



C U Y A M A C A
· C O L L E G E ·

Annual Update Report

Academic - Kumeyaay Studies (KUMY) - (AHSS)

Strengthen Campus Cultural Presence and Enrollment (Fall 2025)

Program Goal: Strengthen Visibility and Enrollment

Goal Status: Active

Summary of Progress or Results

Summary Date: 01/12/2026

Summary of Progress or Results: N/A - New Goal

Reporting Period: 2025 - 2026

Status: Not Started

Action steps for this academic year.:

- Develop an advertising and outreach campaign emphasizing transfer options, GE pathways, and career relevance (education, environmental fields, social services, arts/humanities, tribal governance).
- Work with Counseling to ensure all counselors are fully aware of the program, GE applicability, and course pathways.
- Increase presence on the college website, including faculty profiles, program description, and links to campus cultural sites (Kumeyaay Village, Learner's Garden).
- Conduct on-site enrollment support at each Kumeyaay reservation and community center.
- Work with college leadership to formalize support for:
 - the Kumeyaay Village outdoor classroom
 - the Learner's Garden
 - campus cultural signage and interpretive installations
- Advocate for college investment in a Native student center, providing community space, academic support, and cultural programming.
- Acquire a dedicated campus location for pottery firing, traditional tool-making, and hands-on cultural arts.
- Establish ongoing campus-wide Native activities, including:
 - cultural arts days
 - traditional food events
 - storytelling circles

Summary of Progress or Results

- land-based workshops
- Document the program's role in fulfilling the college's equity, DEIA, and community engagement commitments.
- Demonstrate how the program contributes to the history and place-based identity of the college.
- Advocate for stable funding for:
- cultural materials
- adjunct support
- outdoor learning resources
- signage and displays
- technology and instructional materials

Expand Course Content and Regional Indigenous Representation (Fall 2025)**Program Goal:** Expand Course Content and Regional Indigenous Representation**Goal Status:** Active**Summary of Progress or Results****Summary Date:** 01/12/2026**Summary of Progress or Results:** NA - New Goal**Reporting Period:** 2025 - 2026**Status:** Not Started**Action steps for this academic year.:**

- Expand academic focus to include neighboring Southern California tribal groups (Luiseño, Cahuilla, Cupeño, Diegueño, Serrano, Mojave, and others) while maintaining Kumeyaay leadership and centrality.
- Foster collaborations with local tribes for guest lectures, workshops, and shared educational opportunities. Update syllabi and course materials to reflect a broader, inclusive Indigenous Studies perspective.

Improve Program Integration and Cohesion (Fall 2025)

Program Goal: Improve Program Integration and Cohesion

Goal Status: Active

Summary of Progress or Results

Summary Date: 01/12/2026

Summary of Progress or Results: NA - New Goal

Reporting Period: 2025 - 2026

Status: Not Started

Action steps for this academic year.:

- Strengthen continuity between ethnobotany, ecology, humanities, history, and language courses.
- Develop shared learning outcomes and thematic connectors:
 - land stewardship
 - cultural continuity
 - traditional ecological knowledge
 - colonial histories and survivance
 - place-based learning
- Create a coordinated set of resources (slides, maps, vocabulary lists, field guides, plant/animal knowledge, digital archives).

Strengthen Community and Tribal Partnerships (Fall 2025)

Program Goal: Strengthen Community and Tribal Partnerships

Goal Status: Active

Summary of Progress or Results

Summary Date: 01/12/2026

Summary of Progress or Results: NA - New Goal

Reporting Period: 2025 - 2026

Status: Not Started

Action steps for this academic year.:

- Build sustained relationships with tribal education departments for recruitment and educational pathways.

Summary of Progress or Results

- Invite tribal elders, artists, and knowledge-keepers for regular presentations.
- Coordinate activities and educational events in the Kumeyaay Village, reinforcing the space as a living cultural classroom.

Program Overview and Update

Lead Author

Stan Rodriguez

Collaborator(s)

Michelle Garcia

Please briefly share the ways in which you collaborated with colleagues within and outside of your department to gather input to inform your program review.

The Kumeyaay Studies Program gathered input for this program review through ongoing collaboration with colleagues and community partners. The primary instructional and planning collaboration has been with the Biology Department Chair, who works closely with Kumeyaay Studies to coordinate curriculum, program goals, scheduling, and resource needs, particularly for the shared Kumeyaay Science and ethnobotany courses.

