



University of Colorado **Boulder**

2025 Program Review

Center for Asian Studies

Academic Review and Planning  
Advisory Committee Report

Approved

Signed by:  
*Ann Stevens*

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Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs | Date

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## Process Overview

The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) review of the Center for Asian Studies (CAS) was conducted in accordance with the 2025 program review guidelines. The degree program report and goal setting exercise were prepared and submitted by the unit. An external review committee (ERC), consisting of two experts from outside of the University of Colorado Boulder, engaged in a virtual visit and submitted a report based upon review of relevant documents and interviews with faculty, staff, and student unit members and university administrators. ARPAC staff, employing web conferencing tools, facilitated the external review as a remote visit over April 3 and 4, 2025. The ARPAC unit liaisons submitted a summary of findings derived from the goal setting exercise. ARPAC reviewed and considered these materials, met with the director, and wrote this report.

## Past Reviews

ARPAC conducted its previous review of CAS in 2016 and made a number of recommendations to CAS regarding the need for CAS to engage in a strategic planning process that would clarify its identity and mission (research center, quasi-department, or both); identify budgeting needs and funding sources in an atmosphere of declining federal funding for Title VI programs; evaluate the status of the low-enrollment Asian Studies major. Concurrently, ARPAC recommended that the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S) work with CAS to outline a sustainable structural and funding model, based on consultation with leaders of allied units. Another recommendation that involved both the unit and the dean of A&S included working with CAS's libraries liaison to determine unit needs and to acquire specific resources to support CAS's work. As a part of this discussion, seek further clarification from the University Libraries on appropriations for East Asian holdings. Further recommendations to the dean included examining the CAS director stipend for purposes of equitability and facilitating cross-disciplinary co-teaching. Recommendations that involved higher campus administration included finding a suitable campus location for CAS and establishing a position at the vice-chancellor level to oversee and to promote CU Boulder international activities.

Since the 2016 ARPAC review, the Center for Asian Studies has made notable progress on several key recommendations, including completing a new strategic plan, diversifying external funding sources, expanding academic and outreach programming, and piloting interdisciplinary co-teaching. CAS has also demonstrated resilience in sustaining operations despite the absence of Title VI funding. A&S, the provost, and the campus have also made progress on other key recommendations, including ensuring continuity of CAS leadership, finding satisfactory space for CAS in the Denison building, and announcing the creation of a vice chancellor for global affairs position.

However, core challenges remain unresolved: Title VI funding has become even more precarious, the center continues to lack stable internal funding for staff and leadership, the director's stipend remains insufficient, library support for East Asian collections is still limited, and the relationship with the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations (ALC) requires clearer coordination. While the Asian Studies major has modestly grown, it remains small and under-supported. CAS's hybrid status as both a research center and a degree-granting unit continues to create confusion in terms of oversight and reporting responsibilities. Overall, CAS has strengthened its impact and cross-campus collaborations but still requires greater institutional investment and clearer integration within the university's academic and internationalization strategy.

## Unit Analysis

The campus' standardized description of the Center for Asian Studies is available on the website of the Office of Data & Analytics (D&A) at

<https://www.colorado.edu/oda/institutional-research/institutional-level-data/information-department/academic-review-and-planning>. D&A updates the profile annually during the fall semester. This

report cites data posted in August 2024, reflecting the state of the Center for Asian Studies as of the academic year (AY) 2023-2024. Additional data obtained from the unit provided degree program report from November 2024 are also cited where relevant.

## Teaching and Learning Excellence and Assessment

The Center for Asian Studies offers the Asian Studies major and minor, as well as two interdisciplinary certificates: an undergraduate certificate in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies and a graduate certificate in Asian Studies. CAS has also proposed an undergraduate certificate in Climate and Society in Asia. While the major and minor do not currently have specific tracks, the certificates offer focused pathways aligned with distinct regional and thematic interests. As a hybrid academic unit within the College of Arts & Sciences, CAS combines the functions of a degree-granting program with those of an interdisciplinary research and outreach center. The unit's teaching mission is to make Asia accessible to the CU Boulder campus through a broad, multidisciplinary curriculum that draws from the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and beyond. CAS courses serve both majors and many non-majors across diverse disciplines—from engineering and business to physics and anthropology—demonstrating its significant role in interdisciplinary education. CAS is also the only unit in Colorado offering instruction in both Tibetan and Indonesian languages at the post-secondary level, further enriching its contributions to the university's global education mission.

