



# University of Colorado **Boulder**

2020 Program Review

Department of Ethnic Studies

Academic Review and Planning  
Advisory Committee Report

Approved

DocuSigned by:

*Russell Moore*

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Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs | Date

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# Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC)

Alaa Ahmed, Associate Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering

Alison Boardman, Associate Professor, School of Education

Barbara Battenfield, Professor, Department of Geography

Paul Campos, Professor, University of Colorado School of Law

Gerardo Gutierrez, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology

Andrew Johnson, Associate Professor, University Libraries

Pui Fong Kan, Associate Professor, Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences

Austin Okigbo, Associate Professor, College of Music

Judith Packer, Professor, Department of Mathematics

Kathleen Ryan, Associate Professor, Department of Journalism

Hanna Rose Shell, Associate Professor, Department of Art and Art History

Tamara Sumner, Professor, Institute of Cognitive Science

Michael Stutzer, Professor, Leeds School of Business

Paul Youngquist, Professor, Department of English

Academic year 2020-21  
voting members

Non-voting members

Bob Boswell, Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement and Professor of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology

Katherine Eggert, Senior Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning and Assessment and Professor of English

Mary Kraus, Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education and Professor of Geological Sciences

Michele Moses, Vice Provost and Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs and Professor of Education

Ann Schmiesing, Executive Vice Provost for Academic Resource Management and Professor of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures

Scott Adler, Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of Political Science

Staff

Ka Yong Wolff, Office of Faculty Affairs

Emmanuel Melgoza Alfaro, Office of Faculty Affairs

## Process Overview

The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) review of the Department of Ethnic Studies (ETHN) was conducted in accordance with the 2020 program review guidelines. Self-study responses were prepared by the unit and checked by an internal review committee composed of two University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) faculty members outside of the unit. The internal reviewers submitted a summary of findings derived from the self-study and from interviews and/or surveys with faculty, staff, and student unit members. An external review committee, consisting of two experts from outside of CU Boulder, submitted a report based upon review of relevant documents and interviews with faculty, staff, and student unit members and university administrators. Owing to the COVID-19 emergency, ARPAC staff facilitated the external review as a remote visit over March 19 and 20, 2020, using web conferencing tools. Internal and external reviewer comments and recommendations are shared when relevant throughout this report.

## Unit Overview

The campus' standardized description of the Department of Ethnic Studies is available on the website of the [Office of Data Analytics \(ODA\)](#). ODA updates the profile annually in the fall semester. This report cites data posted in October 2019, reflecting the state of the Department of Ethnic Studies as of the academic year (AY) 2018-2019.

## Disciplinary Context

The Department of Ethnic Studies is a relatively new addition to CU Boulder. In 1987, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences created the Center for the Study of Ethnicity in America (CSERA), which incorporated the Black Studies Program, established in 1970, and the Chicano Studies Program, established in 1972. In the fall of 1989, the American Indian and Asian Studies programs were added to CSERA. While courses were being offered in each of these four program areas, the university had not moved to offer major or minor degrees or to create an ethnic studies department.

In the spring of 1994, CU Boulder students led a number of demonstrations demanding the creation of an undergraduate major and minor in ethnic studies, the establishment of graduate

degrees, and a separation of gender and diversity core requirements. The dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the chancellor of CU Boulder, and the University of Colorado Board of Regents responded positively to their demands and the Department of Ethnic Studies was established in 1996. In 2014, the department began to confer the PhD degree in ethnic studies, making it one of only four such programs in the country, along with those in the University of California system at Berkeley, San Diego, and Riverside. (The University of Oregon's new PhD program will join this cadre in 2021.) The department defines its mission as centered on "the epistemologies, histories, and lived experiences of marginalized communities of color and indigenous nations in order to challenge and critique all forms of oppression and to advance emancipatory, self-determining futures for all people."

During its relatively short time as a department, Ethnic Studies has achieved distinction in its field. The external reviewers describe it as "a strikingly productive, dynamic, innovative, and nationally respected community of scholars."

## Research and Scholarship

Research and scholarship in the Department of Ethnic Studies combines critical attention to diversity with a commitment to social justice. External reviewers characterize it as "innovative, politically relevant, and socially valuable." Ethnic Studies is justifiably proud of its interdisciplinary research which, according to the external reviewers, includes fields as various as "African diasporic decolonial critical thought and philosophy, colonial/colonial settler violence, criminal justice, decoloniality and performance, domestic abuse, film, environmental studies, Indigenous philosophies, migration, non-Western religiosity, performance studies, queer studies, racialization and sports, refugee studies, transnational and diasporic studies." Ethnic Studies faculty members possess expertise in an impressively wide array of disciplines, not just ethnic studies but also women, gender, and sexuality studies; environmental studies; critical sports studies; critical and intersectional criminology; cultural studies; literary and film studies; border studies; and American studies—not to mention more traditional disciplines including anthropology, history, education, religious studies, and sociology.

