

Changes to Commission on Academic Priorities Draft Report April 18, 2002

1. Revised Recommendation 15. Latin American Studies

Latin American Studies was developed in 1994, along with the East Asian Studies program, in an effort to establish Lewis & Clark as a focus of international education. (Three of the Commission's comparison schools have interdisciplinary programs in Latin American studies: Willamette, Earlham, and Macalester). The Lewis & Clark program began offering a minor in 1997 and graduates about eight to 15 students a year; there is no major. Students select six courses from a list of options and are required to participate in a Lewis & Clark overseas program in Latin America or Spain. Overall, we found that the Latin American Studies program lacked coherence. No core course has been designed specifically to serve the minor; faculty participation in the program has come primarily from untenured faculty; and little regular coordination and communication occur between the Hispanic Studies program and the Latin American Studies program. Hispanic Studies is primarily a Spanish language and literature program, with courses taught primarily in Spanish and with mastery of the language central among its aims, whereas the Latin American Studies program is broader, encompassing history and culture as well as literature, and its courses are taught in English. However, there are overlaps among faculty participating in the two programs and in some of the course offerings.

For these reasons, and in view of the recent departures of two of the key faculty participants in the program, the Commission's original recommendation was to phase out this program. However, members of the Commission have been persuaded that Latin America should be regarded as an important focus area for the curriculum (see revised recommendation 1). In addition, recent conversations with the Latin American Studies and Hispanic Studies faculty have demonstrated their strong commitment to strengthening the Latin American Studies program. The Commission is now open to the continuation of this program as a minor, and encourages program faculty to continue their examination and improvement of the program.

In particular, the Commission would like to see the faculty of the Latin American Studies program develop a revision of the curriculum to provide more structure and coherence. This revision might be based on the question: what should all Latin American Studies minors know and be able to do? This revision should include at least one required core course that would serve to introduce and integrate the different disciplinary approaches represented by the minor. Among other things, this course should include a focus on the historical importance of Latin America to the modern Western world and to the U.S. in particular, as outlined so persuasively in LAS's April 10 memo to us. In addition, we would like to see a leadership plan for the program that involves senior faculty. We understand that some of these developments are in progress, and are encouraged by what we have seen so far.

2. Foreign Languages. CAP has modified its original recommendations in the following ways:
 - a. The CAP is now divided on the question of the proper level of tenure-track staffing in French and has no clear recommendation about this. Some believe the original proposal should stand, and about an equal number believes the staffing should remain at 3 FTE.

b. The CAP recommends changing the name of the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department to the Department of European and Asian Languages and Literatures. We think this is a clearer reflection of the languages actually taught here and also that it is wise to remove the word "foreign" from the title.

c. The CAP recommends changing the names of the 3 major language programs from French Studies, German Studies, and Hispanic Studies to French, German, and Spanish, respectively. This is to simplify the titles of these majors and to make clearer the point that they are primarily dedicated to language instruction, including literature in the language.

d. The CAP recommends that to be eligible for honors in Spanish and French, majors be required to spend a year overseas. In addition, the ISCC, together with the French and Spanish faculty, should endeavor to reach the goal of creating programs like that in German where students can spend a year abroad taking courses in areas other than language and literature at a university. This change reflects our acknowledgment that it may be virtually impossible to achieve our earlier recommendation right away, but also our continuing belief that the goal of the earlier recommendation has merit.

3. The CAP recommends changing the language in the second paragraph of Recommendation 1 to read: "The areas we recommend the College maintain and develop a curriculum in are: Europe (with priority given to Western and classical Europe and secondary emphasis given to Central Europe); the Americas (with priority given to the United States and secondary emphasis given to Latin America); and Asia." This new language is to reflect the change mentioned in the first item above (referring to recommendation 15).

4. Overseas and Off-Campus Programs. CAP had modified its original recommendations in the following ways:

a. The CAP recommends changing the last sentence in Recommendation 22, Establishing and Evaluating Off-Campus Programs, to read: "Therefore we recommend that the College create a task force, to include external consultants, representatives from ISCC, and other faculty, to develop a conceptual framework for determining where off-campus programs should be established, the frequency with which they should be offered, and what criteria should be used to evaluate them, as a step toward implementing the recommendations of this Commission."

b. The CAP recommends changing the language of the first paragraph of Recommendation 18, Focus of Off-Campus Programs, as follows:

Because we are recommending that many on-campus programs focus on the geographical areas of Europe, the Americas, and Asia, we believe it is desirable that our off-campus programs be structured to support this emphasis. Students' understanding of a foreign culture will be enhanced if they can take relevant coursework prior to undertaking overseas study; some programs, such as the one to India, have typically required such

coursework. In addition, student contribution to on-campus courses will be enhanced by their direct experience in the culture or political system being considered. Thus classroom study and experiential learning can be mutually enriching, and this symbiosis should be fostered wherever possible. We therefore recommend that the preponderance of off-campus programs share a focus on Europe, Latin America, and Asia or have other well-focused curricular ties. It is understood in this recommendation that significant academic benefit for students may be gained either through the curricular content of their program (insofar as it suitably complements their on-campus study) or through the program's ability to challenge conventional and particularly Western assumptions and modes of thought. That is, significant academic benefit is not restricted to the curricular benefits.

c. The CAP adds a recommendation that the Report should affirm that off-campus study is an essential part of the identity of the college.

d. CAP reaffirms its earlier recommendations: 1) to restrict leadership when possible to faculty leaders; 2) to devote greater efforts to recruitment of faculty leaders; 3) regarding students.