

July 2010

To: Wayne Quirk, Provost  
Tracy Pellett, AVP for Undergraduate Studies

From: Marji Morgan, Dean, College of Arts and Humanities

Re: 2009-2010 Program Review, Asia-Pacific Studies Program

c: James Cook, Director, Asia-Pacific Studies Program

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I write to provide commendations and recommendations as part of the program review process for the Asia-Pacific Studies (AST) Program. These remarks are based on the Program's Self-Study and the external reviewer's evaluation, and take into account college mission and resources. I have not yet had time to meet with the program faculty about the review. I will do so early in Fall quarter. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in this review process, especially Jim Cook, AST faculty and Dr. Marilyn Levine, as I know how very time consuming the review process is for everyone involved. The AST Self-Study was outstanding, and I want to commend Director Jim Cook and other AST faculty for their careful attention to this important document.

### **COMMENDATIONS**

Dr. Levine highlighted the quantity and quality of faculty with expertise in China and Japan, referring to the faculty as "stellar." I certainly agree, though the recent extended leave and resignation of two critical faculty members, Chenyang Li in Philosophy (leave) and Mei Chun in Chinese language (resignation), are serious blows to program faculty strength. The offering of two Asian languages is another strength, and we must continue to offer at least two years of both Japanese and Chinese in order to meet program requirements. Dr. Levine notes that opportunities for undergraduate research through the NSF grant and other means are another strength. While the NSF grant is outstanding for CWU and is a model for faculty mentored research, I'm not sure it can be considered a "niche" for the Asia-Pacific Studies Program, as very few students from that program participate in the grant funded research. I hope this can change in the future. Finally, the Asia-Pacific Studies program supports many college and university goals, including promoting academic excellence, increasing resources through external grants, and enhancing diversity, civic engagement, interdisciplinary learning, and the internationalization of the campus and curriculum. Both the AST program and the new Asia-Pacific Islander Living Learning Community are critically important for creating an inclusive, welcoming campus climate that is essential for recruiting and retaining high quality students and faculty.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The external reviewer offered four main recommendations, and I will address all below.

- 1. Program Revision** - The key program recommendations are to provide a scaffolding of undergraduate and graduate degrees and to create program focus around thematic niches rather than geographical or disciplinary areas. Regarding a scaffolding of degrees, Dr. Levine suggests adding a certificate program requiring an internship and a Professional Masters of Science

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requiring a practicum. Given the departure of two key faculty members and the likely grim budget picture for the next several years, I do not recommend that we add a graduate degree at this time. I believe that the program and university first need to resolve structural and resource needs for the undergraduate program. A certificate program would be good, only if it is linked to the practical experience of an internship, but I believe the minor and major programs should do more of this community based learning as well (more later). CAH's Non-Profit Organization Administration minor/certificate program might serve as a model, though we would need to discuss likely demand for a certificate in Asia-Pacific Studies.

With respect to focus, Dr. Levine emphasizes the importance of building on the current foundation of China and Japan strengths, and I strongly agree. I do not believe that we currently have the resources to spread out into other regional areas, nor are we likely to have such resources in the near future. More interestingly, she suggests that we tap CWU's cross-disciplinary strengths to create niche areas of excellence in such things as environmental studies, media arts, health, and business, economics and information technologies. She has in mind that these niche areas should replace the disciplinary areas of concentration that include aesthetic experience, humanities and social science.

I couldn't agree more with Dr. Levine about the importance of creating niche areas to distinguish CWU from other institutions, and to recruit and retain students for the AST program. I believe that creating such areas should be our goal, and I will be talking about this very thing with our chairs and interdisciplinary directors at our September retreat. We need to work as a college and as an institution on making it easier to develop and support cross-disciplinary/college programs. Given our CWU environmental studies program, our NSF China grant focused on environmental issues, our college of business, and likely workplace demand in the future, it seems to me that two obvious niche areas are environmental studies and business/information technologies. We must think more in terms of cross-disciplinary and even cross-college appointments, and thus I strongly support Dr. Levine's recommendation that the university support a joint appointment in CAH and COB in the area of Pacific Rim business and economics. I would also support a future hire in foreign languages and AST, who would teach two years of Chinese language and also courses in AST, perhaps in the area of environmental studies, or some other agreed upon niche area.

