

**Report of the review committee for the
Department of Asian Languages and Literature**

Site visit: April 12-13, 2005
Date of this report: 9 June 2005

Internal members: Galya Diment (Chair) (Slavic), Sharon Hargus (Linguistics), Gary Hamilton (Sociology)

External members: Ashok Aklujkar (Asian Studies, UBC), Naomi McGloin (E. Asian Language and Literature, U. Wisconsin-Madison), Shuen-fu Lin (Asian Languages and Cultures, U. Michigan)

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1 THE PROCESS OF EVALUATING THE DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

The committee received its charge on March 16, 2005. Its internal members subsequently met to discuss the particulars of the review process with Gail Dubrow, Associate Dean for Academic Programs at the Graduate School, Susan Jeffords, Vice

Provost for Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost; George Bridges, Dean and Vice Provost, Office of Undergraduate Education; Michael Halleran, Divisional Dean for Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences; and David Canfield-Budde, assistant to the Dean, The Graduate School. That session was followed by two other meetings prior to the on-site visit. On March 28 we met with Professor Terje Leiren (Chair, Scandinavian L&L), who chaired the chair-search committee for Asian L&L, which had completed its work by the time we met with him. Professor Leiren shared his committee's observations with us and answered our questions. On April 6, we conducted our first interview with the chair of Asian L&L, Professor William Boltz, and then met with the heads of the JSIS Area Studies Programs (Professors Kent Guy, Marie Anckordoguy, Clark Sorensen, William Lavelly, and K. Sivaramakrishnan).

The on-site visit, during which we were joined by the outside members of the committee, took place April 12-13. In these two days we interviewed most of the Asian L&L staff and faculty (including Lecturers, Adjunct Professors and Affiliate Professors). Our meeting with students was, unfortunately, not as well attended. We also received a number of e-mails from faculty, staff, and students who either could not see us in person or wanted to provide a follow-up to their interviews. We shared our preliminary findings during the exit interview on April 13 with Gail Dubrow and other pertinent administrators in attendance. Prof. Boltz was there to respond to our preliminary observations and to clarify or correct some of the information we had obtained at various stages of the process. At the end of these two days, we all agreed that it was a thorough, fair, and well-structured process. We feel confident, therefore, in putting forward our final report. The entire committee participated in formulating it, and we are unanimous in our conclusions and recommendations.

2 SUMMARY STATEMENT

Asian L&L at UW is, undoubtedly, in the first tier of Asian L&L departments in North America, both in terms of the scope of its offerings—in languages, linguistics, and literatures and cultures—and in the quality of scholarship, especially among senior faculty in Chinese, South Asian, and Buddhist Studies. The high level of scholarship in the department should be particularly noted because there is a general and unfortunate tendency on this campus and everywhere to treat language and literature programs as largely “service” departments for teaching beginning and intermediate language courses. The intellectual and academic gravitas and rigor that are exhibited in the research of Asian L&L senior faculty compare supremely well with any top department at UW.

The four degree programs (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and South Asian and Buddhist Studies) represent the very core, the heart and soul of the department. While our report will detail ways in which the department can improve itself by remedying some of the problems and functioning differently, much of the department's future success and ability to retain its status as one of the best in the country will depend on the strength of the institutional commitment and support. We are unanimous in our belief that the department deserves strong and wise support from the College of Arts and Sciences and the UW central administration.

3 NATIONAL TRENDS IN ASIAN L&L DEPARTMENTS

A number of national trends can at present be observed in Asian Languages and Literatures departments across North America. These trends largely result from the changes that have taken place in student demographics, in student interests, and in literary and cultural theory. During the last two decades, these changes have shaped both the teaching of Asian languages and scholarly work in Asian languages and literatures.

One trend is that an increasing number of Asian languages can no longer be considered “less commonly taught languages.” In the major institutions in the U.S. where Chinese and Japanese are taught, these two languages have been drawing very large enrollments. When Korean and Hindi are offered, the foundation courses in these courses have had increasingly large enrollments as well. Thus the programs in these languages have become comparable to those in such commonly taught European languages as French, German, and Spanish.

Another recent trend is that courses in Asian L&L are populated by two distinct but ever-increasing sets of students. On the one hand, there are “heritage students” who can understand and speak the languages to a certain extent, but cannot read or write them. On the other hand, there are also non-heritage students for whom the language is completely new. This situation has forced many language programs to adopt a multi-track system for the teaching of these languages.