The breadth of the faculty's expertise is matched by their publishing success for both articles and books, the latter at a rate of almost two books per faculty, with distinguished academic publishers such as Duke University Press, Oxford University Press, the University of Minnesota

Press, and New York University Press. Data derived from Academic Analytics in 2019 cited in the self-study shows the department outpacing its three peer PhD-granting programs in all categories of research productivity (i.e., articles, books, citations, and grants), except in terms of articles, where the University of California Berkeley holds a slight edge. The total number of citations by the department's faculty members far exceeds those of its peer programs, as do grant dollars per faculty member. Two of the department's faculty members have won federally funded grants, both from the National Science Foundation (NSF): a Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, and an Early Career Development Award, the latter a first for ethnic studies faculty anywhere.

Ethnic Studies stands as a program on four pillars of interdisciplinary scholarship: Africana studies, Native American and Indigenous studies, Asian American studies, and Chicana/Latina studies. In previous reviews, the department's orientation of ethnic studies' inquiry was described as comparative; the department's 2013 self-study report indicates it "remains committed to research and teaching that examines each racial and ethnic group within comparative frameworks." That focus has since shifted in its most recent self-study to emphasize "intersectionality and interdisciplinarity" in order better to "examine how race and the interrelated categories of culture, ethnicity, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, religion, dis/ability, and legal status impact the past and present lives of people locally, regionally, and globally." This shift in focus involves viewing ethnicity less in singular than in composite terms, rendering a "comparative" approach less nuanced than an "intersectional" one that forefronts relationships between race and other interrelated categories. An intersectional approach reflects the current interests of the department's energetic recent hires and aligns its research and teaching with its peer programs.

## Collaborations

The Department of Ethnic Studies practices culturally transformative scholarship, examining the ways race and related categories impact the lives of people locally, regionally, and globally. Spread among the department's four disciplinary pillars of scholarship, the department's faculty members produce interdisciplinary research that combines attention to the complex historical origins of ethnicities with progressive social agendas. The department describes the purpose of its academic inquiry in the self-study, stating: "the field of Ethnic Studies is dedicated to research that makes a difference in our diverse communities." This explains its

dedication to community-engaged scholarship and collaborations that address issues of racial justice locally.

Research in the Department of Ethnic Studies is dedicated to a large degree to advancing social justice in underserved and diverse communities. It involves extensive collaboration and community engagement that builds partnerships for research-based learning and advances the cause of social justice locally, nationally, and globally. Some of the faculty members' current research projects address critical local issues such as gentrification and racial justice in Boulder and land use in urban Indigenous communities along the Front Range. Numerous collaborations in and beyond CU demonstrate the significant impact and broad reach of such community-engaged scholarship. Collaborating with a member of the Department of History, one Ethnic Studies faculty member helped curate an exhibit called "Moments in Mexican-American History in the Southwest" at CU Boulder's Norlin Library. Two others currently collaborate with CU Boulder's Center of the American West and the Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies to improve native inclusiveness in educational programs offered at Rocky Mountain National Park. One faculty member practices community-engaged scholarship involving collaboration with migrant youth from California, El Salvador, and Madrid to understand the experience of displacement and community-making, while another faculty member works as a pro-bono researcher with the Denver Metro Domestic Fatality Review Committee and has been instrumental in seeing such committees established in all regions across Colorado. Yet another conducts long-term research in collaboration with Cherokee Nation elders funded through a National Science Foundation (NSF) Career award. One faculty member sits on the advisory committee of the Boulder County Latino History Project. Another has initiated a class involving CU undergraduates held in both women's and men's correctional facilities in conjunction with Temple University's Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program.

## Campus Context

The external review report describes the Department of Ethnic Studies as "a strikingly productive, dynamic, innovative, and nationally respected community of scholars." It emphasizes, too, the importance of its intellectual mission "to transform historically received conceptual bias that has rationalized social, cultural, economic, and political bias towards Indigenous and other 'people of color' in the U.S. and to expand knowledge for the greater good of campus and of society as a whole." Indeed, Ethnic Studies demonstrates impressive

leadership both within and beyond the university, putting into transformative practice their commitment to redressing legacies of bias against people of color.

At CU Boulder, Ethnic Studies plays a crucial role in redressing such bias and teaching its students to do the same. According to the department's website, it "provides students with a broad liberal arts education with an emphasis on critical thinking, comparative analysis, oral/written expression, and a keen understanding of social justice issues." Ethnic Studies emphasizes the social contributions and perspectives of its four pillars of inquiry and encourages its students to think critically across cultures.

The faculty and students of the department make a definitive contribution to diversity at CU Boulder and offer a sense of belonging to people of color throughout the institution. Significant diversity characterizes the department's students. The AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile documents that 58% of the department's undergraduates identify as women and 79% as Asian American, African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, or Pacific Islander, and that 100% of its graduate students identify as belonging to a "minority" population. In the predominantly white institutional setting of CU Boulder, this diversity creates both opportunities and challenges. The Department of Ethnic Studies provides a place of belonging for people of color across the CU Boulder campus, but reportedly proves vulnerable to institutional appropriation of faculty time and expertise in the name of diversity.

