



India Association of Minnesota:
Association Records

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Office of the Vice President
Academic Affairs and Provost
213 Morrill Hall
100 Church Street S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

(612) 625-0051

May 15, 1987

Sudhansu S. Misra, President
India Club of Minnesota
1694 Como Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Dear President Misra:

Thank you very much for your letter to Provost Benjamin. He has asked me to respond for him. In the planning process the University is now going through, each college in the University is responsible for proposing its own program priorities. The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has submitted a proposal that would eliminate the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. That proposal will be further reviewed by both the CLA Assembly and by a University-wide advisory task force, with further opportunity for public discussion before final action is recommended to the Board of Regents and the Higher Education Coordinating Board, next Fall and Winter. Nothing will be final until then.

Options under consideration include the possibility of expanding the scope of other departments so that the current programs will continue to have a departmental home. If the recommendation to abolish the department stands after that review, it will be because of a judgment that other priorities are more important, not that the program in South and Southwest Asian Studies is without merit. When a program is proposed for change, the planning process is intended to weigh our need for the program (based on prospective demand and its centrality to the University's overall program) against the investment required for the University to satisfy that need in a responsible way, with high quality. In the present case, the department's educational contributions and its quality are important considerations in making that judgment, as is the availability of similar programs within the Big Ten.

I will forward your letter to the dean of the College of Liberal Arts, so that he is aware of your view. I appreciate your making the effort to communicate it.

Sincerely,

Edward Foster
Acting Associate Vice President

cc: Provost Benjamin
Dean Lukermann (with enclosure)
Regent McGuiggan
Regent Moore

JOHN J. MARTY

Senate District 63
Room 235 Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155
(612) 296-5645

Senate

State of Minnesota

May 30, 1987

President Kenneth Keller
University of Minnesota
202 Morrill Hall
100 Church Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear President Keller:

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed elimination of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies at the University.

As one who represents a large part of the University community and who has been a strong supporter of funding for higher education, I am pleased to see efforts to improve the University. However, the University's plan to disband the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies as part of the Commitment to Focus seems contrary to the goals of improving education at the University.

Minnesota is a natural place to develop a strong interest in Asian Studies, due to the large number of Asian immigrants here.

In times when we are trying to increase international trade and international understanding, it is a shame to eliminate successful higher education programs in Asian Studies.

It also strikes me somewhat ironic that under the Commitment to Focus, the University is trying to eliminate a department that is widely recognized as one of the more successful such departments in the country.

While I do not know all of the background behind the proposal to eliminate the department, or the status of the proposal, I urge you to reconsider the decision.


Thank you for your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

John J. Marty

JJM:lt

bcc: Mr. Sudhansu Misra ✓

F.Y.I.




PLEASE POST/CIRCULATE

Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans

TOWN HALL MEETING

The Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, a legislated State Agency will hold a Public Meeting, as follows:

DATE : May 5, 1987 (Tuesday)

TIME : 7:00 PM

PLACE : The Centrum - Free Parking
Lutheran Social Services
2414 Park Avenue, Minneapolis
Telephone 871-0221

AGENDA : COMMITMENT TO FOCUS
The University of Minnesota
* Minority Programs
* Asian/Pacific American Learning
Resource Center
* Proposed "dis-establishment" of the
Department of South and Southwest
Asian Studies

In compliance with the Council's legislative mandate to advise the Governor and the Legislature on issues confronting the Asian-Pacific people in the State of Minnesota, the Council is holding this Town Hall Meeting as an integral part of its "community outreach and education program" and to solicit public comments and recommendations regarding the "Commitment to Focus" Plan of The University of Minnesota. The Council will submit its findings and recommendations to the University President, the Governor, and the Legislature for appropriate action. Organizations and individuals who wish to speak may register in advance by calling - Dr. Albert V. de Leon, Executive Director at (612) 296-0538.

cc: President Kenneth H. Keller
Dr. John M. Taborn
Dr. Nobuya Tsuchida
Dr. William Malandra

Governor Rudy Perpich
Minnesota Legislators
Asian-Pacific Community

Summit National Bank Building
205 Aurora Avenue, Suite 100
St. Paul, Minnesota 55103
612-296-0538

PLEASE PRINT

NAME SUDHANSU S. MISRA TEL. NO. 631-9579

ORGANIZATION India Club

POSITION President MAY 5, 1987

ADDRESS 2473 Brenner St.
Roseville, Mn. 55113

SUBJECT: COMMITMENT TO FOCUS: COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Why Should the University of Minnesota
retain the Department of South & Southwest
Studies :

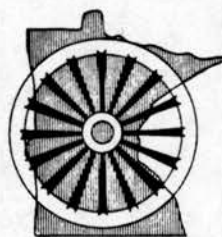
- ① Nearly 25% of the world's population live in South and Southwest Asia. The University will do a great service to teach and provide research facilities in languages of this area. ~~and~~ This will give the area residents an opportunity to learn the culture and language and promote understanding.
- ② The existing department at the University is well known for its quality of teaching and research. The staff is well qualified and have years of research and teaching experience. Most of them are tenured. Well known universities in the other parts of the country recognize the superior quality of the department curriculum.
- ③ The Ames library is one of a kind which provides research facilities to the South Asian Students. Elimination of the department may eliminate the library.
- ④ Interest by the U.S. business and educators in South Asia is growing rapidly. Language is one of the most

effective means of better communication and understanding. It will be a mistake to eliminate the ~~study of language~~ department instead of strengthening it in order to achieve this objective.

⑤ Most important of all to the Indian community, is the hope of providing education in Indian languages at the University of Minnesota for their growing number of children. The parents and their children will be deprived of this opportunity and look elsewhere for this education. This will amount to more expense and less return for their tax dollars.

⑥ Elimination of a language department from the University will amount to insignificant saving in budget compared to the huge budget for other departments, such as the Athletic Department.





THE INDIA CLUB OF MINNESOTA

Dr. Roger W. Benjamin
Vice President, Academic Affairs
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN.

April 27, 1987

Dear Professor Benjamin,

The proposed elimination of the South and Southwest Asian studies at the University of Minnesota has caused a great deal of concern for the Asian Indians and others who feel it is being abolished from an well established institution without much consideration to the languages used by almost 1/3rd. of the world's population. It is proposed at a time when the American business and political awareness is expanding in the South West and south Asia. Once it is decided to eliminate the department, it is almost impossible to recreate it and along with it one of the very valuable assets of the University, the Ames library is most certain to go. We the Asian Indians will be very disappointed to lose both the South Asian study department and the Ames library.

We have appealed to our senators and legislators and they have promised to help as best as they can. The Asia Pacific Council of Minnesota which represents all the Asians of Minnesota is very strongly opposed to the elimination of the department. The Asian Indian community has entered into the second generation and most of them are either in college or entering college. The parents were looking forward to the department of South Asian Studies at the University to give their children an oppertunity to study Indian languages. It hurts to know that our children will be deprived of such education at the University which will give them a scope to do research or in-deapth study.

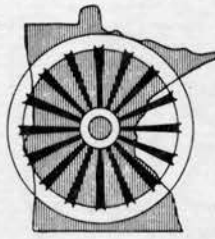
With due respect we are submitting the attached petition to express our concern and dismay. We are a small community in the state but we represent a majority of the intellectuals and professionals. The India Club is an organization that represents the Indians and adapts to the community needs. As the president of the India Club I urge you to retain the South West and South Asian study department at the University of Minnesota. Thank you.

Sincerely

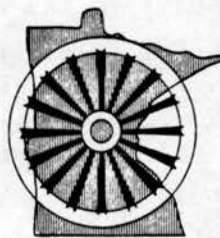
Sudhansu S. Misra

Sudhansu S. Misra, President, India Club.

cc: M/S Wenda Moore, Board of Regents, University of Minnesota
Dr. Charles McQuiggan, Chairman, Board of Regents, University of Minnesota



THE INDIA CLUB
OF MINNESOTA



THE INDIA CLUB OF MINNESOTA

Dr. Roger W. Benjamin
Vice President, Academic Affairs
University of Minnesota
213 Morrill Hall
Minneapolis
Minnesota

April 20, 1987

Dear Professor Benjamin,

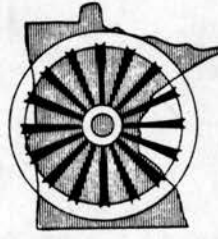
We understand that there is a movement to disband the department of South Asian studies at the University of Minnesota. In addition, we are informed that the Ames Library which is considered to be one of the best for South Asian literature, could be sold to another university.

We the under-signed who represent the Indian community, are extremely concerned. We are writing this petition to express our dismay and disappointment. The elimination of the South Asian Studies department will deprive our children and others who are benefiting greatly in the study of South Asian language and literature conducted by one of the best in the country.

THROUGH OUR PETITION WE URGE YOU TO RETAIN THE DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES AND THE AMES LIBRARY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA.