In addition, the program is informed by continuous dialogue with the Kumeyaay community and broader Indigenous education networks. This includes consultation with tribal members, elders, and educators, as well as engagement with Indigenous-serving institutions such as D-Q University and statewide Native education and advocacy networks. These conversations provide essential insight into the real-world experiences, barriers, and aspirations of Native students, ensuring that the program remains culturally grounded, responsive, and aligned with community needs.

Input from these partners helps guide decisions related to curriculum, pedagogy, land-based learning, cultural programming, and student support. This combination of campus-based collaboration and community-based consultation ensures that the Kumeyaay Studies Program remains both academically rigorous and authentically connected to Indigenous knowledge systems and student experiences.

Dean/Manager(s)

Jane Gazale

Please briefly share the ways in which you collaborated with your Dean on your program review to discuss your vision, goals, and resource needs/requests.

I met with the Dean in December to discuss the program's vision, goals, and priorities, including enrollment trends, curriculum development, community partnerships, and long-term resource needs. This conversation helped align the program's direction with the college's broader commitments to equity, Indigenous representation, and place-based education, and provided guidance for shaping this annual update and future planning.

Please summarize the changes, additions, and achievements that have occurred in your program since the last program review.

Since the last program review, the Kumeyaay Studies Program has made meaningful progress in strengthening its curriculum, community engagement, and student success. Over the past five years, the program has awarded 12 degrees, averaging 2–3 degrees per year, reflecting steady completion despite the program's small size.

Our courses consistently demonstrate high retention and success rates, showing that culturally grounded pedagogy effectively supports student engagement and learning.

The program has also deepened its cross-disciplinary collaborations with Biology and Ornamental Horticulture through the creation and expansion of the Kumeyaay Village and the planning and development of the Learners' and Elders' Gardens. These outdoor learning spaces serve as living classrooms where students engage in traditional ecological knowledge, restoration ecology, and Indigenous land stewardship, creating powerful connections between culture, science, and place.

Annual Update

Students in the Kumeyaay Studies Program are actively engaged in living cultural practices, including building Kumeyaay houses and tule boats, and learning traditional construction, navigation, and land-based skills. Through these experiences, students do more than study Kumeyaay history; they experience Kumeyaay culture as a living, vibrant, and continuing presence.

The program centers the understanding that the Kumeyaay people are still here, and that their knowledge, language, and traditions remain vital to the region and to the educational mission of the college. These immersive activities foster a deep sense of identity, respect, and connection to place, supporting both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in understanding the cultural and ecological foundations of the land on which they learn.

Together, these accomplishments have strengthened the program's identity, increased its visibility on campus, and positioned Kumeyaay Studies as a vital hub for Indigenous-centered, place-based education.

Assessment and Student Achievement

After looking at the SLO information for the past year in Nuventive Improve, are you are on track for the 4-year assessment cycle?

No

If you answered no above, please describe the department's plan to ensure SLOs are assessed every 4 years.

Kumeyaay Studies courses KUMY/BIO 133, 134, and 135 have been assessed, and students are meeting the stated Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Assessment of the remaining Kumeyaay Studies courses was delayed due to an instructional disruption, when the regular faculty member was unable to teach and course continuity was temporarily affected.

To ensure full program-level assessment moving forward, the department has established a structured SLO assessment plan. Beginning in Spring 2026, the program will assess two courses per semester, allowing all Kumeyaay Studies courses to be evaluated and reviewed by Spring 2027.

This schedule will ensure that every course in the program is assessed within a four-year cycle, in alignment with college and accreditation expectations.

SLO results will be reviewed during Kumeyaay Studies planning meetings and shared with the Biology Department and partner programs to support curricular alignment, continuous improvement, and culturally responsive teaching practices.

Which courses have not been assessed in the last 4 years?

KUMY 116, 117, 120, 121, 128, 129, 220

If you did not assess in the last year, please share why, including whether your program is experiencing barriers to assessment or data submission, and/or if your program would benefit from outcomes and assessment support.

NA

Please share any outcomes assessment projects your program has worked on in the last year, including SLOs on Canvas, PLOs by ACP, Equitable Assessment Strategies (innovative collective/common assessments, project-based, work-based learning, student-centered, etc.), or other.

Over the past year, the Kumeyaay Studies and Biology faculty have continued to develop and implement equity-centered, project-based SLO assessment across KUMY/BIO 133 (Kumeyaay Ethnoecology), KUMY/BIO 134 (Ethnobotany), and KUMY/BIO 135 (Ethnoecology/Ethnobotany Lab).

