

Report Submission - ID: 17Acad189

Author(s):

Mehrdad Kia

Unit of Analysis ID Number: 14

College/School: College of Humanities and Sciences

Title: Central and Southwest Asian Studies

Type: UG

State the mission, objectives, and primary functions of this program.: Mission: The Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program (CSWA) is the academic arm of the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Center, which was founded as a stand-alone and self-funded academic unit focusing on the history, cultures, politics, social organizations, and artistic traditions of the societies and countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus region, the Middle East and North Africa. This interdisciplinary program, which is the only BA of its kind in the United States, offers historical, anthropological, and cultural training as a basic means of understanding human societies and the varied nature of socio-economic and political conditions in lands and countries extending from western China in the east to North Africa in the west. Objectives: We want students to perceive fundamental patterns of social, economic, political, and cultural change that affect some of the most ancient societies, institutions and value systems in the world, and to improve their understanding of their own cultural heritage, of the nature and backgrounds of other contemporary civilizations, and of the historical, multicultural, and international dimensions of the human experience. The CSWA seeks to counter narrow-mindedness, provincialism, intellectual insularity, racism and ethnocentrism by offering courses that focus on the world's oldest civilizations, cultures, and political systems. Primary Functions: To provide UM students with high-value skills such as source analysis, critical reading, and expository and argumentative writing, which will enhance students' academic experience and advance student success by preparing them with valuable and sought-after skills in a shifting job market and ever-expanding global economy.

Complete the FTE Detail Excel spreadsheet using the link below.:

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Using the space below, address any issues with your FTE Detail Sheet.: Mehrdad Kia is housed academically in the Department of History.

Ardi Kia is housed academically in the Department of Anthropology.

Identify Special Program Requirements. (e.g., extended credit requirements, accreditation): CSWA requires students to complete, at minimum, a four-semester sequence (or equivalent) of language instruction in either Russian, Chinese or Arabic.

5YA/Trend of Total Faculty Personnel Costs : See charts from the departments of History and Anthropology.

5YA/Trend of Non-Faculty FTE : There are no non-faculty FTE

Communications: Event Planning

Development: Fundraising

Student Services: Academic Advising, Career Service Advising

Criteria 1. - Bullet 1.: The academic mission and the strategic objectives of the Central and Southwest Asian Studies undergraduate program align closely with the UM2020 Strategic Plan. As award-winning teachers and scholars, our faculty exemplify and embody qualities of leadership in the profession, in the classroom, in the community, and the world of humanities and social sciences beyond. The two full-time CSWA faculty members teach at all levels of the curriculum, including 100-level survey and upper-level seminars. Full-time faculty mentor students through research projects, hands-on library and archival research, and the production of high-quality scholarship. Faculty members also demonstrate their commitment to student success by providing scholarships for students participating in conferences and study abroad programs. Beyond classroom instruction, the faculty seek to cultivate students' leadership skills and engagement through participation in panel presentations at the annual CSWA conference, in research-based talks through CSWA brown bags, as well as promoting local, state, and national internship opportunities and encouraging/advising students to gain global experience through academic study abroad opportunities. With respect to sustainability and diversity, CSWA trains major and non-major students to challenge their preconceived notions of the past and present. We require students to expand their academic and personal horizons by taking courses that engage with the history, cultures, and civilizations of the non-Western world, and encourage students to pursue certificates, minors, and double majors in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

Criteria 1. - Bullet 2.:

The study of non-Western societies, cultures, histories and political systems as designed through the CSWA curriculum constitute a central component of a liberal arts education. CSWA's course offerings are positioned at the very core of the University of Montana's mission. Through its classes, CSWA also contributes to UM's General Education curriculum (Historical and Cultural Studies, Ethics and Human Values, Democracy and Citizenship, and Cultural & International Diversity).

Criteria 1. - Bullet 3.: Through the study of the cultural institutions, diverse histories, and political systems of the countries and societies of Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, CSWA faculty train students to be inquisitive, creative and curious citizens and engaged members of the global community. Our program offers a course of study that prepares UM students to live, think, and work in a diverse and rapidly changing world. A core set of distribution requirements for the major ensures that students are exposed to a variety of non-Western cultures, but there is sufficient flexibility built into the major and minor so that students can work with faculty advisers to tailor a course of study that builds on and strengthens connections with their own academic interests, fields of study, and experience. The skills we teach in our courses transcend mere memorization and the recitation of facts. Our courses emphasize critical thinking, source analysis, and effective oral and written communication – vital skills that employers prize. We concentrate on writing instruction at all levels of the CSWA curriculum and work with the Writing Center to help students hone this critical skill. CSWA students are trained, and must be prepared, to embark upon a variety of career paths. Although many graduates of our program have gone on to careers in the academy, many more go into fields in the public and private sectors that require practitioners to possess a keen understanding of the past's relationship to the present – law, journalism, teaching, business, government service.

