The Undergraduate Council has completed its study of the Ethnic Studies Program.

The External Review Committee was:

Dr. Juliana Chang, Associate Professor
Department of English
Santa Clara University

Dr. Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Director
Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America
Brown University

Dr. Julian Kunnie, Director
Africana Studies
University of Arizona

The Internal Committee was:

Dr. Lisa Diamond, Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
University of Utah

Dr. Robert Flores, Professor
College of Law
University of Utah

Dr. John McCullough, Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of Utah

Dr. Maureen Mathison, Associate Professor and Director
University Writing Program/Department of Communication
University of Utah

The following summary is based on reports provided by both the Internal and External Review Teams and the response from the Director of the Ethnic Studies Program.
I. PROGRAM PROFILE AND INTRODUCTION

The University of Utah Ethnic Studies Program is central to that part of the University’s academic mission that provides the epistemological and methodological tools to study and examine issues of power, privilege and inequity regarding various populations in the United States. The existing Program has capably and effectively fulfilled that need on the campus in unique ways for more than 25 years. The presence of UUESP faculty in many departments and colleges across campus has created high visibility for the Program and its mission as well as providing role models for students and members of the larger University community.

The Program has also excelled in providing core elements for fulfilling the diversity requirement enacted 12 years ago. Well-established ethnic “Experience” core courses, such as “The African American Experience” and others that focus on Chicana/o, American Indian, and Asian/Pacific American issues, have been central to the exposure of the student body to minority experiences in the United States. Other issues addressed through the curriculum include political economy, education inequities, gender through the lifespan, and intercultural communication, to name a few.

The Program has a long history dating back to the late 1960s and early 1970s. Originally African-American, Chicana/o and American Indian Studies courses and activities existed as separate units. These were consolidated in 1976-77 to form the core of the Ethnic Studies Program. Later, in 1989, an Asian/Pacific American Studies section was added.

The UUESP has been housed in two different units. In 1976-77 when the separate sections were consolidated, the Ethnic Studies Program was housed in the College of Humanities. At this time, a minor was developed. In 1983, the Program was placed under the supervision of the Office of the Associate Vice President for Diversity, which, according to the self-study, has been advantageous in terms of increased “support, visibility, and stability of the Program.” The UUESP has continued to grow in terms of its faculty and in the number of students it serves.

Program and Governance

The original goal of the UUESP was to provide courses for ethnic students focusing on minority and ethnic groups in order to help them understand their heritage and their place in the dominant Anglo society. That focus has since shifted to providing these courses to the wider university audience. The “Experience” courses that the curriculum offers provide an overview of the experiences of people from specific ethnic groups and backgrounds. These are supplemented by more advanced courses offered by the UUESP as well as courses in other departments; together they form the base for satisfying the university diversity requirement. The additional courses outside of the UUESP are offered by various departments, including History, English, Linguistics and Communication in the College of Humanities; Anthropology, Political Science, Sociology and Family and Consumer Studies in the College of Social and Behavioral Science; and Music, Dance, Film, and Theatre in the College of Fine Arts. Still lacking are UUESP-based courses in the College of Science.
Each subprogram has a coordinator and the overall program has a director who reports directly to the Associate Vice President for Diversity. While similar reporting arrangements are seen in other university programs, this structure is at variance with the usual department to college to vice-president tree found throughout the university. The Program sees several problems in this arrangement, the most important being the lack of primacy in both hiring and RPT decisions. Regular departments hire and retain faculty; the UUESP has little choice in most matters other than vetoing pre-selected department choices. Once hired, the faculty member owes primary loyalty, time, energy and resources to the department of record, while loyalty to the UUESP may be a matter of good will from the department. To correct this problem the UUESP has considered a thoughtful step by step plan, advancing from a program offering only a minor to one offering a major to department status. Realization of this plan is not universally supported by program participants but all seem sympathetic to a consideration of the pros and cons of the proposal. Certainly a first step will be hiring appropriate new faculty not only to fill gaps from program losses but also to bolster existing course offerings.

Faculty and Teaching Support

The faculty are all active contributors to the teaching program, to service to the university, to the profession and especially to the community, and many are nationally and internationally recognized scholars. Their dedication, energy, commitment and accomplishments are commendable.