A third trend is that programs in Asian Languages and Literatures are drawing students from far more diverse and complex academic backgrounds than a couple of decades ago. A reflection of this trend is the fact that a high percentage of undergraduate majors in Asian Languages and Literatures are double majors. Besides majoring in one of the Asian languages, they also major in another area of the humanities, in the social sciences, in the natural sciences, or even in one of the professional schools (such as business or engineering). Previously, Asian L&L majors were exclusively interested in the languages, literatures, and cultures of Asia.

A fourth trend is an orientation in language pedagogy toward achieving proficiency, spearheaded by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). With this orientation, instructors judge students by what they can do and how they can perform, rather than just how well they have learned the information they were asked to learn. The proficiency orientation requires students to acquire all four skills of language acquisition: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

The fifth trend is the incorporation of new instructional technology in teaching language and literature. This includes the use of computers, videotapes, videodiscs, the web and film to make teaching more efficient and effective.

The sixth trend is more concerned with the research and teaching of Asian literatures and cultures. By the 1970s and 1980s, studies of Asian literatures (particularly Chinese and Japanese literatures) were fully recognized as independent disciplines in this country, rather than as parts of other disciplines such as Sinology (which was dominated

by the methodologies of philology and history) or Japanology. Literary scholars take the intrinsic qualities and values of texts studied as their central concern, and a great diversity of approaches is reflected in their teaching and publications. During the 1990s, the practice of cultural studies emerged to become the prevailing fashion mode in humanistic scholarship in the West and elsewhere. In cultural studies, the emphasis is on a wide-ranging contextual reading of literary and non-literary “texts” (e.g., other cultural artifacts) within a culture, as opposed to more traditional literary studies in which the main task is the interpretation of literary works themselves. Cultural studies try to integrate such diverse disciplines as literary theory, media studies, women and gender studies, cultural anthropology, etc. As a leading American literary theorist, Jonathan Culler, has well put it, “the project of cultural studies is to understand the functioning of culture, particularly in the modern world: how cultural productions work and how cultural identities are constructed and organized, for individuals and groups, in a world of diverse and intermingled communities, state power, media industries, and multinational corporations” (*Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, p. 44). It was thus natural for Asianists working in modern and contemporary literatures and cultures to follow the critical studies trend.

Although the more traditional approaches to the study of Asian literatures and cultures continue to be practiced, the impact of cultural studies has of course extended beyond the modern and contemporary fields. In recent years, Asian L&L departments have begun to fill vacated positions in modern literatures with scholars trained in cultural studies. Scholars have also begun to cross traditional disciplinary boundaries, and some institutions have also begun to add specialists in media studies, visual culture, women studies, etc. to their faculty. In response to the changing interests of undergraduate students, various Asian L&L departments have also replaced or complemented the older literature-in-translation format of survey courses with theme-oriented courses.

4 OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

The Department has for decades enjoyed a reputation as one of the leading programs in North America for teaching and research in Asian languages, literatures, and cultures. Our review of this department, one of the very best of its kind in North America, reveals that it is quite in keeping with the trends noted in §3. Asian L&L appears to have effectively accommodated the heritage students who come to take its language courses. Language pedagogy emphasizes proficiency orientation and takes advantages of new advances in instructional technology. Asian L&L’s strong programs in historical linguistics and in the philological textual studies are seldom, if ever, rivaled by other Asian L&L departments in North America.

4.1 Degree programs

We were impressed, given the diversity of its different degree programs, with how well the department functions and fulfills its mission. It is inevitable, however, that because of such diversity (which is unparalleled by any other unit of a similar nature on campus), Asian L&L often finds itself in a position where their strengths are almost synonymous with their challenges. The sheer number of different programs that are housed within the department makes it a virtually unavoidable and often sad reality that

these programs are not all of the same scope or quality. Even among comparable programs that offer the same array of undergraduate and graduate degrees—Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and South Asian—there is a certain, often large, degree of disparity.

Korean is the weakest link in the degree programs in Asian L&L, not in terms of the quality of the courses offered but in their quantity. Given the strength in Korean studies at JSIS, there exists a great opportunity on this campus to build one of the major national centers in Korean Studies. The department should be commended for hiring a new assistant professor in Korean literature (the Korean community, which raised enough money to make this possible, should also be commended), but one tenure-track faculty member and one lecturer are not really enough to sustain successful BA, MA, and PhD programs.

