

## Oregon State University Undergraduate Program Review Reviewers' Report Template

### 1. Overall Recommendation: (check box)

XX	Expand
XX	Maintain
	Restructure
	Reduce
	Suspend
	Discontinue
	Other (include brief explanation)

### 2. Objective, Logistics and Participants for this Review Process

This section serves as an introductory summary of the review process.

#### a. Objective of the review and brief summary of the logistics of the site visit

The American Studies major at OSU Cascades Campus is undergoing a ten-year undergraduate program review, administered by the office of Academic Programs and Assessment.

On April 22 and 23, 2019, a review team (two external members who are specialists in American Studies and two internal members representing the OSU Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee) visited the Cascade Campus in Bend Oregon. After careful review of the prepared self-study, produced by faculty of the American Studies program, the review team met with administrators, faculty, and students to discuss questions and address issues.

This report represents the views of the review team upon completion of the site visit.

#### b. Overview of Program (brief description)

According to the self-study document, since American Studies scholarship and teaching was first established in the 1940s, they have been “firmly established and practiced both nationally and abroad.” American Studies is an interdisciplinary major, engaging in questions concerning American culture through a variety of disciplinary lenses, including literature, art, film, history, political science, sociology, anthropology, and communications theory.

In 2010 OSU approved the American Studies major (AMS) at Cascades Campus in Bend, that previously was an academic track within the Liberal Studies major. That same year the American Studies major at OSU Corvallis was canceled. Originally, the only major offered at Cascades Campus by the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) was Liberal Studies. Presently, CLA at Cascade Campus offers four majors: American Studies, Liberal Studies, Art, and Social Science. Since its move to the Cascades Campus, the American Studies program has been revised several times (in 2013, 2015,

and 2017) in response to the needs and evolution at the growing Cascades Campus. It remains as the singular AMS program within the OSU system.

c. Participants in the site visit

- Dr. Allen Thompson, Assoc. Prof., SHPR OSU, Co-Chair FS Curriculum Committee.
- Dr. Frieda Knobloch, Professor, Director, American Studies Program, University of Wyoming
- Candice Clark, PhD Candidate in Education, College of Education, OSU, Corvallis
- Dr. Larry J. Estrada, Emeritus Professor and Director of American Cultural Studies, Fairhaven College/Western Washington University

### **3. Detailed Program Evaluation and Assessment**

a. Programmatic Strengths

- Interdisciplinary (Literature, Art, Political Science, Philosophy, Sociology, History, Creative Writing, Environmental studies) with awareness of other possible connections in other fields and units
- Flexible curriculum that is attractive to transfer students, students returning to school, and students eager for connective, lively, approaches as well as subjects of study
- Abiding awareness of and commitment to AMS as a learning community—a fundamental value in American Studies as a field, and a profound asset at Cascades
- Excellent long-term leadership (Program Lead, Dr. Neil Browne)
- Enthusiastic student support, valuing mentor relationships.
- Overall Program is “student centered”
- Program is an integral component of the OSU Cascades Humanities curriculum
- Younger faculty appreciate the history and contributions of senior faculty to the Program
- Positive and interactive relationship between the Program Lead and the University Advising Component
- Program Lead is welcoming of participation by faculty throughout the University
- Program Lead welcomes change and inclusivity within the Program

b. Programmatic Weaknesses

- Retirements of central founding faculty who built and sustained the AMS program
- Overrepresentation of contingent faculty in teaching and program delivery
- The Program is structured by unnecessarily limited disciplinary pathways in terms of curriculum.
- Program faculty do not fully reflect the makeup of the university student body and the changing demographics of the Central Oregon region
- Limited Funding Base
- Adjunct and part time faculty have no office space to facilitate student-centered learning and development
- Inconsistent visibility of the Program in general among students and prospective students via physical and on-line dissemination of information

c. Programmatic Challenges

- Since key founding faculty have retired, and contingent faculty are trained solely in various supporting disciplines, if no full-time or tenure-track hire is possible in the near term, the program will face challenges maintaining a sense of identity and learning community as American Studies
- Seeking more opportunities for faculty collaboration (including new full-time tenure-track colleagues) in curriculum building, course approaches and ideas, assessment, for next generation of program work, to raise profile of interdisciplinary capacity
- Re-establishing community visibility and connections that would support possible internship opportunities for AMS students
- Reaching prospective students as first-year or second-year students—a challenge to American Studies undergraduate programs in general
- Describing American Studies as a field, and as a path to professional development to other units, colleagues, administrators and communities—a challenge to American Studies broadly
- Informing the campus community, including Corvallis, of the rationale and purpose of American Studies
- Maintaining knowledgeable and committed assigned staff to work with the Program Lead
- Establishing pathways for students of the AMS Program with AMS graduate programs at other institutions state, regionally and nationally
- Maintaining and enhancing the articulation of the AMS Program with COCC and OSU Cascades
- Establishing and maintaining linkages between the AMS program and tribal communities within the region