Criteria 2. - Bullet 1.: The faculty members of the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program are involved in interdisciplinary and collaborative activity at UM and beyond in the national and international arena. The CSWA faculty work closely with students and colleagues from a variety of interdisciplinary programs and centers, including South and Southeast Asian Studies; Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center, the Defense Critical Language and Culture Program; East Asian Studies; International Development Studies; Russian Studies, Chinese Studies, Arabic Studies; Pre-Law; and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Both CSWA faculty members serve as the principal administrators and advisers for the Central & Southwest Asian Studies Center without any additional financial compensation. In addition, CSWA faculty members coordinate and contribute to campus-wide educational and training efforts, including the Community Lecture Series, the Presidents' Lecture Series, the Provost's Lecture Series, and the Defense Critical Language and Culture instructional and training programs. The CSWA faculty members have offered innovative courses for the Davidson Honors College, the Global Leadership Initiative, and the Montana Osher Lifelong Learning Institute where their courses have attracted hundreds of students. They also serve on advisory boards; foster student research and engagement at the UM Conference for Undergraduate Research; and engage in cross-disciplinary teaching and research by serving as graduate committee members and offering guest lectures in numerous departments and schools across campus.

Criteria 2. - Bullet 2.: Because the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program works closely with a large number of academic and non-academic programs and offices at UM, our impact can be felt throughout the campus. The results of any reduction in the program, which is confined to two faculty members, would be irreparable and truly destructive for many other departments and programs. For example, CSWA faculty members provide crucial instruction and training for the Defense Critical Language and Culture Program, which relies heavily on our faculty and their expertise to fulfill its instructional and training obligations to the federal government. Another example is that our classes serve as the recruiting ground for several language programs at UM. The gateway CSWA course, The Silk Road, serves as one of the recruiting pools for students who will eventually take classes in Chinese language and literature, while many who enroll in the Arabic Language and Culture courses receive their first impetus for a language class through our two-semester class on Islamic Civilization. Based on our participation over the past five years, a partial list of other potentially affected programs and departments are; Department of Anthropology; Department of Geography; Department of History; Department of Modern & Classical Languages and Literatures; Department of Political Science; Global Humanities and Religions; Alexander Blewett III School of Law; Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library; Russian Studies Program; Arabic Studies Minor; Chinese Studies Minor; and East Asian Studies Program.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 1.: The faculty members of the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program produce high-quality research-based scholarship that has made original contributions to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the societies and countries of Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. The program prides itself on one of the highest research outputs at UM. Since its inception, the faculty members of the CSWA have published nine books and twelve articles and book reviews in their respective fields. Some of these books have won national awards, while others have been translated into other languages. Unit standards in both the departments of anthropology and history, where our tenures are located, require publication of books and at least four articles and/or essays in peer-reviewed journals or anthologies for awarding of tenure and promotion to associate professor, and then again to full professor. These standards emphasize peer-reviewed scholarship and monographs, and faculty are required to be engaged in ongoing research. In 2015, and again in 2017, our external program reviewers praised the quality, as well as the quantity of scholarly work by CSWA faculty. These evaluators were also surprised to discover the extensive research and publication collaboration that the CSWA faculty members enjoy with colleagues in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the United States. These collaborations have resulted into joint publications with scholars from Moscow State University, Russian Academy of Sciences, Georgetown University, George Washington University, Rutgers University, Bradley University, Kent State University, the University of Texas, and the University of Utah.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 2.: The Central and southwest Asian Studies has an extensive and accomplished service and outreach record. The program prides itself on organizing a major international conference each year for the past fifteen years in April. These conferences, which have been funded exclusively by external grants and private contributions, have brought numerous diplomats, politicians, ambassadors, analysts, journalists, writers, artists, musicians, and archeologists to UM. The department also organizes regular monthly brown bag presentations by UM and non-UM scholars. The CSWA faculty also provide cultural and linguistic training for the members of the Montana National Guard, United States Navy Seals, and United States Special Forces. We also participate in numerous conferences, seminars, workshops, training programs, and radio and television interviews. In the past five years, the CSWA faculty have delivered more than 100 public talks and lectures. CSWA evaluates its service and outreach according to the quality, impact, and public support of its efforts. We expect faculty to engage in continuous service to the program, the university, and the profession. The CSWA faculty have served on various university and college committees, including Faculty Senate, Graduate Council, University Research and Creativity, and International and Global Studies.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 3.: The CSWA is distinguished by both the quantity and quality of its classroom instruction. This is reflected in the series of teaching awards won by its faculty members, which constitutes one of UM's most distinguished and consistent records of teaching awards, including the Carnegie United States Professor of the Year, UM Distinguished Teaching Award, Most Inspirational Teacher of the Year, the Missoulian's Missoula's Best Professor, and the Missoula Independent's Best UM Professor. In recent years, both CSWA faculty members have taught MOLLI courses to hundreds of Montanans. In the latest MOLLI class taught by the CSWA director, over 300 students enrolled. To help support undergraduate students, the CSWA Program offers several scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$1,000. Unlike most academic units at the University, CSWA has never relied on adjunct faculty to staff its introductory or upper-level course offerings. Every semester, the program offers its gateway course, The Silk Road, as well as one of the 200 level survey courses on Islamic Civilization, which is taught by the program's director.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 1.: According to the surveys of CSWA's alumni network, the career outcomes for CSWA undergraduates have been most impressive. CSWA graduates have been employed in foreign service (i.e., the U.S. Department of State), the United Nations, law, journalism, business, and other fields that value the skills they have acquired in our program.

