




Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Department Chair:  Date: 5/19/2026
Loretta Ramirez

Dean, College of Liberal Arts: *Daniel O'Connor* Date: 5/19/2026
Daniel O'Connor

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Program Review Summary
Memorandum of Understanding
Department of Chicano and Latino Studies
College of Liberal Arts
April 2026

This document summarizes the Program Review findings and serves as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the consensus reached by the Department of Chicano and Latino Studies (CHLS), the College of Liberal Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs. It is based on the recently conducted program review, including the self-study submitted in September 2024 and the external review completed in April 2025. This report and MOU describe 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 in an annual report.

The Department of Chicano and Latino Studies offers a Bachelor of Arts degree and a minor in Chicanx and Latinx Studies. The BA consists of eleven core courses and a Spanish-language requirement. The department also plays a significant role in delivering courses that fulfill the Ethnic Studies General Education requirement and offers a special track for students pursuing a double major or a major–minor combination with CHLS. Students may apply up to two courses from other disciplines with clear connections to CHLS topics, such as race, ethnicity, migration, and gender. CHLS also offers composition courses (104A and 104B) with Chicanx/Latinx content. Although these courses do not count toward the major, they are an integral part of the CHLS curricular pathway. Finally, faculty contribute to campus leadership and initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion.

The Department has made some progress in meeting the recommendations from the 2016 MOU that specified the following needs: 1) The department will have a strong focus on the assessment of student learning. It will develop a strategic plan for program-level assessment, building a system of assessment to align curricular needs with current trends in the field; 2) develop a manageable number of course and program level student learning outcomes using active verbs; the learning outcomes will be aligned with the CSULB Institutional Learning Outcomes as noted in the Alignment letter dated 5/28/14; 3) continue to work in partnerships with campus advising and other campus resources to sustain and build on recent increases in enrollments; 4) plan for future tenure-track hiring based on departmental needs and mission; 5) the department will provide a biennial (changed to annual in 2018) updates on progress made toward revising and aligning learning outcomes and developing a sustainable assessment plan.



Resources reviewed for the report:

- Self-study October 2024
- External review April 2025
- Previous MOU 2016
- Department website

Strengths were identified in the reports

1. Curriculum Development

- a. CHLS faculty and students engaged extensively with campus, local, and legislative communities to advocate for AB 1460. Following its approval, CHLS collaborated with other Ethnic Studies departments to establish the Ethnic Studies Institute (ESI), which expanded and strengthened General Education offerings, including Ethnic Studies 119.
- b. Following the transition to online instruction during the pandemic, CHLS maintained several online sections of CHLS 119 to increase student access and help meet enrollment demand associated with the new GE requirement.
- c. CHLS faculty co-developed and offered the Ethnic Studies Certificate for Educators and Professionals (ESCEP) through CPaCE. The certificate responds to increased demand for Ethnic Studies content and competencies among teachers, administrators, and other professionals following the implementation of Ethnic Studies graduation requirements in California high schools.
- d. The CHLS Department collaborated with other Ethnic Studies units to develop a Master of Arts in Comparative Racial and Ethnic Studies (CRES). This proposed degree provides a comparative foundation across the four core disciplines of Ethnic Studies and is designed to serve graduate students, educators, professionals engaged in diversity, equity, and inclusion work, and community leaders. The program is currently still in the development process.

2. Ethnic Studies Institute (ESI). The ESI is a collaboration among the four Ethnic Studies departments and programs that offers select courses to eligible high school students through dual enrollment partnerships. Participating districts include 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 Schools. These partnerships provide students with the opportunity to earn transferable college credit while still in high school.

3. Faculty. The department has experienced substantial turnover in tenure-line faculty and staff between AY 2016-17 and 2023-24. Eight of the eleven current tenure-line faculty members joined CHLS after the last self-study. Tenure density currently stands at 72.4%.



The addition of new faculty has significantly expanded the department's expertise in areas such as race and ethnicity, literature, immigration, and social policy. Faculty have also broadened the department's scope regionally (e.g., Central America, the Caribbean, and the eastern United States), theoretically (e.g., Afro-Latinx studies, Latinx Indigenous studies, queer studies, transnational racial formations), and topically (e.g., rhetoric and composition, creative writing, community arts and activism, community health, and criminal justice).

