

## Annual Departmental Assessment Report

Department or Program: Indigenous, Race, and Ethnic Studies

Academic Year of Report: 2019-2020

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### Section 1: Learning Objectives Assessed for this Report

For each major in the department, list the learning objectives that were assessed during this period.

[Major 1]: *Ethnic Studies Bachelor Degree*

#### 1. Learning Goal 1

*For this assessment we focused on ES's Learning Assessment #7 – Original Research. The full text of the assessment is as follows:*

*“Engage in original research by completing a senior research paper that reflects and utilizes a comprehensive understanding of ethnic studies methodologies and theories, synthesizes and applies knowledge from earlier ethnic studies coursework, and attends to the details of evidence and argumentation in knowledge production.”*

### Section 2: Assessment Activities

*As reflected in last year's annual assessment, we have implemented the change to our major requirements that eliminates the ES 498 and ES 499 two-quarter, research thesis sequence requirement and replaces it with completion of any two 400-level ES seminars. Since this change, we have been involved in evaluating our overall curricular offerings, especially since expanding the number of our upper-division 400-level courses dovetails with the roll out both our IRES graduate certificate program in AY 2020-21 and our IRES PhD program in AY 2021-22. Additionally, we are still in the process of establishing the appropriate balance between 200- and 300-level courses offered each year (as these classes serve the most undergraduate students and fulfill several of the University's General Education requirements) relative to the number of 400/500-level courses, which now need to be offered more regularly as part of facilitating completion of the new major requirements.*

*As a faculty, we have also assessed the effectiveness of having a Director of Undergraduate Studies, a change to our department administrative structure that we implemented in AY 2018-19. The consensus from faculty point of view is that this position has significantly streamlined the workload for all, eliminated confusion due to decentralized and sometimes inconsistent advising, and made student support more robust and effective.*

*While more data needs to be collected and analyzed, initial reports from the DUS suggest that most students have an unambiguously positive response to the change in major requirements and experience less anxiety and stress completing the major. This assessment is based on observations during advising and general student comments and responses when they learn about the change. Several students interested in the minor have also reconsidered the major when they discovered that they are no longer required to take the ES sequence capstone classes (ES 498 and ES 499) in order to graduate.*

### Section 3: Actions Taken Based on Assessment Analysis

*In our assessment activities, we realized that in addition to thinking through the number of 400/500-level courses taught, we needed to reconsider how the content of our 400/500-level courses might be revised further to achieve our learning objective for undergraduates to engage in original research. Thus, in the spring term we*

*plan to (1) discuss the creation and crafting of tailored research assignments that may become common features of some or all 400/500-level courses and (2) evaluate more generally the kinds of assessments and assignments included in 400/500-level course requirements that might replicate the most generative aspects of the original ES 498/499 major requirement model.*

*As part of strengthening our structure for student support and advising, we are also in the process of making information most accessible. We are drafting more information to go on our website that will be easily readable and searchable, specifically in the areas of faculty research interests and major maps based on students' specific interests and potential career paths. As examples of the latter, students will soon be able to see example itineraries for major coursework in IRES based on interests such as law and policy, tribal governance, media and culture, social service, etc.*

#### **Section 4: Other Efforts to Improve the Student Educational Experience**

*As faculty, we have started conversations about what makes ES distinctive and plan in the spring to take an inventory of our pedagogical practices and curriculum that reflects this distinctiveness. We hope that this activity will further allow us to highlight for students interested in our major what makes an IRES educational experience unique and what opportunities are afforded through participating in our learning community.*

*We are also working with our team at Tykeson Advising Center to coordinate student support and best communicate the goals and distinctiveness of our department and major.*

#### **Section 5: Plans for Next Year**

*We will continue to focus on Learning Outcome #7 for the next year. Steps we will take: 1) revise this learning outcome in official documents; 2) get student feedback about the proposed change to the major; 3) assess to what degree the ES Undergraduate Research Symposium may contribute towards the goal of independent research; 4) assess what kind of undergraduate work is being performed in the 400/500 level IRES electives. I think it would be irresponsible of IRES to jump to another learning outcome in the immediate future.*

*We are in the midst of organizing our department data and deciding optimal deadlines for assessment. Currently it is still too early for data analysis, since students are still adjusting to changes to our major requirements. Not enough time has passed in order to confidently associate these curricular changes with any positive changes in enrollment. Still, we anticipate that as students learn about our curricular changes, and can more easily add the major without being constrained by the previous two-course capstone sequence requirement, we will see an increase in majors.*

*We also plan to gather more information about how people have been participating in the Annual ES Undergraduate Research Symposium, which we co-coordinate with OSU. We need to discuss a new approach or orientation toward this significant capstone event, given that we no longer have ES 498/499 that created an organic means to participate in the program. We hope to streamline a new process through which our 400/500-level classes have a direct feed into Research symposium participation, e.g. by assigning papers that are explicitly intended for the symposium.*