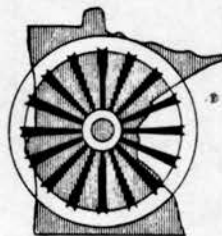
Sincerely

- 1) Sudhansu S. Mishra; President, India Club
- 2) Pranab K. Lahiri, President, Hindu Society of Minnesota.
- 3) Samir K. & (6) Bhyan Bhandari (8) Anoop Mathur
- 4) Kalyan Mishra (7) Parfata (9) Sunil B. Patel
- 5) Pramesh Jain



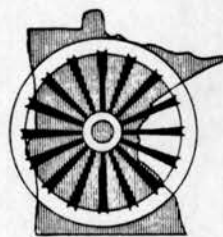
THE INDIA CLUB OF MINNESOTA

- (10) T. K. S. -
(11) Lakshmi M. Shreeya
(12) Godambharan Indirpad
(13) Shobhana Marjithia
(14) Yashwant Junghare
(15) Pardeep Puri
(16) Fern Panda
(17) Maria J. Monuho
(18) Dipankar R. Chatterjee
(19) M. Rajeswari Kant
Anu Jayaraman
20) De Gahr
21) S. S.
22) H. Vora
23) S. Vora
24) R. Bhatt
25) S. J. Trivedi
26) Durga P. Panda
27) Sarat K. Mohapatra
28) Jayanti Mohapatra
29) Giriparna Misra
30) Indu Misra
31) Brian Ganguly
32) Bipul Desai
33) Bihari Desai
34) K. B. DESAI
35) Madhu Desai
36) C. Vant R. Bhatt
37) Naresh Gendli
38) Hare U. L. Khan
39) Jeta J. Patel
40) Ketaki J. Sha.
41) Jayant & Patel
42) Lata Shukla
43) Leena Patel
44) Rajesh
45) Parag B. Desai



THE INDIA CLUB
OF MINNESOTA

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 46) Prabhu C. Kotela | 62) Kirit Mody |
| 47) Dr. Dinesh Shah | 63) Donna Mody |
| 48) Bipin C. Gandra | 64) Prakash Karami |
| 49) Bharat Kothari | 65) Vimal Gandhi |
| 50) Sudha Kothari | 66) Suresh Patel |
| 51) Anjali Patel | 67) Shripal Sheth |
| 52) Harsha Desai | 68) Ramanik P. Shah |
| 53) Saroj Kamath | 69) Kirit Patel |
| 54) Shanti Sheth | 70) Debesh Patel |
| 55) Sita K. Sheth | 71) Jitendra M. Shah |
| 56) Somya | 72) Anurag |
| 57) R. Mehra | 73) B. V. P. A. S. |
| 58) Jagdeep Taneja | 74) Sonal Desai |
| 59) Shaktika Trivedi | 75) RANJIT V. PATEL |
| 60) Vikram Mehra | 76) Jay Patel |
| 61) Y. P. Upadhyaya | 77) S. V. Upadhyaya |



THE INDIA CLUB

OF MINNESOTA

76) Meena Shinde

96) Kusum Shah

79) Bhargav Jain

~~96) Kusum Shah~~
97) Mayank Patel

80) Pili Bhatt

98) Ashwin Patel

81) Kirtidevi B. Jain

99) Heena Patel

82) Mahendra C. Shah

100) Harshad P. Bhatt

83) Govind & Shil

84) Kamlesh Patel

101) Vinodini V. Shah

85) Kirti Gandhi

102) Ashwin Shah

86) Koki Patel

103) ~~Ami M. Jha~~

87) Kreshnakant P. Vora

104) Kalyanji U. Patel

88) Varsha Vora

105) Vinak K. Patel

89) Dipti Munshi

106) Suresh T. Shah

90) Mira Shah

107) Pallavi Shah

91) Dinesh Shah

108) D. K. Gaud

92) Hansa Shah

109) Simta Shah

93) Shuchi

110) Hemmi Phadnis

94) Vithal Patel

111) Jyoti C. Patel

95) Sushil Patel

112) Kamal Sam

March 25, 1987

To: CLA Assembly Members

From: Certain members of the Dept. of South & Southwest Asian Studies

Dear Colleagues:

This open letter is being sent to all who are concerned with the quality and variety of education provided by the College of Liberal Arts. At the CLA Assembly meeting to be held on March 31, 1987, at 3:15 P.M., Room 30, Law Building, the College Planning Statement, we believe, will be presented for rapid passage. This document includes the "dis-establishment" of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. We urge you to consider this action carefully. We further urge you to vote against "dis-establishment" and strive for some better solution, one that maximizes the use of personnel and resources (e.g. the unique Ames Library of South Asia and the Middle East holdings) now present at Minnesota. We hope that you will act to delay the administration's rather hasty proposal until all its ramifications can be studied.

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies has six "core" faculty, five of whom are tenured and the sixth on the tenure track (he is new this year). The department offers a B.A., and at the graduate level an M.A. and a Ph.D. under the rubric of "South Asian Languages." "Southwest Asia" is an awkward term chosen to represent the Arabic and Persian components of this program -- legacies of the now-defunct Middle Eastern program -- while "South Asia" stands largely for India and Pakistan, although Bangladesh is included to some extent. Hindi and Urdu are the two major South Asian languages taught, while Marathi (an important regional language) and Sanskrit (the Indian equivalent to Classical Greek or Latin) are also offered. In terms of enrollments, Arabic is the large language offered, as may be expected in view of the importance of the Middle East, and Persian enrollments are also about as high as any university in the United States.

The department also offers courses in the cultures, literatures, religions, etc., of its areas of expertise. Further areal courses are taught by scholars in other units: e.g. Anthropology, History, Humanities, Linguistics, Political Science, and others. Several of these "adjunct faculty" serve on the department's committees, take part in its research, enhance its offerings, sit on its graduate examining committees, and participate in its national and international activities. Most core members similarly work in other programs and departments: e.g. the current department chair is also the chair of Religious Studies; he and others are members of the Center for Ancient Studies, etc. A South Asian Consortium joins the efforts of the university's program with those at Carleton College, Macalester College, and others, and members of the unit are active in cultural and religious organizations focused upon South Asia and the Middle East. The unit is thus an active and integral participant within the College, the university, and the State of Minnesota.

The department's research activities are impressive. One member has produced a definitive study of the art of medieval Bihar (in India); another has developed a nationally-known and recognized course in the Urdu language, as well as a three-volume reader of classical Urdu poetry, a two-volume course in the Baluchi language, and five or six other major linguistic and pedagogical works; still another has produced a seminal Persian course, plus several literary and linguistic studies. Other members have made similar important contributions. The department's personnel are internationally known: several serve on national and international committees, hold offices in scholarly bodies, evaluate grant proposals for major agencies, and the like.

The department's teaching is highly effective: two members of this small unit received the CLA Distinguished Teaching Award, and two more have been nominated. The elementary Arabic class draws over forty students each Fall Quarter, and courses on Persian fiction in translation, religious developments in South Asia, etc. are always attended by 60-up students.

In 1978 the department underwent a major self-survey. An evaluating committee was formed within this university, and three external evaluators were brought from South Asia programs at other American institutions. The findings of this survey fill two volumes, but the essential bottom line is that the program was given high marks. One major weakness cited was the lack of local support by the College administration.

Given the above, why the hurry to "dis-establish" this department?

Enrollments are a big factor. Students have not been plentiful. Even so, Minnesota has more students in its Urdu program than anywhere else in North America. It also has a surprisingly large enrollment in its Arabic courses, and Hindi and Persian are also reasonably well attended. The cultural courses are now heavily enrolled, but these are often housed under other rubrics: e.g. Religious Studies, Humanities, History. These "external" courses do not show up very clearly when heads are counted. There is also an automatic "built-in" pressure towards the "traditional" European languages and cultures in American society, and students often do not "find" the department until late in their careers. Other programs at the university are sometimes also so heavily concentrated upon their own requirements that they do not send students for training in South Asian and Middle Eastern languages and cultural matters urgently relevant to their disciplines.

One strongly negative factor cited by the administration is that of "critical mass." This appears to relate to the small student population, the paucity of majors (but cf. above!), plus the number of "core faculty." The dwindling of the department's faculty, both "core" and "adjunct" is indeed a problem. There are still six core members, and the "Adjunct Faculty" numbers about six more. This, certainly, is sufficient for "critical mass" -- and, if not, why cannot further personnel be appointed from within the university? There are examples of units with as few as one tenured faculty member within the College; five, plus the adjunct members, make up a reasonably sized body. "Critical mass" can be achieved through broader cooperation, coordination with other programs, and publicity.

University support has not been lavish. In the late 60's, the department was given "seed money" by the U.S. Government to half-fund posts within other disciplines. These "seeds" were supposed to be picked up by the university and the money redeployed to add still further needed personnel to the program. The latter was never done; the university eventually did fund all of these "seed" posts -- but the "seeds" were not given back to the program. This matter is now a "dead issue" as far as the administration is concerned.

All during the 1970's the department sensed a constant effort on the part of the College and Central Administration to reduce it, to eliminate certain offerings, and to discourage its personnel. Much of this was militated, of course, by the climate of budgetary gloom and retrenchment that pervaded the university in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Demoralization set in. The department was "designated" at the end of the retrenchment process. Four of its tenured faculty were to be released or urged to go elsewhere

before there could be any talk of replacements or new incentives. Several colleagues did leave the university, some citing the mood of depression and the lack of a future at this institution. To cooperate, the department eliminated Bengali, placed Marathi on a "demand-only" basis, pressed for the expansion of Arabic (which does draw students) and its Middle Eastern component, and reoriented itself toward teaching "cultural" courses in order to attract students and service the needs of other units. Nevertheless, subtle pressures to "dis-establish" the department continue and now culminate in the action urged upon the CLA Assembly on March 31st.

And what does the College propose? To "dis-establish" the department, to parcel out its cultural and areal offerings to the International Relations Program, give Sanskrit to Classics, possibly put Arabic into Afro-American and African Studies, and let the rest dangle in limbo. The International Relations Program is not a bad choice. Areal and cultural courses are not the true focus, we understand, of that Program -- but how about putting all international courses over there? Sanskrit is indeed "classical" in the sense that it is a dead language, like ancient Greek or Latin. The vagaries of American education often compel Sanskrit's inclusion in a "classics" department. This choice in itself is not indefensible. It does obscure the relationship between ancient and modern India, just as putting "classical" Greek into Classics and modern Greek into, say, East European Studies would be unfortunate. As for Arabic, it is indeed the national language of all of north Africa, from Morocco over through Egypt; it is thus "African." But this is clearly a make-shift decision, one calculated to sweep the oddities under the carpet, and not one based upon scholarship or logic. Arabic originates in Arabia; it is the tongue of millions of persons in Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. Again, the administration's action serves to obscure real and important relationships.