CAS's enrollment figures, student demographics, and course outcomes show that, in the 2022–2025 period, CAS taught 818 students, 24.6% of whom identified as Asian or Pacific Islander, with many classes fully enrolled and the largest reaching 40 students. CAS currently uses peer teaching observations to ensure teaching quality, particularly among its small teaching faculty. The unit is actively developing new initiatives and curricular offerings: the newly created undergraduate certificate in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies and the proposed certificate in Climate and Society in Asia reflect growing student interest and institutional demand for regionally specific and environmentally focused content. Additionally, CAS plans to expand internship offerings in Asia and increase linkages between coursework and study abroad, particularly through the Tang Global Seminars and Asia Internship Program. These expansions will also serve as informal assessments of curricular relevance and student engagement.

CAS's interdisciplinary undergraduate curriculum is a clear strength, attracting students from over 20 different majors. The creation of regionally focused certificates provides students with flexible, targeted credentials that complement a wide variety of degree programs. Tibetan and Himalayan Studies and Climate and Society in Asia are distinctive offerings that set CAS apart. Key areas of opportunity include expanding the course offerings and faculty expertise necessary to sustain and grow these new certificates, as well as continuing to adapt classes to fulfill college diversity requirements.

The integration of language training, cultural studies, and region-specific content creates a rich environment for student learning. The small, highly engaged faculty offers close mentorship to students. However, with only three teaching faculty (two full-time and one half-time), course availability and mentorship capacity are constrained. Additional, stable teaching lines or adjunct positions could alleviate this pressure and allow for expansion.

#### Strong Points and Areas of Opportunity in Curriculum Development and Assessment:

CAS has demonstrated curricular innovation through its response to grant opportunities (e.g., Title VI National Resource Center (NRC), Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language (UISFL)), using external funding to build sustainable academic programs. Peer review of teaching is a promising start, but the current reliance on the faculty director and executive committee presents sustainability issues for assessment of teaching effectiveness. Broader involvement from affiliated faculty in assessment could distribute the workload and enhance the evaluative process.

#### Strong Points and Areas of Opportunity in Interdisciplinary Education:

CAS is a campus leader in interdisciplinary education, both in teaching and research. Its classes are taken by students from across CU Boulder's colleges, and partnerships with the College of Engineering & Applied Science and other units amplify its reach. The Climate and Society initiative exemplifies this strength. A strategic opportunity exists in more formally integrating CAS's programming with other interdisciplinary credentials and leveraging this work to attract funding and institutional support.

#### Other Notable Strengths and Opportunities:

CAS offers rare language training in Tibetan and Indonesian, expanding CU Boulder's global language portfolio. Its connections with institutions like the Rangjung Yeshe Institute and programs like the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) contribute to its international teaching profile. A clear opportunity is to further institutionalize these partnerships and develop joint credentials or shared courses, particularly with institutions like Naropa University.

#### Key Challenges

The uncertain status of the CAS funding stream provided by Title VI grants administered by the Department of Education is the primary challenge to CAS's teaching mission. It is unclear how faculty positions funded by these grants can be continued within the A&S budget.

## Research, Scholarly, and/or Creative Work Excellence

The Center for Asian Studies is recognized as a central interdisciplinary hub for Asia-focused research, teaching, and outreach at CU Boulder, bringing together more than 100 affiliated faculty members across the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and professional schools. As a designated Title VI NRC in Asian Studies (2022–2026), CAS is one of a select group of programs nationally that receives U.S. Department of Education funding to promote advanced language and area studies. This designation affirms its national prominence and capacity for leadership in Asian Studies scholarship. CAS has also secured approximately \$30 million in external funding since its founding in 1999, a testament to its sustained success and institutional impact. Through its interdisciplinary research symposia, speaker series, and collaborations, CAS shapes critical conversations in the field and enhances CU Boulder's international reputation in Asian-area studies.

