

Report Submission - ID: 17Admin203

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Unit of Analysis ID Number: 192

Sector: Provost

Division : Central and Southwest Asian Studies Center

Unit for Assessment: Central and Southwest Asian Studies Center

State the mission, objectives, and primary functions of this unit. : The Central and Southwest Asian Studies Center (CSWA) is the outreach arm of the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Program, which came into existence shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The idea of establishing the CSWA was originally conceived by Professors Mehrdad Kia and Ardi Kia as a means of filling the enormous academic and outreach gap present in UM curriculum and outreach regarding the three important regions of Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. The program has been growing steadily since then, becoming an outreach center in 2010, approved by the UM Board of Regents. The center coordinates an interdisciplinary cluster of faculty from several departments in teaching, research, and programming within their respective areas of competence, including history, anthropology, geography, political science, geosciences, Arabic studies, Russian studies, and Asian languages and literatures. The core academic mission of the Center is the teaching of the academic major and minor in Central & Southwestern Asian Studies, which was created in 2008 in response to a petition circulated among nearly one thousand students. Program courses attract hundreds of students every year and many graduates of the program have been placed in prestigious academic programs, government, business, law, and education, both in the United States and overseas.

Identify the primary users of the unit.: The principal users of the unit are UM students and the public residing in larger Missoula and western Montana communities. The CSWA Center is the home for the CSWA academic program, which enrolls an average of 150 students per semester in its core classes. Many of these students end up completing a major in CSWA or finishing the minor, which was designed to accommodate students with a secondary interest in the vast region extending from western China to Morocco. In addition to serving a large number of students, every spring the CSWA Center hosts a major international conference, which focuses on the most important political, social, economic, environmental issues confronting the countries of Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. These conferences, which generate a great deal of public interest, have hosted world renowned women writers and activists, environmentalists, politicians, diplomats, writers, musicians, artists, dancers and political analysts. The average number of participants in each year's conference is 1,200, many coming all the way from Billings, Great Falls, Helena, and Bozeman. The CSWA conferences allow the Center to establish close working relationships with the grade school and high school teachers who bring their students to various sessions of the conference. We also work closely with various departments and organizations on campus and in the larger Missoula community to organize special seminars, panels, and public events in response to public interest in current events in the region on which CSWA focuses.

Submit Organizational Chart : [17Admin203_SubmitOrganizationalChart_1002034823.pdf](#)

Complete the FTE Detail Excel spreadsheet provided in the link below.:

[17Admin203 CompletetheFTEDetailExcelspreadsheetprovidedinthelinkbelow_1002034823.pdf](#)

Using the space below, address any issues with your FTE Detail Sheet.: The academic home of Ardi Kia, the co-director of the center resides in the Department of Anthropology.

The academic home of Mehrdad Kia, the co-director of the center resides in the Department of History.

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. CSWA encourages Engagement and commitment to students and their intellectual development by example. 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 held every April, 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 introduce them to the history, cultures, and civilizations of non-Western world, and encouraging students to pursue certificates, minors, and double majors in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

Criteria 1. - Bullet 2.: In an increasingly global society and university, the courses and expertise offered by the faculty of the Central and Southwest Asian Studies Center are essential to a grounded and educated public. Students hunger for and expect a variety of worldviews and multicultural approaches to the problems and opportunities presented by today's world. CSWA was created to fulfill student demand and interest; the continuance of its teaching and service are essential to UM.

Criteria 2. - Bullet 1.: Until the establishment of Central and Southwest Asian Studies, UM suffered from a large and embarrassing gap in its academic offerings, as well as its outreach capabilities, regarding the vast region extending from western China to North Africa. Hundreds of UM students taking classes in history, political science, anthropology, art history, business, law, journalism, and foreign languages expressed a desire to see their university develop a cohesive program focusing on the study of the cultures, societies, histories, political systems, and artistic traditions of western China, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. CSWA Studies was created in response to this growing demand from UM students. The program also benefited from the realization on the part of the then administration that numerous funding opportunities were available provided the University could develop a full-fledged academic and outreach concentration on the world's strategic regions. The enormous popularity of our course offerings among UM students, and the growing respect and popularity that the program was gaining among this community and beyond, convinced the UM administration to support the introduction

of a major in CSWA Studies in 2008, followed by the establishment of an outreach-academic center in 2010. In the past five years, the demand for CSWA courses has increased significantly, while at the same time the participation in the center's activities, especially among students, staff, and faculty at UM has expanded nearly tenfold.

