[African American Studies]
[African American Studies Faculty, San Jose State University]

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I. Introduction

In the late 1960s, at the beginning of the influx of African American students into the nation’s colleges, Black Student Organizations, Black Studies Programs, and Civil Rights Organizations pressed administrators for a supportive environment for blacks and other minority groups. Black Studies Programs developed in response to the expressed need of the students and their communities. African American Studies became a center where students could find faculty and staff knowledgeable of the factors impacting their lives on the campus and in their communities. Thus to this date, where African American Studies Programs flourish, so do African American Students. Likewise, the campus with a stagnate African American Studies Program sends the message to black communities, that black students are unlikely to find the support they need for academic success. As we enter the second decade of the 21st century African American college student retention and graduation rates have declined precipitously at SJSU and elsewhere in California. Our department desires SJSU to embrace the principles of inclusion embodied in its world-renowned statue of Olympic champions John Carlos and Tommy Smith and find the means to support African American Studies at SJSU.

Department Mission

As published on the SJSU web site, the primary mission of the University is: “To enrich the lives of its students, to transmit knowledge to its students along with the necessary skills for applying it in the service of our society, and to expand the base of knowledge through research and scholarship.” The African American Studies Department supports the University’s mission.

We provide students from throughout the University with specialized knowledge about the historical and contemporary African-American population and its communities because an understanding of the history of African Americans provides the lens through which our society’s system of race, gender, and class stratification emerged and developed. When citizens make sense of these invidious distinctions they are better positioned to dismantle them and increase democratization of our society. Through our program undergraduates are prepared for responsible citizenship and a strong sense of social responsibility in our diverse society and global community. Our curriculum prepares students for success in graduate degree programs and to assume leadership roles in a wide range of career fields.
II. **Strengths of the African American Studies Department (AFAM)**

Our strengths include our 43-year historical link with SJSU alumni and their communities, a multidisciplinary faculty and curriculum, and the rich diversity of students who enroll in AFAM courses.

**Department’s links**

For over 43 years the Department has maintained connections with its majors and minors, community organizations, and thousands of other students who have completed coursework in African American Studies. When in the San Jose area, our SJSU alumni routinely seek us at our offices. Through the faculty, primarily embodied in Dr. Steven Millner, an SJSU alumni and former Department Chair, current students and alumni have a sense of history and connectedness with SJSU.

When alum and current students come to the Department they find faculty conversant in the historical and current socio-cultural, economic, and political factors that influence their status in the nation, the state, their communities, and on the college campus. Students and alum expect AFAM faculty and staff to be rooted in the issues surrounding their survival in California, our nation and throughout the African Diaspora. Current and former students expect to find empathic faculty with a listening ear, and someone who will remember their name.

**Diversity of students**

A second strength is the wide diversity of students we have taught in our yearlong GE course, AFAM 2A-2B. In the past decade, AFAM offered two sections of each segment of this course per semester, approximately 300 students per year. In this year-long course students interact dynamically in a setting where ethnic minorities are the majority and the course material addresses the origins of America’s social classes. Although primarily a lecture course, students have an opportunity to interact in small groups, field and ask questions of each other, and discuss one of America’s most taboo topics: race. By discussing it, dramatizing it, and confronting it, students are better prepared to negotiate and dismantle the disabiling impact of race prejudice in their lives and in their communities.

Our students include African Americans from throughout California, the nation, the Caribbean, as well as those first and second generation Americans whose ancestral roots are in countries from Africa, the Middle East, Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, Central and South America, along with students of bi-racial and multinational heritages. Our majors and minors are predominantly African American men and women, and White American women.

Our strength and greatest long-term impact reside in the number of future leaders we educate who will enter the work force and interact with people of color...
in a more informed and supportive manner. We equip our graduates to take the lead in addressing social problems such as poverty, excess mortality and morbidity, undereducated and under-skilled youth, and the underrepresentation of women. This, we believe, will increase our nation’s ability to create policies in support of the beloved community so articulately outlined by Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Multidisciplinary curriculum**

During the past decade the Department refurbished its curriculum to include material reflecting the changing times. Course material includes more lectures, literature, and videos addressing women and gender issues, the new diversity of blacks and other ethnic minorities in the United States, contemporary socio-political and ecological issues in America’s inner cities and in Africa, and the changing majority in the United States. The faculty also incorporates global community issues in course materials. Additionally, diverse speakers visit our courses and inform our students of the forces of worldwide change.