I do not support Dr. Levine's recommendation to hire a second instructor in Chinese language. We have not had sufficient student demand to maintain enrollments in the courses offered by one instructor. Although it is true, as Dr. Levine points out, that we have two instructors for Japanese, that is only because the Japanese professor is currently Chair with a substantial reduction in teaching load.

2. **Assessment** - Dr. Levine recommends that the AST program adopt a more rigorous and systematic assessment plan for evaluating student learning outcomes and the success of the program. Doing so by the end of fall quarter 2010 is essential. I will work with Director Cook and the faculty on revising student learning outcomes, and on adopting more specific and rigorous assessment tools. The program has already made one important change and that is adopting a capstone experience, which should provide an excellent end of degree assessment tool. It is also important that the final assessment plan be linked to all 5 of our college student learning goals.
3. **Additional Asian Area FTEs** - The main message here seems to be that the program concentrate on consistency, focus and niche areas, rather than branching out too much beyond

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4. China and Japan areas of strength. Dr. Levine suggests that the department might use fellowships and exchanges to test out interest in areas such as South Asia and Korea. Dr. Levine states specifically, “It is easy for students to informally relate that they want more diversity in the Asia areas, but if you question them further, they are more interested in what they can do with the degree for their careers—which requires consistency, focus, and niche from the program.” I couldn’t agree more, and I also think this student interest requires that faculty make a conscious effort to educate students about the value of the Asia-Pacific Studies degree *and* that internships be emphasized for appropriate students. Information about careers such as that found on p. 15 of Levine’s review should be easy to find on the Asia-Pacific Studies website and should be discussed in the AST 102 class. Having mentioned the website, I should say that it is critically important to update it regularly, and to have the sort of information there that will attract students and faculty. I will work with Director Cook on the website, as it must be transformed into a more effective force for recruitment and retention of students.
5. **Structural and Resource Needs** – A key recommendation here concerns having more stability in program course offerings, which means having chairs and the AST director working more closely on scheduling. This is important for all of our interdisciplinary programs, and we will be discussing this issue at our fall retreat. My goal is to ensure that chairs and interdisciplinary directors do work more closely together in the future to provide enhanced stability for interdisciplinary programs.

Given the grim budget outlook at this time, I do not think it is possible to provide the Director with 50% reassigned time and a 10-month contract. I am doing my best to retain the current reassigned time of 10 workload units, and will continue to do so, as this minimal time is essential if the program is to succeed. I agree that a real physical space is critically important for the identity of the AST program and our other interdisciplinary programs. Our new building proposal includes such dedicated space, but I believe that the university should have as a high priority finding space soon for all of our interdisciplinary programs. Having such physical space will help with the critical need for program visibility/recruitment, with the goal of building community among AST students and faculty, and with improving our chances to obtain external funding.

### SUMMARY

The AST program is a model one when it comes to faculty productivity, language offerings, faculty mentored research, cultural programming, and commitment to diversity and internationalization of the campus. It can become even stronger in the future by stabilizing course offerings, developing niche areas of excellence, improving assessment methods, and enhancing opportunities for internships and career information. I am committed to encouraging CAH to think seriously as a college about how we conceive of hires, how we focus our programs, how we do scheduling, and how we recruit and retain students so that we can be more collaborative and thus more supportive of AST and other interdisciplinary programs. I also believe that it’s not only AST that needs to create niche areas of excellence; CWU as a whole needs to do this, which means departments and colleges need to find ways to work more collaboratively.