

January 24, 2017

PROFESSOR DAISUKE MIYAO, Director
Japanese Studies Program

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Program Review for the Japanese Studies Program

Dear Professor Miyao,

The Undergraduate Council discussed the Japanese Studies Program's 2016 Undergraduate Program Review. The Council supports the findings and recommendations of the review subcommittee and appreciates the thoughtful and proactive response from the Program.

The Council will conduct its follow-up review of the Program in Winter Quarter 2018. At that time, our goal is to learn about the Program's progress in implementing the recommendations of the program review subcommittee and the Undergraduate Council. We also look forward to learning more about the restructuring process and subsequent move to the Institute of Arts and Humanities. The Council extends its thanks to the Program for their engagement in this process and we look forward to the continued discussion.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey Cook, Chair
Undergraduate Council

Attachment

(1) Undergraduate Program Review Report and Response from the Japanese Studies Program

cc: C. Della Coletta
J. Rauch
R. Rodriguez
K. Roy
B. Sawrey
M. Sidney

UCSD Undergraduate Review of
Program in Japanese Studies
April 28, 2016

The Undergraduate Review Committee:

Professor Maho Niwa, Biology, UCSD, Chair

Professor Weijing Lu, History, UCSD

Professor Michelle Yeh, East Asian Languages and Cultures, UC Davis, external

A. *Brief Description and Analysis of the Program*

The Program in Japanese Studies (PJS) was last reviewed in 2008, and since then it has remained a successful program that continues to grow despite facing a number of administrative challenges. The review committee congratulates the Program Directors, Professors Turner and Tohsaku, on their continuing commitment, service, and effort. The campus-wide efforts of the UC system and UCSD to increase interdisciplinary and internationally integrated education programs and initiatives, consistent with its mission of an internationally well-rounded education, have increased the importance of and the demands for the services of the PJS.

One of the major administrative changes introduced is that the PJS is now part of the Institute of Arts and Humanities (IAH). This is a change welcomed by the PJS since they previously were without adequate administrative support, and disbursement of funds required the approval of the History Department. The dean of the IAH, Professor Cristina Coletta, was recruited to UCSD in 2014, and since then she appears to have made positive changes for the IAH participating programs, including the PJS. Importantly, despite recent declines in student enrollment in the social science departments, the number of students enrolling in the Japanese language program continues to increase, demonstrating the urgent need to maintain the PJS in high academic standing.

Overall, the PJSP affiliated faculty members displayed a sense of excitement about being part of the IAH, and the committee felt that the PJS is in good shape and on a positive trajectory. However, the committee felt that the continued expansion of the PJS requires a long overdue commitment from the University to provide financial and administrative support. It is not an overstatement to say that it is remarkable that the PJS has managed to sustain its teaching mission with high educational standards with only a volunteer staff under the direction of Professors Turner and Tohsaku.

B. *Responses to the Last Review*

The PJS received a favorable review in 2008 and has since made extensive efforts to incorporate the three major recommendations of the UGC. Despite the administrative and financial limitations of the PJS (discussed below in more detail), the PJS has at least partially implemented two of those recommendations. Specifically, there have been

effective changes in (1) balancing the number of students enrolled in TA-led sections to maintain a constant ratio of students to TAs, and (2) integrating Japanese language instruction and Japanese studies to broaden the students' learning experience about Japan and its society. These changes deviate slightly from the original reviewers' recommendations, but this committee recognizes and appreciates that the modifications were introduced after careful consideration of any potentially negative impact on the students in the PJS.

Despite considerable effort, the PJS was unable to implement the third UGC recommendation from the 2008 review. Professor Takeo Hoshi, the OJS Director at the time of the review, was preparing to initiate a survey of seniors with a major or minor in Japanese studies. Unfortunately, the survey was not conducted. Among the several possible reasons for this is the lack of administrative continuity, particularly with frequent changes in the Program Director and Coordinator. Since the last review, the PJS has had four different Program Directors and three different Program Coordinators, only one of whom is still at UCSD. Current members of the PJS, however, agree on the value of these surveys and they are optimistic that one can be started in 2016.

C. Analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Curriculum

1. General Organization

Overall, the committee was impressed by the deep commitment of all personnel of the PJS—faculty members, lecturers, and the single part-time staff member—to teaching and mentoring the undergraduate students and to furthering their general education at UCSD. Japanese is becoming one of the most popular languages taught in the US, particularly in California. For example, the Japanese language courses enroll about 500–550 students per academic year, and the PJS saw a 16% increase in enrollment in the 2015–16 Fall and Winter Quarters. This is particularly significant given the decline in recent years in the enrollment of majors and minors in social science programs. It is also noteworthy that 66% of the students taking Japanese at UCSD are STEM majors. The increasing demand for the Japanese language program is perhaps a reflection of rapid globalization, and the educational value and contribution of the PJS is expected to grow further in the coming years.

The committee recognizes and praises that the ability of the PJS to maintain a successful program in the face of significant administrative constraints, and we consider it unreasonable to rely solely on the commitment and effort of the staff without addressing the problems they face. A similar statement was made during the last site visit review in 2008, and, generally speaking, this committee senses an urgent need for positive changes. We were glad to see that a few changes have been made towards improving the situation. The PJS was originally administratively overseen by the History Department, but it became an independent member of the IAH in 2014. Members of the PJS anticipate that this structural change will allow them to seek their own budget. In

addition, the PJS hopes to seek additional funds within and outside the University. This review committee agrees that independent funding will help to further the development of course sections that incorporate learning and/or scholarly research in Japanese arts, culture, and society within the language courses. At a minimum, such funding would allow the program to make timely responses to changes in basic operational demands, such as a sudden increase in enrollment in the Japanese language program. The success and popularity among students of the third-year level “Japanese for Professional Purposes,” which incorporates some of these changes, showcases the importance of making such course changes. The committee strongly hopes that the urgent needs of the PJS will be communicated to the appropriate campus administration.

2. Instruction and Curriculum of the JSP

(1) Senate Faculty Members: The PJS includes nine affiliated faculty members who have some connection to Japan in their home departments and who teach courses in the PJS. The review committee met with four. There appears to be little opportunity in the program to gather together the affiliated faculty members, lecturers, TAs, instructors, and students, which is due partly to the set-up of the program (not unique to the PJS) and partly to the lack of financial independence. As the PJS is now part of the IAH, the review committee hopes that this will change in the near future. Providing the program members with an opportunity to interact will not only boost morale but will also stimulate exchange of ideas to benefit the program.

(2) Lecturers: Similar to other programs within the UC system, the PJS does not have FTEs. The Japanese language courses are usually taught by five full-time lecturers. The workload was carried by four lecturers during the 2015–2016 academic year, however, as one left in the spring quarter and could not be replaced in time. The language program will be back to five full-time lecturers in fall 2016, but the committee feels that this situation exemplifies a type of difficulties that the PJS is facing. The current full-time lecturers hold postgraduate degrees (PhD or MA) and seem very engaged in teaching; however, they appear to be working at their maximum capacity and there is little room to accommodate changes or disruptions such as that occurring in spring quarter. The students are clearly responding to the increasing globalization of society, and it would be a pity to discourage them due to limitations in administrative support.

In addition, there is no formal structure or mechanism for communication among lecturers about instructional issues or course assignments. Professor Tohsaku, in addition to his many other responsibilities, makes himself available to meet with the lecturers one-on-one for advice about pedagogical issues, but it will benefit the lecturers and TAs to have periodic program-wide or sub-group meetings. Having an LSOE as the coordinator will greatly facilitate this initiative (discussed below in “Major Issues”).

(3) Curriculum: The General Catalog lists 50+ content courses in humanities and social sciences in the PJS. The Japanese language courses are of very high standard. They use a textbook written by Professor Tohsaku, who also provides advice for pedagogy.

The overall program structure is based on ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and is similar to other language programs on campus. In addition, specialized and innovative courses developed by Professor Tohsaku in response to changing demands from students, thus distinguishing the PJSP from other language programs within and outside of UCSD. Since the motivation for taking Japanese courses differs widely among undergraduate students, the committee recognizes that it is not easy to meet all of their expectations, but having a program with more non-language content courses is gaining popularity.

The students who met with this review committee expressed much enthusiasm for, and satisfaction with, the courses offered by the PJS. The program has responded to such demands by offering five years of Japanese language and a year-long course of “Japanese for Professional Purposes.” This year-long course allows the students to use the Japanese they have learned. It also provides students with opportunities to learn appropriate communication skills and relevant social and cultural issues by working in Japanese professional organizations. Such training undoubtedly increases the students’ chances of getting jobs in globally connected organizations after graduating from UCSD. The committee met with one student who expressed that this course, taught by Professor Turner, was a truly eye-opening experience and he was encouraged to further pursue Japanese studies.