We use the “extra credit” incentive to encourage students to attend a variety of cultural and educational events on campus, including the College of Social Science’s Constitution Day and its Dean’s Symposia, as well as campus lectures, such as that of the first California Hispanic Supreme Court Justice *Cruz Reynoso* and UCSC Professor Emeritus and Activist *Angela Davis*. We incentivize student visits to exhibits at local and regional museums, for example, Stanford’s Cantor Art Museum and San Francisco’s Museum of the African Diaspora. These activities expand student appreciation for the diversity of our society and global community.

**Multidisciplinary faculty**

A fourth strength is our dedicated faculty, their multidisciplinary backgrounds, their ability to mentor faculty and students of color, along with their national and international network of colleagues, alumni, and former students. These and other exemplary qualities are exemplified in their vitae (Appendix A).

**III. Challenges of the Department**

The primary challenge of the Department is to fulfill the 1999-2002 plan for adding faculty. We need faculty who are engaged in teaching and research, with a broad and in-depth understanding of the historical and social forces confronted by African Americans and people of the African Diaspora. SJSU is a large university and most of its resources service large departments with numerous majors. Thus specialized departments that do not quickly become large units are easily subsumed, underfunded, and at risk of withering, especially in the current fiscal climate. Despite the dismal African-American students’ graduation and retention rates, African American Studies has not been prioritized in the SJSU capital fund campaign. Additionally, the current .2 chair appointment, coupled with its 1.5 faculty lines provide limited time for the faculty to attend the
procedures required to request, search, hire, and mentor new faculty, write major
grant proposals, and seek sponsorship from private donors. This section
discusses Departmental challenges identified by the last program review, those
identified in 2001-2002, and the priorities we outlined for the CoSS development
staff at the behest of Former Dean Hegstrom.

III.A. Previously Identified Challenges
The last departmental program review was conducted in 1993-1994 and a
subsequent Five Year Plan for Faculty Recruitment for Academic Years 2000-
2001 and 2001-2002 was prepared.

Curriculum Challenges
The previous reports noted a series of **curriculum challenges:**

- The necessity for 8 FTEF in specific new “Course Offerings” to be taught
  by new AFAM faculty
- Infrequently staffed and infrequently taught elective course offerings
- The disproportionate offering of a limited number of required courses
- Few majors enroll in the program
- Few students graduate with a major in African American Studies (AFAM)
- Few students enrolled in non-GE classes
- An over reliance on a few GE courses for faculty-student interaction
- A dated curriculum that did not make use of recent technological
  innovations, i.e., the lack of the utilization of the techniques of information
  technology
- A curriculum that did not enhance the employability of African American
  Studies majors in the Silicon Valley or in the global economy in general
- A curriculum which lacked an international focus
- The necessity of a new departmental Mission Statement
- The need for curriculum development that would allow for the widened
  appeal to a broader student base

Faculty Staffing and Recruitment Challenges
The 1993-1994 AFAM Program Review and subsequent Five Year Plan for
Faculty Recruitment: Academic Years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 also noted the
following faculty staffing and recruitment challenges:

- Three of five AFAM faculty members retired when offered the Fall 1992
  Early Retirement Option
- The department’s excessive reliance on the use of part-time faculty from
  within SJSU and adjunct faculty external to SJSU with little if any
  commitment to curriculum development and maintenance of student
  advisement
- The projected retirement in 2005 of Dr. Steven Millner, one of the two
  remaining AFAM faculty members
- The projected hiring of two full-time tenure tract or tenured faculty for the
  2000-2001 Academic Year; one of whom would be at the rank of
Associate Professor or Full Professor and would serve as the Chair of the department

- Two faculty hires during the 2001-2002 Academic year, one of whom would be at the rank of Assistant Professor and the other at the mid-level rank, assumedly at the rank of an Associate Professor or a very senior Assistant Professor
- Recruitment beyond fall 2002 would be dependent upon the growth in student load or faculty turnover between 2002-2003
- The retirement in 1997 of one of the two remaining tenured/tenure track faculty members
- The necessity to hire four AFAM faculty members to bring the staffing to pre-1992 viability due to the retirement of one of the two remaining tenured/tenure track faculty members in 1997

Another document, The Academic Priorities Report: Final Decisions – May 1997, called for two basic actions:

- The engagement in review, critique, and evaluation of the curriculum with a view to curricular reform; and
- The review of the viability of the program in three years.

Substantive changes and challenges have occurred since the last program review.

III.B. More Recent Staffing Challenges

Faculty Challenges

In AY 2001-2002, two faculty positions were filled, one with an advanced Assistant Professor (Dr. Wilson), the second with a Full Professor and Chair (Dr. Georges-Abeye). In AY 2002-2003 the Chair requested and received permission to conduct a search for a new junior level tenure track faculty member. The Chair commenced the approved faculty search and concluded it without hiring a candidate. Thus, the goal of four new hires was not realized. In fact, the number of full-time faculty declined.