Criteria 2. - Bullet 2.: Since its founding, CSWA faculty members have conducted surveys of their courses, measuring the level of student participation and success each and every semester. These surveys clearly indicate that the level student enthusiasm for our course offerings and outreach activities remains very high. The overwhelming majority students who enroll in one of CSWA classes end up taking four or five additional classes in the field. They frequently express their amazement at the high quality of instruction, the willingness of the CSWA faculty to work with them one to one, and the enormous knowledge they have gained from enrolling in our courses. It is from among this expanding pool of students that we recruit our majors, as well as those who decide to complete a minor in CSWA. Every year during our brown bag presentations, as well as our annual conference, CSWA also conducts surveys of the public participation in our various activities. These surveys clearly indicate that the number of participants in our various outreach programs has increased significantly. For example, the first conference organized by CSWA fifteen years ago brought nearly 300 participants, while the fifteenth annual CSWA conference last April attracted 1,234 participants from the UM campus, the Missoula community, various cities and towns in Montana, as well as a much larger international contingent, which increased fourfold since 2016. This enormous growth has taken place without any financial or logistical support from the University, and while the institution's enrollment numbers have shrunk significantly.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 1.: In addition to teaching evaluations, which provide a measurement for the success of our faculty in classroom, the CSWA conducts year-long internal assessments of its faculty members and the student response to their teaching, mentoring, and advising. The results of these assessments are shared on a regular basis with the center's advisory board and the office of the Provost and the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The common theme in all our internal assessments is the fundamental need for additional faculty and staff support for the center and its academic and outreach program. The two core faculty members provide all the advising and mentoring for CSWA students either majoring in our program or completing a CSWA minor. The CSWA receives no additional assistance in this regard from the College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS). For several years Ms. Jana King from CHS was able to provide CWSA students with academic support and advice how to satisfy the General Education Requirement, but that is not the case anymore. Furthermore, as the center does not have its own administrative staff the service burden falls disproportionately on the two directors of the Center, which may affect their scholarly productivity and general service to the university. It also affects the visibility of the Center as resources such as the program website should be updated regularly; the newsletter and archive of past events on the CWSA website should also be updated on a weekly basis.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 2.: The members of the CSWA Center participate regularly in national and international conferences, workshops and training programs in order to expand their global and international connections as well as update their knowledge of the latest academic and research funding opportunities in the field. Without any support from the University, the Center has provided funding for travel, research, and professional development activities. The Center has supported conference and workshop presentations by its affiliate faculty members with an understanding that they would publish their research in prestigious international journals. The center has also provided funding to its faculty affiliates to conduct Study Abroad programs in the countries of the Middle East, the most successful of these being the study abroad program in Arabic and Hebrew studies in Jerusalem, which allowed several different groups of UM students to receive first hand experience in the region. The Center's administrators and affiliate faculty members are regularly involved in campus committees, including the Faculty Senate, the ASCRC, the Graduate Council, etc. They also participate in the departmental

committees of their academic homes. We also work on a regular basis with various local and state-wide agencies on designing, developing, and organizing training programs. Thus, when the Montana National Guard needed to provide legal, cultural, and civic training for cadets from the Kyrgyz National Army, the CSWA Center was identified as the ideal program to design, develop, and implement the program.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 3.: The faculty affiliates at the CSWA Center are some of the most productive scholars at the University of Montana. Both full time members of the CSWA Center have authored major publications. Mehrdad Kia has written several single-authored books on Middle Eastern and Central Asian history published with Greenwood Press, two single-authored encyclopedias on the Persian Empire and the Ottoman Empire with ABC-Clío, one co-authored volume on Middle Eastern authoritarianism with Routledge in London, one co-authored volume on Tajikistan with Ardi Kia, and numerous peer-reviewed articles and book reviews in prestigious journals, including *Middle Eastern Studies*, which is published in London. Ardi Kia has published one single-authored volume on Central Asian architecture with Lexington Books. He has also published numerous chapters and articles in various books and monographs dealing with the history, cultures and artistic traditions of Central Asia. Several members of the Center have co-authored a textbook on Central Asian history and Culture. Another team of scholars, including Ardi Kia and Mehrdad Kia, has completed a long monograph called *The Silk Road*, which will be used as a textbook in our courses. The annual Central and Southwest Asia Conference held every April on the UM campus is also an important scholarly contribution to the University of Montana and the Missoula community. The proceedings for this year's conference are being edited for publication in the very near future.

