

December 23, 2016

**PROFESSOR KARL GERTH, Director**  
**Chinese Studies Program**

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Program Review for the Chinese Studies Program

Dear Professor Gerth,

The Undergraduate Council discussed the Chinese Studies Program's 2016 Undergraduate Program Review. The Council supports the findings and recommendations of the review subcommittee and appreciates the thoughtful and proactive response from the Program.

The Council will conduct its follow-up review of the Program in Winter Quarter 2018. At that time, our goal is to learn about the Program's progress in implementing the recommendations of the program review subcommittee and the Undergraduate Council. We also look forward to learning more about the restructuring process and subsequent move to the Institute of Arts and Humanities. The Council extends its thanks to the Program for their engagement in this process and we look forward to the continued discussion.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Cook, Chair  
Undergraduate Council

Attachment

(1) Undergraduate Program Review Report and Responses for Chinese Studies

cc: C. Della Coletta  
J. Rauch  
R. Rodriguez  
K. Roy  
B. Sawrey  
M. Sidney

Professor and Program Review Chair Ursula Meyer, UC San Diego  
Professor Yasu-Hiko (Yashy) Tohsaku, UC San Diego  
Professor Michael Fuller, UC Irvine

The Committee met on Monday, May 23, 2016 with the new program director Kuiyi Shen, affiliated faculty, AVCDUE Sawrey, divisional dean of Arts and Humanities, current students, the current MSO, the program coordinator, and several teaching assistants. We had been provided with the self- study, a past review and a set of documents providing data for the program past and present.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT PROGRAM:

Kuiyi Shen, director of the program in Chinese studies, gave us a brief history of the program. He writes “The Chinese Studies Program was established in the late 1960s. Since then, the Anthropology and History departments took turns housing it. It has been one of the largest and strongest regional studies programs on campus. During this review period, the program started with seventeen participating professors from various departments, six regular full-time lecturers, and about twenty graduate teaching assistants (TAs). “Professor Shen goes on to state that there have been a number of recent retirements including five professors and two lecturers so that the current program employs only thirteen professors and four lecturers. There is also a possibility of another significant retirement in the coming year.

The catalog for 2015-16 reports 13 professors, 5 associate professors, 1 lecturer SOE, and 6 regular lecturers. Of the 13 professors, 5 are emeritus. There is 1 professor in Physics, 1 in Linguistics, 2 in History, 1 in Political Science, 3 in Literature, 1 in Visual Arts, 1 in Sociology, and 2 from the School of Global Policy and Strategy. Among the Assistant Professors, 2 are from Music, 2 are from History, and 1 is from Literature. All the lecturers but one (including the SOE) are Chinese language instructors housed in the History Department. 1 lecturer is from Visual Arts.

Even though the Chinese studies program has been reputedly one of the largest language programs on campus, the enrollment and number of majors and minors has declined significantly in this last review period. In Spring of 2015 the majors had dropped to 10 from 40 in 2011 and the minors dropped to 47 from 156 in 2011. Since the 2010-11 school year, 61 major degrees have been awarded and 227 minor degrees. Enrollment, particularly in the Chinese language courses, dropped dramatically - from 724 to 448 in the first year Chinese language course and from 462 to 250 in the second year Chinese language course.

According to the program’s director, the current program has been functioning since 2011 without an operations budget. This cut has impacted conferences, a lecture series, symposia and support for student organizations who look to celebrate Chinese culture.

Even though there has been a good deal of frustration about the program being housed under a variety of different departments - History, Literature and Linguistics, there is a strong feeling of optimism about the new-formed ‘Institute of Arts and Humanities’. The budget for Chinese Studies has already been transferred from the History Department to the new Institute.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES:

### Strengths:

According to the director, faculty, and students (who were overwhelmingly enthusiastic) the program has a lot to offer. The faculty in modern Chinese history is very strong and have a national reputation. There is strong support in the study of twenty-first century China and in GPS. The lecture series has a high profile. There are good relationships between faculty, and the faculty support each other.