These courses use shared, community-based and field-based assessments that allow students to demonstrate learning through knowledge sharing, observation, reflection, and application, rather than high-stakes exams. Examples include:

- land-based field activities in the Kumeyaay Village and surrounding landscapes,
- ethnobotanical plant studies,
- collaborative documentation of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), and

Annual Update

- reflective writing and presentations connecting Indigenous and Western scientific frameworks.

SLOs for these courses have been assessed using Canvas-aligned rubrics and project artifacts, and results show that students are successfully meeting learning outcomes related to ecological understanding, cultural knowledge, scientific observation, and relational learning.

KUMY/BIO 134 and 135 were also assessed through paired lecture-lab projects, allowing faculty to evaluate how well students transfer knowledge between classroom and field settings, an important marker of authentic learning. These assessments contributed to ongoing program-level discussions about shared learning outcomes, culturally responsive pedagogy, and alignment across Kumeyaay Studies courses.

Together, these outcomes assessment projects reflect the program's commitment to equitable assessment, community-grounded learning, and continuous improvement, and they provide a strong foundation for upcoming PLO mapping and program-level review.

Student Achievement

Please discuss any equity gaps in access or success and share what the program will do to address them.

Across the last five years, Kumeyaay Studies courses (KUMY) have demonstrated exceptionally strong retention and success. When viewed chronologically (Fall 2020 → Spring 2025), retention has remained consistently high, typically above 90%, with success rates generally ranging between 75–90% across terms. Gender data show minimal gaps: female and male students exhibit comparable retention and success across nearly every term, indicating that the program provides equitable learning conditions across gender groups.

Notably, Kumeyaay Studies courses do not show the large equity gaps commonly seen in STEM or large-lecture disciplines. This reflects the program's culturally responsive pedagogy, community-based learning, and strong sense of belonging, all of which support persistence and achievement for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike.

The program will continue to address equity by:

- Expanding land-based, experiential learning in the Kumeyaay Village and Learner's Garden
- Strengthening community partnerships and Indigenous representation in curriculum
- Increasing counseling awareness and GE alignment to reduce structural access barriers

Please describe any enrollment changes (increases/decreases) over the past year and the context for these changes.

Enrollment in Kumeyaay Studies increased dramatically in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, reflecting growing interest and strong word-of-mouth about the program's relevance and community-centered design. However, Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 saw a decline, largely due to the loss of the program's full-time faculty member for nearly a full academic year. This disrupted scheduling, continuity, outreach, and visibility, critical drivers of enrollment for a culturally rooted program.

If your program has seen a significant decline in enrollment over the past year, what resources or support would be helpful to improve program enrollment and access?

To restore and grow enrollment, the program needs:

- Improved marketing and website presence
- Dedicated campus space and visible cultural sites, such as the Kumeyaay Village and the Learners' Garden being accessible to students
- Counseling and enrollment support at Kumeyaay reservations and community centers

With faculty stability and institutional investment, Kumeyaay Studies is well-positioned to return to growth and continue serving as a model of equity-driven, place-based education.

Annual Update

Distance Education Course Success (If Applicable)

If your department offers distance education classes, how do you ensure Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) is being implemented?

Kumeyaay Studies distance education courses are intentionally designed to ensure Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) between faculty and students, even when courses are offered online or in hybrid formats.

All Kumeyaay Studies courses include a synchronous Zoom component, where students meet live with the instructor for lectures, discussions, cultural sharing, and guided analysis of course materials. These live sessions allow for real-time dialogue, feedback, and relationship-building, which is essential for culturally grounded, community-based learning.

In addition, students participate in guided field trips and land-based learning experiences, including activities in the Kumeyaay Village, Learner's Garden, and local ecological sites. These experiences are coordinated and facilitated by the instructor and serve as substantive instructional interactions tied directly to course learning outcomes. They are also streamed over Zoom, so all students can participate.

Faculty also provide weekly announcements, instructional videos, discussion facilitation, and prompt, individualized feedback on assignments, reflections, and projects. Students regularly engage in interactive discussions, collaborative projects, and instructor-guided activities that require application, analysis, and reflection rather than passive content consumption.

Together, synchronous meetings, field-based instruction, interactive Canvas activities, and continuous instructor feedback ensure that Kumeyaay Studies distance education courses meet RSI requirements while honoring Indigenous pedagogies centered on relationship, land, and shared knowledge.

Program Goals

Program Goals Status

I have updated the progress on my previous goals.

Submission

Program Review response is complete and ready for review.

Yes - Response complete and ready for review

Dean Approval and Feedback

Feedback

Recommendations to continue strengthening the SLO assessment work by developing a robust assessment plan and implementing regular assessments. All active goals are new goals; no previous goals listed and no goal mapping.