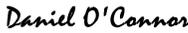




Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Department Chair:  Date: 3/16/2026
M. Keith Claybrook

Interim Dean, CLA:  Date: 3/19/2026
Daniel O'Connor

Vice Provost Academic Programs:  Date: 3/19/2026
Pei-Fang Hung



Program Review Summary
Memorandum of Understanding
Department of Africana Studies
College of Liberal Arts
December 2025

This document summarizes the findings of the recent Program Review for the Department of Africana Studies (AFRS) and establishes a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the Department, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs. The review was based on the departmental Self-Study submitted in September 2024, with an external review conducted by Drs. Gammage and Williams in February 2025. This report and accompanying MOU outline the goals to be achieved and the actions to be undertaken by all parties during the next program review cycle. Progress toward these goals will be documented through annual reports

The Department of Africana Studies offers a Bachelor of Arts in Africana Studies, a Minor in Africana Studies, and a Certificate in Africana Studies. In collaboration with the Departments of Liberal Studies and English, it also contributes to the B.A. in Liberal Studies with a Concentration in Africana Studies and the B.A. in English with a Concentration in Africana Studies. Additionally, the department plays a significant role in delivering courses that fulfill the university's Ethnic Studies General Education requirement and in advancing campus-wide Black Student Success initiatives.

The department has made notable progress in addressing recommendations from the 2019 MOU (based on the 2017 Self-Study). That MOU between the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of Africana Studies identified several priorities: 1) revise the curriculum map for the BA and the program learning outcomes (PLOs) so that the language is active and measurable, will consider reducing the number of PLOs, and will continue to ensure appropriate student learning outcomes for each course. The department will continue the assessment of GE courses and PLOs; 2) continue to review and revise required courses and will work to ensure adequate scheduling of required courses to enable students' timely graduation; 3) work with the CLA advising office (ATLAS) to examine time to graduation, and implement measures to reduce time to degree; 4) explore the development of online courses to strengthen enrollments and make its curriculum accessible to students across the CSU; 5) The department will consider reducing the number of units required for the minor and the certificate in Africana Studies. 6) provide updates on progress made towards the actions agreed to in this MOU, to be submitted to the Vice Provost and the Director of Program Review and Assessment.



Resources reviewed for the report:

1. Self-study Report (2024)
2. External Review Report (2025)
3. Previous MOU (2019, following 2017 review)
4. Department website and University Catalog

Strengths were Identified in the Reports

1. Curriculum Development

- a. Following the transition to online instruction during the pandemic, the Department of Africana Studies maintained several online sections of *AFRS 119 Introduction to Racial and Ethnic Studies* to enhance student access. In Fall 2024, the department offered 22 sections of AFRS 119 and 16 sections in Spring 2025, with enrollment typically ranging from 72 to over 100 students per section.
- b. In response to recommendations from the previous MOU, the department developed new courses in Africana Women's Literary Traditions, including *AFRS 445 Africana Women's Literary Tradition: Toni Morrison* and *AFRS 545 Africana Women's Literary Tradition: Zora Neale Hurston*. These courses reflect developments in the discipline by centering Black women's experiences and intellectual traditions.
- c. Faculty in Africana Studies created and now offers the Ethnic Studies Certificate for Educators and Professionals (ESCEP) through the College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPaCE). This certificate addresses the growing demand for Ethnic Studies content and competencies among teachers, educators, administrators, and other professionals. It aligns with the Ethnic Studies graduation requirements mandated by AB 101 (for California high schools), California Community College Academic Senate Resolution 9.03, and AB 1460 (for the California State University system).
- d. The Africana Studies Department collaborated with the other Ethnic Studies departments to develop a Master of Arts in Comparative Racial and Ethnic Studies (CRES). This program will provide students with a comprehensive, comparative foundation in the four primary disciplines of Ethnic Studies. It will serve K-12 and community college educators seeking to expand their curriculum and pedagogical expertise, as well as professionals in sectors such as nonprofit organizations, social services, urban planning, public health, and education who aim to strengthen their capacity to work with racially and ethnically marginalized communities. The program is currently under review and is anticipated to launch in Fall 2026.