4. **Faculty Engagement in Cultural Activities.** CHLS fosters a supportive and engaging environment to promote student success through a range of co-curricular programs and resources. These include i) personalized advising from the department chair, ii) El Centro, a dedicated space for CHLS students and faculty; iii) the Chicanx and Latinx Studies Student Association (CHLSSA), iv) Universidad de la Familia, a Saturday program led by Dr. José Moreno that brings students and their families to campus for an academic experience, and v) Café Cultura, a semesterly event showcasing student writing and expressive culture (paused during COVID-19 and scheduled to resume in Fall 2025). Additional programming includes cultural events, scholarly forums addressing critical issues in the field, and the Helena María Viramontes (HMV) Lecture, a distinguished event focused on Latina/o/x literature.
5. **High Impact Practices (HIPs).** HIPs in CHLS include capstone courses and projects, service learning and community-based learning, collaboration with the Honors Program, short-term study abroad, undergraduate research opportunities, and writing-intensive courses. As an Ethnic Studies discipline, CHLS integrates diversity and global learning throughout its curriculum.
6. **DFW Rates.** The department reports elevated DFW (D, F, and Withdrawal) rates across six courses, evenly distributed between lower- and upper-division offerings. Two courses, Composition I and Composition II, demonstrate patterns similar to those observed in the English Department. CHLS 215 has been reconceptualized as CHLS 119 and is no longer offered in its previous form. Among upper-division courses, CHLS 352 was identified as a high-DFW course only once, and CHLS 450A (Latinas and Revolution) has not exhibited elevated DFW rates since Fall 2017.
7. **Contribution to GE.** Non-major enrollment in CHLS courses that fulfill General Education requirements has more than doubled since 2019, underscoring the department's central role in meeting campus-wide GE needs.
8. **Student Population.** The CHLS student population is predominantly composed of historically underrepresented students. Among CHLS majors, 58.6% are first-generation college students and 74.9% are Pell-eligible. Across CHLS courses over the past five academic years, students have been predominantly first-generation, from underrepresented minority backgrounds, majority female-identified, and with high levels of Pell eligibility.

**Concerns were noted in the reports**

1. **Enrollments.** Major enrollment declined over the review period, from 87 students in Fall 2016 to 43 students in Fall 2023, with a modest rebound to 52 students in Fall 2024. Major FTES also reflects an overall downward trend across the seven-year period. Following a modest increase in Fall 2020 (30 FTES), enrollment in major-designated courses declined sharply beginning in 2021. This decline coincides with multiple factors, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes to General Education requirements (particularly the introduction of the Ethnic Studies requirement), and a campus-wide decrease in transfer student enrollment. The major relies heavily on transfer students, double majors, and students declaring CHLS in their junior or senior year. The average cohort of first-time, first-year students between Fall 2015 and Fall 2023 was only three students, indicating limited growth from FTFY enrollment.
2. **Curriculum (Upper-Division Course Offerings).** The decline in major enrollment, combined with increased demand for faculty to teach General Education courses, has resulted in a reduction in upper-division course offerings, from 18 sections in Fall 2021 to 11 in Fall 2024. This contraction limits opportunities for CHLS majors to develop specialization and depth within the field. This trend raises concerns about the department's ability to adequately prepare students for career pathways and for advanced study, including the proposed Master of Arts in Comparative Racial and Ethnic Studies (CRES). Strengthening the upper-division curriculum will be critical to ensuring that course offerings reflect the breadth and depth of Chicanx/Latinx experiences and scholarship.
3. **Curriculum (Language Requirement).** In the absence of a campus-wide language requirement for graduation, the Spanish-language requirement for the CHLS major may represent an additional barrier for some students. This requirement may discourage prospective students from declaring the major, particularly those from linguistically diverse backgrounds. Revisiting the language requirement could improve accessibility and better align the program with the linguistic diversity and educational needs of the current student population.

Opportunities for development were noted in the reports

1. **Mission Statements.** The Department has established a mission statement and developed Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which are clearly posted on its website and are appropriate to the discipline. However, some PLOs would benefit from revision to improve measurability. For example, the Department should replace non-assessable verbs (e.g., "understand," "study") with measurable action verbs aligned with best practices in outcomes-based assessment.