CAS's research strengths lie in its facilitation of interdisciplinary, collaborative scholarship on Asia, particularly in the areas of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies, Climate and Society in Asia, and

transnational Asian Studies. These thematic initiatives reflect both the intellectual interests of affiliated faculty and global concerns such as climate change and cultural preservation. The annual CAS Asia Symposium, built around rotating themes, showcases cutting-edge research and provides a platform for scholarly exchange. Faculty have developed innovative programs, such as a proposed Climate and Society certificate in partnership with the College of Engineering & Applied Science, that link research and teaching while addressing university-wide priorities around sustainability. (It should be noted that the certificate proposal is on hold while academic leadership seeks to coordinate a number of similar proposals for undergraduate certificates and minors related to sustainability.) Similarly, the Tibet Himalaya Initiative (THI) has grown into a research and teaching platform attracting interest from CU and beyond, including collaborations with Naropa University and integration with the Renée Crown Wellness Institute's Dalai Lama Fellows Program. CAS-affiliated faculty are deeply engaged in public scholarship, international collaborations, and multidisciplinary inquiry, though the center does not directly hire tenure-line researchers. Instead, as is the case with CU Boulder's other research centers and research institutes, it leverages its network of affiliated faculty to amplify research efforts.

### Analysis of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Work

#### Strengths:

- CAS has built a robust interdisciplinary research network that enriches the university's global scholarship.
- Its status as an NRC underscores its national competitiveness and strategic importance, particularly in language and area studies.
- The breadth of faculty affiliation (over 100 faculty members from diverse fields) ensures wide disciplinary reach and integration.
- Curricular offerings align closely with university leadership priorities, presenting opportunities for cross-campus collaboration and research funding.
- CAS maintains a consistent output of high-profile events (e.g., 40+ events per year), helping to build scholarly communities and disseminate knowledge both on and off campus.

#### Needs and Opportunities:

- While CAS is successful in supporting research, it currently lacks a dedicated infrastructure (e.g., postdoctoral fellows, research coordinators, or stable internal funding) to sustain and expand the faculty's research efforts.
- A key opportunity lies in developing a "funded research cluster" model, which would formalize support for interdisciplinary scholarship, host postdocs and visiting scholars, and generate publishable research through workshops and fellowships.
- The expansion of the Climate and Society initiative into a research stream (beyond curriculum) is a promising direction but would require stable faculty lines and external funding.
- The Tibetan and Himalayan Studies initiative, while highly successful in teaching and outreach, also requires long-term funding to support research components.
- CAS would benefit from increased institutional investment to supplement increasingly competitive federal and foundation funding, ensuring long-term sustainability of its research mission; however, the source for this funding is unclear.



CAS has positioned itself as a leader in interdisciplinary Asian Studies research at the national level, with growing international recognition. Its successful integration of teaching, research, and outreach—especially through themes like climate and Tibetan studies—demonstrates its innovative approach to area studies. To build on these strengths, the next step for CAS is to secure stable research infrastructure, deepen faculty research engagement, and continue developing signature initiatives that reflect global challenges and CU Boulder’s strategic goals.

## Hiring and Mentoring (Faculty, Staff, Postdoctoral Fellows)

### Faculty Strengths, Needs, and Opportunities

According to the D&A profile for AY 2024–2025, faculty personnel in the Center for Asian Studies consisted of 2 full-time teaching-track faculty, 1 half-time teaching-track faculty member, and a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) from Indonesia. CAS does not have any tenured or tenure-track (TTT) faculty directly appointed to the unit; rather, it draws on affiliated TTT faculty across the university for instruction, research collaboration, and governance. While CAS does not house research-track faculty, it partners with over 100 affiliated faculty across CU Boulder in interdisciplinary initiatives. These numbers are consistent with the unit’s description and reflect the Center’s hybrid role as both an academic program and a research center.