What, exactly, is saved by this administrative "streamlining?" No one seems willing to answer this question succinctly, head-on. Is it proposed to terminate staff? Five core members are tenured; the sixth is on the tenure track. These scholars wish to remain at Minnesota -- they have the same right to this as professors of Physics, Sociology, etc. True, tenure is vested in the department, not in the College or University. Kill the department, there goes tenure! These staff members can be given pink slips at once, unless they beg entrance into some other department in order to get a "tenure home." There is no legal recourse. The administration says that these displaced persons also will not be aided in finding other tenure homes, although they will be transferred if they do find refuge. Why is this? Several examples can be cited of cases in which the College aided refugees from dying programs to find shelter elsewhere. Why not in this case? The department's personnel are good and even excellent scholars and teachers.

One can always "float" without a tenure home, the administration says, but that is at the administration's discretion, which seems a very shaky branch from which to hang these days. In any case, the demoralization resulting from having no tenure home, no department, no services, would be devastating -- and, given the current job market, it is possible that such "floating" faculty may be compelled to remain at Minnesota in this condition for years!

That brings up the ugly word "termination." Does the university want the bad reputation that certain other American institutions got when they fired tenured faculty a few years ago? Not very encouraging for new staff! Not very heartening for members of other small departments already here -- and, rumor has it, possibly also threatened.

Again, what is really saved? A secretary's salary --! Stationery, lights, heat? Wherever the refugees from the deceased department go, they will still need these services. Office space? Not while people still have jobs! The fact is that financial savings accruing from the demise of this department will be minuscule. No, monetary savings cannot be the issue here.

What about the curriculum? The administration says that most offerings will continue to exist, although they will be dispersed here and there. The present department offers a cohesive curriculum; its offerings are all together and visible in the catalog. Students can be easily advised, and their programs can be coordinated. To scatter them around would be to lose their visibility and cohesion entirely -- a student who wants a program in Middle Eastern affairs would have to look under International Relations Programs, under Afro-American and African Studies, under History, under -- what? No, programmatic logic can hardly be the reason for the urgency of this "dis-establishment."

It must also be noted that the department is currently visible as an "entity" to the federal government and to granting agencies. The Department of Education gave nearly a quarter of a million dollars in the mid-1970's to produce A Reader of Classical Urdu Poetry. A sizeable part of this was taken by the university as "indirect costs." Other members of the department have been successful with grants as well, and Professor Joseph Schwartzberg's Historical Atlas of South Asia would have been much more difficult to produce had his colleagues in the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies not been here. In the current year, two faculty members were granted computers and support by the Woksape Project (the only new Woksape grant funded within CLA), and these same scholars have also applied for roughly a hundred thousand dollars in supplemental funds from outside the university. Granting bodies look very hard at requests from a university where there is no recognizable program, no "entity."

What, then, are the reasons for the rush to "dis-establish" this unit? "Critical mass?" A handy term without real content. What else? We haven't heard any sound academic or financial reasons yet.

The languages of the Middle East and South Asia are absolutely crucial to an understanding of events in those troubled regions. It is true that student enrollments in these subjects are tiny, but these will undoubtedly increase as the new language and cross-cultural requirements are applied to incoming students. Cultural courses have already surpassed the present abilities of the department to teach them, and Arabic, similarly, requires another professor in order to attain its potential. Instead of "dis-establishment," thus, the department deserves support and encouragement. Doubling the size of the present department would cost only about 1/50th as much as the cost of one ten-million dollar machine which has been proposed for one of the technical departments! Double the size of the current Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies, and we could have one of the finest and most respected programs in this field in the country.

There is also a hint -- justified or not, who can be sure? -- of racism in the actions now being taken against the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. Rumors abound to the effect that such "ethnic" units as Afro-American and African Studies, Chicano Studies, and American Indian Studies may be in trouble as well. We hope these rumors are untrue. However, the traditional university departments do not seem to be threatened, while various "ethnic" units are indeed found at the bottom of certain administrative lists. We ask the administration to prove its good faith by supporting programs and scholarly endeavors in the "ethnic" areas.

In the last analysis, the citizens of Minnesota have as much right to learn Arabic, Persian, and Hindi-Urdu as they have to study engineering, medicine, or French. The Middle East and South Asia are high on the list of national priorities. A department-- perhaps not the present format but some other logical structure -- can, should, and must exist on this campus.

Wait, one may say, we can't teach everything. Money is scarce, and we can't provide for every language in the world, every culture, every literature! True. But when one looks at the urgency of Arabic and the Middle East, at the situation in Iran, at the hundred and some-odd million people who speak Urdu or the couple of hundred million who speak Hindi -- one must admit that these are not just "unimportant little languages we can't afford to teach!" Minnesota is one of the largest universities in North America; can it call itself a "university" without full and detailed coverage of these vital regions? The citizens of Minnesota must not leave

these subjects to be taught "at Berkeley, at Harvard, or at Columbia"; we have a right -- and a duty -- to do this for ourselves. These directions tie in strongly with President Keller's Commitment to Focus, to the needs of Minnesota's international businesses to such programs as Public Health and the Medical School (which train physicians for work abroad), to the government of the State of Minnesota, and to the Federal government.

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies is conscious of its role as a "good academic citizen." There is no intention here to "defend the pass at Thermopylae to the last Spartan." Administrative streamlining is a useful objective. In this case, however, it will likely result in the destruction of what is now a small but useful program, the cramming of its components into units where they do not fit, the diffusion and obscuring of offerings, and the further demoralization of staff -- not only the staff of the department itself but also of other units that may feel "threatened" by this development.

Let's look at something positive instead. If "streamlining" is needed, one might propose an "umbrella" department along the lines of the British School of Oriental and African Studies: a centralized office providing services and budgetary unity, while its components retain localized autonomy and prosecute their disciplines in cooperation with other sub-units. Such an umbrella could serve as a convenient home for smaller programs that do not fit easily into other structures. It would be feasible later to join -- or coordinate -- this umbrella with a centralized institute (center, whatever) for linguistics and English as a Second Language, putting all of such offerings (except the traditional European language departments, although they might wish to join in, of course) into one useful, centralized, "service" department.

A good deal of study is needed before any step should be taken. This has not been done -- not, at least, in consultation with the personnel of the department most concerned! Nor have other relevant units been brought into this planning process. Meetings with representatives of the administration have not been collaborative, cooperative discussions. The administration seems to make up its collective mind and then enforce its decisions, rationalizing them as best it can. It apparently has the will and the power to "dis-establish" a department -- against the wishes of its members and possibly of the College and the community-at-large -- but it lacks the interest, the vision, or whatever it takes to see that the defunct unit is replaced by a better and more viable one.

In response to comments voiced by the deans and various committees of the CLA administration, Professors Bashiri and Junghare prepared a new planning statement which was edited by Professor Schwartzberg. To date, there has been no substantial response to this document.

In summary, the proposal to eliminate the department has been imposed on the faculty by administration -- not done in the spirit of mutual consultation and cooperation. The academic rationale for the department's "dis-establishment" doesn't strike us as appropriate or in the best interest of the academic community. There is neither financial gain to the university nor a gain in faculty or programmatic coordination. In view of the lack of productive results, the proposed dissolution of the department strikes us as unhappy and unfortunate. The department's research potential and ability to attract grants is being seriously hindered. This is especially important as regards proposed and ongoing research relating to language proficiency testing which President Keller strongly favors and the Federal government has as a top priority.

Some further thought and effort are required. Please join us in opposing this unwise and hasty action.

Thank you.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
TWIN CITIES

Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies
192 Klæber Court
320 16th Avenue S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
(612) 624-7030

March 31, 1987

TO: The CLA Assembly Members

FROM: Indira Y. Junghare *Junghare*

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies has existed at this university under some rubric for the past two decades. Until 1982, it was called the Department of South Asian Studies. As scholars, we have achieved national and international recognition and have attracted well over \$1,000,000 in federal funding. We still continue to receive Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship support.

In 1982, the Department was reorganized and what remained of the disbanded Middle Eastern Studies Department was merged with us. The administration claims that this marriage between the South Asian and Middle Eastern Departments has not been successful. In point of fact, the only remaining faculty member in the Middle East Department left at the time of the merger. Actually, all that our department gained from the merger was office equipment. The so-called marriage never took place.

From 1982 until now, the composition of the Department has consisted of two wings: South Asia and (nominally) the Middle East. At present there are six core faculty and six associated faculty members with full voting rights. Of the six core faculty, 3½ teach and are engaged in research in the languages and literatures of South Asia. The other 2½ constitute the entire "Middle Eastern" or Islamic component. In this "wing", one member has been hired on a tenure track basis this academic year. The six associated faculty members have tenured homes in various social science departments. They conduct research and teach courses centering on South Asia and the Middle East.

In the process of the departmental merger, three Middle East tenured positions were lost and have never been replaced. The Department has also lost three tenured positions in the South Asian component due to retrenchment and tenure buy-outs. Thus, the department's core faculty has been reduced to one-half its pre-1982 strength.

Out of the present six core faculty, two have received CLA Distinguished Teaching Awards. The faculty members of the department have also received substantial federal funding for research, including NEH grants, HEW, Smithsonian, American Institute of Indian Studies awards, etc. Additionally, they have received numerous University of Minnesota grants.

The importance of the scholastic contribution of the faculty of the Department is recognized nationally and internationally. As evidence of this, I

have on file letters from leading scholars: scholars from such institutions as the University of Chicago, the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, the University of Wisconsin (Madison), the University of Michigan, etc.

In spite of the loss of faculty, the Department has experienced, we continue to attract a large number of students to our cultural and language courses due to the cultural pluralism, World Studies and foreign language requirements. Out of these increasing enrollments, a new body of graduate students is emerging and in the near future the graduate program will flourish.

In light of Commitment to Focus, we are already ranked number #1 nationally for Marathi and Urdu. Our Arabic enrollment is the largest in the country. Our research in South Asian Linguistics is of international repute. In order to place the Department in the top 5 nationally, we have been requesting several additional positions from the administration which we have not received. On the contrary, we have been told that the Department is going to be "dis-established." We ask you the members of the Assembly not to approve the administration's recommendation. We are very close to being in the top 5 nationally; it would not take much additional funding to put us over the top.

