

Final Assessment Report for East Asian Studies Program

Introduction

East Asian Studies is an interdisciplinary program committed to offering its students engaging, interactive, and challenging courses that develop an understanding of East Asian cultures and proficiency in East Asian languages (Chinese, Korean, Japanese; *from Program Mission Statement*). The program's home is Renison University College (University of Waterloo).

Although a relatively young and small program, East Asian Studies (EAS) enjoys a high profile, both within the university and within the greater community. The EAS program has a strong presence in research and publications both domestically and internationally (e.g., reputable books, prestigious research grants, invited talks, government consultations etc.). It is a participant in an excellent international network of scholars and institutions and contributes significantly to internationalization of Renison University College and the University of Waterloo.

Self-study process

This self-study is the first review of the EAS program and was a cooperative effort of EAS staff, faculty members, and alumni under the direction and coordination of the Director and her assistant. A survey of EAS alumni was distributed on May 2, 2013, with the aid of the University of Waterloo Alumni Affairs Office. With the assistance of the University of Waterloo's Centre for Teaching Excellence, a workshop was held for EAS faculty and instructors to introduce the UW UDLEs and to discuss program outcomes and goals. The site visit was conducted November 7, 2013; the review team report was received November 29, 2013. The review team members were Prof. Brian Dixon (Department of Biology), Prof. Martin Ross (Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences) and Prof. Elizabeth Weckman (Department of Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering). The responses and implementation plan from program director and endorsement by the Principal of Renison were received February 27, 2014. The implementation strategy with timelines, responsibilities and resource needs assessment is found at the end of this report.

Program History

The program enrolled its first students in 1990, although the first language course offerings were in place by fall 1989, when 35 students registered in introductory courses in Japanese and East Asian Culture. Today EAS offers 39 credit courses serving more than 1000 students each year. Courses cover a range of areas in the social sciences and humanities, with an inter/multi-disciplinary nature, including culture, literature, history, political science, international relations, and religious studies.

The Renison College Certificate in EAS was first offered in 1997, becoming the Renison College Diploma in EAS in 2004/2005. The EAS Diploma became available only to non-degree/post-degree students in 2009/2010 when the EAS Minor and Option were introduced for degree students. The Option was inactivated in Fall 2012 along with all other Faculty of Arts options. Diplomas in Chinese Language and Japanese Language became available in 2009-2011, replaced in 2011 by certificates for students registered in degree programs at the University of Waterloo. A new Korean Language Certificate became available in 2011. Diplomas remain available for non-degree/post-degree students, according to Faculty of Arts practice.

The Confucius Institute was officially opened on May 3, 2007 and is an integral part of the East Asian Studies program. This non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and development of Chinese language, culture, studies, and business.

As of 2013, programs in East Asian Studies are offered at many levels at various institutions in Canada (Toronto, UBC, McGill, Victoria, Alberta, Ottawa). UW offers EAS only as a Minor, Diploma or Certificate and it is unique in offering a Korean Language Certificate. In comparison to the other institutions, the number of faculty teaching in the East Asian Studies program at the University of Waterloo is very low – there are only three faculty members.

Program administration and resources

The EAS Program is part of Renison University College, and its Director reports directly to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Renison University. The Director oversees all the programs and represents EAS publicly. A part-time Assistant to the Director of EAS provides administrative support for the program. In addition, the Academic Dean (previously the Administrative Dean), along with the Renison Registrar's Office, provides academic advising to EAS students.

EAS works closely with three departments at UW: Religious Studies, History, and Political Science. EAS faculty are cross-appointed and affiliated with them and contribute to their graduate programs. EAS also collaborates with the Balsillie School of International Relations and the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) for some research projects.

In addition to having access to UW's physical and electronic library system, the EAS program is also supported by the Lusi Wong Library at Renison. Renison has one computer lab – the Donald Choi Multimedia Lab. There are also 8 computers available for student use in the library.

Office space is tight - increasing numbers of classes have meant increased numbers of teaching staff. All faculty and staff are accommodated, either in single or shared office spaces.

Programs offered and objectives

The programs offered are the following:

- East Asian Studies Minor
- East Asian Studies Diploma
- Diploma in Chinese Language
- Diploma in Japanese Language

- Certificate in Chinese Language
- Certificate in Japanese Language
- Certificate in Korean Language

In addition to credit course offerings, EAS also offers non-credit courses each term in Chinese and Japanese language, which are taken by faculty, staff, students, and people in the local community.

The above credentials (minor, diplomas, certificates) are constituted from various combinations and numbers of courses. Courses are currently offered at the first (9 courses), second (19 courses), and third (11 courses) year level. There are no courses offered at the fourth year level. The specific courses are clearly indicated in the calendar descriptions of the various programs. Minimum cumulative averages for the courses also vary according to credential. EAS has the second largest percentage of class enrollment at Renison (19% vs. 50% for Social Development Studies).