CAS has remained relatively stable in terms of its core teaching personnel, although this minimal faculty footprint is under pressure given growing student interest in Asian Studies and the need to sustain new curricular initiatives (e.g., Tibetan and Himalayan Studies and Climate and Society in Asia). No new full-time faculty hires are currently planned, but the unit has emphasized the need for stable funding to support key teaching positions currently covered by external grants, particularly for the Tibetan and Himalayan Studies and Climate and Society programs. CAS has already used Title VI NRC funds to support a 50% teaching line in Climate and Society and a full-time position in Tibetan Studies. However, the lack of permanent instructional lines remains a structural vulnerability.

Mentoring at CAS is organized primarily by the faculty director and supported by the executive committee, with a current emphasis on peer observation for teaching faculty. Given the small number of full-time faculty, mentoring responsibilities are disproportionately shouldered by the director and a few affiliated tenure-line faculty, making this a growing area of concern. To address this, CAS has outlined plans to broaden the involvement of affiliated faculty in mentoring and peer review, especially to support ongoing teaching excellence.

CAS has a strong record of leveraging limited resources to create a vibrant teaching and scholarly environment. Its use of affiliated faculty networks is a notable strength and has enabled interdisciplinary curriculum development and research without a large core faculty. The Center’s success in securing external grants—nearly \$30 million since 1999—has been central to sustaining its faculty and instructional activities.

However, a key challenge lies in the precarity of faculty funding and compensation, particularly for the executive director, who plays an essential leadership and administrative role but is currently grant-funded rather than supported by a stable university line. The same concern applies to teaching lines for strategic initiatives like Tibetan and Himalayan Studies. The faculty director position, which involves responsibilities akin to a department chair, is currently undercompensated relative to workload. CAS has clearly articulated the need for chair-level recognition and compensation for this role to ensure continued leadership and program quality.

There are also opportunities to enhance faculty mentoring structures, particularly by formally involving more affiliated TTT faculty in mentorship, observation, and support of CAS teaching faculty. Expanding this capacity is essential to sustaining teaching quality and faculty morale.

#### Staff Strengths, Needs, and Opportunities

According to the Office of Data & Analytics (D&A) profile for AY 2024–2025, staff personnel in CAS consisted of 3 university staff members and several student hourly employees. CAS does not currently employ any classified staff. These figures align with the unit's submission documents, though they also underscore a key institutional challenge: CAS's entire operational infrastructure is supported by grant funding, with no permanent university funding for even a part-time staff role. Staff roles currently include an executive director, an events coordinator, and a program support staff member—all of whom are vital to the Center's daily functioning and external grant administration.

CAS has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to operate as a fully functional academic and research unit with minimal staff support, largely due to the skill and dedication of its staff, especially the executive director, who is responsible for grant writing, implementation, strategic planning, and daily coordination. However, the current structure is not sustainable. The reliance on soft money for these core positions poses a serious risk to the unit's continuity and effectiveness.

The most urgent priority identified by the Center is the stabilization of the executive director's salary through university operational support. Similarly, the events coordinator role, essential for managing the Center's approximately 40 annual events, needs to be transitioned to a permanent, university-funded position. CAS also seeks to enhance staff cohesion and professional development, but such efforts are limited by current staffing constraints and the precarious nature of staff funding.

There is a significant opportunity here for institutional investment. Stable staffing would not only ensure continuity and operational resilience but also strengthen CAS's ability to win future grants, which increasingly require evidence of institutional infrastructure.

#### Postdoctoral Fellows

As of AY 2024–2025, CAS does not currently host postdoctoral fellows, although its vision for the future includes the development of a research cluster model that could support such positions. The unit has expressed a strong interest in building a funded postdoctoral program tied to thematic areas such as Climate and Society in Asia and Tibetan and Himalayan Studies.