We ask the Assembly to give us your support in setting up a committee or a task force to work in cooperation with the departmental faculty and CLA Administration to help develop a more positive alternative than what is proposed to you today.

To end with a personal note, we the faculty members of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies would like you to consider the fact that we have worked very hard for two decades and gave the best of ourselves to this institution. Just at the time we are being recognized nationally and internationally as excellent scholars and teachers, we are told to abandon our life-long professional investment and reorient ourselves academically. We are being told that we, ourselves, must seek out new tenure homes. At this point in life, it is humiliating to go to another department and have to beg for a place. Even if some departments are kind enough to accept us, we will have to develop courses according to the needs of the new departments. We will have to start all over again. This is not only unfair, it damages the University of Minnesota's reputation nationally.

THE
HENRY M. JACKSON
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES
South Asian Studies



April 1, 1987

Prof. Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minn. 55455

Dear Professor Benjamin:

I am shocked to hear that there is a prospect of the discontinuance of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Languages at the University of Minnesota. I hope you will reconsider this decision--or if it is not yet a decision, that you will not take such action. I was a member of the faculty at the University of Minnesota during 1957-70, and served for many years as Director of the South Asia Program. It is renowned in the United States as one of the premier programs in the field, numbering within the top eight or so among those programs which offer both graduate and undergraduate instruction (as is attested by the receipt for many years of awards from the Office of Education to continue and improve its instruction).

The University of Minnesota's program features several unusual strengths. Its core faculty in languages, history and art history, and geography are among the veteran teachers in those disciplines and are highly respected by the community of South Asian specialists in this country. I know practically all these scholars and firmly believe that they are outstanding among their peers.

The University may not realize what the current situation is as far as governmental support for South Asian Studies. It seems highly likely that there will be more assistance available from the government for South Asian programs in the immediate future. It would seem folly for the University of Minnesota to pick this particular occasion to downgrade the visibility of this program and thus jeopardize its chances of contributing to the recognized need for research and teaching on South Asian subjects, a need attested to by the continuing support provided the program by the U.S. Government. The Centers program is one of the longest-standing educational assistance programs in history; it would seem folly for your University to abandon the considerable strength which Minnesota has amassed. I doubt that your University can gain much, at least in the near future, by the proposed termination of the Department, since I am sure you do not propose to fire these tenured staff. It seems to me you may be biting the hand that feeds you in this case.

I strongly urge you to allow the proficiencies of the faculty in South Asia there a chance to earn rightful recognition. The vagaries of U.S. Government funding are, of course, indisputable. Let me tell you, in conclusion, of our University of Washington South Asia program's experience. We lost our Center in 1983, after having been supported for over a dozen years. Naturally we were much concerned, but the administration here at the University recognized the strengths exhibited in the program, so that two years later, when a new round of Centers was announced, the University of Washington reappeared among those being supported. It would seem to me shortsighted for Minnesota to undermine their excellent South Asia program. You have one of the great libraries, strong language instruction, and excellent academic quality in several fields of social sciences and humanities. I hope you will reassess your decision and decide to support the Department rather than to demolish it.

Sincerely yours,



Karl H. Potter
Chairman
Department of Philosophy

KHP:vm

cc: Prof. Indira Junghare
South and Southwest Asian Languages
University of Minnesota

THE
HENRY M. JACKSON
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES

South Asian Studies Program
April 2, 1987



Dr. Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Dr. Benjamin:

As a University of Minnesota graduate (M.A. in Asian Studies, 1963, Ph.D. in History, 1969) I have always had a very special respect and affection for the institution. I have kept up with the news of the campus as much as I could from here in Seattle where I have been a member of the history faculty since departing Minneapolis nineteen years ago. I had read with interest of President Keller's "Commitment to Focus" policy and, perhaps because distance lends enchantment to the view, assumed that the process of evaluation and retrenchment would be conducted with a care and sensitivity which I regret to say, was not followed in a series of program reductions here at the University of Washington.

Perhaps it was because of the skilled reporting of the alumni magazine that I was lulled into a sense of security regarding the University of Minnesota's plans for the future of the program in which I spent my graduate years. I was, therefore, both shocked and appalled to learn that the University now proposes to eliminate the South and Southwest Asian Languages program. Minnesota has always enjoyed a reputation for South Asian studies which placed its scholars among the top persons in their several fields. I was aware that some realignment had occurred in the merger of two area language programs a few years back, yet I could hardly believe the report that you were now proposing to abolish this altogether.

Minnesota's significance as a South Asia center was well established twenty years ago, with an excellent faculty and a research resource unparalleled in North America in the Ames Library of South Asia, which was transferred to the University by Mr. Ames during my tenure as a student. The language program was being built up in those years. I will confess frankly that some of the earliest initiatives and appointments in that program were not entirely successful. Nonetheless, the subsequent growth of the program, and particularly the additions of Professors Barker, Junghare and Malandra, gave Minnesota a claim to offer instruction of a high quality in significant South Asian languages.

The faculty of the University of Washington South Asia Center are aware of the work of the South Asian scholars at Minneapolis, and have always respected these valued workers whose contributions to our understanding of South Asia are truly outstanding.

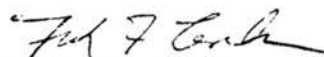
I have been asked by my colleagues to express on their behalf their strong opposition to the weakening of South Asia-related language and area training at the University of Minnesota. We view an abandonment of language instruction in South Asian languages as a very dangerous step which will ultimately weaken the area studies work done there. For a university that continues to present itself to the public as a major center of international studies and concerns, it seems almost incredible that Minnesota would abandon instruction some of the most major and significant modern languages of a world area which holds more than one-sixth of today's world's population.

To this objection, I would add a further personal perspective. When I came to Minneapolis in 1960, I was a raw, unseasoned and unexperienced graduate with only a glimmer of hope to have a chance to study about India. Minnesota gave me that chance, and much more. The quality of my education at Minneapolis was superb, and this was reflected in my obtaining appointment at a major university South Asia center even prior to my completion of my doctoral work. I could never have taken the scholarly, academic and personal steps of my career without the support, consistent encouragement and excellent teaching of the faculty. To hear now that the University proposes to grind this down in the name of "focus" is scarcely believable.

I gather that you are taking opinions and comment upon the proposed elimination of the South Asian language instructional program at the University of Minnesota. May I, speaking as the chairman of the South Asia Program of the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies here at the University of Washington and as a graduate of the Minnesota program, urge as strongly as possible that a resolution be found which will not see the erosion of South Asian studies at a major American academic center? May I urge that you and other university and college authorities find a means to preserve this program?

To eliminate the program will be viewed from outside the University as a shortsighted act of destruction of an important national resource. Personally this program eliminated now proposed strikes me as an assault on my field, my career and my teachers--an act which will be viewed as a piece of academic vandalism which will do damage to the fabric of our national research and teaching base, of which Minnesota has hitherto been a significant part.

Yours sincerely,



Frank F. Conlon
Professor of History
Chairman, South Asian Studies



McGill University

Institute of Islamic Studies

In affiliation with the Aga Khan Foundation
and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

April 6, 1987.

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear President Benjamin,

I recently learned that the University of Minnesota has decided to eliminate the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. I am writing this letter as a former faculty member to urge the administration to reconsider its decision.

I believe that abolition of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies will be a significant loss to the University and the State of Minnesota. Over the years, the Department has served the University, the discipline, and the nation well.

The Department has an eminent and internationally known faculty member, Professor M.A.R. Barker, who produced the finest teaching materials for Urdu language and literature in the western hemisphere. In recent years, in view of low enrollment in Urdu courses, Professor Barker channeled his energies to teaching Arabic I. Given an institutional and departmental support, he is equally capable of producing first-rate texts for teaching Arabic in North American universities. There is an urgent need for good teaching materials in Arabic.

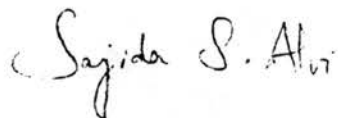
The purpose of this letter is not only to show my support for my former colleagues but also to express my views on the critical subject. It is hard for me to imagine that a fine institution of higher learning such as the University of Minnesota will overlook the importance of Middle Eastern Studies in today's global situation.

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I would like to draw your attention to the fact that during my tenure as the Director of Graduate Studies for the Department for three years just before I left Minnesota, I had discerned a sustained interest in the program, particularly in the areas of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. This was evident from the large number of inquiries about the program received from prospective students in the five states region. The expectation was that after the first tenure-track appointment in Arabic in September, 1986, there will be a gradual growth of the program with additional new appointments. The news of elimination of the entire program was thus quite shocking to me.

I trust that you will reconsider your important decision which will have far-reaching consequences.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sajida S. Alvi".

Sajida S. Alvi
Associate Professor

cc: Department of South &
Southwest Asian Studies

SSA/VM



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA 4567 St. Johns Bluff Road, South, Jacksonville, Florida 32216 (904) 646-2580

College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Language and Literature

March 26, 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Professor Benjamin:

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Study Program has asked me to offer you my perception and assessment of the invaluable contribution it has made to the studies and research scholarship of Asian studies in the world of academia. With my established expertise in the field I believe that I can give you an objective perspective in order to help the program continue with the usual vigor at your institution rather than being phased out as a result of certain changes in the administrative perception of it. I hope you would take my observations into full account in determining the future existence of the Asian studies through a unit as it has been for the past many years.