In total, 103 East Asian Studies credentials have been awarded to students from 1998-2013. To date, the highest number of East Asian degrees awarded has been EASIA Studies Diplomas (40), followed by EASIA Studies Certificates (14) and EASIA Minors (13). In the span time covered by the self study, credentials awarded have ranged from 5-13/year.

The EAS curriculum is designed to develop specific skills in critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal relations, and leadership. Students learn not only to communicate effectively in a second language, but also to think analytically about East Asian cultures. Skills developed in the EAS program allow students to develop a solid foundation from which they could build a career in East Asia and interact in a highly globalized world.

The program encourages students to take advantage of overseas exchange programs and study abroad opportunities. Agreements currently exist with universities in Japan, Korea, and China. EAS courses help to prepare students who go on these exchanges by raising their cultural awareness and providing a linguistic foundation for communicating in foreign languages.

Students

Participation in EAS programs is campus-wide. The number of students enrolled in EAS culture and language courses has shown relative growth for the past seven years, from about 1000 to a noticeable peak of nearly 1800 students enrolled in all EAS courses in 2012/13. This year also saw a peak in the numbers of students enrolled in EASIA, JAPAN, and KOREA courses. Class size varies depending on the subject matter. Some courses are seminars, designed for smaller group discussions with approximately 10 students whereas other classes have much larger enrolment numbers close to 100.

The entrance average from high school for students who have received a degree/diploma/certificate in EAS is 83.6%. Alumni who responded to the survey show a wide diversity of post-graduation career paths (e.g., administrative assistant, ESL school manager, software developer, economist, engineer, corporate account executive, case manager).

Faculty

EAS is currently supported by three tenured faculty members (two associate professors and one full professor - from Political Science, History and Religious Studies). All three are established scholars with international recognition in the field of their expertise.

Two of these members have numerous involvements with professional and community organizations related to Asian studies and culture. There are three language coordinators (China, Japan, and Korea), and a special project coordinator, all of whom hold renewable contracts, and a number of full-time and part-time instructors with term contracts. Three coordinators and one sessional instructor currently hold adjunct faculty appointments.

There are no tenured/tenure-track faculty members teaching East Asia language courses in the program - all language instructors are on contract. They are, however, dedicated and excellent educators, as proven by continuous popularity of their courses and outstanding results of speech contests in provincial, national, and even international levels. The Confucius Institute regularly sponsors visiting instructors/lecturers.

The standard teaching load for Renison faculty is five courses per academic year. The Director as well as one of the tenured faculty in the program have reduced teaching loads due to their administrative responsibilities. Teaching associates (staff) within the EAS program are not bound by the same teaching loads, with some teaching only one course per academic year, and others teaching as many as nine.

Program quality indicators and strengths

The EAS program demonstrates its high quality in several ways:

- The demand for EAS courses is high and continues to grow.
- Although faculty numbers dedicated to the program are small (3), those individuals are recognized successful scholars in their discipline.
- Student evaluations of their instructors (faculty and contract) are consistently very positive, rating high for Japanese instructors (4.63), the Korean instructor (4.68), Chinese instructors (4.38), and East Asian Studies instructors (4.11).
- Students' overall evaluation of the courses shows that Japanese and Korean courses were graded most positively, with an overall average grading of 4.51 on a 5.0 scale for Japanese courses and 4.53 for Korean courses. Chinese courses were graded 4.29 and East Asian Studies courses were graded 3.96 on a 5.0 scale.
- Of the sixteen EAS alumni who responded to the survey, half indicated that they chose the EAS program to pursue their interests. Also, half responded that they would definitely recommend this university to someone considering an EAS program and 62% rated the quality of their academic experience as very good.
- Students registered in Renison's Japanese language courses have established a reputation for their excellent performances at the annual speech contest in Ontario and at the national finals.

- The Korean content of this program is unique among counterparts elsewhere, but is somewhat vulnerable as it relies on only one adjunct faculty.
- The reviewers commented that “Librarians have done excellent work identifying methods and technology for identifying and cataloguing non-English works.”

