

American Studies Program  
Academic Plan (October 2008)  
2009-2014

## **Introduction**

The American Studies Program grants BA and MA degrees through courses that integrate the humanities, fine arts, and social sciences in the cultural study of American experience. The program serves as an intellectual community through and beyond the classroom by creating and sustaining working relationships with other programs and departments at UW, organizations in Wyoming, the U.S., and other countries, and with universities abroad.

AMST made significant and concrete progress on its APII items (see appendix below). In the next planning cycle, AMST will continue to work toward those long-term goals defined in APII that involve the most extensive collaborations and planning with others (eg. Humanities Institute proposal, and exchanges/shared degree programs abroad; see AMST 3, AMST 6).

AMST's overarching planning priority for 2009-2014 is to accomplish CF2 Planning Motif 1, building depth. We aim to secure the most stable and productive future for the program's established strengths, all of which contribute directly to 4 out of 6 Areas of Distinction as defined in CF2 Motif 2, as well as the remaining Planning Motifs: promoting access, fostering excellence, and cultivating leadership. Specifically, we will continue the effort to secure a hire (AMST 6), assess our curriculum to respond effectively to specific challenges and opportunities (AMST 7), define best practices and points of collaboration with other interdisciplinary programs to help stabilize all these programs' success (AMST 8), as well as make what we do and the collections we house more usefully available on the web (AMST 9). The three program faculty made the accomplishments of APII possible. The addition of a fourth, shared position will allow us to extend our reach, potentially to the Ph.D. level. However, the future continuity of our program with a nationally-recognized American Studies faculty requires that the hiring of a junior faculty member remain among our top priorities these can't be sustained without providing for the future continuity of program faculty, which is why efforts to hire a junior colleague (AMST 1) is our first planning priority.

## **Action Items**

***AMST 1:** Explore the feasibility of opening a Ph.D. program in American Studies.* In principle, this would be a unique American Studies degree, drawing from long-established expertise at UW and drawing together disciplines and fields in the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts around common areas of interest and faculty strength. Assessing the student demand, resource needs, faculty expertise and development opportunities, and Graduate Assistantship requirements should be completed during this planning cycle. The next few years will give us the opportunity to study the feasibility of the newly-expanded Program and the potential marketability of the degree. It would also allow us time to build the foundation for the new degree, so that it could be ready for implementation as a part of the next planning process. Since this would be a major step for a Program that will be celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012, all of the Action Items will be either subsumed under or inflected by this important discussion.

*AMST 2: Secure faculty to sustain curriculum and program continuity over the long term, through requests to hire directly into AMST.* The three faculty members of AMST sustain ongoing commitments to SENR, WMST, AIST, CHST, and other interdisciplinary programs, an extensive public sector curriculum, arts and humanities organizations, and international curriculum and exchanges that distinguish AMST as a program at UW and among American Studies programs in the U.S. and abroad. This action item responds to two Program planning objectives: 1) Ph.D. planning. If our feasibility study produces a compelling rationale, the addition of a faculty member will bring us to the national average for a Ph.D. curriculum supported by a program rather than a department. 2) Succession planning. No matter whether a Ph.D. proposal emanates from American Studies, we must anticipate retirements of one or more of our senior faculty. This action item addresses CF2 Motif 1, building depth, directly. If we were given the opportunity to hire, the nature and priorities of our program would allow us to continue to contribute to all those CF2 Areas of Distinction including ENR that are not defined exclusively by the sciences, as well as CF2 Motif 3, access, recruiting both faculty and students of color, and CF2 Motif 4, excellence, sustaining AMST's significant contributions to UW's Areas of Distinction, as well as conserving AMST's "excellence in human capital" over the long term. This hire would be made in the areas of expertise that would be core to the Ph.D. program.