2. **Ethnic Studies Institute.** The Ethnic Studies Institute represents a collaboration among the four Ethnic Studies departments and programs. It offers select Ethnic Studies courses to eligible high school students from partner districts, including the Long Beach Unified School



- District (LBUSD), Paramount Unified School District (PUSD), Port of Los Angeles High School (POLAHS), Norwalk–La Mirada Unified School District (NLMUSD), and Da Vinci High Schools. Through this dual-enrollment initiative, participating high school students earn transferable college credits while gaining early exposure to university-level coursework in Ethnic Studies.
3. **Faculty Engagement and Campus Collaboration.** Rooted in the African-centered intellectual tradition, Africana Studies faculty actively collaborate across campus to foster belonging and enrichment for Black students. The department partners with the Black Resource Center, Black Student Leadership Council, and various Black student clubs and organizations to support student success. Faculty also lead and participate in signature campus events such as the annual Pre-Kwanzaa Celebration, Black History Month programs, Kusanyiko (Open House), the African Folktale Series, and Africana Studies Week (in coordination with the Africana Studies Student Association). Additionally, the department co-sponsors the annual Black Graduation Celebration in partnership with the Black Resource Center.
 4. **High Impact Practices.** The department integrates high-impact educational practices to enhance student learning and engagement. AFRS 499 Directed Studies serves as a key opportunity for students to develop research skills through close collaboration with faculty mentors. The department's strong record of faculty scholarship, conference leadership, and student research participation contributes significantly to its reputation within the discipline.

Concerns were Noted in the Reports

1. **Enrollments.** Major enrollments in Africana Studies have declined steadily over the review period, decreasing from 36 to 12 students. This downward trend parallels the overall decline in admissions of students of African descent to CSULB. The department attributes this pattern in part to reduced resources for recruitment and outreach, which have been limited by recent budget constraints affecting financial aid, scholarships, and grant opportunities.
2. **Advising.** The department utilizes the College of Liberal Arts advising center (ATLAS) to onboard incoming transfer students during the SOAR orientation program. While current majors receive strong and personalized advising from Africana Studies faculty, potential students appear to receive limited guidance about Africana Studies as a degree option from ATLAS advisors. Strengthening this connection could enhance student awareness and recruitment into the major.
3. **Faculty Advising Load and Collaboration with ATLAS.** The department reports that students are not always referred to Africana Studies efficiently by ATLAS, which can delay student progress within the major. The department aims to build a stronger, more collaborative relationship with ATLAS to improve communication and referral processes. Additionally, faculty do not receive reassigned time for advising duties. This lack of formal advising support places an additional service burden on a department already engaged in



extensive campus and community service. Faculty note that this workload contributes to what is often described as cultural taxation, given the department's high level of involvement in Black student success and campus cultural initiatives.

Opportunities for Development

1. **Mission Statements and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).** The Department of Africana Studies maintains a clear and appropriate mission statement and well-defined Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), all of which are publicly available on the department website. To strengthen assessment and alignment with institutional standards, the department may consider refining the language of the SLOs to make them more specific and measurable.
2. **Assessment.** The department's Self-Study includes a thorough discussion of classroom-based assessment of student learning. Moving forward, the department is encouraged to implement a regularized, systematic approach to evaluating overall program-level learning outcomes. This will help demonstrate the cumulative impact of the curriculum and inform future program improvements.
3. **Faculty Resources.**
As of Fall 2022, the department employs six tenured or tenure-track (T/TT) faculty members and twelve lecturer faculty, totaling approximately 10.8 full-time equivalent faculty (FTEF). Approximately three FTEF were added in Fall 2021 following the implementation of the Ethnic Studies General Education requirement. The department relies primarily on lecturer faculty to teach Composition, Ethnic Studies Introduction (ESI) and other GE courses. To support advising, service responsibilities, and upper-division course offerings, the department is requesting additional T/TT faculty positions.
4. **Graduation Rates.** The department has shown progress in improving both native and transfer student outcomes, though graduation rates remain below CSU system benchmarks. A comprehensive plan focusing on advising, mentoring, curriculum design, and high-impact practices is underway to enhance graduation rates and reduce time to degree.
 - a. **First-Time, First-Year (FTFY) Students.** FTFY students posted a 27% four-year graduation rate and a 63% six-year graduation rate, both below the GI 2025 goals of 37% and 72%, respectively. The average time to degree is 4.6 years, with average total units earned ranging from 122 to 134 units.
 - b. **Transfer Students.** Transfer student completion rates vary by cohort, with two-year graduation rates between 16.7% and 60% and four-year rates between 33% and 80%, both below the GI 2025 benchmarks of 49% and 91%. However, the average time to degree decreased from 4.1 years (2016-17) to 2.5 years (2022-23), achieving the GI 2025 target of 2.75 years or less. Average total units earned ranged from 126 to 140 units.
 - c. **Ongoing Focus.** The department is encouraged to sustain these improvements, emphasizing continued progress toward timely degree completion with minimal excess units.