2. **Assessment.** The self-study provides a thorough account of the development of an assessment framework, including PLOs aligned with Chicana/Latina Studies, the proposed CRES program, and CSULB Institutional Learning Outcomes, as well as the use of a crosswalk matrix. The next phase should focus on implementation. The Department should systematically assess program-level learning outcomes and develop shared assessment practices, including common rubrics and evaluation tools aligned with core courses. Establishing a cohesive assessment culture and clear expectations will be critical for sustaining continuous improvement.
3. **Graduation Rates.** The Department has made progress in improving both native and transfer student outcomes. However, graduation rates remain below CSU benchmarks. The Department has outlined a comprehensive plan involving advising, mentoring, curriculum development, and high-impact practices to support continued improvement.
 - a. First-Time, First-Year Students (FTFY). Between 2017-2018 and 2023-2024, the Department awarded an average of 9 degrees annually. The average time to degree was 5.1 years, compared to 4.7 years at the college level. Average total units earned were comparable (128 for CHLS vs. 127 for the college). Time to degree fluctuated significantly, ranging from 3.8 years (2022-2023) to 5.7 years (2023-2024), while average units earned declined steadily from 134 to 125 over the same period.
 - b. Transfer Student. Between Fall 2019 and Fall 2024, with an average cohort of 10 students, the two-year graduation rate was 51.2% and the four-year rate was 77.8%, approximately 4 percentage points below college averages. Between 2017-2018 and 2023-2024, the Department awarded an average of 10 transfer degrees annually (range: 5-15). The average time to degree was 2.5 years, compared to 2.3 years at the college level, and average total units earned were higher (137 vs. 133).
 - c. Facilitate Timely Graduation. The Department should develop clear two-year and four-year degree roadmaps for transfer and FTFY students respectively. These tools would support more effective advising, help students understand how CHLS coursework aligns with university requirements, and promote timely degree completion.
4. **Student Recruitment**
To strengthen enrollment, the Department should pursue the following strategies:
 - a. Expand Area F offerings beyond CHLS 119 to include additional lower-division gateway courses that can attract first-year students and support recruitment into the major.
 - b. Leverage participation in a large dual-enrollment Ethnic Studies program to build a pipeline of future CHLS majors.
 - c. Collaborate with ATLAS to develop a Latinx-themed First-Year Learning Community that links General Education courses with identity-focused programming to enhance student belonging and retention.



- d. Strengthen coordination between the College of Liberal Arts and CHLS faculty regarding internal recruitment and enrollment management strategies.
 - e. Partner with the Career Development Center to clarify career pathways for CHLS majors through initiatives, such as résumé workshops, alumni engagement, and expanded internship opportunities. These efforts will help students articulate the applied value of the degree across fields, e.g., education, public service, nonprofit work, and community advocacy.
5. **Facilities and Space Needs.** El Centro serves as an important space for collaboration and community-building among students and faculty. However, the Department has additional facility needs, including flexible classroom spaces with updated instructional technology, sufficient office space for tenure-track faculty, and dedicated areas for public programming, archives, and cultural resources.
6. **Strategic Planning Priorities.** The Department has identified four key strategic priorities in response to the issues raised in this review:
- a. Enhance mentorship and collective support structures for assistant professors
 - b. Finalize curriculum design and strengthen infrastructure for program delivery
 - c. Implement ongoing program assessment to support continuous improvement
 - d. Increase the number of majors (and minors) to sustain demand for upper-division coursework

Recommendations:

It is therefore agreed that the Department of Chicano and Latino Studies will collaborate with the College of Liberal Arts and Academic Affairs to:

1. Edit program learning outcomes to make them more measurable. Implement the PLO annual assessment plan using direct and indirect methods and report on closing the loop activities to illustrate that 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. Your review cycle will be from 2023-2030. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2030 for a 2030-2031 Academic Year review process.
(Opportunity #1)
2. Analyze retention and graduation rates for both first-time, first-year (FTFY) and transfer students and develop targeted strategies to improve student success and degree completion. *(Opportunity #3, 4; Concern #3)*
3. Develop and implement a systematic recruitment plan to increase enrollment of FTFY students and transfer students, including strengthening existing pipelines and outreach efforts. *(Opportunity #4)*



4. Establish a coordinated, department-wide approach to assessment by developing shared practices, tools, and timelines. Conduct ongoing program-level assessment to support continuous improvement and respond to enrollment and programmatic trends. *(Opportunity #2; Concern #1)*
5. Review and revise the curriculum to address barriers to timely graduation, including potential bottlenecks associated with the Spanish-language requirement. Expand Area F offerings and strengthen upper-division course availability to ensure depth, breadth, and alignment with student demand and program goals. *(Opportunity #4; Concern #2)*
6. Identify and prioritize facility and resource needs, including instructional space, faculty offices, and programmatic space, and work with the College and Academic Affairs to address these needs as resources permit. *(Opportunity #5)*

This MOU has been read and approved by:

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Vice Provost for Academic Programs: Pei-Fang Hung

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