*AMST 3: Pursue establishment of a Humanities Institute at UW.* We continue to support the establishment of a Humanities Institute at UW, a location for faculty research and graduate student mentorship that would lend distinction to the University. Since it is clear that the activities of such an Institute must be modeled during this planning cycle so that an Institute proposal can be developed for the next, we propose to focus our efforts on the core activities of the Institute – identification of faculty expertise and interest, articulation of faculty research groups, and development of seminars, colloquia, and conferences – as they apply to the development of an American Studies Ph.D. proposal. Our intention is to model Institute activities for two or three years and then, with the help of interested humanities faculty, develop an independent structure and alternate funding sources for the Humanities Institute.

Our efforts on behalf of a Humanities Institute continue the APII designation of AMST as a nexus for interdisciplinary and cross-college programs. A Humanities Institute would build depth (CF2 Motif 1) at UW by recognizing and organizing the substantial scholarly strength UW enjoys through the widely-distributed accomplishments of colleagues within and beyond A&S. It would simultaneously help build excellence in human capital (CF2 Motif 4) by cultivating an under-recognized resource at UW for teaching and learning. An organized venue for the pursuit of humanist inquiry would allow humanist scholars from across campus to meet and work with one another, raising the profile of humanist inquiry at UW. Success in this venture could generate unparalleled GA opportunities for students who will be increasingly expected to work in an interdisciplinary academic world. A successful Humanities Institute would be a compelling recruitment tool for prospective faculty and graduate students.

*AMST 4: In cooperation with other academic units, develop faculty position requests that would contribute to an American Studies Ph.D. and, more broadly, strengthen faculty expertise in the humanities, social sciences, fine arts, and interdisciplinary fields.* Faculty requirements for a Ph.D. proposal in American Studies will have to be met through the contributions of faculty members in contributing departments and programs. Many of these linkages already exist, but

some new hires should be made that would strengthen our proposal, fill high-priority needs in the co-sponsoring department or program, and contribute to the intellectual life of the College.

*AMST 5: Work with the Wyoming Council on the Arts to hire a public sector folklorist, to assume duties by Summer 2009.* For the last several years the Program has worked with the Traditional Folk Arts program at the Wyoming Arts Council under Memoranda of Understanding that have provided internship and research opportunities for several graduate students. These cooperative programs extend our public sector mission, a facet of American Studies practice that was first emphasized through a similar arrangement in the early 1990s. The public sector folklorist, jointly funded by American Studies and the Arts Council and classified as a Research Scientist, would conduct research throughout the state, teach in the American Studies Program, and serve as a bridge between the two university and state units. All of these functions will be important to our Ph.D. proposal.

*AMST 6: Sustain and expand initiatives to link AMST with other institutions and programs, internationally and at UW.* Negotiations regarding a dual MA degree with Southern Denmark University are nearing completion and similar arrangements with the University of Utrecht (Netherlands) should be completed by the end of 2009. AMST continues its relationship with ENR and has begun discussions with the MFA program based on that model. This action item primarily addresses CF2 Motifs 1 and 5, building depth and fostering excellence, by institutionalizing strengths and connections AMST already sustains.

*AMST 7: Define and address curricular needs, through the assessment process, for both the BA and MA, to advance student recruitment, timely progress toward degrees, excellence in research and writing, and success after graduation, including special attention to the needs of public sector, ENR, and teacher-training students in our program.* (This includes contributing to the effort to increase UW support for GA's, which would substantially augment AMST's ability to place AMST students in innovative as well as useful GA's outside AMST where their abilities and interests might best be served.) Many of our MA students pursue a public sector/historic preservation emphasis in their degrees and a growing number are working toward AMST/ENR degrees. We have also long accommodated access to and participation in our BA program for teachers-in-training, and practicing high school teachers in the MA. All such students have special curricular and scheduling needs, but together they represent a significant portion of our student enrollment. The scope of this action item addresses AMST's established commitments to priorities defined in CF2's planning motifs, beginning with Motif 1, reinforcing areas of distinction (cultural assets, arts and humanities; environment and natural resources; history and culture of the Rocky Mountain region; professions critical to the state and region). Our students' needs, particularly in ENR, public sector work, and teacher-training, reflect Motifs 3-5 as well: promoting access to higher education; fostering excellence; and cultivating leadership.