I must admit that I have always heard exciting things about the scholarly productivity of the faculty members of South and Southwest Asian studies at Minnesota. They have aided a further dissemination of more research work in the field which has been most useful for the classroom instruction and scholarly presentations at the professional meetings and conferences. For instance, the three-volume edition of Urdu literature by Professor M. A. R. Barker has generated new studies in the Pakistani and Indian literature, across the country. Many of my graduate students have fully utilized those works in their research. Possibly they would have been handicapped without them. Likewise, the English translation of Jaya Sankar Prasad's novel, Titli, by Professors Paul Staneslow and Ramdayal Munda (now Vice Chancellor at the University of Ranchi, Bihar, India), was a boon to me when three years ago I undertook the translation project of Andhi by Prasad, which was published by the Macmillan Company of India, New Delhi, last year. Who does not know the great scholarly works of Professors David Kopf of History Department and of Professor Indira Junghare of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Study Program? Their works have changed the direction of Asian studies in this country, as they have brought an enviable credit to the University of Minnesota.

I am fully convinced and impressed with the matchless quality of the program and its wide ranging effects upon the future studies and scholarly activities. You have got an established discipline that has brought laurels to your institution. Its phasing out and eventual disappearance would be a great loss to the future generation and to the rising vista of international studies on major campuses such as yours. May I therefore request you to save the program and let it continue the way it has been for a long time.

Sincerely yours,

Satya S. Pachori AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY INSTITUTION

COPY

Carleton College
One North College Street
Northfield, Minnesota 55057

Department of History

(507) 663-4217

March 25, 1987

Roger Benjamin, Vice President for
Academic Affairs
238 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minn. 55455

Dear Dr. Benjamin:

I have just learned that the long rumored decision about the South and Southwest Asia Department is to be made on Tuesday. It is high time that I wrote to encourage the University to keep and strengthen South Asia. These are hard times for South Asianists, but a great University cannot base its offerings on the swings of public interest, not - I hasten to say - on a period in which a Department appears somewhat less than strong.

Since I and my students have some close associations with University faculty and with the Ames Library of South Asia, the fate of South Asia up there concerns me deeply. I fail to see how cancelling the Department helps anyone - certainly not the finances of the University since all faculty must be found other homes. What it does is cancel the future of South Asia at the University at some later date. This would be a great pity. The University has produced many scholars and much good work, and even now in the days of uncertainty and depression, some good things are going on. I urge you to have some faith in this area, so essential to a balanced view of all the world.

The Ames Library of South Asia is an invaluable asset to the University. I am in the finishing stages of a book called The Experience of Hinduism - a set of extremely realistic essays on Hinduism the way it actually is (including rejection and reform) which the State University of New York will publish. I could never have edited this volume without the Ames Library. It is a resource for the entire State, and beyond, and my hope is that someday it will also be the center for a revived and energetic University South Asia Department.

Please take the long view into consideration. South Asia does not threaten us, has no intention of going Communist, and suffers from a reputation for spirituality, poverty and little else. It does not have a good press in the United States. But it is one of the most interesting and important areas of the world. The University could join Chicago, Pennsylvania and Berkeley, the three strongest centers for study, in promoting the study of this area, and it has an asset in the Ames Library that none of the others possess. I urge that the South Asia Department be kept and strengthened.

Sincerely,


Eleanor Zelliot
Professor

I. Junghare

March 26, 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Dr. Benjamin:

Today I received a phone call from your university asking me to assess the department of South Asian and South West Asian Studies. Since I have a high regard for the department, I agreed to do so on such short notice.

At the outset I would like to add that my area of specialization is linguistics and I have been engaged in the language pedagogy of South Asian languages for quite some time. Therefore, I will restrict myself to the contribution of the department to South Asian linguistics and the teaching of South Asian languages.

Until recently, your department has been recognized as one of the six National Resource Centers for South Asian Studies funded by the U. S. Department of Education. This recognition speaks for itself about the importance of the department.

As regards my own assessment, I have watched with great interest the development of the department and I am impressed. Your department has many nationally (and some internationally) known faculty members. I grew up professionally reading the works of Professor Barker, Junghare, Miranda and Stanslow.

I may, of course, have a slight South Asian bias, but I have no hesitation in saying that I am impressed with your faculty. Some outstanding work has been done in the department. Professor Barker is the best known authority on Urdu. I have used his Urdu readers in a number of my language courses. Professor Junghare's work on Pali and Sanskrit Tadabhav word is quoted frequently in the literature. Professor Miranda's work has inspired me to undertake research in the area of historical linguistics and Language Maintenance and Language Shift.

As a member of a number of conferences I have had a number of opportunities to listen to the papers of Professor Junghare, Miranda, and Stanslow. I have found them to be well prepared, organized and persuasive in their argumentation.

The above is essentially what I have been aware of as the strong points of the department of South Asian and South West Asian Studies on the basis of my knowledge of the department through professional contact. In a sense, my knowledge is rather limited and I might not be aware of its weak points, but the point I am aware of does create in me a good deal of respect for the professional activities of the department. If I could be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Sincerely yours,

Tej K. Bhatia

Tej K. Bhatia (cs)
Director
Linguistic Studies Program

TKB/cs

Duke University

DURHAM
NORTH CAROLINA
27708

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

TELEPHONE (919) 684-5012

March 27, 1987

Dr. Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of Minnesota
213 Morrill Hall
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Dr. Benjamin:

It has been brought to my attention by South Asian scholars in the U.S. that the administration at the University of Minnesota is contemplating on abolishing its Department of South and South-West Asian Studies.

I am writing to persuade the administration at the University of Minnesota not to take such an action and to strongly urge that the Department of South and South-West Asian Studies be maintained and continued as an academically functioning unit for many reasons.

The Department of South and South-West Asian Studies at Minnesota is one of the oldest in the U.S. to offer a varied and rich set of courses in the languages, literatures, and cultures of the countries in South and South-West Asia. That part of the world is increasingly becoming strategically important and Americans will have a greater need now than ever for knowing the languages and cultures of such nations as India, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt as well as the small Persian Gulf countries. From the information available to me, the language and literature courses in Hindi, Urdu, Persian, Arabic, and Marathi offered in the department are quite popular and have good enrollments. Thus the department seems to provide a vital instructional service not only to the university of Minnesota students, but also to the Mid West region and to the nation as a whole. I understand that many of the courses taught by the members of the department are cross-listed in other departments signifying their relevance across disciplinary boundaries.

Perhaps even more important is the fact that the faculty members of the Department of South and South-West Asian Studies are well recognized for their research and scholarship as reflected in their publications among scholars of South and South-West Asia in the Humanities and Social Sciences. By their research activities and publications, these faculty members provide a vital link to scholars from such other departments and programs as Linguistics, Anthropology, Women's Studies, Religion, and Literature, not only at the university of Minnesota, but also at other institutions of higher education. I, for one, am familiar with and think highly of the publications of

many faculty members from the Department of South and South-West Asian Studies.

Abolishing this department, therefore, would be a severe blow to a large number of academic institutions and scholars who are interested in South and South-West Asia. They recognize the vital importance of this region occupied by almost one-fourth of the world's population for research and for raising the world consciousness of young Americans in higher education.

In this day and age when it is so crucial to increase communication and understanding across cultures in this troubled world, it would be indeed tragic to have to witness the demise of important academic departments such as the one at the university of Minnesota that play a significant role in this endeavour and which in the process provide important analytical and theoretical insights into the diverse linguistic, literary, and cultural aspects of human existence.

I therefore strongly urge you not to abolish the Department of South and South-West Asian Studies at the University of Minnesota.

Yours sincerely,



Mahadev L. Apte
Associate Professor

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH AND
SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94720

March 31, 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice-President for Academic Affairs
Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Professor Benjamin:

I wish to convey my shock and dismay at the news of the proposed elimination of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies at the University of Minnesota and I urge that this decision be reconsidered.

I have long been familiar with the excellent work of several of the faculty members of that Department, which is one of only a dozen or so academic departments in the U.S. offering a range of instruction in the languages and cultures of South Asia.. The superb textbooks on Urdu and Baluchi written by Professor M.A.R. Barker remain unsurpassed and are the standard for teaching materials in South Asian languages here and abroad. Students trained at the University of Minnesota have received their full share of grants and fellowships for advanced study in South Asia. For example, some of the best students on the Berkeley Urdu Language Program in Pakistan, which I direct, have been trained at the University of Minnesota. In short, it is widely regarded that the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies is a valuable component of the national academic structure and has contributed significantly to American scholarship and teaching on these critical areas of the world.

What particularly disturbs me about this proposal is the implication that a great university such as the University of Minnesota is withdrawing from an area of the world which desperately needs more, not less teaching and research by American universities. South and Southwest Asia are of ever increasing importance to this country, not only strategically and economically, but also in terms of the growing populations of persons from those world areas living in the U.S.

To take just one example: Urdu is the language of well over 130,000,000 people and is the official language of Pakistan, one of the largest Islamic countries in the world and a country of crucial importance to the U.S. and a vital bridge between South Asia and Southwest Asia. It is disheartening to think that the University of Minnesota should now be considering abandoning its fine program of Urdu, one of the best in the country and a field in which the University of Minnesota has been a leader.

At a time when there is rapid movement toward the formation of a National Foundation for International Studies and many universities are

Professor Roger Benjamin
March 31, 1987 - page 2

expanding their programs of international studies and strengthening existing programs in various world areas, I am perplexed and saddened by the prospect of the disbanding of an important academic unit at a major university, a department which has so productively brought together scholars of some of the most crucial areas in the world today.

I very much hope that the proposed elimination of the Department of South and Southwest Studies will be thoughtfully reconsidered, not only in view of the pros and cons of internal organization, but, more importantly, in terms of the far-reaching implications this move has for the future of foreign language and international studies at American universities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bruce R. Pray". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Bruce R. Pray, Director
Title VI South Asia National Resource Center

Acting Chairman
Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies

University of California, Berkeley

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA 19104-6305

School of Arts and Sciences

SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL STUDIES
820 Williams Hall
(215) 898-7475

27 March 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
213 Morris Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Vice President Benjamin:

I have been asked to write a letter expressing my opinion of the academic quality of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies at the University of Minnesota.