At the time of the self-study report the UUESP faculty consisted of 17 tenure-track (through their home departments) faculty, 16 of whom are jointly appointed to departments and the UUESP (four full professors, eight associate professors, four assistant professors). Additional instruction for the Program is provided by one associate instructor, two adjunct appointments and four lecturers and allied faculty). According to the self-study, five of the faculty identify as Chicana/o, six are African American, and three identify as Native American. One member is Caucasian, and three are Asian American. The budgeted FTE for regular faculty was 10, of which 7.5 were filled and 2.5 vacant. By February, 2008, three new hires had committed to the university (two in Political Science, one in English).

UUESP faculty and students mentioned the need for more faculty, especially in the American Indian and Asian American subdivisions. Faculty loss there has been substantial, due to both hiring away and retirement – an average of 2 faculty members every 3 years – and recruitment is difficult for reasons described above. If the level of major is to be achieved, increased faculty will be necessary; the program is well aware of these needs and has a reasonable plan for the increases.

Students

The program reported a total of 81 minors between 1992 and 1994, of which 54 completed their degrees. The number of minors for 2007-08 was 120. Since 2002, two hundred students have graduated. Currently there are several students interested in pursuing a major in Ethnic Studies
and eight students pursuing a major in Social Justice through the Bachelor of University Studies (BUS).

Enrollment increases have also been dramatic through 2002, with 513 students in Academic Year 1986-87 to 1129 students in AY 1993-94, to 4,932 in AY 1997-8, when the baccalaureate diversity requirement was instituted. Since 2002, however, there has been a downturn in student enrollment due to campus-wide diversity courses that are discipline-specific. The self-study reports that of the 111 listed diversity courses, 41 are offered through UUESP.

Students are strongly supportive of the program and its faculty. They consider the program a home away from home and a means to validate their own ethnic experience; this is especially important in a state so monolithically European in demography and culture as is Utah. Of equal importance to them is the opportunity to educate the general populace and introduce them to the ethnic richness found at the university and in the wider community.

The course offerings are large and students would like to see them expanded. This will not be possible utilizing the existing UUESP faculty. However, because many Diversity courses are offered in other departments this problem is slightly alleviated. At the same time, these courses “poach” students who might otherwise take courses from the direct UUESP curriculum, and Program faculty see this as a potential problem, and certainly a competition for faculty hires and Program resources. If an UUESP major is to be seriously considered, this problem will have to be dealt with at the highest administrative levels.

**Facilities and Support**

Facilities and support have been less than adequate, given the increased enrollments. A perennial problem throughout the university, it is particularly problematic for UUESP.

The unknown fate of Carlson Hall is unsettling. While the History Department and the Tanner Humanities Center are moving to new facilities, will Carlson Hall still be home to the UUESP or will it be incorporated into the Law School? If so, where will the UUESP be housed? Office space may be considered inadequate in the sense that the Ethnic Studies faculty members use their tenuring home offices, disbursed around campus. Inadequate office space for faculty not primarily associated with the program (usually regular faculty housed in their respective departments) has been a problem in the past.

Office space for TAs is now a problem as they are housed in cubicles in the basement of the building.

Most of these space problems would be solved by having the UUESP simply occupy Carlson Hall, although the problem of a meeting room for UUESP faculty remains, as the Carlson Lounge does not really work.

Adequate library materials to support course assignments and faculty research is also a problem. Some departments have established mini-libraries within their own spaces; these serve primarily
as resources for students. Expansion of the existing faculty-oriented library/media center might be considered.

**Diversity Requirement**

The diversity requirement has now been in place for about ten years and is a success, due in no small part to the efforts of the UUESP. This program offers many courses satisfying the requirement, supplemented by courses offered directly from regular departments. There is a feeling that the UUESP has lost some degree of control over the requirement and certainly has lost SCH by having departments offer their own courses. Ethnicity is a major, but not the only aspect of diversity which students may explore to satisfy the diversity requirement, so cooperation with other programs is essential to continuing success.