Challenges and opportunities for program improvement and enhancement

- A pressing challenge is to meet the high demand for language courses because there is insufficient budget available. *Ad-hoc* arrangements are made every year to add sections to meet the demand for language courses. The program wishes to secure an annual budget to offer extra sections regularly.
- EAS would like to offer more courses at the 300 and 400 levels and eventually offer an EAS major, but is currently unable to due to limited budgetary and faculty resources.
- The program reviewers commented that “the diversity of this interdisciplinary program, and those that teach it, were such that they could not derive consistent and clear UDLEs during their self-study for this report.”
- The program reviewers commented that students “currently get some extended proficiency in East Asian studies through the “culture” courses; however, the students felt that more courses on socio-economics and international relations would also be a benefit. One of the three tenured faculty felt international business courses would be a good addition.”
- The reviewers commented that “The physical resources for the East Asian Studies program are a key limiting factor in the delivery and management of the program.”
- The program’s heavy reliance on sessional instructors makes it excessively vulnerable to funding reductions.

External reviewers' report, program response and implementation plan

The reviewers recognize EAS to be a "very strong program delivering high quality education". With current physical and human (teaching and administrative) resources, high demand for EAS programs is not satisfied due to both space limitations and lack of permanent teaching staff. The reviewers further note that "the largest student enrollment and demand is in the area that is almost solely taught by non-permanent staff."

The reviewers made 4 recommendations for program improvement:

Recommendation 1: Consolidate the program ("build our strength") by making some teaching staff permanent and providing resources to enhance coordination of the program.

Program response:

- 1) Long-term contracts will be offered to four coordinators in the program starting in Fall 2014.
- 2) The program is currently examining additional ways to enhance program coordination. The discussion will need to involve other relevant units and the expectation is that this objective will be realized in 2015.

Recommendation 2: Identify plans to increase space and teaching support as required (both for lectures and tutorials), particularly for accommodating student demand.

Program response:

EAS' budget situation is expected to improve in the coming years. Renison University College will receive enhanced funding through the FUAC equity agreement starting from the next academic year (2014). The program hopes to make use of this budget increase to help stabilize and develop the EAS program.

- 1) In December 2013, the Renison Board approved the construction of a new building to increase office and classroom space for the college, next to the current East Asian Studies area. The building is expected to be ready in 2015. With the construction of the new building, we expect that there will be more office space available for EAS program, as well as more additional classrooms.
- 2) EAS has received additional funds that have been used to cover the cost of additional sections to eliminate/reduce the long waiting lists for 2014-2015. EAS will hire a new faculty member who can support the Korean program area. In 2015 EAS expects to hire long-term regular tutor(s) or lecturer(s) for the Korean Language Program.

Recommendation 3: Develop a unified plan for expanding the program beyond its current level in a specific area of focus (Socioeconomic? Cultural? Exchanges? Business?). Given the uniqueness the program has in offering Korean content, expansion of that component should be considered very seriously. Collaborative expansion capitalizing on other initiatives should also be considered.

Program response:

1) The development of the EAS program as a whole must be done in a way that addresses the student demand. The following upper level Chinese language courses are currently being proposed: CHINA 410R (“Selected Readings in Classical Chinese”) and CHINA 460R (“Creative Writing in Chinese”). Preparation to offer more upper level Japanese and Korean Language courses is currently under way. The actual offerings will be decided based on demands, such as pre-enrollment and budget.

2) Besides the regular language courses, it would also be desirable for us to expand our offerings of Korean language-related courses, such as “Korean for Business,” “Korean Literature in Translation,” and “Korean in Mass Media.”

3) EAS is currently proposing two upper level culture (Social Science and Humanities) courses titled “Cold War in East Asia” (EASIA 377R) and “Chinese Culture through Films” (EASIA 320R). Plans are being made to propose a “Politics and Diplomacy of Contemporary China”* course (to be coordinated with the Political Science Department) or another 3rd year course with a focus on China.

Recommendation 4: After all of the above and only then, consider what it will take to change this into a major program.

Program response:

EAS will continue to work on developing and expanding upper level and fourth year course offerings for a future EAS major, including the development of a required capstone course at the 400 level. Fourth year course offerings may include “Honours Seminar in Special Topics,” “Special Studies,” and “Senior Honours Essay/Thesis.”

Implementation Strategy with timelines, responsibilities, and resources required

Timeline	Recommendations	Responsibility	Resources Required
September 2014	1. Consolidate the program (“build our strength”) by making long /definite-term contracts with some teaching staff and providing additional resources for program coordination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director • Renison Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin Support • Funding for additional staff work hours
2014-2015	2. Identify plans to increase space and teaching support as required (both for lectures and tutorials), particularly for accommodating student demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director • Renison Principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space availability • Funding for additional hires and increased teaching hours
2014-2017	3. Develop a unified plan for expanding the program beyond its current level in a specific area of focus (Socioeconomic? Cultural? Exchanges? Business?). Given the uniqueness the program has in offering Korean content, expansion of that component should be considered very seriously. Collaborative expansion capitalizing on other initiatives should also be considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin Support
2016-2018	4. After all of the above and only then, consider what it will take to change this into a major program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admin Support • Funding for additional hires