While CAS does not yet support postdocs, the Center has the intellectual infrastructure and interdisciplinary partnerships to provide a rich mentoring environment if funding becomes available. Future development of a postdoc program would strengthen CAS's research mission, enhance visibility, and contribute to career development pipelines for early-career scholars. The Center is encouraged to pursue funding from sources such as the Luce Foundation or institutional seed grants to realize this goal.

## Student Success and Mentoring (Undergraduate and Graduate Students)

As of the most recent degree program report of November 2024, the Center for Asian Studies reported 20 majors and 8 minors enrolled in the Asian Studies undergraduate program. Over the

past five years, the number of majors has remained relatively steady, while minor enrollments have increased modestly, reflecting growing interest in interdisciplinary global studies and themes related to Asia. In the same academic year, CAS awarded 4 bachelor's degrees, consistent with historical averages. CAS does not offer graduate degrees but hosts a graduate certificate in Asian Studies. As mentioned previously, the status of this graduate certificate is unclear.

CAS generated approximately 850 undergraduate student credit hours (SCH) in AY 2024–2025. Of those SCH, 94% reflected enrollment by non-majors, underscoring the Center's significant contribution to campus-wide interdisciplinary education and its appeal to students across multiple fields, including International Affairs, Political Science, Anthropology, Religious Studies, and Environmental Studies.

Regarding instructional staffing, the majority of SCH were taught by teaching-track faculty (approximately 94%), with the remainder covered by tenure-track (2%) and others (4%). CAS does not employ TTT faculty directly, nor does it rely on teaching assistants (TA)/graduate part-time instructors (GPTIs) for instruction, due to its structural positioning as an interdisciplinary center rather than a traditional academic department.

CAS does not currently offer a formal honors program, though students have the opportunity to pursue honors theses through affiliated departments. CAS encourages undergraduate research via mentorship and partnership with faculty across disciplines. The Center has also created internship opportunities, especially through its National Resource Center grant, which supports student placements with organizations like the Asia Society, U.S.–China climate networks, and Tibetan cultural institutions. The undergraduate certificate in Asian Studies and course clusters in thematic areas such as Climate and Society in Asia offer additional structure for academic and career preparation.

CAS students benefit from a student-led club, the CU Asian Studies Association (CUASA), which organizes film nights, speaker events, and peer networking. Students also frequently attend CAS's public events, many of which are integrated into course curricula. CAS regularly supports student travel and study abroad, especially to Asia, through grant programs and fellowships tied to its NRC status.

While formal post-graduation tracking remains limited, anecdotal and internal reporting indicates that CAS undergraduates have pursued careers in international development, government service, education, and nonprofit sectors, and some have gone on to graduate programs in Asian Studies, Religious Studies, and Public Policy.

Student feedback from internal surveys and comments gathered during the ERC visit suggest high levels of satisfaction with the Asian Studies program, particularly regarding the interdisciplinary flexibility, the quality of instruction, and the close faculty-student mentoring environment. However, students noted a desire for more language course offerings and greater visibility of career pathways associated with the major.

#### Undergraduate Strengths, Needs, and Opportunities

The Center for Asian Studies plays a crucial role in undergraduate student success, both through its degree programs and its substantial contributions to interdisciplinary undergraduate education. Its high ratio of non-majors served speaks to the relevance of its curriculum across campus. CAS also offers students meaningful engagement beyond the classroom through internships, events, travel grants, and mentorship, which together form a holistic model for student development.

However, the program faces several challenges. First, the absence of permanent faculty lines places pressure on the teaching mission, especially given increasing interest in programs like Climate and Society in Asia. Second, the lack of a formal honors track or dedicated advising resources limits opportunities for high-achieving students to pursue deeper scholarship within CAS itself. Additionally, while CAS excels at event programming, systematic career development resources and alumni tracking could better support student transitions after graduation.

There is a significant opportunity to enhance student success infrastructure through investments in academic advising, career services, and undergraduate research opportunities. Stable funding for key teaching roles and enhanced collaboration with campus-wide career development offices could help CAS deepen its already strong impact on undergraduate success.