Disparities also exist within different degree programs of better-staffed units. Thus while the Chinese graduate program is extremely well known and attracts good graduate students, the Chinese undergraduate program has a disappointingly low number of majors, namely 18. The Japanese program, on the other hand, is almost the exact opposite of its Chinese counterpart. Its graduate program in literature suffered a tremendous setback after it lost two of its well-known modern Japanese literature specialists. However, with an added cohort of three young and energetic assistant professors, and a strong second language acquisition component, its BA program, which has 84 majors, and its “terminal” MA degree, which is geared towards professional training of language educators, are doing very well.

Within the South Asian degree programs (South Asian L&L and Buddhist Studies), similar gaps and unevenness are in evidence. The graduate programs in South Asian and Buddhist Studies are acclaimed and attract high-quality applicants, but there are just four undergraduate majors in the South Asian program, a smaller number than even Korean, which has substantially fewer teaching staff. The program continues to feel the loss of a Tibetan specialist who was not only essential to the Buddhist Studies program but also served as an important bridge (and in such diverse departments bridges of this kind are extremely helpful) to Chinese religious and linguistics history.

4.2 *Non-degree programs*

Because of its diversity, Asian L&L is affiliated with more Title VI Area Studies Centers at JSIS (3) than other similar departments on this campus. Such multi-levelness, which is the envy of many smaller schools in the country, is undoubtedly a great boon, but the challenges of responding to the linguistic needs and demands of different Area Studies centers in a time of tight budgets are also quite daunting, to say the least. The situation that exists now in the non-degree Southeast Asian program is a case in point.

UW is one of only a handful of North American universities which continue to offer instruction in SE Asian languages, but there are no tenure-track faculty members in the program. The Thai and Vietnamese lecturer positions are completely funded by the state, but the funding for the Thai position, we were told, is on a year-by-year basis. Only half of the Indonesian position is state funded. Therefore, the scheduling of a full

complement of Thai and Indonesian language courses, as is required by Title VI funding, has been an on-going challenge for both Asian L&L and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, and causes some tension between the two units from time to time.

South Asia and Southeast Asia have much in common as far as their cultures are concerned. At many conferences and symposia, research papers in either area are presented in the same sessions or panels. We did not get the sense that Asian L&L was offering enough courses to reap the benefit of the shared culture. Literature-in-translation or culture courses that cover South and Southeast together, even when given intermittently, would benefit both programs and would especially strengthen the SE Asian program at UW. Since there are a number of Southeast Asia specialists in JSIS, creating such common courses should not pose an insurmountable challenge.

Asian L&L also used to teach Tagalog (Filipino), but this language was recently transferred to the Department of American Ethnic Studies, where it is a part of their Asian/Pacific American Studies Program. Several people we interviewed, both within the department and from the Southeast Asia Center, thought it was a serious mistake by the department to let Tagalog go to AES (where it has gone from teaching just one year to teaching three years of language). We believe that Tagalog logically belongs in Asian L&L, and efforts should therefore be made to move it back. Such a move has to be gradual and fair to Tagalog's current home, and may thus require some form of compensation to AES.

We recently learned that the Department of Comparative Literature will request to be allowed to search for a position in "the literatures of emerging nations" next year, with a special emphasis on "applicants working in Southeast Asian literatures, ideally with competence in Philippine literature." Their longer-term plan also includes a request "in conjunction with the South Asia Studies program to hire someone working in S. Asian film." Needless to say, if these positions are approved and successfully filled, this could be a great boon for Asian L&L, especially since it would only be logical for both specialists to have affiliate or joint appointments with the Department. (The prospect of having a scholar in Philippine literature should also, we believe, give the department an additional incentive to bring back teaching of Tagalog.)

A number of people told the committee that the department has resisted teaching more languages or different aspects of the same language (e.g. "Technical Japanese", currently offered in the College of Engineering, or "Business Chinese", currently offered in the School of Business). The reason given for this reluctance is that such a proliferation of language courses would endanger the integrity of what senior faculty members consider to be the department's "intellectual core." It was for this reason, we were repeatedly told, that Tagalog was let go, and that tutors for less commonly taught or "strategic" languages financed through the Title VI Centers are routinely turned down by the department, despite the centers' and their students' pressing needs for instruction in these languages.