Two weeks before the beginning of AY 2004-2005, the Chair submitted his resignation, which was accepted. Dr. Millner resumed the position of Chair until 2008, at which time Dr. Wilson assumed that position. Additionally, the FTEF declined further. Dr. Millner requested and received permission from the Provost to split his appointment between African American Studies and History. As a result, the Department currently has 1.5 full time faculty, fewer than what was in place prior to the previous self study.

Simply put, the Department needs more tenured and tenure track faculty who are familiar with the challenges of the CSU system. AFAM not only needs faculty to teach courses, it also needs faculty to mentor, advise, and advocate for students, and to serve on the many university and college committees that make policies affecting curriculum and other activities critical to AFAM operations.
Curriculum Challenges
Changes in GEAP and GE policies have had a profound impact on our enrollment and number of majors. Foremost is the BOGS requirement for team teaching GE courses. Secondly, is the loss of D1 D2 credits for the year-long AFAM 2A/2B series which reduced student enrollment from over 200 students per semester to less than half that amount. Our GE courses are feeder courses.

Staff Challenges
AFAM needs highly skilled, supportive clerical and administrative staff. CoSS budget cuts have weighed heavily against AFAM. During the first round of layoffs in 2009, AFAM administrative assistant support was decreased from 20 hours per week to approximately 5.8. More recently, funds for a student work-study position have declined. Thus, we not only have fewer faculty to assist with clerical work and committee duties, we have less assistance from our administrative assistant and student assistant. Faculty responded by spending longer hours providing the same level of support for students.

These cut-backs in staff support have occurred during the same time faculty have been encouraged to be more entrepreneurial. We are eager to participate in entrepreneurial efforts to assist the department and university weather the difficult economic years ahead. The latter requires that that we muster additional time and effort, even as we adjust to cutbacks in staff. We are responding to these needs through grant writing and including budget lines for additional staff.

Impaction and Economic Downturn Challenges
A college education is a major investment for American families and the best insurance for employment in the 21st century. However, the current recession has deepened the economic woes for African American students and all working class students, which has direct implications for our Department. According to recent 2011 reports on California’s unemployment rates, 11.6 percent of whites were out of work in July, as were 14.3 percent of Hispanics and 20.3 percent of blacks. ¹ Thus, students from African Americans families, especially those in the inner cities, are twice as likely to be impacted by the recession as white students. Additionally, their families’ homes lost more value, and the overall wealth of these

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¹ Joanna Lin, California Watch. 8/22/11.
families declined precipitously.² At the current rate of CSU tuition increases, students from inner city communities in Oakland, San Jose, and San Francisco will have fewer resources to pay for their college education, further widening the current gap in opportunities for minorities in the workplace and in higher education.

When these economic woes are coupled with the CSU decision to increase tuition and impose impaction on its campuses, our Department and its students are faced with additional challenges. To push forward and acquire the skills for success in the 21st century, SJSU’s diverse student population needs the inspiration from the historical achievements of African Americans under dire circumstances. How can we deliver it with our current staff? This is precisely why students like John Carlos and Tommy Smith of the mid-1960s demanded black studies courses. As working class students negotiate the decline in the economy, students will need the strong historical emphasis on resilience and survival through harsh times embedded in our curriculum.

**Challenge of Actualizing AFAM’s 2009 Funding Priorities**

In response to the CoSS Dean’s request that Chairs submit their funding priorities to the Development Staff, AfAM requested the following:

1. An Endowed Chair in African American Studies
2. An Endowed Chair in African Studies
3. Funding for Postdoctoral Fellowships
4. Grants for students accepted for summer travel/study abroad programs
5. Funding for Visiting Professors, 1 semester - 1 year
6. Honorariums for speakers for a yearly lecture series in African and African American Studies
7. Student internship funds for AFAM students working on research projects with professors (a training grant)
8. Funds to refurbish our office spaces, e.g., desks, chairs, bookcases, and cabinets to display art objects
9. Funding for a Departmental Student Success Program that supports academic excellence among minority students
10. Funds for a programmatic outreach to parents of our majors and minors

AFAM has received donor funds to endow a scholarship fund, AFAM has used CE funds to refurbish two of our allocated four offices; however, we have not received any other funding for these listed requests. The AFAM faculty looks

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forward to continued opportunities to write and secure grants and work with the Dean and Development Officer to solicit and secure funding needs of the Department.