Criteria 3. - Bullet 4.: The core academic mission of the CSWA Center lies in offering UM undergraduate students an interdisciplinary major and a minor in Central and Southwest Asian studies. Several of its well-attended and popular courses contribute to the strength of the general education curriculum at UM, and the variety of CSWA courses is striking for a public research university in a state of our size. CSWA course titles include "The Silk Road," "Central Asia: Peoples and Environments," "Islamic Civilization: The Classical Age," "Islamic Civilization: The Modern Era," "Nationalism, Socialism, and Religious Fundamentalism in the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa," "Peoples Without History: Women, Ethnic and Religious Minorities in the Middle East and North Africa," and "Iran between Two Revolutions." Most of these courses satisfy several required categories listed in the General Education Requirements at UM. Judging from student evaluations and enrollment figures, many of the CSWA courses are among the most popular in the liberal arts curriculum at UM. In the words of one external evaluator, the program is an example of how area studies programs can help grow the humanities and social sciences at an institution of higher learning. All CSWA courses are offered either through the Department of History or the Department Anthropology. Unfortunately, UM does not allow the CSWA and those departments working with the Center to cross-list courses, a policy which has struck all our external reviewers as an odd and potentially self-defeating policy for a research university.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 1.: From its inception, the CSWA Center has relied exclusively on external funding for its operation and activities. Grants from federal and private sources, as well as donations and contributions from the Center's supporters have allowed us to maintain our financial independence from the UM administration and the ongoing financial crisis confronting the university system. In the past three years, we have also intensified and expanded our fundraising activities, allowing the Center to create a financial cushion if and when the external grants become unavailable. The Center takes a special pride in being the only academic center at UM that has never requested any funding from the UM administration, an academic dean, or a state source. Thus, the entire cost of CSWA's operation and activities, including the organizing of major international conferences, the organization of brown bags, publication of books

and manographs, as well as the publication of the Center's newsletter are all supported by revenue generated from external sources. Historically, the Center was founded after we received a significant number of grants from the United States Department of Education. These grants were later reinforced by grant funding from the United States Department of State, USAID, the World Bank, etc. Since its creation, the CSWA Center has generated \$4.2 million in grants and projects.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 2.: The CSWA prides itself on being a self-standing center, which from its establishment has never received any funding from the UM administration or the College of Humanities and Sciences for its operational expenditures. While regional studies and professional training grants from various governmental departments and organizations, including the U.S. Departments of Education (DOE) and State (DOS), etc. were available, the CSWA was highly successful in generating a significant number of projects. In the last two years, as federal funding in Washington, DC especially in DOE was significantly cut, the number of available projects have been reduced, and the Center has relied increasingly on private donations, individual contributions, and fundraising events and activities to secure its operational funds. These efforts have been highly successful, which has allowed the Center to organize its successful and popular conferences, lecture series, and brown bag presentations, as well as publish its newsletters. We have also adopted a new strategy of increasing our close collaboration with international partners, developing joint grants and projects, the most recent being our highly successful partnership with universities in China, Central Asia, and the Middle East. One of the most fruitful among these projects has been the Center's collaboration with the Middle East Institute at Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) in China, which over the last five years has sent groups of scholars as conference participants, visiting professors, and project collaborators to UM.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 3.: From its very founding, CSWA has adopted a strategy of collaboration with other centers, programs, departments, and organizations both on the UM campus and beyond. Thus, CSWA Center has organized conferences, seminars, public presentations, art exhibitions, and musical performances in collaboration with Montana World Affairs Council, Defense Language and Culture Program, the Mansfield Center, the Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures Department, the History Department, the Anthropology Department, the Music Department, the School of Fine Arts, the Russian Studies Program, the Arabic Studies Program, the International Wildlife Film Festival, and Rocky Mountain Ballet Theater. Through these collaborations we have provided first hand education to the larger Missoula and western Montana communities about the diverse cultures, societies, and artistic traditions of Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. All of our events are free of charge and open to the public. To maintain free access to these events, the CSWA has embarked on a long and successful campaign to raise funds from private donors and contributors. The efficiency of services provided by CSWA is best demonstrated by the fact that all our events are organized by only two administrators who do not receive any extra compensation for any of their non-academic and administrative work. In other words, their work is simply a labor of love. The only reward we have received is the enormous support, which we have received from a large army of community advocates and enthusiasts who encourage us.