#### Graduate Strengths, Needs, and Opportunities

CAS does not directly offer graduate degrees, but it plays a significant role in the mentoring and professional development of graduate students across several disciplines. Graduate students affiliated with Asian Studies are typically enrolled in departments such as Anthropology, History, Religious Studies, Political Science, and Geography and often take coursework or receive funding support through CAS.

CAS offers a graduate certificate in Asian Studies that allows students to pursue interdisciplinary expertise relevant to both academic and applied career paths and provides students with cross-departmental advising and opportunities to work closely with CAS-affiliated faculty. The certificate has been in existence for just a few years and has not had any graduates yet; however, the director of CAS reports that three students have declared their intent to complete the certificate as of fall 2025.

Graduate students benefit from research assistantships, conference and research travel funding, and the chance to present work at CAS-sponsored events. The Center also provides key support through language study fellowships and outreach and internship placements, especially as part of its NRC grant.

Graduate students also participate in the governance of CAS, primarily through involvement in event planning, research clusters, and occasional input into curriculum development. Feedback from students, gathered through the site visit and internal reports, highlights the value of CAS's interdisciplinary exposure, funding opportunities, and mentoring, though some noted challenges in navigating certificate requirements or balancing CAS commitments with their home departments.

In sum: while CAS does not administer its own graduate degrees, it makes an outsized contribution to graduate student success at CU Boulder through its certificate programs, research support, and mentoring infrastructure. The Climate and Society in Asia and Tibetan and Himalayan Studies initiatives have become focal points for graduate training and interdisciplinary collaboration. The availability of grants, fellowships, and travel funding gives graduate students concrete tools to develop their research and professional profiles.

That said, the informal structure of graduate support can present coordination challenges for students navigating across multiple departments. More formalized advising pathways, clearer communication of certificate expectations, and stronger alumni tracking could further enhance the experience. CAS would benefit from expanded graduate staff support, particularly to manage student-facing programming and communication.

Looking ahead, the proposed interdisciplinary research clusters—which would integrate graduate students as key contributors—represent a promising model for expanding graduate mentorship and professional development. CAS is well positioned to deepen its impact on graduate education, provided that resource constraints, especially staff support, are addressed.

## Inclusivity and Unit Culture

In February 2022, a collaborative group met and identified the following [five goals to advance diversity, equity and inclusion](#) at CU Boulder: (1) employee skills and development; (2) student achievement outcomes; (3) community building; (4) employee recruitment outcomes; and (5) preparing students to participate in a diverse democracy. The Center for Asian Studies has made several notable efforts aligned with these goals, particularly in promoting inclusive pedagogy, interdisciplinary representation of marginalized Asian communities, and fostering cultural competency among both students and faculty.

CAS's programming explicitly centers equity and global inclusion. Its thematic foci—such as Climate and Society in Asia and Tibetan and Himalayan Studies—amplify voices and regions often underrepresented in traditional Asian Studies frameworks. Through its National Resource Center designation, CAS supports K–16 educator training and public engagement efforts that bring inclusive Asian perspectives into broader community contexts.

CAS has also integrated inclusive excellence goals into its faculty hiring practices, and the faculty and staff mentoring efforts reflect a shared equity leadership model, in which collaboration across units and disciplines is both expected and supported. The unit's small size and interdisciplinary nature foster cross-cultural engagement and academic flexibility that benefit students of various identities, particularly those underrepresented in traditional academic pathways.

CAS demonstrates a deep and sustained commitment to inclusive excellence, particularly through its curriculum design, public outreach, and interdisciplinary collaborations. By engaging with global issues such as environmental justice, migration, and postcolonial critique, CAS prepares students to meaningfully participate in a diverse democracy. These efforts align strongly with campuswide diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) priorities.

While CAS does not currently maintain a formalized DEI committee, many of its existing initiatives serve DEI functions, such as supporting first-generation college students via advising and course flexibility, and its contribution to inclusive language instruction (e.g., Tibetan, Hindi, and Chinese) through partnerships with affiliated departments.