In this review period, the program has added eleven different Chinese related courses so that students will have more choices. The impact of this is not known yet. The EAP program is strong in Beijing although the cost is an issue. The MSO discussed that the increase in upper division electives will create a lot more flexibility.

The faculty evaluations are strong-the teachers are passionate and love their students. Several students reflected that when they got involved with Chinese studies they discovered what a wonderful program it is and then decided to become majors. Their reasons for choosing it as a major were articulate and diverse. One student offered that it is important to acknowledge that a fifth of the world speaks this language and as a political science student who hopes to travel the world, Chinese studies would be integral to his success. Other students who were interested in International Relations, law school, pursuing East Asian studies, or who grew up speaking Chinese but were less comfortable with reading and writing, all proclaimed the merits of the program. They uniformly stated that they loved their teachers and were not surprised to find out that the program is one of the best language programs in the state. They all had high praise for the program coordinator. They said she answers all questions, follows up, helps with petitions, and counsels them in how to navigate to graduation. They also felt the TAs were phenomenal.

### Weaknesses:

The structural weakness of having the program reside in History with many teachers coming from other departments and History having control of the budgetary needs of Chinese Studies has apparently been the biggest challenge. There does not seem to be a clear center for the faculty and students to gather and there is a lot of anxiety over future hires considering the number of recent and imminent retirements with no clear FTE path.

There were many complaints among the students about counselors from their various colleges discouraging the students from pursuing Chinese studies if they could 'test out' of their language requirement. The students felt they were often confronted with the 'unit cap' when they were interested in taking a second year of the language or if they were transfer students with a lot of credits coming in. They felt it was difficult to get good counseling as it was problematic to get appointments without many weeks of waiting. There was a general perception that the counselors were of the "snap snap snap, who's next - let's get you graduated" mindset and it left them confused about the nuances of this program and how to continue in it. They also felt that counselors had been discouraging the concept of a 'double major' in lieu of the TTD mandate, even when they felt that many of their primary majors (political science, international relations, etc.) would be greatly enhanced by a second major in Chinese Studies.

Of course, the dramatic decline in the number of majors, minors, and general enrollment is a grave concern.

There was a lot of discussion about the visibility factor - many of the students said they stumbled onto Chinese studies by accident (a roommate or a girlfriend happened to be taking a class, etc.) The students felt that some of the Chinese related courses were difficult to find in the catalog. Calligraphy was mentioned in this regard. Staff, as well, felt there was a definite PR issue - that the cry of "science, science, science" has brought on a real neglect of what they termed as "humanistic science".

The students also wanted more lower division choices and more ways to deal with some of the classes where there was overlap. They felt that some courses in different areas covered the same material. They also wanted more wiggle room in their choices. The students felt that there was a lack of communication between the various faculty members within the program and a dearth of communication between faculty and students.

The TAs talked about work load. They told us they worked 220 hours per semester. They also mentioned that the language classes had students who came from a wide variety of experience and this factor required the TAs to do a lot of one on one tutorials. They found this difficult to do without many hours of extra work - but they were dedicated to doing it anyway.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

There was a great deal of conversation about the Humanities Institute as a possible solution to many of the issues confronting the program. The students would have a central place to meet and disseminate information. The faculty would have a place to convene and discuss curriculum and issues of the program. Advertising for various activities related to the program could happen there. Counseling for the area could happen there. And the program could apply for funds for some of its activities - lectures, symposia, Chinese New Year, the Institute. The opportunities for fundraising and collaboration between all language areas would greatly improve. There was some concern expressed about the fact that the new director was coming from History and might have some bias. We would hope that there could be a brief report in a year or two to see how the Chinese Studies program is progressing in its new setting. Also, given some recent implementations - the new lower division History streamline, the new director, the large number of retirements, it might be useful to see how those factors impact enrollment, majors, and minors in the next few years.

It also seems appropriate to recommend that the Chinese Studies program have a budget of its own rather than replicating the former situation where History held the purse strings and now, it seems, the new institute will control the funding: for planning of events, speakers, films, etc., it would be good if they knew what they had available at the beginning of the year.