In general, we find ourselves sympathetic to both parties in this dialogue, and hope that a constructive resolution can be found which would enable the department to protect its intellectual quality and academic integrity yet at the same time better accommodate the needs of the Title VI Centers, and, in particular, the Southeast Asia Center. We will address this issue again in the recommendations.

4.3 Undergraduate programs

We are encouraged by the new departmental initiatives in advising and teaching undergraduate populations.

- A new gateway course for undergraduate majors is in the works, likely to be first taught by Prof. Shapiro in Spring 2006. The class is designed to create a sense of community among undergraduate majors, and acquaint them with what it means to be an Asian L&L student. As such, the class would introduce prospective majors to the text-based methods and professional tools of Asian L&L, but would not concentrate on any particular geographical area covered by the department. We would also encourage the department to think of their existing course “Introduction to Asian Linguistics”, which is “not taught very often,” as another such gateway course. Perhaps it should be required of all undergraduate majors.
- A faculty mentoring program for undergraduates has been instituted, which allows students greater opportunity to get to know the faculty and their interests, and vice versa. The faculty we spoke to about this did not seem to find undergraduate mentoring a burden, as only a small percentage of students contacted by the faculty participate.

While Asian L&L appears to have been adapting remarkably well to the prevailing trends in the study and teaching of Asian languages and literatures, we feel that it has remained a little too conservative in the design of the undergraduate curriculum. Most course titles appear very general or even cut-and-dried: “Literature and Culture of Ancient and Classical China,” “Premodern Chinese Narrative in Translation,” “History of Chinese Literature,” “Readings in Classical Japanese Literature I & II,” “Korean Narrative and Dramatic Literature,” “Literature and Culture of South Asia: From Tradition to Modernity.” One wonders if those undergraduate students who have no intention of majoring in Asian literatures would actually bother to read the descriptions of these courses to find out about their rich contents. It seems that some curricular innovation (designing some theme-oriented courses) and transformation (repackaging of materials and making the course titles more user friendly) are warranted. We agree with the need for “a slate of complementary courses that would provide the language students with the ancillary cultural knowledge,” as noted in the department’s self-study document.

We believe that the department should be more aggressive in its attempts to increase its undergraduate enrollments in linguistics, literature, film, and culture courses. As it stands right now, the department offers very few non-language courses that attract large numbers of students. In the list of such courses that we examined, only one had an enrollment over 50 students. With a revised set of courses, we think that Asian L&L

non-language courses will attract a much larger number of undergraduate students. However, it may not even be a matter of creating many new classes; it could be that existing classes simply need to be repackaged and better advertised to increase their attractiveness to students.

The requirements for undergraduate majors also appear to us to be top-heavy in Asian languages and literature. Since the reality is that a very high percentage of the Asian L&L majors are also pursuing a major in some other subject, it seems counter-productive to require all majors to complete language and literature courses as if they are preparing for a career in these areas. We recommend a conception of the major that allows maximum flexibility while maintaining academic rigor.

As mentioned in 4.1, we were all struck by the disappointingly low number of undergraduate majors in Chinese, especially when compared to Japanese (which has more than four times as many majors). While we realize that some of the reasons may well be outside of the department's control (like the current popularity of Japanese video art and culture), we feel that there must be some internal longstanding reasons for such a disparity. We note that there is at times a heavy emphasis among the senior faculty on teaching graduate courses (which usually have less than 10 students enrolled in them). We also note the lack of attractive undergraduate (300-level or below) literature, culture, and film courses of the kind that the junior faculty in Japanese routinely teaches. There may also be some problems with the 4th-year instruction (according to highly negative feedback we received from two Chinese majors, who were the only undergraduates to contact us). Chinese is not being offered during the Summer quarter this year, while Japanese (and Korean and Hindi) are. Whatever the reason for the disparity between the numbers of Chinese and Japanese undergraduate majors, it must be possible at a university of UW's standing to create a potentially larger pool of students who may consider majoring in Chinese. We further feel that some streamlining of the major requirements, with an eye on breadth of Chinese culture, would help increase the number of majors (or double-majors).

