Task Force on Graduate Education: Selective Excellence

Program Ratings and Rationale

Program: Asian Civilizations M.A. Program
Rating: Additional Evaluation Required

Asian Civilizations offers the MA degree in Chinese Studies and Japanese Studies, but all students receive an MA in Asian Civilization. Students are not currently being accepted into the Japanese program due to limited faculty numbers. The Task Force recommends additional evaluation of the Japanese Studies track; however, if replacement of faculty in the Japanese track is not a priority for CLAS, the track may be a candidate for closure.

Chinese Studies has four focus areas (Literature and Culture Track; Linguistics Track; Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL) Track; and the Interdisciplinary Track in Chinese Studies. Students typically take courses from all of these areas to complete their degree requirements regardless of their track. However, according to the strategic assessment, the largest of the subtracks is TCFL. In Spring 2009, of the 21 applicants to the MA program in Chinese, 19 were applicants to the TCFL track and of these, 4 were admitted to the program. Admissions were limited by the available TA positions. Placement following degree completion in the TCFL track addresses the increasing demand for Chinese language instruction. Some students matriculate into the Second Language Acquisition doctoral program after completing the Asian Civilizations MA. Given the small size of the student cohort (11 students enrolled in Fall 2008) and the small size of the faculty, the TF suggests that the program would benefit from more focused efforts on a smaller number of tracks. Currently, the TCFL track seems the most viable. The Task Force recommends additional evaluation of this program.