I know personally Professors M. A. R. Barker, Paul Staneslow, Indira Junghare, Joseph Schwartzberg, William Rowe, and Rocky Miranda, and am familiar with the scholarly work of Professors David Kopf, Robert Tapp, and Frederick Asher.

Professor M.A.R. Barker is an internationally known scholar who has produced a number of important works on South Asian languages and linguistics. His work on Urdu language and literature is highly respected by scholars and teachers of Urdu throughout the English-speaking world as well as in the countries of South Asia. I have frequently had occasion to consult and refer to his work, and am planning to use his lexicographical work on Urdu as a basis for a projected Hindi/Urdu-to-English dictionary.

Professor Indira Junghare is also internationally known as a linguist, with a wide range of interests which also include literature, literary criticism, applied linguistics, and sociolinguistics. Her work is of interest for general linguistic theory as well as the typology of South Asian languages. Last November, in a letter supporting her promotion to full professor, I wrote the following: "Professor Junghare is clearly a competent scholar with a wide range of interests, who is no doubt a source of stimulation to her colleagues who work in other areas of linguistics. Her work in language teaching, though it appears only secondarily in her published works, is also clearly an activity to which she gives much of her creative energy."

Professor Paul Staneslow is an extremely creative scholar, and a very imaginative and innovative teacher. In recent years he has produced a number of works of translation which have been very well received by the scholarly community.

Professor Joseph Schwartzberg, who was formerly a member of the faculty of this department, is also an internationally known and highly-reputed scholar, who has been producing high-quality work in the field of geography for many years now. I hardly feel it is necessary for me to add to what you must already know of this outstanding scholar.

Without commenting individually on the merits of the other members of the South and Southwest Asian Studies Department, I will say only that the University of Minnesota is fortunate to have assembled such a solid group of scholars in this field. Others familiar with the field of South Asian studies will surely agree with me that the academic reputation of your institution owes much to this group--in fact, far beyond what might be expected from the size of the program.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Franklin C. Southworth", written in a cursive style.

Franklin C. Southworth
Professor of
South Asian Linguistics

2 April 1987

Dr. Roger Benjamin
Vice-President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrell Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Dr. Benjamin:

Recently my attention has been drawn to the fact that there is a serious movement afoot at your institution to disband the Department of South and Southwestern Asian Studies. I am writing this letter to express my dismay at this turn of event, dismay that is shared, I am certain, by hundreds of other scholars in the field of South and Southwestern Asian Studies in the United States and elsewhere as well.

I understand that the University of Minnesota, like other schools throughout the United States, is regrouping in order to cope with problems of over-extension in a period of contraction of funds for education. We here at Oakland University recently did this with our program of "targets of opportunity." Minnesota, I understand, is now doing it under the programmatic name of "commitment to focus." Whatever the name, the effect is the same: that of putting limited resources in those areas where they will do the most good, and delete those programs that are not distinctive.

The very basis of such programs is the recognition of what are the particular institution's strong suits. In the case of the University of Minnesota, there are many, one of them being the program in South and Southwest Asian Studies. Notwithstanding the fact that you have lost a number of very good people in that program (Professors Munda, Alavi, and Lelyveld), those who still remain are internationally recognized, hard-working and productive scholars in their fields. To dismiss any program with persons of the stature and international standing as Dr. Abdur Rahman Barker and Dr. Indira Junghare, for example, would be a disservice not only to these scholars, but to your institution and the field of South and Southwest Asian Studies as well.

Both of these scholars are first-rate and would grace the faculty of any college or university at which they might teach. Dr. Barker is, in my estimation, the foremost scholar of the Urdu language in the West. His fluency in this language is as formidable as it is elegant, the envy of his colleagues, both those who have learned Urdu at a second language and even those for whom it is a mother tongue. Dr. Indira Junghare is a dynamic, imaginative, and versatile scholar whose work not only in literature and translation, but linguistics as well, has received kudos from all quarters. Her English translation of the Hindi novel Maila anchal by Phanishwarnath Renu is monumental, an intellectual tour de force which, when published, will bring considerable accolades to Dr. Junghare personally and to her institution as well. She has recently been

given an award for teaching excellence at Minnesota, I understand. Such a combination of scholarly accomplishments, academic versatility, and excellence in teaching is, in my experience, rare, something to be fostered and supported, not dismissed as negligible

Let me repeat that, both as an academician and as an administrator, I am, indeed, completely in favor of programs such as "commitment to focus." The only problem with such an approach is to identify clearly and without prejudice those areas in an institution where such focus should be centered. If your Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies has not been cited as a distinctive department at your institution, then someone has not been telling you the truth about it. Hence, it behooves persons from the outside like myself to act (presumptuously perhaps) and offer opinions whereby you might receive a clearer, more objective picture of this group than you presently seem to have.

I urge you to give unstinting and unqualified support to the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies as the "commitment to focus" program moves forward. To do otherwise would be a serious breach of academic and administrative responsibility and would do inestimable damage to a distinctive program made up of talented, accomplished scholars.

Thank you for your kind attention in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Carlo Coppola, Ph.D.
Professor and Director
Editor, Journal of South Asian Literature

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
Department of Asian Languages and Cultures
3070 Frieze Building
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109, USA

MADHAV M. DESHPANDE
Professor of Sanskrit and Linguistics

3-27-1987

To
Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Professor Benjamin,

In recent conversations with colleagues from your university, I learned that a decision is evidently being made to discontinue the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. This is a shocking news for all of us in the field of South Asian Studies, who over the years have come to admire the contributions of this department to South Asian Studies, and also the commitment of your university to this field. The members of this department have established a national reputation for excellence in their subfields. Minnesota ranks among one of the very best universities in this country which have excellent library and museum resources in South Asian Studies and have done outstanding work in the fields of South Asian art, linguistics, religions, languages and literatures. Along with the major South and Southwest Asian languages, Minnesota has the honor of providing instruction in some of the rare modern and ancient languages, including Marathi and Avestan.

South and Southwest Asia is an extremely important part of the world, and a full understanding of the history of this area, its languages, cultures and religions, is absolutely essential for the U.S. citizens, if they are to make intelligent decisions about war and peace in this part of the world. No world-class university can be without a commitment to this area of academic research, and it would be a shame if Minnesota abandoned its well-deserved longstanding commitment.

I hope and pray that the decision to discontinue this department is not yet final, and that responsible authorities in your university will give proper consideration to the above mentioned issues. I urge you to do so on behalf of all my colleagues in the field of South Asian Studies at the university of Michigan.

Madhav Deshpande
Sincerely yours,

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES
3070 FRIEZE BUILDING, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48109
TELEPHONE: (313) 764-8286

28 March 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Room 213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

(COPY)

Dear Professor Benjamin,

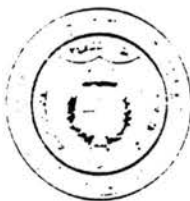
Recently I have learned of the proposal to dissolve the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies at the University of Minnesota as part of a program named "Commitment to Focus". As the University of Minnesota was one of the very few places in North America to maintain a consistent program in South Asian studies as part of its commitment to cultural pluralism and the only one to recognize the geographic and cultural unity of the area of the world comprising the Near and Mid East (approximately the same area as that included in the empire of Alexander), I am distressed to learn of the University's plans to disband the Department and urge you and others charged with charting the course of the University's activities to reconsider. I have experienced the effects of an attempt to improve the level of excellence at a university by 'reorganizing' (disbanding) a department. The result was five years of turmoil, enormous waste of time, energy and goodwill, and a net loss in the national creditability of our university's program in that discipline (linguistics). Do not take it amiss if I encourage you not to choose the path that was taken here. The University of Minnesota has a well-known and highly regarded areal program in the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. That is a strength on which to build further.

Sincerely,

Peter E. Hook

Peter Edwin Hook
Professor of Linguistics and
Indo-Aryan Languages

cc: Professor Indira Junghare
Professor M.A.R. Barker



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures
2601 University Avenue • Austin, Texas 78712 • (512) 471-1365

March 27, 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
217 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Professor Benjamin:

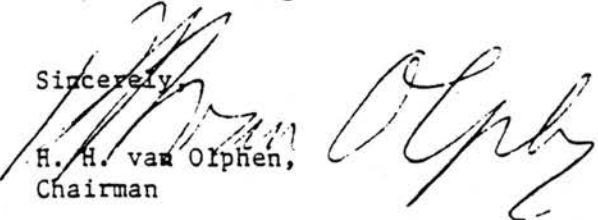
It is with great concern that I heard that there are plans to end the independent status of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies at the University of Minnesota.

Such an action would have a very negative effect on the perception scholars in my discipline would have of the University of Minnesota; the fact that such respected scholars as Indira Junghare and M. A. R. Barker have their base in the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies brings great credit and respect in the scholarly community to your University.

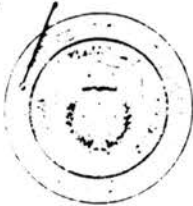
Our Dean frequently tells all who will listen that he would not want to be Dean at a University where Sanskrit and Hindi/Urdu are not taught; I realize that you are not contemplating terminating these language programs, but language programs such as Hindi/Urdu (third in number of speakers in the world) and Sanskrit (an indispensable course of study at any University which ranks itself as a major research university) require a supportive Departmental environment to flourish. Making them an appendage in a Department where interests lie elsewhere would be a great disservice to the discipline and to the University.