**Diversity of Faculty and Students**

The UUESP is unique in that the very nature of the program is such that there is great ethnic diversity in the faculty. As seen in the description of the faculty members above, the UUESP has the most diverse faculty on campus, with faculty representing a range of ethnicities: African-American, Asian-American, Caucasian; Chicana/o and; Native-American. Six of the seventeen faculty members are female. Because the UUESP faculty primarily consists of joint appointment positions, hiring is generally undertaken by both the home department and the UUESP, both of which strategically attempt to recruit a diverse pool of applicants for positions. The UUESP negotiates the language for positions with the partnering departments.

The course offerings and the opportunity to interact with an ethnically diverse faculty, tend to attract an ethnically diverse student body. One special characteristic of this program is that it serves as a ‘diversity’ service center for the overall University--- i.e., the overall ethnic diversity of the University is greatly enhanced by the work of the Ethnic Studies Program. The diversity of the faculty affiliated with the Program strengthens the University overall—and enhances the University’s ability to attract and retain other diverse faculty (even those who will not have a formal affiliation with the Program). In addition, the education and socialization experiences that the Program provides for ethnically diverse students contributes to the success of those students, and thus serves the University’s overall mission of supporting and retaining such students.

Students enroll in the UUESP courses for various reasons. For some, it is to fulfill the diversity requirement. For others, the commitment is stronger, as they immerse themselves in a plan of study for either a minor, offered through the UUESP, or a major, which is offered through the Bachelors of University Studies Program (BUS). UUESP has attended general recruiting events on campus (i.e., Majors Fair, Plazafest) to talk with students, and also maintains a website. Students also hear about the Program through word-of-mouth. Finally, students self-select courses of interest to them.
II. COMMENDATIONS

The Undergraduate Council commends the Ethnic Studies Program for the following:

1. Among the greatest strengths of the Ethnic Studies Program is its faculty. Because they come from several departments and colleges across campus they create higher visibility for the Program and its mission. Both the internal and external review committees report the faculty to be collegial and consistent in demonstrating respect and appreciation for each other’s scholarship and work. Many are nationally and internationally recognized. Faculty members create a safe space in their classrooms where controversial topics can be discussed responsibly and intellectually.

2. The faculty is highly diverse representing a range of ethnicities including African-American, Asian-American, Caucasian, Chicana/o, and American Indian. Faculty are seen as role models and mentors for ethnic minority students.

3. Students characterize the material covered in Ethnic Studies classes as exciting and challenging and feel that faculty do a good job in communicating the material to students with varying backgrounds. Students are respectful of faculty and appreciate the role they have played in their education.

4. The Ethnic Studies Program has excelled in providing core elements in fulfilling the diversity requirement enacted 12 years ago. The requirement has become a widely accepted bachelors degree requirement due in part to the efforts of the UUESP. The original focus of the UUESP was providing courses for ethnic students concerning minority and ethnic groups to help them understand their heritage and place in the dominant Anglo society. The UUESP should be commended for their change in focus which has shifted with the implementation of the diversity requirement to providing a curriculum appealing to the wider University audience.

5. The UUESP has had significant success in growing the program. From the establishment of the program through 2007–08 the number of minors has grown steadily. Since 2002 two hundred students have graduated with ESP minors. In spite of the absence of a major in the program, students have been able to craft their own majors through the BUS program within Undergraduate Studies.

6. The UUESP has continued to expand its offerings. Two new minors have been developed - the Asian Pacific American minor and the comparative ES minor, and a new foundation course, Intro. to Ethnic Studies, has been established. The UUESP has developed a revised mission statement and engaged in thoughtful discussions regarding the possible offering of a major and considered the potential of developing a proposal to become a fully accredited academic department.
III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Academic Structure:

   Ethnic Studies should offer a major in addition to the minor currently being offered. The major should be organized by themes rather than on the basis of racial/ethnic subgroups. This would put Ethnic Studies on an equal footing with the University of Utah’s Gender Studies Program, which already offers a major.

2. Administrative Structure:

   Ethnic Studies should explore the possibility of becoming a full-fledged department, with at least some full-time faculty appointments and the ability to make retention, promotion, and tenure decisions, but only when adequate financial support becomes available. Such a move would also require a change in reporting structure, with the department reporting to a dean instead of to a vice president.