The department's contributions to the campus include significant cross-disciplinary curricular and course offerings to non-majors. The department offers a concurrent bachelor's and master's (BA/MA) degree program in ethnic studies and education with the School of Education. It also offers two certificates, one recently introduced in 2018 for undergraduates in the area of critical sports studies and another for graduate students in comparative ethnic studies. Undergraduate courses show a steady growth in popularity; the total number of student credit hours taught by the department in the last five years increased 30%, according to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile. Non-majors generate 83% of those student credit hours, demonstrating both the appeal and importance of the Ethnic Studies curriculum to CU Boulder students. Because a large number of ethnic studies courses fulfill diversity requirements in both the humanities and social sciences, these enrollments seem sustainable. The undergraduate certificate in critical sports studies has seen immense success, with student numbers in its introductory course increasing from 90 in fall 2016 to 150 in spring 2019.



Related areas of inquiry such as Hip-Hop Studies and Social Justice Studies remain perennially popular (introductory courses are capped at 150 students and always see waiting lists), as do specific courses such as “Violence Against Women and Girls” and “Race, Gender, Class, and Crime”, which are cross-listed with the Women and Gender Studies and Sociology departments, respectively.

## Faculty and Research Personnel

According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, the department employs 10 tenured and tenure-track faculty members, and one lecturer. The profile counts no instructors. The unit’s self-study provides a different snapshot, stating that in fall 2019 the unit comprised 13.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) tenure-stream faculty members. The discrepancy is accounted for by the self-study, however, which describes how a number of these individuals are rostered partly or fully in other units, including two as associate deans in the College of Arts and Sciences, one as the director of the Center of Humanities and the Arts, and one on a joint appointment with the Department of Cinema Studies and Moving Image Arts, leaving only 10.5 full-time equivalent tenure-stream faculty lines as fully active within the department.

Five faculty members have left the department since the last review. These losses have been offset by two targets of opportunity hires, two tenure line transfers from the Department of Sociology, and one full professor hire. A new assistant professor, hired as the result of a Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellowship for Diversity Program, began their appointment in fall 2020.

The self-study and the external reviewers both express an urgent need to hire tenure-track faculty in two of Ethnic Studies’ four emphasis areas, Africana studies and Native and Indigenous studies, as well as one full-time rostered instructor to assist with teaching courses for the critical sports studies certificate program.

Per the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, faculty salaries approximate the Association of American Universities’ (AAU) averages for assistant and associate professors (98% and 101% respectively), but full professor salaries lag significantly (76%).

## Staff

According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, the department employs one classified staff member and five hourly student employees. By contrast, the self-study counts two classified staff members: an Administrative Assistant III and a Program Assistant II. It describes the department's current need as equal to at least a half-time staff line (specifically, another Administrative Assistant III), and notes that this "additional position would be responsible for carrying out the various administrative duties that have been displaced by the graduate program administration duties that the [two current staff members] have necessarily taken on."

The external reviewers endorse increasing the department's administrative support, specifically for the critical sports studies certificate program.

## Undergraduate Education

Ethnic Studies offers a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree and a minor in ethnic studies, a certificate in critical sports studies, and a bachelor's-accelerated master's (BAM) program in ethnic studies and education. The critical sports studies certificate became available in 2019, partly as a result of increasing demand for ETHN 3024, Introduction to Critical Sports Studies. According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, in the fall of 2018, the department enrolled 81 majors and 56 minors, awarding 13 bachelor's degrees in 2018-2019. The department intends to increase the numbers of its majors but expresses frustration in the self-study that the Eurocentric bias of typical high school social studies curricula decreases undergraduates' awareness of the discipline and discourages students from committing to the major early.

The department taught 5,695 undergraduate student credit hours during AY 2018-2019, representing a 30% increase over five years. As previously mentioned, enrollments by non-majors account for 83% of the total. Tenure-stream faculty members delivered 52% of these credit hours, instructors 4%, graduate part-time instructors and teaching assistants 36%, and lecturers 7%.

Ethnic Studies faculty members have chaired 20 honors theses since 2014, and 8% of its majors graduated with honors in 2019. Nine of its students have received Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) funding since 2014. Noting the department's

accomplishments, the internal reviewers urge the department to go even further to cultivate a culture of undergraduate research.

Working with the Office of Data Analytics (ODA), the department has started to develop program and course learning outcomes based on CU Boulder's baccalaureate learning goals and domains. The department plans to begin student progress assessments in three courses: ETHN 2001, Foundations of Ethnic Studies; ETHN 3501, Theory, Methods, and Writing in Ethnic Studies; and ETHN 4951, Senior Seminar in Ethnic Studies. The self-study indicates that faculty members are discussing ways to improve assessment based on initial data returned from these courses and to broaden assessment strategies beginning in spring 2020.