**IV. Progress Towards Addressing the Challenges and College/Department Strategic Planning Goals**

The Department has made considerable progress towards addressing challenges, while aligning its efforts with the mission of the College of Social Sciences. The College of Social Sciences places high value on *interdisciplinary approaches* to understanding human behavior. The College priorities are immigration, globalization and the social science study of technology. AFAM full-time and part-time faculty, and its full-time faculty collaborators in the College of Humanities and the Arts expose our students to a variety of disciplines – anthropology, economics, English literature, philosophy, psychology, sociology, theater arts, religious studies, and urban planning.

The careful study of the TransAtlantic Slave Trade in our GE course AFAM 2A provides students with an in-depth understanding of how European colonization was both an international and global phenomena, transforming the way people throughout the known world viewed themselves and others, while changing social systems, plant diversity, and technology distributions. Thus, students in our GE courses are well grounded in how the actions of people in one or more populations can impact humans worldwide. Equally important, students learn to compare the factors that contributed to the rise of the TransAtlantic slave trade with factors associated with contemporary forms of human trafficking.

**Updating the Curriculum**

Three new courses, AFAM/AAS/MAS 25: The Changing Majority, AFAM/SOCI 196: *Global Youth Culture: Technology and Youth Networking*, and AFAM 112: *New Faces in the Black Community* provide examples of how we have aligned our program with the priorities of the college and the university. We have offered two of these courses to students in the Incubator Classroom, thus the instructors and students are exposed to and learn state-of-the-art educational technologies.

AFAM /SOCI 196 examines the impact of globalization and technology on youth ages 14-24, in the United States and Japan, two nations in which innovative technology is accessible and has proliferated among youth. Developed as an SJSU Virtual Abroad Program course, three class sessions convene synchronously with a course being taught at Kwansei Gakuin University in Japan. We use anthropological and sociological perspectives to examine issues of identity, culture, business, and values among youth ages 14-25. Students work individually and in small groups to develop research projects on the topic, and interact with students in Japan over the Internet, Desire2Learn, text messages, Skype and email.
In AFAM 112, students engage with and investigate new black immigrants from the Fiji Islands, and countries in Eastern, Western, and Southern Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, and South and Central America. They also learn to conduct interviews, collect interview data, and report their findings to the class. Thus, students engage dynamically in the learning and teaching process in the classroom, use new technologies to communicate with each other, and collect and analyze data.

In the Black Religion, Music, and Film courses, the instructors updated the requirements to include student research projects that require students collect data and report their findings to the class. Students in the religion course visited worship centers where Islam, Buddhism, Catholicism, Baha’i, as well as various forms of Protestant faiths were practiced and noted the ethnic diversity in these religious experiences. These on-site visits broadened student understanding of the diversity of the African American experience in the United States.

**Increasing Majors and Minors**

Although the number of majors and minors are increasing slowly, we feel that in the USA, where few students experience African Americans in a position of authority in the classroom, the importance of the number of students who take our courses outweighs the number of majors and minors in the program. In 2010 AFAM developed a strategy focused on recruiting majors from the California Community College Network as feeder units, making contact with prospective transfer students when they visit the campus, and holding Meet and Greet events for current and prospective AFAM majors and minors. In 2012, we invited community organizations to sponsor the Meet and Greet potluck meals and join students for Q & A sessions. These sessions provided students with community mentors who linked them to job opportunities, community resources and internships. They also added value to students’ affiliation with the department.

**New Technologies**

During the past five years the Department has kept pace with new educational technologies. We requested and received access to the incubator classrooms, and taught one online class and several hybrid courses. We have appreciated the SJSU investment in updating the classrooms and our access to classrooms equipped with technology.

**International Opportunities**

The full-time faculty have engaged in international scholarly activities since the past review period, and we have used those experiences to enrich our students’ classroom experiences. We have encouraged the Study Abroad program to send its returning students to our classroom to make presentations, we have taken students on faculty-led study tours to Tanzania and Haiti, and our Collaborative Online International Learning course (COIL) has stimulated student interest in international educational and employment experiences.
Entrepreneurial Efforts
In response to our Dean’s request, we have sought external funding and will continue to do so. We received no release time to pursue grants and have a full teaching load. In 2011 we pursued two grants (one internal and one external), and were successful with one. In 2012 we pursued four external grants and were successful with one (California Humanities). Results from two other grants are still pending, and we have plans to resubmit the one that was not funded. AFAM faculty looks forward to continuing pursuit of larger grants that will support the mission of the college and its programs.