#### **4. Summary of Findings (inputs of resources and outcomes of program performance)**

- a. Undergraduate Degree Programs Offered (Mission of the program, and its relationship and alignment with the mission of the academic college(s), and that of the University)

The Cascades Campus American Studies program self-describes its mission as preparing “students to spark new thinking and practices in a broad range of fields including business, teaching, fine arts, arts administration, law, medicine, public service, and graduate programs in the humanities and social sciences.” This goal is advanced by “teaching students to read closely, write precisely, and reflect deeply on issues of equity, environment, and cultural diversity. ...[Students are taught] to think critically, globally, and democratically, conduct research, and navigate a complex and ever-evolving information society.”

This emphasis on reading, writing, library research, and critical thinking is copacetic with the mission of the School of Writing, Literature, and Film which, in turn, supports the core educational curriculum of the University and thus aligns with Oregon State University’s Mission and Strategic Plan 4.0.

- b. Administrative Structure (Quality of organizational support)

American Studies is a small, interdisciplinary program. Prof. Neil Browne serves as the Program Lead, with occasional consultation with Prof. Peter Betjemann, Director of the School of Writing, Literature, and Film, from OSU Corvallis. Decisions concerning use of local resources, course offerings, course scheduling, and assessment are made by Neil Browne, while decisions pertaining to faculty and curriculum are approved through the

College of Liberal Arts, the School of Writing, Literature, and Film, and the OSU Faculty Senate oversight of OSU Curriculum.

c. Faculty (Quality of personnel and adequacy to achieve mission and goals)

Presently, faculty working for the College of Liberal Arts at Cascades Campus each teach a variety of courses, and these courses are either part of the required core of a CLA major (American Studies, Liberal Studies, Art, and Social Science) and/or are among the electives available within a major. The American Studies major identifies three tenured, one tenure-stream, and five non-tenure-line instructors as the program faculty. None of these faculty, nor any in Cascades CLA have a terminal degree in the field of American Studies.

Only three faculty deliver all of the core, required courses: two non-tenure instructors teach the two lower-division required courses but only one tenured faculty member, Neil Browne, is responsible for teaching all five of the upper-division required courses, plus facilitating the required one-credit, capstone American Studies Portfolio.

d. Students (Recruitment and enrollment trends of students, admissions selectivity and other indications of selecting high quality students)

American Studies is a small major. On average, over eight years, it has about twelve (12) majors, with a low of four (4) in its first year (2010-11) and a high of seventeen (17) in 2013-14). The first year was uniquely low, which brings down the average.

e. Facilities and Resources (Level and quality of infrastructure)

According to the self-study, "Courses in American Studies are taught in Tykeson Hall and Obsidian Hall on the Cascades Campus, and at the nearby Graduate and Research Center. The buildings on the main campus in Bend were completed in 2016. Tykeson Hall has eight classrooms, three labs, and forty (40) faculty offices. Obsidian Hall has four (4) classrooms, fourteen (14) administrative offices, and a dining hall and cafe."

Furthermore, the enhanced classrooms are equipped with, computers, connectors, projectors, and document cameras. "Most rooms are equipped with lecture capture, in-room amplification.... Videoconferencing is only available in Tykeson 207." Finally, according to the self-study, "full-time faculty are supplied with a laptop that is replaced every three (3) years. Part-time faculty have access to desktop computers in Tykeson 314. Printers are available throughout all buildings."

The program is housed in comfortable, modern, and adequate facilities, and they are supplied with adequate and modern technologies.

f. Degree Program Structure, Courses, Curricular Innovations

The American Studies major requires a total of 53 credits. At the lower-division (20 credits) two courses are required:

ENG 253 - Survey of American Literature: Colonial to 1900  
ENG 254 - Survey of American Literature: 1900 to Present.

Students are also required to take two of a three course series on the History of the United States, HST 201, 202, and 203. Additionally, students must complete one AMS elective from a list of eight options.

At the upper-division level, students must complete five courses:

AMS 311 - Topics in American Studies  
AMS 350 - American Culture, the Vietnam Experience  
ART/ENG 386 - Cultural History of American Art and Lit: Part 1  
ART/ENG 387 - Cultural History of American Art and Lit: Part 2  
ART/EGN 388 - Cultural History of American Art and Lit: Part 3

Additionally, students must complete AMS 406 - Projects (American Studies Portfolio) for one (1) credit. To finally complete the curriculum, then, students must also earn twelve (12) credits from a list of twenty-four (24) electives.