Overall, the department's undergraduates appear highly satisfied with their educational experience, returning a 96% positive response in a spring 2016 senior survey administered by ODA to questions concerning the major as a whole and course effectiveness. The January 2020 undergraduate student survey conducted by the internal reviewers confirms this response, with 95% of respondents attesting to being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the Department of Ethnic Studies. It receives high marks, too, for its inclusivity (92.5% positive). Satisfaction with academic advising slips to 77.5%, and reaches a low with scholarship and research support (at 37.5% and 34%, respectively). Responses from the student survey suggests that Ethnic Studies could do more to promote undergraduate research. A significant share of respondents, 87.5%, reports never having worked with faculty on a UROP grant, although the self-study notes that nine undergraduates have received UROP funding since 2014.

## Graduate Education

As noted, the department offers a master's degree awarded in conjunction with the School of Education through its concurrent five-year BA/MA program in ethnic studies and education. The department also offers a graduate certificate in comparative ethnic studies that provides specialized training for students across disciplines.

In 2014, the Department of Ethnic Studies inaugurated its PhD program in comparative ethnic studies. According to the AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile, the program has an enrollment of 14 students, with two having defended their dissertation in 2019. This tally aligns closely with the

unit's enrollment goals of "15 doctoral students at any one time," according to the self-study. The graduate program in Ethnic Studies attracts a wide range of diverse students whose training prepares them primarily for academic job placements. Because they serve as teaching assistants in large lecture courses, undergraduates benefit from their cutting-edge knowledge in their fields of specialty.

Nevertheless, funding for the doctoral program remains modest. Until recently, the department could offer only six permanent four-year teaching assistantships. Several students accepted admission offers with no funding. According to the self-study, the department has "been able to secure funding for these students through the Program [for] Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) and Continuing Education." The number of teaching assistantships now stands at 12.5 five-year lines, allowing the program to resume admitting students after a year's hiatus in AY 2018-2019. The self-study argues that better funding would yield the ability to recruit top students seeking admission to peer programs.

The extent of the department's professionalization efforts appears defined by a single "pro-gram" for incoming graduate students. It remains unclear whether Ethnic Studies formally tracks PhD placements, but it's a new program that has produced few to track. The self-study does note, however, that two PhD students finished the degree and accepted temporary positions, one as a visiting assistant professor at Ft. Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, and the other as a CU Boulder Ethnic Studies instructor.

Neither the website nor the self-study mentions graduate student organizations, but the self-study notes that "a graduate student representative (elected by graduate students) ... attends [Ethnic Studies'] monthly faculty meetings and serves on the graduate committee." Although the self-study does not address the question of graduate seminar assessment, the internal reviewers recommend adding a practicum course to the graduate curriculum.

Graduate student satisfaction with the PhD program runs high in some respects. The Campus and Workplace Culture (CWC) Survey administered by ODA in the fall of 2019 found that most of the department's graduate students feel welcome, respected, and valued. The graduate students treat each other and each other's work with high regard, and they appreciate devoted faculty mentoring. More than three-quarters (78%) of ETHN graduate students do not, however, feel so welcome at CU Boulder more generally. Many report experiencing negative

treatment in regard to their identity, a circumstance also noted by the external reviewers. Two-thirds (67%) of the graduate students would not attend CU if they could make their choice over again.

The January 2020 graduate student survey conducted by the internal reviewers reveals respectable satisfaction with the relatively new PhD program. The number of respondents was small (only nine), but six attest to being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the department’s graduate program. That leaves a third of respondents dissatisfied, however. While funding remains an area of consistent disappointment, some graduate students feel that undergraduate education is a higher priority than graduate education in Ethnic Studies. Two-thirds of respondents express dissatisfaction with the availability of courses that “provide a theoretical foundation” for advanced study in the field. The great majority of students in the program indicate that the department “encourages a culture that is inclusive and respectful of diversity,” but one respondent strongly disagrees. Open-ended comments in the survey confirm the sense that many graduate students do not find CU Boulder a welcoming institution for people of color.

## Budget

Ethnic Studies receives a continuing payroll budget from the College of Arts and Sciences that covers faculty and staff salaries, plus a continuing allocation for a small number of teaching assistant and graduate part-time instructor positions from a mix of permanent and temporary funds. Funds for operating expenses are determined by a standard algorithm used by the college. Ethnic Studies controls four scholarships to support undergraduate research and an endowment for undergraduate and graduate research that will become active upon the donor’s death.

## Space and Infrastructure

Ethnic Studies is housed in the Ketchum Building, and the department anticipates the need for three additional permanent faculty offices in the building to accommodate recent hires. It argues that the proximity of these offices would allow the department to continue its community building efforts and provide “a sense of spatial coherence for the faculty and the department.” According to the self-study, two senior faculty members currently share offices

with others, which it says, “is not an ideal situation.” The report does not indicate how the extensive 2015 Ketchum Building renovation affects departmental life.