Refurbishing Office Space
In 2010 we partially refurbished two of our four office spaces with CE funds. Our students and faculty have access to these spaces and the computers and conference areas shared with Urban and Regional Planning. We are engaged with grant writing activities in 2012-13 that may yield resources to help the Department resolve its challenges. We welcome suggestions to further improve our use of available resources.

V. Synergies of the Department (Combined Efforts)
Since 2001, the Department has discussed, planned and/or implemented activities with faculty in almost all of the colleges on our campus, and several colleges in our region. A more detailed listing by college is included in Appendix B.

VI. WASC Program Outcomes Rubric
Students in the AFAM program objectives are expected to:

1. Understand the role of African Americans in the development and history of the United States
2. Use critical reading, viewing, and thinking skills to reflect on historical records, documents, and audiovisual materials
3. Understand how American society and its institutions have historically incorporated ethnic minorities and women
4. Develop information literacy
5. Develop critical thinking skills through collective learning processes

Assessment is a work in progress for our program. We are working with others in the college to develop a systematic approach to monitoring and measuring these objectives. In our review of the WASC Program Learning Outcomes, we noted that AFAM is in an “Emerging” status. Although we discussed our program objectives for our GE courses, we have not indicated how each course will support the overall objectives of the major. In the next three years, we plan to assure that our students and lecturers are aware of our program objectives and expected outcomes and the courses our majors and minors should take assure their competency in the major. It is crucial for us to develop learning outcomes
that are shared, available to all lecturers, and embedded in the greensheets of all our courses.

**VI. AFAM Assessment of Student Learning**

We assess students through a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures that include questions on objective exams, oral responses during class discussions, and qualitative assessments of student essays, research papers, projects, and oral presentations.

**Indirect measures collected in Fall 2005**
AFAM collected baseline information on objectives 4 and 5 (information literacy and critical thinking), and overall writing skills in the capstone course, AFAM 198. The work of five students was reviewed.

Additionally, objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4 were assessed in AFAM 2A and AFAM 2B. We used final term papers in spring semester introductory classes to assess the year-long values-added improvements of 86 AFAM students.

**Findings**
The data suggested that students’ information literacy, writing, and critical thinking skills needed reinforcement throughout the curriculum.

**Actions taken**
AFAM faculty met and took the following actions:

- Redesigned term paper requirements in lower division GE classes with a focus on incremental activities (topic proposal, bibliography, outline, first rough draft submission, final paper)
- Changed the required paper length and focus for the AFAM 2A/2B series. Rather than assessing a 20-page term paper, we assigned two 6-7 page essay assignments that explore primary documents, along with one-page in-class buzz essays, and extra credit 2-3 page essay assignments that required responsive/reflection writing.
- Provided feedback and credit on each segment of the writing assignment so students could later observe how they improved their writing skills at each stage.
- Designed more activities that promoted information literacy in three sections of AFAM 2A and AFAM 2B, including requiring the Martin Luther King Jr. Library website’s on-line plagiarism quiz, and an online map activity from a textbook publisher’s website.
- Began designing ways to measure learning outcomes and the effects of new teaching strategies initiated in AFAM 2A and 2B, and eventually for all AFAM classes.
- Developed new modes of using media to enhance critical thinking skills by incorporating written responses to visual materials in AFAM 198.
Began designing essays that assessed the skills of bilingual/bicultural learners from West and East Africa.

Results of this and other meetings

- Although faculty must spend more time reviewing and grading these intermediary stages of students’ writings, the focus on process has rendered higher quality final papers with fewer errors.
- When our majors take upper division courses, they are better prepared to meet the writing requirements.
- These activities engaged students’ imagination and helped them to focus on the content and quality of their writing, rather than the number of required pages.
- More students complete their writing assignments, and thus fulfill the minimum writing requirements for GE courses.
- Students are more likely to cite their sources when writing required papers.

VIII. Summary Analysis of Student Data provided by the Office of Institutional Research (OIR)

In this section we address the OIR data elements and comment on the enrollment status and trends.

The total number of students in the major is small. It has varied between eight to eleven students who tend to declare their major in the junior year as transfer students, during their third or fourth year at SJSU, or as SJSU students who decide to change their major after enrolling in several of our lower and upper division courses. We recruit minors throughout the year, however those data or not reflected in the Required Data Exhibits.

Data Exhibit 1 Number of Courses and Sections Offered (Fall Semesters Only),

The number of course offerings have varied with the number of full-time faculty. Currently, the Department has 1.5 full-time faculty. During the period of review, the number of sections offered have risen and fallen (between 5-12 courses), with the lower number reflecting Fall 2012. Most recently, the number of courses offered may also reflect mandated campus enrollment reductions and cuts in part-time faculty.