I realize that reorganization is sometimes necessary as needs and funding levels change, and, as an outsider, I would not presume to give you advice on how to organize your University. I do however have a great interest in the continuation of South Asian Studies in the United States as an independent entity, not just because it is my field but because the study of South Asian languages is of vital importance to the scholarly community and this country. Thus we find that many major Universities such as Chicago, Penn, Wisconsin, Columbia, and UC-Berkeley, give high priority to vital South Asia programs. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Sincerely,


H. H. van Olphen,
Chairman

HHvO:dd



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures
2601 University Avenue • Austin, Texas 78712 • (512) 471-1365

March 27, 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of Minnesota
213 Morrill Hall
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Dr. Benjamin:

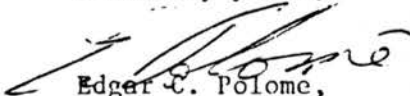
I have heard that your University is considering doing away with its Department of Middle Eastern and Asian Studies in an effort to increase its commitment to focus on strong programs. It was my privilege a few years ago to visit your University at the request of your Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences with Dr. Edward Dimock, then President of the American Institute of Indian Studies and Professor at the University of Chicago, and another colleague from the University of Michigan. In the report we wrote we stressed the potential and the strengths of that program and we underlined the quality of the teaching especially in the field of South Asia, where your University has probably the best specialist in the country in the field of Urdu in Professor Barker. His books are recognized as the best teaching material for this language and he enjoys the highest reputation in the discipline. At his side, Professor Stanislaw is a qualified pedagogue whose knowledge of Hindi is outstanding and who has put it to work in training generations of students. For Indian culture, the dynamic personality of Dr. Junghare gives your program the breadth and depth that involves linguistics, sociolinguistics and women's studies. Professor Malandra adds religion and Sanskrit to this well-rounded picture. Moreover since the focus is on South Asia and on Urdu the program is further strengthened in the perspective of Muslim India by the excellent programs in Persian by Professor Bashira, and Arabic by Professor Ashareef. In the field of area studies the associated faculty has national and international reputations, in particular Professor Schwarzberg whose historical atlas of India is a monument of erudition and a widely recognized tool for all Indianists. Professor Asher is a recognized authority on Indian art; Professor Tapp is a foremost historian of religion and, with Professor Kopf and Rowe in history and anthropology, your program is also extremely well-rounded and belongs to one of the leading national Centers in the field.

I think your University would be doing yourselves and the profession a tremendous disservice in breaking up such an excellent team, and depriving itself of the quality of a program which is so well-rounded. As a former Director of a Center for Asian Studies and a person involved for more than

March 27, 1987
Page 2

a quarter of a century in South Asian Studies in this country, I thought it my duty to submit these thoughts to you. I hope they can be of some use to you in the formulation of your final decision, and I hope that it will help you take a favorable stand to the maintenance of your excellent program.

Sincerely yours,



Edgar C. Polome,
Chairman, Graduate Studies Committee,
Departments of Germanic Languages, and
Oriental and African Languages and Literatures,
Christie and Stanley E. Adams Jr. Centennial
Professor in Liberal Arts

ECP:dd

The Journal of Asian Studies

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Columbia University
1128 International Affairs
New York, NY 10027

Published by the Association for Asian Studies, Inc.

March 26, 1987

Dean Frederick M. Asher
College of Liberal Arts
Johnston Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Rick:

Indira Jhugare has asked me to write a letter about the future of South Asian Studies at the University of Minnesota, and I will address it to you because I know we share the same commitments to the field and its place in American intellectual life. It has been many years since the survival of South Asian studies at Minnesota was first put in jeopardy--in a word, ever since the easy federal seed money failed to flow. I personally feel a great sense of failure in my own inability to achieve anything of lasting value, and finally I found the prospect too discouraging, the environment too hostile to continue. Others, you included, have done much better and kept the faith. So I write in the hope that you were right and I was wrong about Minnesota, that there is some place there--and in any major university--for the serious study of one of the world's major civilizations, and that Minnesota still has in its faculty, library and other resources the possibility of retrieving a respectable offering in the field.

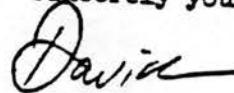
Most particularly I would like to express support for my former colleagues who have been teaching, among other things, South Asian languages. Professor M.A.R. Barker is my old teacher, and I had much to do with persuading him to leave one of the world's great centers of Islamic studies to come to Minnesota. A major figure in anthropological linguistics, he had already established himself as the leading American scholar of Urdu and a master-teacher of that and other languages. Minnesota has never appreciated what an extraordinary resource they had in this man; instead they beat him down by continually demanding that he defend the existence of the field. But anyone who has ever studied his books or sat in his classes knows that he is one of the great language teachers as well as a major scholar.

I also have studied under Iraj Bashiri, again a man of great talents and originality whose work has been underestimated by the university. Indira Jhugare is a lively teacher and an energetic scholar of broad interests, and Paul Staneklow, though not a researcher, is one of the best teachers of beginning Hindi in the country. I assume I do not have to endorse Bill Malandra: his scholarship and success as a teacher should be obvious. All in all this is the basis for a sound language program. Where to put it administratively is a vexing question, no doubt. I have long advocated that there be a language faculty--that teachers of language be integrated into an administrative unit, not isolated by region, and that they be linked with Comparative Literature and Linguistics. But the main issue is the continuance of the program. If it is removed now it will never be restored, and that will be a great disservice to the university and to American culture as a whole.

Dean Frederick M. Asher--

Technically I am still on the faculty for a few more months, but I write now from a more distant perspective, one that sees beyond the individuals immediately involved to the desperate need in this country to expand beyond its narrow provincialism to a true awareness of heritage and present reality of the entire world. To remove India from a major university is to inflict lasting self-injury and I hope the counsels that prevail will be wiser than that.

Sincerely yours,



David Lelyveld
Dean, Graduate Studies
Columbia University

cc. Professor Indira Jhugare



American Institute of Indian Studies

1130 East 59th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637
(312) 962-8638 Cable Address: AIIS

Joseph W. Elder
President

March 28, 1987

Mary Catherine Hill
Administrator

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Professor Benjamin,

I am writing this letter in my role as President of the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) to describe the high regard in which the AIIS as an institution, and I personally, hold the South Asian scholar specialists in the University of Minnesota.

The American Institute of Indian Studies was incorporated in 1961 to "support the advancement of knowledge and understanding of India." At that time the University of Minnesota joined the Institute as one of its fourteen charter members. Over the past twenty-six years, scholars from the University of Minnesota — many of them faculty members associated with your University's Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies — have contributed in countless ways to the continuing success of our Institute. Today the American Institute of Indian Studies is the major U.S. scholarly research organization associated with India, processing as many as two-hundred grant requests each year from American scholars wanting to study in India. At the moment the Institute has on its Board of Trustees two distinguished faculty members from the University of Minnesota, Professors William Malandra and Joseph E. Schwartzberg. And the Institute's Treasurer is another distinguished faculty member — and dean — from your University, Professor Frederick M. Asher. In short, the American Institute of Indian Studies has benefited from the participation of the University of Minnesota and from the wisdom and advice of Minnesota's South Asianists for a quarter of a century. And we hope we can continue to benefit from their wisdom and advice for many more years.

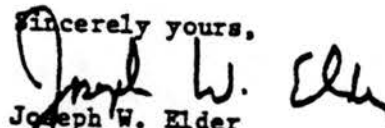
Over the same quarter of a century, the Institute has repeatedly recognized — and rewarded — faculty members and graduate students associated with the University of Minnesota. Between 1980 and 1987 the Institute awarded a total of 29 grants to scholars from the University of Minnesota. Of the 29 grants, 15 post-doctoral grants were awarded to faculty members, 9 pre-doctoral grants were awarded to graduate students wishing to work on their doctoral dissertations in India, and 5 grants were given to graduate students wishing to improve their language skills by living in India and studying an Indian language intensively.

One advantage that has accrued to the University of Minnesota over the years because of its institutional affiliation with the AIIS results from the AIIS's policy of waiving its \$750 administrative fee for pre-doctoral and post-doctoral grant recipients if they come from affiliated institutions (such as the University of Minnesota). This has meant that over the last eight years the University of Minnesota's pre-doctoral and post-doctoral grant recipients have received additional financial benefits amounting to \$18,000 in fees waived (i.e., \$750 x 15 post-doctoral grants plus 9 predoctoral grants) because the University of Minnesota is a member of the AIIS.

If during the coming weeks and months you and others administering the affairs of the University of Minnesota are reviewing the role of South Asia scholars in your University, we in the AIIS would like you to know how highly we regard those scholars and how grateful we are for their contributions — and the contributions of the University of Minnesota — to the wellbeing of our Institute and of South Asian Studies generally in the United States.

If I, or the Institute, can be of service to you in the future in any way, please let us know.

Sincerely yours,


Joseph W. Elder
President

have on file letters from leading scholars: scholars from such institutions as the University of Chicago, the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, the University of Wisconsin (Madison), the University of Michigan, etc.

In spite of the loss of faculty, the Department has experienced, we continue to attract a large number of students to our cultural and language courses due to the cultural pluralism, World Studies and foreign language requirements. Out of these increasing enrollments, a new body of graduate students is emerging and in the near future the graduate program will flourish.

In light of Commitment to Focus, we are already ranked number #1 nationally for Marathi and Urdu. Our Arabic enrollment is the largest in the country. Our research in South Asian Linguistics is of international repute. In order to place the Department in the top 5 nationally, we have been requesting several additional positions from the administration which we have not received. On the contrary, we have been told that the Department is going to be "dis-established." We ask you the members of the Assembly not to approve the administration's recommendation. We are very close to being in the top 5 nationally; it would not take much additional funding to put us over the top.

We ask the Assembly to give us your support in setting up a committee or a task force to work in cooperation with the departmental faculty and CLA Administration to help develop a more positive alternative than what is proposed to you today.

To end with a personal note, we the faculty members of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies would like you to consider the fact that we have worked very hard for two decades and gave the best of ourselves to this institution. Just at the time we are being recognized nationally and internationally as excellent scholars and teachers, we are told to abandon our life-long professional investment and reorient ourselves academically. We are being told that we, ourselves, must seek out new tenure homes. At this point in life, it is humiliating to go to another department and have to beg for a place. Even if some departments are kind enough to accept us, we will have to develop courses according to the needs of the new departments. We will have to start all over again. This is not only unfair, it damages the University of Minnesota's reputation nationally.

