participated, we need to work more on reaching out to a wider group of students. WE will work on developing more active learning and learning community life over the course of Winter and Spring Terms 2020.</p>
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Review Report Recommendation #3

Increase Student Enrollment

- Maintain and expand communication between AMS and Advising to produce recruitment materials, in addition to formal advising materials, to be reflected on OSU Cascades Viewbook or other web presence.
- Recruitment materials could engage all participating AMS faculty to describe the value of American Studies in language intended to reach first-year and second-year students, as well as administrators, and other colleagues
- Engage all participating AMS faculty to develop shared approaches to describing AMS as a major in classes they teach.
- Formally engage other programs in which AMS cultural fluencies valuably supplement and deepen professional engagement (education, HDFS, but also among appropriate STEM-related fields).

Action	<p>Advising has participated in the discussion of all our proposed curricular changes.</p> <p>Web Page revision is underway.</p> <p>Once we finalize the curricular changes in Winter Term 2020, the program lead will present the curriculum to other programs, initiating connecting to other disciplines.</p> <p>We will gather AMS faculty to talk about their representation of the major in their classes. It seems a good idea as well to re-kindle connections with COCC and visit classrooms there to promote the major.</p>
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Review Report Recommendation #4

Increase Programmatic Visibility

- In concurrence with and addition to their self-recommendation that “current faculty and staff should attend recruitment and outreach events” in order to attract more students to American Studies...Host conferences/symposiums/etc. to increase visibility of the program, gain prestige, generate learning community with and beyond Cascades campus, etc. ...Doing so aligns with the self-recommendation in the self-study for current faculty to identify ways to create a more robust presence of American Studies in the larger central Oregon community.”

Action	<p>We will collaborate with the director of marketing and communication to create a plan to promote the major.</p> <p>We will also examine avenues for funding an AMS-focused conference at Cascades.</p> <p>We are also examining possibilities for bringing speakers to campus.</p>
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