5. **DFW Rates.** Departmental data indicate elevated DFW rates in several high-enrollment and foundational courses, particularly AFRS 119 Introduction to Ethnic Studies (8%), AFRS 100 Composition (8%), and AFRS 150 Critical Thinking in Africana Studies (10%). Upper-division and major courses, such as AFRS 310, also report DFW rates between 7-10%. To address these outcomes, the department has identified and begun implementing targeted strategies to enhance student success. These include (i) Increasing opportunities for student interaction and engagement in large-enrollment courses, (ii) Expanding use of culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogical approaches, and (iii) Strengthening advising and academic support for students enrolled in high-DFW courses. Ongoing monitoring and disaggregated data analysis by student demographics are recommended to evaluate the impact of these interventions and ensure equitable outcomes across all course levels.
6. **Facilities and Equipment.** The department continues to experience challenges in securing appropriate and high-quality instructional spaces. Current classroom assignments do not consistently meet the pedagogical needs of Africana Studies courses, particularly those requiring multimedia and discussion-based learning environments. The department anticipates that these challenges may intensify with the planned addition of the Master's program, which will increase demand for seminar-style and technologically equipped classrooms. In addition, the department has requested updated computers and technology resources for its conference room to better support faculty research, student collaboration, and departmental meetings.

Recommendations

It is therefore agreed that the Department of Africana Studies, in collaboration with the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) and Academic Affairs, will undertake the following actions during the next review cycle (2023–2030):

1. Edit program learning outcomes (PLOs) to ensure they are measurable and clearly defined. Implement the PLO annual assessment plan using both direct and indirect assessment methods, and report on “closing the loop” activities to demonstrate how continuous learning outcome data are used to inform decision-making. Provide an annual update (due September 1) on progress made towards MOU actions to the CLA dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Coordinator of Assessment. The next review cycle will be from 2023-2030, with a comprehensive self-study report due in June 2030 for the 2030-2031 Academic Year review process. (*Addresses Opportunity #1 and 2*)
2. Expand outreach and recruitment efforts both within CSULB and at regional high schools, such as using social media and in-person events to attract and retain students. (*Addresses Concern #1*)



3. Analyze class-based FTES and major FTES to determine the appropriate balance and to identify a target for major enrollment that aligns with the CSU benchmark of at least 10 students graduating per degree each year. (*Addresses Concern #1*)
4. Create and implement a plan to improve advising procedures between Africana Studies and ATLAS in order to strengthen student retention and success. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of moving additional advising functions back into the department. (*Addresses Concern #2 and 3*)
5. Reduce the number of units required for the minor, as recommended in the 2019 MOU, to promote accessibility and completion. (*Addresses Concern #1 and Opportunity #4*)
6. Develop a comprehensive hiring plan to address anticipated increases in teaching and service needs. This plan should include both permanent full-time lecturer positions and tenure-track faculty hires. (*Addresses Opportunity #3*)
7. Assess retention and graduation rates for both First-Time, First-Year (FTFY) and Transfer students, and in collaboration with the college and the university, develop strategies to enhance student success in these areas. (*Addresses Opportunity #4*)
8. Develop and implement strategies to improve student success in high DFW courses, including enhancing student interaction and engagement, expanding use of culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogical approaches, and strengthening advising. (*Addresses Opportunity #5*)
9. Address facility and technology needs, including classroom and computer resources, as funding and resources allow. (*Addresses Opportunity #6*)

This MOU has been read and approved by
Chair for the Department of Africana Studies: Keith Claybrook
Interim Dean for the College of Liberal Arts: Daniel O'Connor
Vice Provost for Academic Programs: Pei-Fang Hung

*DocuSign signature page on file.