3. Faculty Make-up:

   Faculty members from the Department of Education, Culture, and Society (ECS) represent a large percentage of the faculty associated with the Ethnic Studies Program. This disproportionate representation is a potential problem that could result in marginalization within the arts and sciences academic environment of the University. Ethnic Studies should hire new faculty members (preferably senior scholars) in departments such as History, Sociology and English.

4. Reducing Faculty Turnover:

   There is serious concern over the high rate of faculty turnover among Ethnic Studies faculty over the past five years. This problem should be addressed by new hires combined with a strengthened system of mentoring and a stronger sense of collective identity among Ethnic Studies faculty.

5. Improving Physical Facilities:

   The Ethnic Studies Program would benefit from more and better space. Now that the History Department has moved out of Carlson Hall (where both Ethnic Studies and History have been housed) into the Carolyn Tanner Irish Humanities Building, the Ethnic Studies Program should expand into the additional space that this move provides. Such an expansion has already begun to take place.

6. Improving Student Recruitment and Retention:

   To improve student recruitment and retention, the Ethnic Studies Program should increase its outreach to high schools and hire an academic advisor to serve Ethnic Studies students.
Department Review by Academic Year

ETHNIC STUDIES

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Memorandum of Understanding  
International Studies Program  
Undergraduate council Review

This memorandum of understanding is a summary of decisions reached at a wrap-up meeting on March 9, 2009 and concludes the Undergraduate Council Review of the Ethnic Studies Program. David W. Pershing, Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs; John Francis, Senior Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs; Steve Roens, Senior Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies; Octavio Villalpando, Associate Vice-President for Diversity; and Ed Buendia, Director for the Ethnic Studies Program, were present.

The discussion centered on, but was not limited to, recommendations included in the Undergraduate Council Review completed on January 27, 2009.

At the wrap-up meeting, the group agreed to endorse the following actions:

**Recommendation 1: Academic Structure**

a. As soon as possible the Ethnic Studies Program should create a major organized by themes (i.e. diaspora studies, social justice, etc.) The thematic nature of the major should infuse the various courses focusing on the different racial/ethnic subgroups. In addition the major will offer courses in which themes are explored comparatively, from the various perspectives of the different racial and ethnic subgroups. Ethnic Studies already has two new courses, one in diaspora studies and one in social justice that could support such a major.

b. Partnerships should be developed with other entities to facilitate creation of a double major.

**Recommendation 2: Administrative Structure**

The Ethnic Studies Program should move slowly and judiciously toward becoming a department. The existing administrative structured should be kept for the present. Once the major (proposed above) is robust, departmental status can be considered.

**Recommendation 3: Faculty Composition**

New hires should be pursued to diversity the faculty. The Program will add fully tenured faculty that have at least 90% of their appointment within Ethnic Studies.

**Recommendation 4: Faculty Culture – Reducing Faculty Turnover**

Structure will be put into place to foster relationship with collaborative chairs so that faculty loyalties will not be an issue.

**Recommendation 5: Physical Facilities**

a. Work in conjunction with Campus Planning as the five-year building plan comes to its end to insure that Ethnic Studies will have adequate space.
b. Plan ahead so that if and when the Law School moves on its new plans for facilities, Ethnic Studies will have the space it needs.

**Recommendation 6: Student Retention**

a. Once the major is robust, the program should evaluate the extent to which it can comply with the graduation guarantee.

b. And advisor should be hired to help with retention. A full time advisor might possibly be shared with another unit that has a strong relationship with the Ethnic Studies Program.

This memorandum of understanding is to be followed by annual letters of progress from the Director of the Program to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Letters will be submitted each year until all of the actions in the preceding paragraphs have been addressed.

Signed by David W. Pershing
Senior VP for Academic Affairs

Signed by Octavio Villalpando
Associate VP, Diversity

Signed by Johanna Watzinger-Tharp
Director, International Studies Program
Associate Dean, College of Humanities

Signed by Edward Buendia
Director, Ethnic Studies Program

Signed by John Francis
Senior Associate VP for Academic Affairs