Data Exhibit 2 Average Headcount enrollment per section

The average headcount enrollment per section is modest (11.1 to 25.4). Our introductory lower division courses have higher enrollments. The average headcount enrollment per section in upper division courses is smaller (9.2 to 18).

Data Exhibit 3A. #B and 3C Student Faculty Ratios
The AFAM SFR is low, ranging between 12.5 and 18.6. Full-time equivalent students (3b) have waxed and waned, with a high of 40.8 in Fall 2009 and a low of 20.0 in Fall 2006. Fall 2011 we have functioned with a reduced number of faculty and number of sections, thus the ratio of students to our 1.5 full-time faculty is increasing.

Data Exhibit 4 Course Enrollment by Student Majors
In our lower division courses, AFAM faculty teaches students from a variety of majors from inside and outside of the College of Social Sciences. In addition to majors from our own college, we have a strong showing of students who major in engineering, business, photojournalism and nursing. Our total enrollment levels during this period range from 100 to 203. They are sensitive to university policies governing GE courses, faculty leaves, rapid increases in unemployment, and an economic downturn that required increases in tuition and cutbacks in admittance of Californian residents.

Data Exhibit 5: Applied, Admitted, Enrolled by Cohort Group
The number of applicants to the major per academic year has increased from a low of 4 (Fall 2003) to a high of 26 (Fall 2011). Unfortunately, these students tend not to enroll or show. Most students apply to the University and the Department during the Fall semester. During the review period, Fall 2003 - Fall 2012, the range in number of AFAM applicants in all cohorts fell between a low of 14 in 2003 to a high of 31 in 2008.

These enrollment data favor freshman in the Fall semesters and undergraduate transfers in the Spring; however, regardless of the number of students who apply, or their cohort type, the show rate (range = 0% – 46%, Fall 2010, Fall 2011) falls below what is desired by the Department, and we have reason to believe it can and should be improved.

Although the number of first time freshmen applicants is higher than the number of new undergraduate transfers (range = 11 – 24; range = 2 -12), the unfavorable show rate of 0% occurred more frequently among first-time freshmen than among undergraduate transfers.

Despite the relatively small number of applicants to the major indicated in Data Exhibit 5, if one considers the increasing number of Change of Major and Minor forms signed by the Chair and processed by the Department, the trend in the number of students enrolled in the major and minor is upwards, albeit slowly.

Data Exhibit 6: Class Level with FTES Majors
The number of Full-Time Equivalent Student majors in our classes experienced a decline during the period under review (12.2 in fall 2003 - 8.53 in Fall 2012). The decline follows the overall decline in university enrollments since Fall 2008, along with the ups and downs of the economy and the state’s fiscal crises. Again, these declines also correspond to the decline in number of faculty (part-time and
fulltime), number of class sections allowed, declines in employment opportunities for African American students and their families, and in budget allocations impacting the university.

**Data Exhibit 7: Enrollment by Student Level and Concentration**
The enrollment by student level and concentration varied from 16 to 10 during Fall semesters 2003 to 2012, and from 14 to 12 in Spring semesters during the same time period. It is not clear to what degree of importance one should assign this variation in undergraduate student enrollment other than those already mentioned: declines in number of full-time faculty, university wide efforts to decrease enrollments and increase tuition, and the sensitivity of African American families to downturns in employment and the economy.

**Data Exhibit 8: Degrees Awarded by Major & Concentration**
During the period under review, the Department awarded between 2-6 degrees to graduating students per year, reflecting the number of students in the major, the number of faculty available to assist student majors move towards completing the degree and, increasingly, the economy circumstances of our students and their families. Currently, we are limited in the number of students allowed to enroll in our courses, the number of sections we are allowed to offer, and the number of part-time faculty allowed to teach. Although it will be difficult to increase the number of degrees awarded (and the number of students in the major), we do not consider it an impossible task.

**Data Exhibit 9: First Year Retention Rates**
During the period under review, one to two students entered as majors per year. In only two years were first year retention rates less than 100%.

**Data Exhibit 10: Graduation Rates (First time Freshmen, 6th year; New transfer: 3 Year, First time graduate: 3 Year)**
Although the numbers are very small (1 to 3 students), the trend suggests that AFAM graduates students who enter the major as undergraduates or first time freshmen.

Over the past two years AFAM has held several meetings to discuss and address the issue of low enrollment of majors and developed a plan to increase the number of AFAM majors and minors (Appendix D).