Criteria 4. - Bullet 4.: Is this unit able to generate external revenue and if so, what percentage of this unit's expenses are supported by this revenue? Since its founding in 2010, the CSWA Center has been able to generate sufficient revenue to support the cost of its entire operation, as well as all of its many activities. One hundred percent of the Center's expenses have been supported by the revenue we have generated through our grant writing as well as fundraising activities. We initially relied heavily on external grants from federal and private sources. More recently, we have increased our efforts in raising funds through private donations and contribution. Our fundraising events and interactions with contributors throughout the state of Montana and across the nation has allowed the Center to receive

generous donations, allowing us to maintain a healthy operational budget. The Center remains the only academic and outreach center at UM which has never requested any funding from the UM administration, any academic dean, or any state source. Thus, the entire cost of CSWA's operation and activities, including the organizing of major international conferences, organizing brown bags, publication of books and monographs, as well as the publication of the Center's newsletter are all supported by revenue generated from external sources. Though the Center has been highly successful in generating enormous amount of external revenue, it is important to recognize that in the last two years, we have been impacted directly by cuts to the federal budget.

Criteria 5. - Bullet 1.: In line with the Strategic Planning Coordinating Council (SPCC), which has studied our comprehensive institution as a single body rather than as a collection of discrete sectors or programs, and following the Strategic Vision: Creating Change Together, which approaches the University of Montana as a complex ecosystem whose purpose is greater than of any part, the CSWA has adopted a pathway for working together on behalf of and with our stakeholders. In order for this strategic vision to remain relevant and actionable, CSWA has focused on its programmatic and outreach priorities, while at the same time responding to our evolving contexts through self-reflection, honest assessment, and interactive adjustments. We believe that the first expression of ongoing collaboration with all stakeholders requires the development of an operational plan, a new data governance model that would allow integrated decision making, and a commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and data-informed inquiry. In accomplishing these tasks, the CSWA has organized an advisory council composed of all departments, centers, and programs the center works with. One of the principal objectives of this board is to provide the center with guidelines through which we should work with as many stake holders as possible while maintaining faithful to our operational plan and strategic vision. Another objective is to create more collaborative ideas and opportunities, which would enhance the participation of students (major and non-major), as well as other departments and programs in our outreach activities. We view this process as an integral part of how the center must

Criteria 5. - Bullet 2.: Since the establishment of CSWA, the center has collaborated with all centers, programs, and organizations, which share a common academic and outreach interest with us. CSWA has collaborated with the Mansfield Center on organizing joint conferences, workshops, and panel discussions. In the past five years, we have also enjoyed a very close collaboration with the Defense Language and Culture Program (DLCP). Our faculty members have given more than fifty presentations to various clients, including the U.S. Special Forces and United States Navy SEALs in collaboration with DLCP. In August 2017, the two operations worked hand in hand in carrying out a thorough evaluation of DLCP's activities which was conducted by the United States Department of Defense. Given the lack of funds at the College of Humanities and Sciences (CHS) and the Mansfield Center, the CSWA agreed to include both operations in its most recent programmatic and center reevaluation. The center spent more than \$3000 to bring to the UM campus a leading evaluator from University of Michigan-Ann Arbor to review the CSWA, the East Asian Studies Program, as well as UM's course offerings in Asian languages and cultures. Instead of using the opportunity for the sole benefit of our center, the CSWA shared its meager resources with CHS, Mansfield Center, and East Asian Studies to accomplish the necessary task of an in-depth programmatic review. These are just a few examples of the extensive collaboration, which we have designed and developed with other units in order to promote efficiency and cost-savings.

Criteria 5. - Bullet 3.: In a later dated March 22, 2010, the then Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Royce Engstrom praised the CSWA as the most successful regional studies program on the UM campus. He also provided a list of commitments to the Center, which as of September 2017 remains completely unfulfilled. The Center was promised three additional tenure track positions within three years. These included a tenure track position in archeology and/or cultural anthropology of Central Asia, a political scientist of either the Middle East or North Africa, and a new language professor in either

Persian or Turkish language and literature. The center was also promised additional office and seminar space on the third floor of the Stone Hall building, as well as a unisex toilet since the third floor of Stone Hall has no bathrooms. The promises from the former provost have not only remained unfulfilled, given the existing financial crisis at the University, the center is on the verge of extinction. The two core CSWA faculty members are nearing their retirement, and in the absence of any replacement, the program will face a natural death. This will once again cause a major gap in our academic offerings and services regarding three of the world's most important regions. Equally disturbing is the disappearance of a center, which could organize first class training to scholars, teachers, and specialists from three important regions of the world.