The required lower-division courses are offered every year. The upper-division courses are generally taught during a cycle of two years, with the exception of ENG 360 (Native American Literature) and AMS 406, which are offered every Spring Term.

g. Program Assessment Practices (Curriculum and assessment strength)

Neil Browne, as the Program Lead, is responsible for program assessment. In 2010 three program learning outcomes and assessment plans were established. In 2015, learning outcomes were increased to eight and an assessment plan was developed for Outcome #5 (“Develop research skills, including handling of primary and secondary sources, library use, and online scholarly search tools”). In addition to an initial use of final grades, assessment data has been gathered from across a variety of courses in the major with a focus on the final essays and a precis assignment.

The major, working with the office of Academic Programs and Assessment, and through the process of developing the self-study in preparation for this ten-year program review, reduced the number of Program Learning Outcomes to four (4), as follows:

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Articulate key concepts and events in American cultural history and their global impact
2. Demonstrate ability to write clear analytical prose
3. Demonstrate capacity to critically compare ideas and material objects from different disciplinary perspectives
4. Develop research skills including handling of primary and secondary sources, library use, and online scholarly search tools

h. Outcomes and Impacts (Student learning outcomes and assessment of learning, placement and success of graduates, satisfaction of students and graduates with their education, Professional or national rankings/ratings, etc.)

Graduates of the American Studies program go into a variety of career paths and fields including law, entrepreneurship, library work, education, and writing.

Students are generally very satisfied with their experiences with the American Studies program. Particularly, they express high levels of satisfaction and engagement with both curricula and faculty. They appreciate the high level of interest and accessibility by the faculty and the one on one mentoring that faculty extend to them on a consistent basis.

i. Key Issues

- Program Visibility
- Program sustainability due to loss and non-replacement of programmatic faculty
- Dedicating defined faculty lines for the Program
- Provision of funding for faculty growth development and conference travel funding
- Provide campus and office space for non-tenure track faculty within the Program
- Unrealized capacity to connect with Central Oregon communities and other selected interdisciplinary programs at OSU Cascades

**5. Recommendations**

**Recommendations to Administration**

Administration anticipation of and support for a number of interrelated initiatives—both at Cascades and Corvallis— would significantly support both continuity and growth in AMS at Cascades, including:

- Invite and prepare to support interdisciplinary hires. This would help shape Cascades (and Corvallis) campus culture broadly to encourage greater flexibility, responsiveness and recognition of interdisciplinary careers and curricular capacity, and appropriately anticipate and support new tenure-stream faculty success in the tenure process. Anticipated new interdisciplinary faculty would invite new forms of accomplishment and forward-looking contribution across the system. For AMS, this orientation would significantly support the possibility of genuine interdisciplinary hiring in AMS as well as a range of other growing interdisciplinary fields, likely with emerging connections possible among them.
- Support —invite, and recognize— the development of creative forms of collaborations — including possibly visiting appointments, online or hybrid courses— with faculty in Corvallis who might contribute valuably to AMS students' course options and professional development mentoring, as well as raising the visibility of AMS for new colleagues' participation, and for students in their classes.
- Develop forms of collaborative community engagement in Bend and Central Oregon that might open opportunities not fully visible yet for course foci, experiential and service learning, internships and professional placements to which AMS could valuably contribute.
- Support initiatives that allow OSU Cascades to more fully engage the communities it serves, or could better serve, including Tribal communities, as well as a range of underrepresented student populations with whom existing and emerging AMS commitments would resonate.

- Administrative support (in course releases and/or recognized faculty development leading to course creation or other incentives) for new collaborations on the Cascades campus featuring interdisciplinary—including humanist and social science practice.

## **Recommendations to the Program**

### ***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.

### ***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.

### ***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).

### ***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.”

## **6. Conclusions**

The American Studies Program at OSU Cascades continues to be an integral part of the campus curriculum and has been the primogenitor in many cases for new and creative curricular efforts over the years. Given its strong leadership, the AMS Program has also been a vibrant part of the evolutionary process of the University as it has grown from a two to a four-year institution which services the higher educational needs for the Central Oregon region. As such its continued growth and viability should remain a vital part of the university’s strategic plan(s) in the years to come.

The interdisciplinary and connective nature of the field of American studies lends itself well to stated values and goals of OSU Cascades as it moves forward. Administrative support in anticipating and developing guidelines with faculty for new participants coming in regarding tenure and promotion in interdisciplinary capacities—in any field— would help lay the groundwork for interdisciplinary initiatives, capacity for collaboration, and raising the profile of diversity and inclusion efforts across campus. American studies personnel—including the possibility of an added hire(s) with a PhD in American Studies or closely related cultural studies fields—would bring vibrant and value-added energy toward reachable goals for both the program and the campus.