**Issues of Student Enrollments**
The range of FTES majors enrolled in the spring and fall semesters have fluctuated over the decade, as have full time faculty and staff advisers knowledgeable of our program.
The data indicate that the interest shown by student applicants who are admitted to the major is not sustained: They are unlikely to enroll or select AFAM as their major, or select SJSU as their college of choice.

Recommendation: This gap between the indication of students' initial interest and their enrollment in our classes needs further attention. An SJSU investment in strategic outreach to students who apply to the Department prior to the deadline for decision-making may increase the show rate. Having students call and encourage applicants to enroll might be a better approach that discouraging students from enrolling in the program, which has been reported by some of our majors. The UC system and private high schools and universities employ this targeted outreach strategy to successfully increase its high value students. We suggest its use by SJSU.

Courses Offered
During the years under review AFAM offered between 6-10 courses per semester. The number of courses offered per semester declined as the minimum enrollment per course increased from 10 to 20 students.

Recommendation: AFAM needs to hire student assistants or staff with expertise in the use of Social Media to increase our marketing efforts to student’s campus-wide. Posting flyers is not as effective as sending messages directly to students.

Headcount in Lower and Upper Division Courses
The range in the headcount per section in lower division courses appears to be increasing. It varied from 10 (fall 2006) to 65 (fall 2010). The average headcount in upper division courses is also increasing, from 11.1 in Fall 2006 to 25.4 in Fall 2009.

The range in the average headcount in lower division courses may be sensitive to the availability of full-time faculty mentors in the major. Students interested in taking “some African American Studies courses” often wait until they have completed their GE requirements and the requirements of their major of choice before venturing to take AFAM courses. Thus, they are at risk of missing the opportunity to learn strategies for success that are mirrored by historical figures in African American Studies, strategies that could help contemporary students avoid “being a statistic” among those who failed to complete a degree at SJSU.

The range of student majors taking lower division courses (2-6) is lower than that of student majors taking upper division courses (6-12). Thus a strategy that targets junior transfers, or SJSU students in the second semester of their sophomore year might yield a stronger cohort of AFAM majors and strengthen enrollment in the upper division courses; however, in the lower division courses AFAM faculty pay close attention to building students’ study skills and self-confidence. These skills may be helpful in the retention of first generation college students at the beginning of their college career.
Student to Faculty Ratio
The student to faculty ratio has increased in lower division courses (10.0 – 22.6), and in upper division courses (12.5 – 18.6). This trend reflects the layoffs of part-time faculty as the number of sections allowed by the College has declined and the allowed minimum enrollment levels in courses increased from 10 to 20 students. Possibly, minority students on campuses with very few minority faculty may not fare as well as students from ethnic groups better represented among the faculty. Although SJSU has made several efforts to address the dearth of tenure track and tenured ethnic minority faculty, African American faculty mentors remain scarce in the College and University-wide.

AFAM has held several meetings over the past two years to developed a plan to increase the number of AFAM majors and minors and we look forward to working with the college and university to secure an environment that enriches our students, the community, and the African American Studies Department (Appendix D). Undoubtedly, it should include helping faculty and advising staff to be more effective mentors of African American students.

Addressing Issues of Number of Students in the Major
In 2010 AFAM decided to address the issue of the number of majors in collaboration with junior college staff in our target region. We decided to recruit majors from junior transfers in our target area and have current majors develop a relationship with them before they enter SJSU, while assuring that they have passed the writing skills test and have gained familiarity with the campus. Thus, current AFAM majors can build a core of support for students who transfer into SJSU and into the AFAM major. As we build a strong core of majors, we will then begin to reach out to potential majors in the regional high schools.

We have also begun a student success activity in our GE courses. We invite alum and successful professionals to share the impact of African American Studies on their career choice. We expect this combined approach, along with examples of alumni featured on our website, will lead to an increase in the number of majors and minors over time. Again, we will need more faculty and staff to implement this effort.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges
The increased reliance on part-time faculty to teach the curriculum has become a normative practice throughout SJSU. As such the Department’s practice of hiring lecturers to teach the curriculum follows the current norm. However, the 1.5 full-time faculty teach more than half of all courses offered, and are responsible for at least 100% of the advising load. Further there are few lecturers in the region who have strengths in our discipline. If faculty take a sabbatical, it impairs student’s progress towards the degree.
Curriculum

Four new AFAM courses were introduced during the review period: AFAM 25 The Changing Majority, a course cross-listed with Asian American Studies and Mexican American Studies, AFAM 112: New Faces in the African American Community, which explores the new black diversity in California and the nation, AFAM 196G: Race, Sex, Drugs, and HIV/AIDS, which address the intersectionality of race and health issues, and AFAM/SOCI 196 Global Youth Culture. Two of these courses are part of the permanent curriculum and we expect the others to be added in the upcoming academic year.