## Governance

The department updated and approved its bylaws in November 2018. The chair serves as the executive officer, and two associate chairs oversee the undergraduate and graduate programs, respectively. Ethnic Studies’ standing committees include an executive committee, a graduate committee, and a curriculum committee. The bylaws describe faculty member voting rights, which are held only by tenure-stream and full-time instructor-rank faculty members. The department’s faculty members meet monthly, participate in an annual full- or half-day retreat, and make decisions by simple majority vote of faculty present. The chair must approve proxy or absentee votes in advance. The bylaws also outline procedures governing new faculty recruitment and hiring, and faculty and student grievances. The department’s policies on merit evaluation and criteria for reappointment, tenure, and promotion are separate from its bylaws, and are posted on the department’s website.

## Inclusive Excellence

The AY 2018-2019 ODA unit profile reports that 46% of the department’s faculty members identify as women, 92% as belonging to a minority population (i.e., Asian American, African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander), and 77% as belonging to an underrepresented minority population (i.e., African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander). Among undergraduate majors, 58% identify as women, 79% as belonging to a minority population, and 78% as belonging to an underrepresented minority population, reflecting an 18% increase in the last category over the last five years. Similarly, 57% of its graduate students identify as women, and 100% identify as belonging to either a minority or underrepresented minority population. Taken together, the Department of Ethnic Studies is ranked first among all CU Boulder units in terms of the percentage of faculty, undergraduates, and graduate students who identify as belonging to a minority population group. The self-study, internal reviewers, and external reviewers collectively urge further hiring to maintain this distinctive diversity, particularly in the area of African American studies, where departing faculty have not been replaced. A prominent scholar in that area recently received a generous and successful retention offer.

## Unit Culture

According to the self-study, the Department of Ethnic Studies “is at the forefront of addressing student climate issues and is viewed by many underrepresented groups on campus as a crucial institutional space in which students are able to find a sense of community and belonging.” Many undergraduates enroll in Ethnic Studies courses “to be in classes where they are not numerical tokens” and where they feel able “to express [concern about the] racist micro- and macro-aggressions” they experience at CU Boulder. The external reviewers also expressed concern about “ongoing campus and local culture of subtle racist microaggression and overt racism.”

Results from the 2019 Campus and Workplace Culture (CWC) Survey administered by ODA indicate that 81% of Ethnic Studies’ faculty and staff feel welcomed, respected, and included, and that these feelings stem from a strong sense of department community. However, a split exists between the department’s local culture and the broader campus culture. Graduate student survey participants unanimously agreed that they “do not feel like a respected member of the CU community” and nearly half (44%) have seriously considered leaving CU Boulder. The sentiment is similarly held by the department’s faculty and staff members, with only about 50% feeling welcome at CU Boulder, and only 44% reporting a sense of belonging to a community that values their work. Fifty percent of responding faculty and staff members report having seriously considered leaving CU Boulder, and only 56% “report that if they had to do it over again, they would have chosen CU for their academic career.”

Such dissatisfaction reportedly arises partly from an institutional inclination to pack committees with people of color resulting in “an undue level of service on [Ethnic Studies] faculty compared to other faculty on campus.” In its self-study report, the department identifies three ways service drains its faculty members’ energy and enthusiasm: first, Ethnic Studies faculty members feel obligated to support the needs of faculty, staff, and students of color whether they are affiliates of the department or not; second, they receive disproportionate requests for external committee service; and third, they provide significant assistance in recruiting faculty of color to other departments, a contribution that typically goes unrecognized. Ethnic Studies faculty members also get selected for college or campus administrative positions, reducing their departmental activity. The internal reviewers acknowledge such problems in their recommendations to the College of Arts and Sciences for clearer communication around

administrative appointments and a formal reduction of service for assistant professors. The external reviewers also weigh in on the need for broader change, recommending to campus administrators: “Prioritize a proactive, administration-down change in campus climate of respect for all members of the university: students, staff, faculty.”



## Past Reviews

The department made a concerted effort to address all recommendations that ARPAC made in its 2013 report, demonstrating a commitment to ongoing improvement and mission enhancement.

The most urgent recommendation posed by ARPAC in 2013 asked the department to refine its strategic plan. This recommendation received direct action from the department, resulting in a plan to strengthen connections between the department's areas of concentration in Africana studies, Native American and Indigenous studies, Asian American studies, and Chicana/Latina studies and to advance its popular program in critical sports studies, yielding several new hires.

The department revised its bylaws to comply with university and campus rules. The bylaws revision, unanimously approved by the department's faculty members in November 2018, also reflected the social sciences divisional dean's input.

The department reaffirmed the importance of its graduate certificate in comparative ethnic studies as a source of student credit hours by pursuing enrollments from students in other departments. As urged, Ethnic Studies graduate students are now more actively involved with the Graduate Teacher Program, and one has served as lead teaching assistant.

ARPAC recommended attention to development opportunities too, and Ethnic Studies responded by securing two scholarships to support undergraduates and an endowment for the eventual support of graduate research. A similar recommendation to enhance funding activity in concert with the Office of Contracts and Grants yielded not only several applications to highly competitive grants, but also the happy result of an NSF Early Career award. Ethnic Studies has instituted the beginnings of a rigorous mentoring program for pre-tenure faculty and taken steps to create a culture of community-based learning and undergraduate research.