On the Japanese side, the problems are of the opposite nature. There are many more students wanting to take Japanese language classes than can be accommodated. Even with eight discussion sections for first-year Japanese, many students are apparently turned away. There is not even space to meet the demand for even third-year Japanese. No one we talked to could tell us how many students are turned away on average from Japanese language classes every quarter. Currently, there are only estimates as established from waiting lists and e-mails to instructors. An adequate solution to the problem can only be developed when a better tracking system is in place and the College of Arts and Sciences helps financially with recruiting more Japanese language instructors.

Student advising is yet another concern. As stated above, we are heartened that the department has recently made changes in how undergraduate majors are advised and that the faculty are now more directly involved in the process. From what we heard in our interviews, however, there are still unresolved issues when it comes to non-faculty advising. In most similar language and literature departments on this campus there is a

clear separation between graduate and undergraduate advising, with two (or more) different staff members sharing the advising duties. Asian L&L has one staff member who is responsible for all student advising. We detected a certain degree of frustration among the departmental staff, and wonder whether some revision and redistribution of advising duties should be considered as being in the best interests of both students and the front office.

4.4 Graduate programs

As stated above, because of the strength of their faculty, Asian L&L attracts good graduate students to their program. Like many other departments on this campus, however, the department cannot always successfully compete for the very best students nationally because of the severe lack of financial support and therefore multiple-year packages available at peer institutions. Despite this crucial lack of financial support, the department has been able to keep the standards for admissions quite high (judging by the average GRE scores of graduate students accepted in 2003-04, 610/760/735). On average, the department receives between 60-80 applications for graduate admissions each year, and admission is denied to 60-70% of all applicants. Enrollment in the graduate program appears to have shrunk in the past ten years (57 in 1994-95; 34 in 2003-2004) but that is in line with other graduate programs in the Humanities (in Comparative Literature, for example, the number of enrolled graduate students went from 70 to 35 during the same ten years), and reflects, once again, the lack of institutional means to support more graduate students or even to retain existing ones.

The 1995 ten-year review committee discussed at some length how much time it took on average for Asian L&L PhD students to receive their degree. We feel that time to degree has also been severely affected by the lack of steady financial support, which often results in graduate students' having to seek other means of employment, thus prolonging the time to completion.

Another area of potential concern that is, however, well within the control of the department is the distribution of TAs for language programs. We heard some complaints that TAs have not been distributed equitably to the various language programs. Whether this is a problem in reality or perception only, it might be addressed, we feel, by better oral or written communication of the rationale for the assignment of TAs to the various language programs in any given year.

Given the diversity of the programs which the graduate students belong to, it is also very important, it seems to us, to make special efforts to maintain a "community" feeling among the graduate students. Along with the gateway course for undergraduates, the department could start a required course that would bring its graduate students together. Such a course would mean limited but necessary (probably on a rotating basis) participation of senior faculty, that is, a collaborative effort. Themes and/or methods that would seem largely relevant to all the enrollees coming with diverse preparations and different aims should obviously be the dominant feature of such a course.

4.5 *Development activities*

We are impressed with recent departmental efforts at fund-raising that are taking shape. This activity has now become a necessity for all departments on campus, especially those in the humanities and social sciences. It is our impression that the department is building a strong development program, and the people who are spearheading it (most notably Professor Cox) are doing so with hard, steady work and without the usual illusions that accompany so many development efforts. Development activities are growing out of community outreach, which, in turn, lays the groundwork for future financial contributions to the department.

Since most of us have done our share of fundraising, our advice would be that unrealistic aims such as collecting several million dollars for a faculty position should not be given priority. Prospective donors are more sympathetic to student needs. Asian L&L would probably do well to concentrate on first creating a fund in support of teaching assistantships on the express understanding with Arts and Sciences and UW administration that the existence of such a fund will not be used to reduce the number of teaching assistantships to which the department may be entitled on the basis of criteria applicable across the College of Arts and Sciences.

5 OVERVIEW OF PERSONNEL AND DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION

5.1 *Senior faculty*

The faculty at all levels is very strong. Most members of the senior faculty have made important contributions to research in their respective fields and are an important component of the strong reputation of the department. In particular, the collaborative research among both junior and senior members in the Buddhist manuscript project and the senior strength in Chinese classical literature and culture are core areas that are to be commended. These features have contributed greatly to the department's high ranking among all Asian L&L departments across the country.