## Unit Planning and Governance Structures and Processes

CAS envisions itself as a flexible, interdisciplinary hub that fosters innovative research, teaching, and community engagement centered on contemporary Asia and its global entanglements. The Center plans to evolve by strengthening its ties to departments across campus, enhancing its thematic programs (e.g., Tibetan and Himalayan Studies, Asia and the Environment), and expanding public outreach through its National Resource Center designation.

In terms of faculty planning, CAS aims to collaborate with other units on campus to establish a “research cluster” with affiliated faculty via joint research and programming. The Center also plans to bolster its staffing infrastructure, recognizing that sustaining its administrative, grant, and programming work requires dedicated full-time staff with regional and linguistic expertise. Staff

roles are envisioned to expand into areas such as event coordination, outreach management, and NRC compliance/reporting, which are increasingly vital to maintaining its national standing and fulfilling federal grant obligations.

CAS presents a coherent and promising vision for its future, well-aligned with both campus strategic priorities and national trends in area studies. Its interdisciplinary, collaborative structure is a major strength, allowing it to adapt to evolving intellectual currents and global issues. However, the Center faces structural limitations in executing its long-term vision—primarily due to its status as a non-departmental unit without direct hiring power or dedicated faculty lines. While this model encourages innovation and flexibility, it also means that CAS is heavily reliant on partnerships and external funding to achieve its goals. To support CAS in realizing its vision, campus administration should explore options to provide stable staff lines, seed funding for collaborative hires, and greater institutional support for NRC-related work, especially in light of the reporting and outreach expectations tied to federal Title VI funding.

Governance in the Center for Asian Studies is highly collaborative and consensus-driven, reflecting its interdisciplinary nature. CAS is led by a faculty director, appointed by the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and supported by a small professional staff. The unit's primary decision-making body is its executive committee, composed of core faculty and staff representatives from a range of departments. This body reviews major decisions related to programming, budget priorities, grant strategies, and curricular offerings. ARPAC notes, however, that the student role in planning programming is not formally defined.

The CAS bylaws were last revised in 2022, with updates that reflect recent changes in campus guidelines and the unit's evolving structure. The bylaws delineate voting rights, including the ability of affiliated faculty to vote on issues related to programming and governance. Since CAS does not have hiring or tenure authority, some governance domains—such as faculty promotion and tenure, merit reviews, and formal mentoring—are handled by home departments, and CAS plays a coordinating or consultative role. Despite this distribution of authority to home units, CAS does need to formalize how the teaching faculty within CAS are mentored; does the affiliate faculty have a formal role in hiring and mentoring CAS teaching faculty? Similarly, the responsibility for staff mentoring and evaluation is not defined in bylaws or other documentation, a key omission given the central role staff play in the center's operations.

Finally, as a small organization, CAS has a particular responsibility to future-proof itself for possible changes in leadership and staffing. ARPAC urges CAS to pay particular attention to keeping records on CAS processes, including grant applications and administration, that are essential to the current functioning of the center and to future similar efforts.

## Support Needs

- **Federal Grant Challenges:** NRC and Foreign Language and Area Studies Program (FLAS) funding are delayed and potentially at risk due to federal budget uncertainty. CAS is deeply engaged in contingency planning and national advocacy through leadership roles in professional associations.
- **Alternative Funding Efforts:** CAS is seeking private, corporate, and foundation funding (e.g., Japan Foundation, Khyentse Foundation), securing a \$20,000 donor commitment, and preparing a Luce Foundation research proposal.

- Donor relations and fundraising guidance, especially with foundations and corporate partners.
- Bridge funding or flexible grants to cover core activities if federal sources lapse.
- Sustainability Planning: A 4-year budget plan has been presented to the dean, outlining operational shortfalls and potential resource reallocations if federal funding is lost.
- Event and Speaker Series Funding: CAS has limited funds (\$13,000 existing + \$20,000 donor) and will seek further support if NRC status is not renewed.

# Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee address the following recommendations to the Center for Asian Studies and to the offices of responsible administrators:

## To the Unit:

1. In collaboration with College of Arts & Sciences leadership and in consultation with the Research and Innovation Office (RIO) and the Office of Advancement, develop a strategy for both short-term funding and the long-term fiscal health of the Center for Asian Studies.
2. Create a proposal for an administrative reporting structure within the College of Arts & Sciences through which the Center will report to a divisional dean rather than the Associate Dean for Research.
3. Formalize written policies and procedures for:
  - a. Mentorship expectations for affiliated faculty
  - b. Staff evaluations and professional development
  - c. Student and faculty input processes specific to CAS event programming (and associated assessments)
4. Establish a structured strategic planning process to engage the executive committee, affiliated faculty, and other relevant campus partners in regular planning cycles that include:
  - a. Assessment of progress toward funding goals and learning outcomes
  - b. Evaluation of staffing, research themes, and public engagement initiatives
  - c. Updates to governance structures, bylaws, and other governing policies and procedures as needed
5. Increase documentation and continuity planning by creating and maintaining a centralized internal resource library (e.g., procedures, grant timelines, reporting, and repositories) to support continuity across leadership transitions and grant cycles.

## To the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences:

6. Organize a task force to assist the unit in developing a strategy for both short-term funding and the long-term fiscal health of the Center for Asian Studies.
7. Secure salary for the executive director, convert the event coordinator into a General Fund-supported line, and reaffirm the faculty associate director role, in recognition of their essential roles in teaching, grant and fund-raising management and interdisciplinary support.
8. Collaborate with departments and the provost's office to identify and create opportunities for joint and cluster hires, or affiliated positions in thematic areas relevant to CAS's mission (e.g., migration, environmental justice, decolonial studies).
9. Place the administrative reporting line of the Center under the dean or a dean of division rather than the Associate Dean for Research, in recognition of the need for a unit with academic offerings to report to an academic dean. Consider the factors outlined in the Center's proposal for a new reporting structure.



10. In coordination with the dean of the Arts & Humanities, consider a consolidated departmental/administrative structure for languages or groups of languages, including those taught by the Center for Asian Studies, that would allow for consolidated administrative support while also retaining successful degree programs and minors and maintaining strategic strengths in discrete areas of research, scholarship, and pedagogical excellence.

11. Support the deans of the divisions of A&S in exploring creating shared administrative support services for certain key functions for which individual units, especially smaller units, may not have staff personnel, e.g., graduate student administrative support, event support, budget and finance support, etc.

### To the Dean of the Arts and Humanities:

12. In coordination with the dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, consider a consolidated departmental/administrative structure for languages or groups of languages, including those taught by the Center for Asian Studies, that would allow for consolidated administrative support while also retaining successful degree programs and minors and maintaining strategic strengths in discrete areas of research, scholarship, and pedagogical excellence.

### To the Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Institutes:

13. Support the Center for Asian Studies on needs for federal grant administration, including:
- a. Training for center staff on federal compliance
  - b. Templates and systems for NRC and other large federal grant tracking
  - c. A designated liaison (e.g., industry & foundation relations) for CAS as an interdisciplinary center with a track record for significant grants

### To the Provost:

14. Champion the visibility and mission of the Center for Asian Studies by:
- a. Promoting CAS's interdisciplinary model as an example of 21st-century area studies that bridge teaching, research, and public scholarship
  - b. Positioning CAS within campus global affairs initiatives
  - c. Leveraging CAS's track record in obtaining significant grants and other funding in campus branding and fundraising efforts

## Required Follow-up

The director of the Center for Asian Studies shall submit two follow-up reports—one due on the first of April 2027 and one due on the first of April 2029. The follow-up reports shall focus on the implementation of the recommendations from ARPAC detailed herein. The dean of Arts and Humanities and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as the provost and other relevant central campus leadership will also respond to all outstanding matters under their purview arising from this review year's recommendations. The dean of Arts and Humanities and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences will submit one follow-up report due on May 1, 2028, while the provost and relevant central campus leaders will submit one follow-up report due on June 1, 2030.