Additionally, the recent success of the course with research components, collaboratively designed by a new language lecturer, Izumi Takeda, and Professor Tohsaku upon incorporation of “a social networking approach to teaching Japanese,” illustrates the high academic standing of the PJS. The review committee encourages the PJS to continue to incorporate further creative changes into its curriculum the future.

(4) Administrative structure, MSO, and student advisors: Until recently, the PJS MSO was a part of the History Department administration. She works with a single PJS staff member who performs all of the administrative work, such as coordinating courses; communicating with lecturers, instructors, TAs, and students; advising undergraduate students in successfully taking the language courses; and managing the credit requirements of colleges or departments. She is committed and uses her personal time to provide students with her advice. As the PJS is now within the IAH, this situation is expected to improve once all the necessary personnel transfer is complete. However, it is unclear how much the understaffing situation will be improved without hiring a second staff member.

3. Recommendations

(1) Providing an independent budget for JSP: The JSP desperately requires and deserves its own budget. This will allow the program to: plan from year to year; respond to changes in student demands, instructional needs, and personnel; and develop new initiatives and long-term goals.

(2) Recruiting a full-time LSOE: During the previous review, the committee recommended that a mechanism be put in place to support a full-time LSOE to be the coordinator of the language program. While the PJS welcomed this suggestion, it was not enacted for administrative and budgetary reasons. This review committee strongly believes that this is a critical issue for the PJS. While Professor Tohsaku has generously volunteered service for years to help develop and oversee the language program without any compensation, both members of the PJS and this review committee feel that the situation is untenable in view of his other commitments. An LSOE with expertise in language pedagogy and experience in running a language program is essential to the long-term wellbeing of the PJS.

(3) Hiring additional language lecturers: In recent years, increasing enrollments in Japanese have not been adequately accommodated with more staffing. As a result, a language class often enrolls anywhere between 35 and 40+ students at UCSD, in comparison to 24 per class on other UC campuses. The problem negatively impacts teaching effectiveness, learning outcome, and morale. Given the educational mission and initiatives of UCSD, it is important to recruit more lecturers to accommodate students who want to learn Japanese.

(4) Forming a Japanese Studies Program Committee: This committee will consist of faculty members who teach courses and/or conduct research related to Japan across disciplines. It will strengthen the PJS by: 1) building a sense of community among its members; 2) providing leadership for developing the vision of the program as a whole and for such practical issues as curriculum and outreach; carrying more clout in representing the PJS to all levels of administration at UCSD.

(5) Organizing intra- and inter-program meetings: The review committee feels that opportunities should be created to encourage interaction between the students and PJS faculty, lecturers, TAs, and administrators. Gatherings of specific groups within the PJS, such as language instructors, will also facilitate discussions of issues associated with the curriculum, instruction, and class assignments. Such meetings will also improve informational flow between the different groups.

(6) Initiating outreach programs: The PJS has great potential for growth if it engages in outreach efforts, such as forming student clubs (e.g., Anime), starting a “Japanese Conversation” table, and creating and maintaining a website for Japanese Studies. These activities could be implemented in collaboration with other departments or programs or could be used to facilitate interactions with other units within or outside UCSD. In either case, having integrated programs will generate more interest and increase enrollment in the PJS.

(7) Generating a user-friendly PJS website: A website with links to relevant information within and outside of UCSD will enhance the program’s visibility. In the future, the website could also support an alumni site for posting information about career paths and

announcing new opportunities for currently enrolled students to extend their education beyond the classroom.

In summary, the PJS is a successfully run, vibrant program that serves both undergraduate majors and minors at UCSD. In addition, the Japanese language program provides a tremendous service to the University with an increasing student population across different disciplines is drawn to the Program. This is a remarkable accomplishment given very limited resources of the PJS. Several administrative issues stemming from the lack of an independent budget were highlighted during the previous program review but still have not been addressed. This review committee fervently hopes that moving the PJS under the umbrella of the IAH will provide some solutions to these problems and that the UCSD administration will take swift actions to ensure that this outstanding program continue to succeed and develop its full potentials.