In response to an ARPAC recommendation to review the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race in America (CSERA) "to determine its future direction," Ethnic Studies concluded that it had no future as an independently funded center, putting CSERA to rest in favor of establishing the newly planned Center for African and African American Studies.

Overall, the department is to be commended for its scrupulous attention to previous ARPAC recommendations and its ongoing evolution toward becoming a nationally distinguished and locally exemplary department.

## Analysis

ARPAC admires the commitment of the Department of Ethnic Studies to advancing the university's educational and research mission as well as its dedication to improving climate and culture for people of color at CU Boulder. The reports of the internal and external reviewers commend the excellence of the department's faculty as both researchers and teachers, and the self-study richly documents those claims. The faculty's work promises to produce transformative effects at CU Boulder and beyond. In the words of the external reviewers, "Today, and with increasing urgency, the pedagogical work of educating the nation's and globe's citizenry and leadership of tomorrow must involve the interdisciplinary, comparative, transnational, and diasporic work pioneered in, and central to the field of Ethnic Studies, of which [CU Boulder]'s department is a key constituent."

Measures of success appear in the increasing popularity of undergraduate courses in ethnic studies (and its certificate in critical sports studies), as well as the strength of its new PhD program, which awarded its first two doctoral degrees in 2019. In recent surveys, undergraduates and graduate students expressed high levels of satisfaction with both the education they receive in Ethnic Studies and the department's welcoming climate, which creates a sense of belonging and space of safety for people of color at CU Boulder.

Undergraduates demonstrate less enthusiasm for the career preparation they receive while attending the university, and graduate students report, in the words of the self-study, "a deeply impoverished sense of welcome, community, and respect at CU Boulder," with many complaining of negative treatment they experience on the basis of identity. The department's faculty evince a similar split in satisfaction with the department and with CU Boulder as an institution. Both graduate students and faculty confess seriously considering leaving CU Boulder for more congenial universities. Given the engaged nature of their teaching and research—their national and global vocation to challenge legacies of privilege in the name of racial justice—this split between departmental and campus climates poses a serious challenge to the university. While primary responsibility for addressing this challenge rests with college and university leadership, ARPAC believes that the Department of Ethnic Studies possesses crucial resources and tools that can prove helpful in the ongoing effort to change campus climate and culture. Great care must therefore be taken not to impose undue service burdens on its faculty members. Two currently serve as associate deans, and others receive frequent

invitations to populate committees outside the department, opportunities that can turn especially onerous for untenured faculty.

In the midst of such challenges, the future of the department nevertheless appears bright. Its undergraduate major and minor are flourishing, its PhD program is bearing fruit, and the research of its energetic faculty matches or surpasses the output of peer departments. As it moves forward, the Department of Ethnic Studies might consider enhancing opportunities for online pedagogy and digital humanities research of the sort that recent events have made so central to the mission of higher education as well as taking all possible steps to place its doctoral graduates in tenure-track or non-academic jobs.

### Strategic Vision and Planning

The Department of Ethnic Studies envisions a robust future that includes advancing its research and teaching strengths across its core areas (Africana studies, Native American and Indigenous studies, Asian American studies, and Chicana/Latina studies), increased numbers of undergraduate majors, and the successful training of PhD students. The department appears to hinge its success on strategic hiring and the recent implementation of a 2:1 teaching load.

Although Ethnic Studies is right to emphasize the importance of hiring as a strategic priority, ARPAC encourages the department to imagine the future from a broader foundation. The “goals” described by the current plan simply enumerate desirable resources (such as increasing faculty size to align with peer programs at around 20 faculty members). The recent formalization of a 2:1 teaching load appears to remove an overly burdensome teaching load as a motivation for seeking more hires. Both the internal and external reviewers concur with the urgency of replacement hiring in Africana studies and Native and Indigenous studies, and the case for an instructor to assist with critical sports studies certificate program seems compelling, given the growing popularity and saliency of the field. ARPAC encourages the department to develop a plan for mentoring instructors as they hire more.

The department’s strategic plan should also include concrete suggestions for shaping the department’s future. These might include a vision for curricular innovations, including for the Center for African and African American Studies that creates opportunities for collaboration

between Ethnic Studies and other CU Boulder programs; a proposal for protecting faculty members from undue service; and a strategy for preparing PhD students for placement in non-academic as well as academic jobs. ARPAC looks forward to learning more about the department's proposed future organization and anticipated activities.

## Undergraduate Education

The undergraduate program appears to be flourishing, thanks in part to a new minor in ethnic studies and the creation of a critical sports studies certificate. In the last five years, the number of undergraduate majors and minors have increased 14% and 60%, respectively. The department also does a considerable amount of teaching to non-majors (accounting for 83% of all undergraduate student credit hours). It would seem that there is an opportunity here to recruit more undergraduates if students could recognize potential career pathways in ethnic studies. But it's not clear that the department provides much in the way of professionalization, career counseling, or job search preparation beyond its website's "careers" page. It might do so by partnering with Career Services. Although 82% of respondents to a spring 2016 senior survey rated their ethnic studies courses as "effective" in preparing them for employment or graduate school, it is not apparent from the self-study that the department tracks its majors after graduation. The report describes the development of a community-based internship class (the inaugural course to be offered in the spring of 2020) as a pathway for future jobs.