5.2 *Assistant Professors*

The junior tenure-line faculty seem terrific to us, and we congratulate the senior faculty on their wise hiring decisions. We expect that the infusion of these young, energetic faculty members into the department will continue to invigorate its intellectual life in many ways. Many of the junior hires have been made in the Japanese program, and we applaud the department for rebuilding this program. Most junior faculty members have research strengths that are different from but complementary to the senior faculty, and we anticipate that the junior members will soon be making important contributions to national standing of the department. Retaining the junior faculty (i.e. getting tenure, competing with other offers) would now be the main concern.

It is clear that the relations among tenure-track faculty in the department are friendly. The assistant professors in the department have nothing but praise and warm words for the department and their senior colleagues. The traditional brown-bag lunches at By George are an opportunity for unofficial advising and mentoring by the senior faculty, and they are much appreciated by the junior faculty.

Despite all that, it is our impression that the assistant professors in general are involved in too many service activities, which eats into the time available for their research, in turn endangering their own futures and the future strength of the department. We were unclear as to why a department with so many lecturers has assistant professors serving as language coordinators on a regular basis. There obviously needs to be a coordinating committee for the larger language programs (Chinese, Japanese), but we feel that it need only consist of lecturers. At present, this service requirement seems to fall especially heavily on the junior Japanese faculty. (See our further recommendations for language program coordination in 5.5.)

The burden of teaching large undergraduate courses should be shared equally among all faculty members, but it currently seems to fall disproportionately on the junior faculty. The distribution of undergraduate vs. graduate classes should also be better distributed between the senior and junior faculty.

5.3 Lecturers

The lecturers seemed to us to be competent, enthusiastic about their fields and dedicated to excellence in language instruction. Unlike the tenure-track faculty, however, they have only limited contact with one another, much to the detriment of departmental cohesion. Certainly some improvements can and should be made in integrating lecturers in the department. There is, however, no doubt in our minds that the lecturers are first-rate representatives of the department in the classroom, but the lecturers' jobs have been made difficult by a lack of good organizational structure and a lack of communication among the various programs.

There are also possible issues of equity among lecturers. Some lecturers perceive that the distribution of teaching loads may not be maximally fair. It could be that this is a misperception that can be corrected by better dissemination of information, such as end-of-year or even end-of-quarter summaries of teaching and enrollment by the departmental administration. We have learned that the number of classes taught is just one factor in determining equitable teaching responsibilities. Other factors are the number of different preparations needed per week, the number of TAs supervised, and the number of students who must be screened before language classes begin. Also, some teaching loads are affected by last-minute circumstances, such as the canceling of classes without enough students. More clarification about these matters would be beneficial to all who are involved.

It is probably natural that the SE Asian lecturers, who teach non-degree program languages, feel that they are the ones who are least connected with the department. This group, in particular, should be encouraged to serve on administrative committees and participate in departmental life. Their help is clearly needed to run the department, and to expand and integrate SE studies as we advised in 4.2.

We also heard some concern about the dynamic of the department where so many spouses work side by side, often in the same program (e.g. Japanese). We are not aware

of any serious untoward incident of “nepotism” that has occurred, but there should be distinct guidelines, we feel, about spouses being on the same committees or constituting the core of one particular program. Other departments with similar spousal clusters, like History, appear to have firmer guidelines in order to avoid not only any possible transgressions but also the appearance of impropriety.

5.4 Staff

In addition to the horizontal divisions in the department between language programs and geographically defined concentrations, there are also vertical divisions between the tenure-track faculty, lecturers, and staff. These vertical divisions were evident to members of the staff. Some staff members brought up the lack of communication and the lack of the potential for input about their jobs as problems. In general, the staff appears unhappy about having to wear too many hats. There also seems to be the problem that they are sometimes expected to make decisions for which they lack adequate authority.

We were surprised that one and the same staff person handles both the undergraduate and graduate programs, since in many language and literature departments on campus, even the smaller ones, these tasks are shared by two staff members. This would not involve hiring an extra staff specialist (since we all know how unrealistic this would be these days) but just redistributing the duties. Reorganization of the front office could also involve a heavier emphasis for one member of the staff on fiscal/budgetary duties. Some of the work load can be made easier to bear by also allowing the staff to have one uninterrupted hour at the beginning as well as at the end of each work day.