Strengths
We have increased our use of tools for educational technology. Faculty have applied for and received faculty development grants to use the technology available on the campus (the Incubator classroom, Smart Classrooms) and have utilized librarian staff and liaisons to help train students in the use of electronic search engines for research. During the initial AFAM course offered in the Incubator Classroom, students learned a series of activities that were summarized in a presentation during the Spring Fling. The faculty applied for and received the opportunity to teach a course in that classroom for each subsequent semester thereafter, and continue to introduce students to innovations in technology for educational purposes and teamwork approaches to completing assignments and presentations.

Faculty pursued course development grants and developed and offered one online course (AFAM 2A) and several hybrid courses (AFAM 125, AFAM/SOCI 196, AFAM 22, AFAM 120, AFAM 25).

In collaboration with Urban and Regional Planning Department, the department invested considerable proportion of its funds in developing the computer lab in the 218H, providing AFAM majors and minors with a place to work in close proximity to their advisors, and an environment where graduate students model ideal study habits.

Internationalizing the Curriculum
AFAM has internationalized its curriculum. The faculty spearheaded the university’s application to the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), and SJSU now has four faculty/staff COIL Fellows. They are actively engaged in teaching courses or administering programs using the knowledge gained as COIL Fellows. We have encouraged the Study Abroad program to send its returning students to our classroom to make presentations, we have taken students on faculty-led study tours to Tanzania and Haiti, and our students have experienced an increased interest in international experiences.
Majors
The number of majors in AFAM increased until the abrupt firing of minority advisors, long-term staff who were aware of our ethnic studies programs and the needs of minority students. Our faculty continues to hear repeated comments that advisors discourage students from enrolling in the major and ask students, “What can you do with a degree in African American Studies?,” and steer them away from the major. Many of our majors come from California Community Colleges where introductory courses are taught and from SJSU students who fail in their initially declared major. While taking one of our courses, our students develop a passion for the discipline and become inspired to pursue the major. Knowledge of the struggles and triumphs of African American men and women buttresses and sustains our majors in the competitive collegiate and employment environment of the Silicon Valley. Thus, with the assistance of the faculty, our majors are able to galvanize the resources and the resolve to finish their degree and graduate.

Department Challenges
Funding, Faculty, Staff and Space, remain four pressing challenges of the department.

Funding
We request the opportunity to work with the development officer and prepare a list of potential strategies to increase the resources for our department. We have already prepared a list of our needs and submitted them to the previous Development Officer. Our strategy should include AFAM alum, Silicon Valley companies, and regional entrepreneurs with interests in the success of African American Studies and AFAM alum.

Faculty
Currently, we have 1.5 full-time faculty members, one of whom plans to FERP within the next year. The previous 100W lecturer did a remarkable job of mentoring and guiding students in the 100W course, a course replete with students who resist engagement in writing and must be encouraged to develop their writing and reading skills.

Action recommended: Offer the qualified part-time writing lecturer a modest salary as an incentive to continue her work.

Action recommended: Fulfill the promise of 2000 and add three more full-time faculty members to AFAM, two with experience and a passion for developing and teaching online courses.

Space
Privileging one department’s part-time lecturers over those of another sends a troubling message. Until summer 2011, AFAM had adequate space in WSQ 216-218 adequate to accommodate the department as it develops and expands.
During summer 2011, one office space, which the department has generously shared with URBP, was rescinded and assigned to two part-time lecturers in Environmental Studies. The Department needs stability and a safe place to grow and develop, rather than moves that further constrict it. Action recommended: Restore office space to AFAM.

Staff

Since the 2009 budget cuts AFAM has lost 75% of its staff assigned time. Small departments need more staff, not less. We need a minimum of 10 hours per week of staff support, and additional work-study funds.

Action requested: Increase work-study student allotment to support faculty who perform many of the tasks of staff. Hire staff with stronger administrative and clerical skills.

VIII. Closing

The AFAM faculty is committed to strengthening the Department, supporting its majors and minors, and providing a viable program to the SJSU. We are prepared to work with our College and the University to continue providing a responsive and supportive role to Californians and other constituents who seek higher education opportunities at San Jose State. Our department desires SJSU to embrace the principles of inclusion embodied in its world-renowned statue of Olympic champions John Carlos and Tommy Smith and find the means to support the African American Studies Department at SJSU.