

Memo

To: Ian McNeely, Associate Dean, and Ron Bramhall, Vice Provost

From: Tuong Vu, Director, Asian Studies Program

Subject: Asian Studies Program Assessment Plan for 2017-2018

Date: 02/06/2017

In response to your request for this Plan, let me first explain that Asian Studies is an interdisciplinary program. We do not have even a single full faculty. Daniel Buck holds only 40% appointment in AS (and 60% in Geography). Almost all the courses our majors (currently about 35) take are offered by other departments. We have normally offered only one course per year: AS 350 (What is Asia?) taught by Dan. This year Dan is on sabbatical leave, and we are hiring a GE to teach the class.

Given the nature of the program and the fact that we have zero full faculty and depend nearly entirely on courses offered by other departments, we are in a very different position than most other departments on the issue of assessment. For example, one of the learning outcomes we have for AS majors concerns language ability. These Asian languages are taught by faculty in the East Asian Languages and Literatures. They obviously assess students who take their language classes, and we trust them to do a good job both in teaching and in assessing students. We have no capacity whatsoever to assess this outcome even if we want to.

In addition, since the program offers only one course (AS 350) of its own, it is difficult to assess learning outcomes of the whole program based just on this course. This course itself has its learning outcomes, which naturally are narrower than those of the whole program. The cohorts of students who take this course also change every year, making it meaningless to compare the learning outcomes of different cohorts in the course across many years and use the comparison to evaluate the program.

We have thought about this issue, and would like to propose the following plan to assess a key learning outcome of the program. This is "broad knowledge of Asia." When Dan Buck returns from leave in September 2017, he will draft a survey. We will distribute the survey in the week before graduation day in June 2018 to graduating majors to find out how good they are in terms of their broad knowledge of Asia. Survey questions perhaps include basic facts and trends in Asia to test student's knowledge. We will repeat the survey in June 2019, 2020, and so on (if the program still exists then, given CAS's pending deep cuts on our resources this year). Dan will analyze the results every year to observe any discernable patterns and will report the findings to the Asian Studies' Advisory Committee.