We all know how important it is for the well-being of any department to have staff who are not just competent and professional, but who also feel like they are full-fledged citizens of the department. We got a definite sense that such is not quite the case in the eyes of some staff members in Asian L&L, and that, together with the heavy work loads and lack of clear structure and communication, creates the situation that becomes the subject of complaints.

We were at a loss, for example, to understand why some members of Asian L&L staff felt that they were discouraged from attending faculty meetings since faculty meetings which do not involve personnel decisions are usually supposed to be open to all (including even general public), and in many departments are routinely attended by staff and graduate students. Whether this is a reality or just a perception, serious efforts should be made by the departmental administration to make sure that the staff do not feel that they are relegated to second-class citizenry in the department, and that not just their hard work, but also their input are sought by faculty and administration. In many departments it is the front office that first becomes aware of potential problems and has the practical acumen to know what needs to be done in order to take care of such problems. We should also not forget that the front office is the department’s public face, and the happier the face, the better it the perception of the department by students, other programs, and local communities.

5.5 *Departmental organization*

The self-study notes “the misleading impression, prevalent among our undergraduates, that the language areas we teach, and hence the different programs within our department, are unrelated to each other.” The impression may be “misleading” to some, but the review committee repeatedly heard the complaint that, in terms of how the department functions, the different programs are organized and largely act autonomously from one another.

Given the intrinsic complexities in Asian L&L, managing the differences between the programs is a difficult balancing act. The review committee recognizes that each program has unique qualities that it must maintain and distinct needs that it must meet. However, we feel that those distinctive qualities and needs should not become structural impediments to the smooth functioning of the department. A way must be found to break down the barriers between programs in a way which will facilitate communication and expand awareness of what is happening in the other programs.

One way to promote better inter-program communications would be for existing committees to take a more active role in the department. We also suggest that the department establish a language committee, consisting of all language instructors in all programs (non-degree as well as degree). This committee could provide a forum for the discussion of advances and problems in methodology, pedagogy, instructional technology or TA training that arise in connection with all the languages which the department teaches. This committee could also serve as a means for the lecturers and TAs to help and support each other.

The suggested establishment of a language committee should not be taken as a suggestion for the promotion of uniform pedagogy across the languages. The point of the committee would rather be to promote awareness of shared problems and sharable solutions and dispel misinformation about the other programs. It was pointed out to us that there is much turnover among the Japanese lecturers and that serving on committees would not be useful for this transient population. However, we see committee membership as something meant for dissemination of knowledge and best practices. It seems to us that new teaching faculty would especially benefit from membership in a language committee.

Similarly, it might be wise to establish a literature committee and/or a linguistic committee to review issues that come up in the teaching of these courses.

In sum, we feel that there needs to be some mechanism in place to break down the barriers between programs, create smoother communication, and foster awareness of what goes on in other programs within the department. The committees we have suggested could create a little more uniformity than currently exists and would reduce the potential for the circulation of harmful rumors.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

6.1 Graduate student support

Asian L&L suffers from the same lack of graduate student support in the form of fellowships and teaching assistantships that is found in other Humanities departments. Without this support, Asian L&L, despite its stellar scholarly reputation, cannot always attract the best graduate students. Increasing the number of departmental TAs might not solve all of the problems such as turning undergraduates away from Japanese language classes, but it would undoubtedly help.

As noted in 5.2, the junior faculty is impressive in many ways. One of these is their willingness, even eagerness, to teach undergraduate classes with large enrollments. The task of doing so would be easier if TAs were made available for literature and linguistics classes, as well as for the language classes. We are happy that at least readers (graders) are available.

6.2 Recognition of departmental value

The review committee agrees that Asian L&L is more than a service department, and should be seen that way by other administrative units of the university. However, being more than a service department does not negate the responsibility to treat the service component seriously. Other university units, in particular the Title VI area centers, depend on Asian L&L for teaching those languages upon which their funding is based. Whether these languages are in the Asian L&L “core” or not does not, we believe, absolve the department of its responsibility to do all it can to teach them.