The committee discussed the idea of recommending an expansion of the program to "East Asian Studies" as in other universities. We felt this would help raise the profile of the major and serve students who are interested in a variety of languages and or a language-related curriculum. We wondered if the area could then offer their own content classes and could the classes be held in the new Institute? Many students expressed that if they wanted to pursue East Asian Studies in graduate school, they would like more flexibility to flesh out their undergraduate studies.

There have been many connections between China, Korea, and Japan in the past, and there remain complex interactions today: there may well be overlaps in activities that contribute to the various programs (this certainly is true at UCI where, for example, we hold a Lunar New Year's Festival that involves Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese language program). The

Institute can be a mechanism by which greater interactions among programs can develop, and we can perhaps recommend that they explore such cooperation.

The committee also was unclear why the classes couldn't be cross-listed to help students navigate the catalog and find what they need.

We took on board many of the student suggestions about a possible "Language Week" to celebrate and promote the study of all languages, developing the speaker series again, promoting a film series, encouraging Chinese Clubs that advertise classes, establishing a newsletter, putting up posters, erecting a graffiti board on Library walk, and generally having a stronger presence on "Admit Day". Also, they recommended, as we do, finding ways to make the courses easier to find in the catalog. They also suggested some interesting classes - a course that enrolled Chinese and English speakers working together and a program that UCI is currently using where native speakers volunteer to tutor language students and get one credit. We also felt, as the students did, that the "overlap" issue should be addressed. For example, in the course on Chinese religions and the course on Chinese political philosophy, much of the same material is covered in the syllabi. We felt that problems of this kind could be easily solved with communication between faculty. The students also asked for more courses that would address issues that are relevant to today's world.

We feel strongly that there needs to be some kind of discussion with counselors at the various colleges about the students' perceptions about what they are hearing as to the value of language studies. Whether or not this is happening in all colleges with all counselors, we felt there was enough passion and agreement among the students on this issue, that it would help to pursue ways to rethink how to approach students who have a strong desire to engage in these courses and in this curriculum. We also felt that the desire to double major should not be discouraged if students felt they could do the work in four years. We wondered if there could be a pitch to other programs on campus about the importance of Chinese Studies, perhaps offering course such as business Chinese or medical Chinese that would directly relate to the students' needs. We also wondered if there could be a way to meet with local teachers to discuss the merits of Chinese Studies/East Asian Studies if the students choose to come to UCSD. This seemed to be particularly relevant to this university, given the demographic of our student body.

We felt that a TA ratio /formula change would help augment the workload problem. The TAs suggested writing tutors to meet one on one with students and cutting the sections in half so there could be better discussions. The sections could be labeled writing intensives.

Also it does seem that, given the retirement of major scholars who study China, it is within our charge to recommend not only that the China faculty on campus participates at some level of consultation in the replacement of faculty (especially in areas such as sociology and political science) but that there be such replacements (i.e., the various departments may easily decide to put their FTE faculty resources elsewhere, and this would make providing the courses to sustain the Chinese major difficult). And as we were told that the Chinese Advisory committee only meets in a crisis, we strongly recommend that the full faculty of Chinese Studies convene at least once or twice a year, especially at matrix time when curriculum for the coming year is being decided.

## CONCLUSION:

The committee was inspired and moved by the passions of the director, faculty, staff, and

students, both majors and non-majors. The students, particularly, were very optimistic and excited about what they had 'discovered' through these classes and this curriculum. Numerous students were contemplating switching majors after taking just one class. Our biggest recommendation is really about communication. Students need to know what their choices are and what their flexibility is within the major. Faculty needs to know what the future holds in terms of replacements and curriculum and workload, what material other faculty are teaching, and what the students are concerned about. The general campus, as well as prospective Freshman and transfer students, need to know what a valuable and interesting program and major is offered at UCSD.

Sincerely,

Professor and Program Review Chair Ursula Meyer, UC San Diego  
Professor Yasu-Hiko (Yashy) Tohsaku, UC San Diego  
Professor Michael Fuller, UC Irvine