The department plans to establish an active learning program called Ethnic Studies Circles for Active Learning and Research (ESCALAR), as well as to pursue plans for flipped classrooms, experiential learning, and course redesigns. ARPAC applauds these plans. The self-study expresses frustration with attracting more undergraduates to the Ethnic Studies major, saying that a Eurocentric bias in high school social studies curricula contributes to the problem. To counteract this perceived bias, the department might consider partnering with the Boulder or Denver public school systems to build programs that could attract local students, including students of color, to the Ethnic Studies major.

ARPAC stresses, however, that to recognize and encourage faculty work with a community engagement component, the department, the college, and the university must define whether such activities (if merited) may be credited in whole or in part as teaching or research, rather than simply service and outreach—not only for purposes of annual merit review, but also for

purposes of faculty reappointment, tenure, and promotion review. The department has taken some steps in this direction in its proposals for recognizing ESCALAR engagement as teaching in its annual merit review (noted in the Merit Evaluation Guidelines document appended in the self-study), and in a statement in its reappointment, tenure, and promotion policy that “[f]unded community engagement that has scholarship as part of the engagement will also be considered as evidence of research productivity.” ARPAC encourages the department to clarify how community engagement may, in appropriate cases, be credited as research or teaching, and to clarify in its policies and procedures how such determinations may be a part of both annual merit review and reappointment, tenure, and promotion review. ARPAC also urges the college to assist with this clarification and to support the implementation of policies and procedures that parse various aspects of community engagement as constituting faculty achievement in teaching or research, when appropriate.

Another possible avenue for attracting students into the major is via the Program in Exploratory Studies (PES). The program’s first-year seminars tackle interdisciplinary, thought-provoking topics, and this approach would appear to align with the department’s mission to train “students to think and research... in transdisciplinary and intersectional ways.” Exploring a closer partnership with PES might prove mutually beneficial, especially if it leads to more course offerings on salient topics.

ARPAC commends the department for its educational successes and supports its request to hire an instructor for the critical sports studies certificate program. Impressive, too, is the department’s dedication to undergraduate research, as evidenced by the high number of students pursuing honors and opportunities in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP). The fact that a large majority of undergraduates report having no opportunity to work with faculty on research projects indicates the potential for more growth in this area.

## Graduate Education

Another great success is the new Ethnic Studies PhD program. ARPAC is impressed by the program’s ability to attract top students. In order to remain attractive to prospective students, the department needs to offer competitive funding packages, and ARPAC supports the department’s appeal to the College of Arts and Sciences for more teaching assistantships, especially given that undergraduate enrollments seem to indicate a need for more instructional

support. ARPAC also celebrates the program's first PhD placements. However, the committee asks, does the department have an actionable plan to help its graduates secure employment, whether in academe or elsewhere?

## Budget

Ethnic Studies derives most of its funding from the university general fund. ARPAC also recognizes the importance of securing external support for scholarships such as those recently funded by a donor. The committee encourages Ethnic Studies to develop a plan to solicit further external funds.

## Space, Infrastructure, and Support Needs

The department's space needs are modest. Securing offices for new faculty hires seems a reasonable aspiration, as does the desire to place faculty who share spaces now in their own offices.

## Inclusive Excellence

Ethnic Studies serves as a model of inclusive excellence among faculty, students, and staff. It rightly prides itself on providing people of color a space of safety in an institutional setting that has witnessed overt acts of racist hostility. Concern exists that its exemplary diversity makes Ethnic Studies vulnerable to undue demands placed upon its faculty for service beyond their department. This concern is explored in the analysis below.

## Unit Culture

While morale within Ethnic Studies appears good, the feeling of belonging and safety shared by its students, faculty, and staff vanishes in spaces outside of the department. ARPAC respects Ethnic Studies' conviction that making the campus at-large more inclusive and diverse is not its responsibility. The committee also feels, however, that department, college, and university administrators alike would welcome suggestions about how university leaders might advance significant and lasting change to an institutional culture that tolerates, even if it does not openly condone, hostility toward people of color. These changes must occur at the university level, and university administrators must be held accountable for their implementation. ARPAC believes that the CU Boulder Inclusion, Diversity, and Excellence in

Academics (IDEA) Plan, if successfully implemented, might yield a greater sense of belonging, respect, and community. It is clear that Ethnic Studies has a large role to play in advancing this initiative, and ARPAC hopes that Ethnic Studies faculty members' service in this regard will be recognized as significant contributions to the university and will be less of a burden on faculty now that the 2:1 teaching load has been implemented.