Therefore, we make two recommendations: First, we recommend to the Dean’s Office that Asian L&L should receive both greater recognition for its valuable service component and also acknowledgement of the importance and uniqueness of its own research. Second, we recommend that Asian L&L reconsider and rationalize its service component. We recognize that Asian L&L cannot do this by itself. The department needs to work more closely with both the Dean’s Office and area programs in JSIS. As a corollary to this recommendation we also think that the department should, in the future, reconsider spinning off its service components to other campus units (as noted above, technical Japanese in Engineering, business Chinese in the School of Business, Tagalog in American Ethnic Studies). We will further elaborate on these two recommendations below.

6.3 Relationship of Asian L&L to JSIS and the area programs

Relations between each of the Jackson School area programs and Asian L&L vary a great deal from program to program. At one end, the relation between the Center for South Asian Studies and Asian L&L is close and beneficial for all concerned. At the other end, the relation between the Center for SE Asia Studies and Asian L&L remains tense and poses difficulties for all concerned parties. The relations with the other centers line up in the middle ground between these two extremes, although for the most part the relations are good.

After reviewing the difficulties experienced in the past in promoting better relations between Asian L&L and the area centers in JSIS, we conclude that the Dean's office should shoulder the primary responsibility for lack of better coordination and support. The two divisional deans in charge of Asian L&L and JSIS need to reconcile the different interests of the groups involved and provide adequate support, even though class sizes in some languages may be lower than desired. The Dean's Office also should help facilitate the relationship of the Jackson School to Asian L&L. The Jackson School views Asian L&L as its natural ally but we did not get a reciprocating sense of this from Asian L&L. Here are some of the ways in which Asian L&L and the Jackson School could join forces:

- In their outreach and development efforts Asian L&L and Title VI Centers often target the same communities. Asian L&L and the Jackson School should be encouraged to coordinate, but not compete, on fund-raising targets.
- Certain Asian positions in History have gone unfilled, but we understand that these will soon be taken care of. The process of hiring specialists in this area could be, we believe, a great example of a successful joint effort on behalf of JSIS and Asian L&L and we encourage the search committees for these positions to include relevant members of the Asian L&L Department.
- There are opportunities for cross-fertilization between Asian L&L and other UW units. Overlap between Asian and European traditions in the areas of linguistics, culture, history of ideas, philosophy are only some areas which could be explored
- Probably the most efficient way to make up for the desirable initiatives not taken in the past and to actualize the potential for the future would be to assign the responsibility of relating between JSIS and AL&L to an Associate/Assistant Dean in the College. This person should periodically ensure that these units remain in contact on a regular basis, encourage mutually non-competitive fund-raising and maximize the space for mutually beneficial appointments.

6.4 Hiring needs

Given the scarcity of positions at the College of Arts and Sciences, hiring a linguist with specialty in both Japanese and Korean seems to us a very realistic and practical choice since it would help both these vital and struggling programs at the same time. We recently learned that the department, indeed, intends to request a permission to search for and hire an assistant professor in Japanese/Korean Linguistics. We could not be more enthusiastic about and supportive of that request and hope that they will get a chance to do so as early as next year.

Restoring the Tibetan line (which will be the Department's second request in a proposal that covers the hiring needs in the next five years) seems to us an almost equally strong priority as a position in Japanese/Korean Linguistics for the reasons noted in 4.1.

Finally, we note that there is a glaring lack of a specialist in Chinese literature for the millennium between 500 and 1500. We therefore lend our whole-hearted support to the last request in the proposal, namely the one for a specialist in Medieval Chinese literature.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Our unanimous conclusion is that the Department of Asian Languages and Literature deserves continuation with a subsequent review in ten years. The department, we feel, is strongly anchored in the tradition of academic and professional excellence and with its new and excellent new hires (and, we hope, more crucial positions to come in the most immediate future) is well positioned for the future.

We hope our report can lead to constructive changes within the Department, where such are needed, and further support and guidance from the College of Arts and Sciences to make sure that the strengths of the Department are reinforced and its challenges, many of them of a budgetary nature, are made manageable as much as possible.

We would also like to thank the Graduate School for making our work easier by putting together a very cohesive and representative committee, with supplying us with many necessary materials, and running the process in a very efficient and friendly manner.

Professor Ashok Aklujkar
Professor Galya Diment (Chair)
Professor Gary Hamilton
Professor Sharon Hargus
Professor Shuen-fu Lin
Professor Naomi McGloin