Two external reviews conducted in 2015 and 2017, found clear evidence that the CSWA is delivering an outstanding interdisciplinary curriculum, teaching students from a variety of backgrounds and intellectual interests the science of historical investigation, and maintaining the highest curricular standards comparable to the most prestigious academic programs in the nation.

The interdisciplinary nature of the CSWA demands critical evaluation of evidence and advanced written communication skills, and our student learning objectives emphasize the acquisition and honing of these proficiencies. In accordance with professional standards, writing is integrated across the curriculum: All CSWA upper-level courses require long research papers. Majors are also obligated to take one of the advanced CSWA seminars and produce a 30-page research paper evaluated according to a strict rubric that measures students' ability to frame historical and anthropological questions, conduct historical research, and sustain evidence-based, thesis-driven arguments. Our self-studies show significant improvement as students move through the program, with over 80% of CSWA students making progress toward the program's learning objectives.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 2.: The faculty members of the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program are among the leading teachers and scholars at UM and have established themselves as eminent scholars in their respective fields. The program's director, Mehrdad Kia, has received every major teaching award given at UM, including Distinguished Teacher of the Year and Most Inspirational Teacher of the Year. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Education has honored Mehrdad Kia as a U.S. Professor of the Year. The CSWA program's co-director, Ardi Kia, has received several campus and external awards for his distinguished and inspirational teaching. In the last five years, the CSWA faculty have published six books and numerous articles and monographs. Since the program's inception, the CSWA faculty have acquired over four million dollars in grants and projects from both federal and private funding sources, including such prestigious organizations as the U.S. Departments of Education and State, USAID, and the World Bank. These grants have allowed the CSWA to organize educational and training programs for visiting scholars from China, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 3.: N/A

Criteria 5. - Bullet 1.: From its very inception the Central & Southwest Asian Studies Program has been a self-standing and self-supporting program, which has never received any state funding from the University. The program relies exclusively on federal grants, private donations and contributions to run its operations and day-to-day activities, including conferences, seminars, and brown bags. The program has two full-time tenured faculty members, one housed academically in the Department of Anthropology and the second in the Department of History. In a letter dated March 22, 2010, the then provost and vice president for academic affairs, Royce Engstrom, promised three additional tenure track lines to the director of the program. These promises were, however, never fulfilled. Thus, the retirement of either of the two tenured professors in the program will result into the collapse of the program as an academic unit. At the undergraduate level, the reliance on only two faculty members has resulted in a narrower selection of courses and a heavier teaching load, making it extremely difficult for the CSWA faculty to deliver the writing-intensive curriculum that distinguishes our program. (142 words)

Criteria 5. - Bullet 2.: Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program faculty have always taken pride in teaching large introductory, as well as smaller upper-level classes, including those 100- and 200-level courses that other departments often relegate to lecturers or adjunct faculty. The two full-time faculty members teach all our 100- and 200-level surveys, and the program has never relied on adjunct faculty. Our two full-time faculty members also participate actively in numerous collaborative and interdisciplinary programs such as East Asian Studies, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Center, Defense and Critical Languages and Cultures, Russian Studies Program, Arabic Studies Program, and Global Humanities and Religions in teaching classes and holding training sessions, both for UM students and external state and federal agencies, including Montana National Guard, Office of the Governor, and the U. S. Department of Defense.

