

Summary of Internal and External Review Team Reports  
Black American/African Studies  
Fall 2006

The following summarizes the findings of the internal and external review teams that conducted reviews during the Fall semester of 2006.

There is ample student interest in Black American/African Studies at SIUC, predominantly among undergraduate students. Historically, BAS/AS/Africana programs have been undervalued and misunderstood, not only on this campus, but elsewhere. A corollary issue identified by SIUC BAS/AS faculty is that students in these programs (particularly those of African American heritage) demand mentoring and counseling services at greater rates as a matter of culture, and that non-African American professional colleagues both in- and outside the program have difficulty understanding its ramifications. SIUC students now taking BAS/AS course work (but not necessarily the minor) appear to strongly value the program, appreciate courses currently available, and strongly support a move toward a major. Unfortunately, current faculty size is simply too small to meet pressing demands for additional course work and opportunities. Further, the program's structural problems and meager OTS budget allocation hamper its ability not only to expand, but also to remain viable. Clearly, the program is central to the university's mission and should be better supported. SIUC has one of the highest percentages of Black undergraduates enrolled at historically White institutions in this country, and the BAS/AS program has existed for 38 years. Recommendations included:

**Program Scope and Goals**

- Develop, articulate, and publicize a focused long-range plan for program development.
- Determine a clear set of requirements—and course sequences—that are to be followed.
- Revise the mission statement to reflect clarity of purpose and 21<sup>st</sup> Century realities and goals.
- Advertise the program more widely across campus and the state.
- Establish connected, but different, goals for the minor, the major, and the graduate certificate to reflect differing student needs, program contributions, and anticipated outcomes.

**Current Program Course Work and Service/Outreach Opportunities**

- Involve students in community action projects that allow them to confront legal, social, economic, and political issues while also highlighting problem-solving and leadership skills.
- Consider developing a required undergraduate research methods course that can augment the African excursion and its intended outcomes.
- Expand curriculum to add policy-oriented studies that focus on applying African American Studies theories/intervention strategies to solve problems facing people of African descent.
- Consider interdisciplinary involvement with political science, community development, economics, African languages, and methodology.

**Faculty Service and Community Outreach**

- Seek/implement creative student mentoring strategies to reduce faculty time commitments.
- Protect faculty research and scholarship time; seek alternative sources of support for students.
- Consider a formal outreach center in the Black community of Carbondale. Use the expanded program as an educational resource for teaching, learning, and research about the struggles, sacrifices, and contributions of people of African descent.
- Establish an advisory committee of prominent professional and community leaders who can assist in actualizing community outreach and education programs.

**Faculty: Teaching and Research**

- Consider requesting full-time faculty for two new positions each year for three years.
- Ensure that current non-tenured faculty members successfully reach tenure by offering reduced teaching loads, summer salary support, and grants to subsidize research.
- Recognize and act upon the fact that increasing the number of faculty in the BAS/AS program will also expand minority faculty representation and participation on campus.
- Explore possibilities for inter-institutional research and faculty recruitment.

**Research Productivity and Opportunities**

- Establish a shared research agenda and augment it with student research or contributions. Get the studies published at a measured rate in prestigious journals.
- Seek research support via requests for one or more undergraduate research assistantships.

**Administrative Structure**

- Develop a more detailed and focused operating paper.
- Pursue opportunities for visiting professorships or inter-institutional sabbaticals that can lead to program improvement and curricular collaboration.
- Develop a curriculum committee that includes faculty, graduate and undergraduate students.

**Student Organizations and Alumni Development**

- Initiate a student organization for BAS/AS students, and through it, establish a peer support and student recruitment/ambassadors program.
- Develop and maintain an alumni organization.
- Track student information, especially alumni data.

**Program Facilities**

- Continue to request action on deferred maintenance problems in unit facilities. They remain a liability for the program as well as the University.
- Update the unit's website.
- Invest in additional signage that can direct students to the program, faculty, and offices.
- Assess library holdings to assure they would support the move to a major.

**Budget Allocation and Stability**

- Work with the Provost and Affirmative Action to stabilize minimal levels of program support.
- Request expanded budget for travel, research, summer salary support, supplies, office space, telephones, copying, clerical assistance, and student assistance.