ARPAC notes the discrepancy that exists between the positive experiences of a workplace culture within the department, that reflects a sense of belonging and respect, and those experiences outside, which are more fraught. That almost half of all Ethnic Studies graduate students second-guess their decision to attend CU Boulder, and that some faculty are considering employment elsewhere, are causes for concern and action. Among the department's faculty members, undue service burdens beyond Ethnic Studies have also become an understandable source of dissatisfaction. Much remains to be done at the college and university levels to address feelings that CU Boulder remains uncongenial to faculty, staff, and students of color.



# Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) address the following recommendations to the Department of Ethnic Studies and to the offices of responsible administrators. ARPAC notes that some of its recommendations require resources, and the committee wishes to acknowledge that this report is being written during the COVID-19 pandemic when CU Boulder's financial outlook is uncertain. Committee members understand that recommendations requiring monetary resources might not be actionable in the near term. However, it is a part of ARPAC's responsibility to record these recommendations in its report in order to describe and document the department's needs at the point of its 2020 academic review.

## To the Unit:

1. Develop a strategic plan that:
  - a. Clarifies changes in mission and focus based on the department's determination of its disciplinary niche;
  - b. Suggests plans for ongoing discussions about the department's place in the field relative to peer programs;
  - c. Addresses concerns central to the department's future such as advancing research and enhancing teaching as they relate to and builds upon the department's renewed mission and relative standing to other peer programs; and
  - d. Updates measures of success for innovative teaching and research.
2. Develop a strategic hiring proposal for new tenure-stream faculty members who specialize in Africana studies and Native American and Indigenous studies. Consider putting forward such a proposal via the Faculty Diversity Action Plan (FDAP).
3. Develop a strategic hiring proposal for a full-time instructor to assist in the critical sports studies certificate program. Establish and formalize a mentoring program for instructors as support for the proposal and as a recruitment incentive.
4. Address undue faculty service burdens with an actionable plan.

5. Produce a clear itinerary for establishing the Center for African and African American Studies and for defining its relationship to the department and to the rest of the university. Advocate for significant space and infrastructure for the center, given its student-centric and community-focused vision.
6. Partner with the Program in Exploratory Studies to create first-year courses emphasizing interdisciplinarity in order to increase students' early exposure to the field of ethnic studies and to attract more students to the major and minor in the early stages of their college careers.
7. Increase career counseling for undergraduate students and partner with Career Services to identify job placement strategies.
8. Enhance opportunities for undergraduates to conduct research in close collaboration with faculty, especially through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP).
9. Create a formal mechanism for tracking the placement of graduate students in academic and non-academic jobs.
10. Define a timeline for establishing the Ethnic Studies Circles for Active Learning and Research (ESCALAR) program and other proposed teaching innovations.
11. Building on current work with local public high schools, consider partnering with Boulder or Denver public schools to create programs that address Eurocentric bias in social studies curricula and cultivate interest in Ethnic Studies at CU Boulder.
12. Create a statement in the department's policy on reappointment, tenure, and promotion regarding appropriately crediting a faculty member's community engagement work as teaching, when merited. This statement should parallel the policy language that "funded community engagement that has scholarship as part of the engagement will also be considered as evidence of research productivity." Similarly, clarify in the department's annual merit review procedures how community engagement might be credited as teaching or research work, when merited.

13. Secure adequate office space for all faculty.

## To the Divisional Dean for Social Sciences and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences:

14. Support the creation of the Center for African and African American Studies as a cross-campus initiative and advocate for adequate space to fulfill its student-centric and community-focused vision.

15. Consider the department's proposals for hiring two additional tenure-stream faculty members and one additional instructor.

16. Work with the Department of Ethnic Studies in creating and implementing a plan for reducing undue service burdens among the department's faculty members.

17. Work with the department to clarify its annual merit and its reappointment, promotion, and tenure policies and procedures regarding appropriately crediting a faculty member's community engagement work as teaching or research, when merited. Support the implementation of these policies and procedures.

18. Create a concrete plan and timeline to mitigate both open and covert hostility toward people of color at CU Boulder.

19. Acknowledge the contribution that the Department of Ethnic Studies makes to diversity at CU Boulder and develop an actionable plan for addressing the sense of qualified belonging among the department's faculty, students, and staff.

## To the Dean of the Graduate School and the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation:

20. Support the creation of the Center for African and African American Studies as a cross-campus initiative.

## To the Provost:

21. Support the creation of the Center for African and African American Studies as a cross-campus initiative.
22. Support the college's initiatives and lead campus initiatives to mitigate both open and covert hostility toward people of color at CU Boulder.
23. Support the college's initiatives and lead campus initiatives to improve the sense of belonging among faculty, students, and staff of color with the broader institution.

## Required Follow-Up

The chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies shall report annually on the first of April for a period of three years following the year of the receipt of this report (i.e., April 1st of 2022, 2023, and 2024) to the divisional dean for social sciences and the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the provost on the implementation of these recommendations. Likewise, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences shall report annually on the first of May to the provost on the implementation of recommendations addressed to the program.