*AMST 8: Collaborate with Interdisciplinary Programs on shared action items: 1) Define "program" institutionally; 2) Enforce MOU's and write shared appointments into job letters; 3) Develop shared 2000-level method course, and 4000-level non-profit policy oriented course (experience modeled on successfully shared 1030 "Social Justice" course)*

This action item addresses CF2 Motif 1, building depth, by securing stability among existing programs and procedures affecting the interdisciplinary programs. Proposed course development addresses Motifs 4 and 5, fostering excellence and cultivating leadership, as well as addressing CF2 Motif 2 Areas of Distinction by preparing students for professions critical to the state and region. The interdisciplinary programs are individually small in scale, but combined represent powerful and important forces at UW: interdisciplinary inquiry, commitment to diversity, and service in the public sector. Increased instructional excellence and support budgets would aid their individual and combined work significantly, contributing to professional development opportunities (eg. travel to conferences and colloquia), resources from which to build shared curriculum (eg. invited guests, working libraries on specific subjects), and host collaborative events for students and faculty (eg. book clubs, discussion groups, field trips or field studies).

**AMST 9:** *Establish and maintain AMST's digital capacity and access to collections by revising our web site, as well as scanning and managing our slide collections.* AMST can serve its many constituencies best by maintaining a rich digital presence, on a well-designed and highly-connective website, and in the digital availability for teaching and research of some 10,000 images in the Wyoming Folk Arts Archive and other faculty slide collections in the program. AMST 9 addresses each of CF2's Motifs: building depth by cultivating one of our valuable internal resources (directly linked to the 4 Areas of Distinction in which AMST regularly operates), improving access to AMST resources and recruitment capability, sustaining excellence in research and education, and cultivating leadership in providing resources to students and scholars active in the public sector.

**AMST 10:** *Support interdisciplinary teaching and research initiatives.* We endorse the proposals for an Institute of Global Affairs and a European Studies minor. We are working with an interdisciplinary group to develop a Museum Studies minor and we have supported financially the innovative (Re)visioning the Whole conferences.

## Implementation

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	outcomes
AMST 1	x	x	x	x		Decision on feasibility (2012)
AMST 2		x	x			CPM request for faculty line
AMST 3	x	x	x	x	x	Humanities proposal for next planning period
AMST 4	x	x	x	x	x	Shared lines with other academic units
AMST 5	x					Hire public sector folklorist
AMST 6	x	x				Initiate dual MS programs with European American Studies Programs
AMST 7	x	x	x			Enhanced AMST curriculum
AMST 8	x	x	x			Increased cooperation with interdisciplinary units
AMST 9	x	x				Improved Web Site and digital access to archives
AMST 10	x	x	x	x	x	Enriched interdisciplinary teaching and learning environment at UW

## Appendix: AMST Planning Accomplishments 2004-2009

	Action Item	Accomplishments
AMST 1	Revise BA and MA curricula	Revised structure and content of BA major; revised MA courses to foster intellectual community
AMST 2	Expand public sector projects	New research scientists stabilized and expanded field courses, internships and public projects
AMST 3	Institutionalize relationship with ENR	Well-established with MOU, courses, GAs, advising
AMST 4	New centers of inquiry	Initiated Humanities Institute effort
AMST 5	Establish regular summer field studies	Accomplished by research scientists
AMST 6	Expand Peace Corps Fellows program	Expanded PCF placement options
AMST 7	Initiate dual MAs with EU universities	Established with 2 universities
AMST 8	Expand exchange programs	Established new exchange with Radboud University, Nijmegen.
AMST 9	Explore possibilities to establish service learning at UW	AMST-initiated AmeriCorps grant established Center for Volunteer Service at UW