

External Review Report of the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies

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External Review Committee

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Executive Summary:

The Pacific and Asian Studies (PAAS) department stands at a critical juncture, facing both significant opportunities and challenges. The department demonstrates strong potential through its interdisciplinary approach and faculty expertise but confronts enrolment declines and resource constraints. Key findings indicate that while PAAS has successfully integrated cultural studies with traditional language programs, it needs to address declining international student enrolment, particularly from China, and strengthen its institutional positioning within the university.

The department's relationship with the Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives (CAPI) offers promising opportunities for growth and student career development. However, administrative barriers, particularly in course cross-listing and resource allocation, need to be addressed. The implementation of a new performance-based budget model adds urgency to resolving these challenges.

Recommendations

1. Grow enrolments and increase efficiency of teaching complement.
2. Develop FTE (and interim, where necessary) coverage for areas of research and teaching strength.
3. Raise the profile of the Department across campus.
4. Establish a structured mentorship program for PAAS faculty members with clear expectations, lines of responsibility and regular reporting. Oversight of the mentorship program will be folded into the work of the Equity Committee.
5. Renew the graduate program with special attention to theoretical training, quality of instruction, cohort-building and career-development. Graduate committee will lead the renewal process. Increase collaboration across the Humanities, as well as with CAPI.