Despite reduced overall enrollment at the university, enrollments in CSWA introductory courses have remained stable. The CSWA upper-level courses (300+) have maintained their robust enrollment and some have experienced a small increase in the past two years. The CSWA faculty teach at least one evening class every semester. The evening classes have frequently exceeded their required enrollment ceilings by an average of 10 to 15 students.

Criteria 5. - Bullet 3.: The Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program has never had contract administrators or contract professionals in the program. Consequently, the two full-time faculty members have had to assume responsibility for maintaining the office and, in the absence of a dedicated staff adviser, handle all routine student advising. Our two faculty members also serve as the department's chief liaison with other offices and units on campus – the Registrar's office, the Dean's office, Enrollment & Student Services, UM Days, Office of Student Success, etc. In addition, our two faculty members coordinate the paperwork generated throughout the academic calendar – the uploading and curating of course syllabi, making certain materials comply with accessibility standards, processing travel reimbursement and fellowship awards, etc. Our two faculty members are responsible for making sure that the program continues to negotiate, design, develop, write, and submit grant proposals to preserve the integrity of our budget because the program has never received any funds from either the dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences, Main Hall, or the state of Montana. The program has consistently reminded the UM administration of the enormous difficulty of running the program without an administrative assistant, and the importance of this position to the fulfillment of our teaching, research and service mission, but these needs have not been addressed.

Criteria 6. - Bullet 1.: The Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program engages students where they are by developing long-term relationships between students and faculty mentors. We structure curricula to ensure that students develop analytical and communication skills progressively and at a professional level. We are presently working with various community and Native American colleges in the state to develop online courses for institutions that are interested in strengthening their international and global course offerings that focus on the vast region extending from western China to north Africa. As part of this effort, we travel frequently and provide presentations on a variety of political, social, economic, and cultural issues to various audiences across the state, including grade schools and high schools. Our most recent collaboration will be held this autumn with Kalispell middle school teachers, where CSWA will conduct training sessions in order for Kalispell to develop a global and international curriculum for their students

Criteria 6. - Bullet 2.: The Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program has already established itself as a leader in interdisciplinary inquiry, state-wide outreach and national and international scholarship. The program produces graduates with strong disciplinary skills and deep topical knowledge. Both lower-division and upper-division CSWA courses fulfill General Education requirements. In addition, faculty and advisors in the schools of journalism, law, education, and business, as well as departments throughout the College of Humanities and Sciences regularly recommend or require that their majors complete CSWA courses. Reviving the cross-listing of courses would help to ensure the continuation of this broad interdisciplinary reach. CSWA faculty research and publications enjoy national and international recognition across a variety of disciplines. Mehrdad Kia's *Historical Encyclopedia of the Persian Empire* received a national award as one of the best historical materials published in the United States in 2016. His *Modern Middle East Authoritarianism*, published by Routledge in London, has been praised by critics. Ardi Kia's *Central Asian Cultures, Arts and Architecture*, published in 2015, was recognized as one of the best books published in English in the field of Central Asian cultural and artistic studies. Through their scholarship, CSWA faculty have established themselves as important public thinkers. Since 2012, they have appeared as guests and commentators on more than one hundred television and radio programs and have been widely quoted in major news publications.

Criteria 6. - Bullet 3.: Having developed our courses over many years of dedicated research and teaching, we feel strongly that the sky is the limit for the CSWA program. Being able to expand our offerings to include courses in environmental issues, women's issues, and human rights, as well as cultural and artistic topics relevant to Central and Southwest Asia would attract a wide variety of students to the program's offerings and serve to strengthen CSWA's already significant alignment with UM's global mission and with the university's general education offerings.

Criteria 6. - Bullet 4.: Fulfilling the UM administration's previous commitment of three additional faculty lines for the program would allow for the expansion described above and would heighten CSWA's already significant regional and national profile as a center for research and dissemination of information on the cultures and peoples of Central and Southwest Asia.

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