I. Junghare

March 26, 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Dear Professor Benjamin:

I have heard that the University of Minnesota is considering the dissolution of its Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. If this is so, I would like to urge the University most strongly to reconsider, and not to take such a drastic and damaging action.

No doubt you will be hearing from people in other areas of South Asian studies about the Department's strength in linguistics, Sanskrit, history, etc. I would like to address myself particularly to the two areas of the Department's work with which I am most familiar: Urdu/Hindi, and Marathi.

In Urdu, your Department is exceptionally strong, despite the recent departure of Professor Alvi. Professor M. A. R. Barker is one of the best-known, best-respected Urdu scholars in North America; his reputation is based solidly on his excellent scholarly work. His many books on Urdu grammar and literature are used by most of us in our classes, and constitute a body of fundamental work unrivalled by that of any other American scholar of Urdu. He is also a very fine Urdu teacher, as his students attest; and he has gradually brought together a personal collection of Urdu manuscripts and printed books better than that of most museums—to which he generously gives his colleagues access. In short, he puts Minnesota very much on the map in Urdu studies, and to redirect his scholarly and teaching activities into some other area would be a tremendous waste of talent. Professor Barker's own presence and his manuscript collection, combined with the impressive holdings of the Ames Library, make Minnesota a real landmark in Urdu studies.

In conjunction with Urdu, Hindi has long been taught by several members of the Department; as one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, and the official language of an increasingly important world power, it deserves more and not less attention in the future. Many other disciplines rely on the language skills made available to their students by the Department, and the loss of Urdu and Hindi would be a real limitation on the choices available to students and professors at Minnesota in the future.

Other universities around the country do teach both Urdu and Hindi, but your Department has one asset that no other university in the country can boast: a serious and continuing commitment to Marathi, with links to an in-country language program for students. Professor Indira Junghare has put a great deal of time and effort into the Marathi program, and it has produced valuable results. In an era when most universities are confined largely to Hindi and Urdu (with perhaps a bit of Tamil), among modern Indian languages,

your Department's Marathi program stands as a real achievement. To destroy this program would be an act of vandalism that would diminish not just Minnesota, but our whole field around the country.

In short, I can testify that your Department, even weakened as it has been in recent years, has formidable and in some cases unique academic strengths that are widely recognized and admired. In linguistics, in Sanskrit, in history, and in modern languages it has an excellent record of past performance, and the ability to continue and even improve that performance in the future. Rather than being torn apart, it should be supported; the whole University will be the richer for it.

Sincerely,

Frances W. Pritchett
Assistant Professor of Modern Indic Languages

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of Linguistics
1168 Van Hise Hall
1220 Linden Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
(608) 262-2292

March 26, 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice President of Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Professor Benjamin:

I have just come to know that your University is contemplating the abolition of the Department of South & Southwest Asian Studies, and presumably also the academic programs associated with it. I must say the news, if true, is very distressing for the profession in view of the contribution that your program has been making to the disciplines and the area studies involved. While I am not very knowledgeable about your Southwest Asian Studies program, I have had a rather close contact with your South Asian program. I have had great admiration for the kind of scholarship that Professor Schwartzberg and Professor Fred Asher represent and the monumental research products that they have been responsible for. The names of other scholars like David Kopf, William Rowe, and Robert Tapp are equally well-known in the South Asian circles.

It may be argued that the dissolution of the Department still allows these scholars to continue in their other disciplinary departments, which may be basically true but not quite. The kind of interaction and cohesiveness that an area studies department provides in which the area itself assumes the role of a discipline will certainly suffer to the detriment of scholarship on the area as well as the broad based empirical bases for the theoretical orientations in the various disciplines themselves.

Even more distressing, however, seems to be the situation in regard to the South Asian language, linguistics, and literature programs. The contributions of at least five of the scholars that I have personal knowledge of leads me to believe that it will be a great loss to the profession if they go away or are forced to reorient themselves to a different discipline. The contributions of Professor Rocky Miranda in South Asian linguistics, both synchronic and diachronic, are well known. Professor Barker is

Professor Roger Benjamin
Page 2
March 26, 1987

regarded as about the best authority on Urdu in this country and his textbook is a classic, used in Urdu programs all over the world and often sought to be made the basis for organizing even Hindi programs (not to speak of his own personal control of the language in speech and writing which is probably unmatched in North America). Professor Indira Junghare has so many dimensions to her scholarly personality that you have in effect several professors rolled into one. She does Hindi, she does Marathi, she does synchronic South Asian linguistics, she has published a highly regarded book on diachronic South Asian linguistics, she does literature and has been involved in scholarly translations of literary works that involve languages other than Hindi and Marathi. Because of her, I think I can safely say that Minnesota has been regarded as the number one place in the States and Western Europe for Marathi studies with several Ph.D.'s produced. Professor Stanislaw has done a lot for Hindi language instruction and so has Professor Malandra for Sanskrit studies. In view of all this, it seems that the proposed dissolution of the Department will end up diminishing not only the profession but also the University of Minnesota's own academic stature in a well-focussed program.

While I am well aware that some of these proposals always have some legitimate administrative motivations behind them, as a member of this academic community I fervently hope that the long term academic implications of such a proposal will also be given at least as much weight, if not more, as any other criteria. I am sure that in the final analysis you will find the academic criteria compelling enough to save the program and the Department.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours.

Manindra K. Verma
Chairman, Dept. of Linguistics
Professor of Linguistics, and
South Asian Studies

DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES AND CIVILIZATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
1130 East 59th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

March 26, 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice-President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Professor Benjamin:

As an alumnus of the University of Minnesota (BA '53), and one-time participant in a flourishing South Asia Summer Program there ('69), I have watched with interest and increasing dismay the progressive dismantling of the South Asian academic enterprise which had such an auspicious beginning at the University in the early '60s with the gift of the Ames Library. And now, it seems, its imminent final junking. (Recalling an attempt to recruit me for it at its inception, I naturally am also thinking "There but for the grace of God go I.")

Is this really necessary? Isn't it a betrayal of a trust? No doubt budgetary considerations are important, but one would hope that the shortsighted bottom-line mentality that so pervades the contemporary American scene is not the only consideration at a great university. In any case, will the University really save money by this? What with the expensive buy-outs plus retention of present faculty, not in the short run, surely. Perhaps in the long run, provided there is not another change of policy. (I remember the on-again, off-again treatment of Arabic at Minnesota going back to the '50s, when at one point Dorothy Runddorf was volunteering in desperation to continue teaching without compensation rather than abandon students in the pipeline. As I recall, her offer was refused.) Meanwhile, I understand that the program is still bringing in some Federal money to the University by way of student fellowships.

No doubt some faculty members concerned are resigned to their fate and even relieved to see an end to the long struggle with the administration. But, judging from cries for help, apparently not all. There are still some people wholeheartedly committed to their work, with international reputations and good teaching and publishing records, probably exceeding some of those in many other departments.

It has not been a fair contest from the beginning. I for one have always had serious doubts about the academic viability of Area Studies anywhere, with their mechanical mixture of social sciences and humanities and lack of philosophical or even administrative integration (in many cases giving part-time faculty based outside the erstwhile department a predominant say

in its affairs). Perhaps as a way of providing background to "spies" (as one of my colleagues puts it) or government officials, the concept has some value, but by pretending to be something else, Area Centers do not even do that job efficiently. In the case of South Asia at Minnesota this weak foundation has been deliberately weakened further first by a major reduction of staff and then by the unnatural marriage with Middle Eastern Studies, thereby destroying its focus--after all of which the beleaguered remaining core is charged with "weakness"!

Nevertheless, it still has some notable, even unique, strengths. One of them surely is Marathi studies centered around Professor Junghare and drawing on other specialists in the Twin Cities area. It is a national resource, and should be maintained somehow. Our Sputnik mentality is another national policy problem--crash programs in areas suddenly in the limelight, followed by letting those concerned die on the vine, rather than maintaining stable cadres of specialists.

Naturally every university should not try to do everything--we must develop complementary specializations. It is appropriate that Minnesota maintain strong programs in Scandinavian and American Indian studies, for example, whether these necessarily "pay off" every year or not. But it can afford to do more. Surely a small Marathi program would not be an undue strain. Arabic, on the other hand, is hardly a specialization: it is not only a major world language, but has been a recognized part of the curriculum of Western universities since the Middle Ages. It should be maintained as Greek and Latin are maintained. The same could be said, with some qualifications, for Sanskrit.

The question is, under what rubric? As you may have gathered, I am not arguing for preserving the Department, as now constituted, as such (although I have been urged to). Perhaps the best arrangement might be to reconstitute the old Department of (Slavic and) Oriental Languages (if the Far Eastern people are willing!), within which there might be Indian and Middle Eastern "tracks", based on language (1. Marathi-Sanskrit-Hindi-Urdu; 2. Arabic), literature, and cultural history--a viable focus.

Please forgive my presumption in writing all this. I am hoping any and all input will be welcome as you ponder your decision. I agreed to write not only because of my special concern for Minnesota but because I consider the whole issue a matter of national concern.

cc: Junghare ✓
Naim
Stanislaw
file

Yours sincerely,

Edwin P. Masica

EDWIN P. MASICA
Associate Professor
Department of South Asian
Languages & Civilizations
University of Chicago

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF SOUTH ASIAN LANGUAGES
AND CIVILIZATIONS
FOSTER HALL
1130 EAST 59TH STREET
CHICAGO • ILLINOIS 60637

29 March 1987

Professor Roger Benjamin
Vice-President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Dear Professor Benjamin:

It is not an easy letter for me to write as I fully realise my great presumption in attempting it. I can only assume you will be kind enough to give it some attention. I do, however, share the deep concern of Professor Junghare and my other friends at the University of Minnesota. And I did take some part in the beginnings of the South Asian Studies there: in 1961-62 I used to travel from Chicago to Minneapolis every other weekend to teach Urdu-Hindi, prepare language tapes, and instruct my teaching assistant. It was a small beginning under the auspices of Slavic and Middle Eastern Studies, but those were exciting days. The University of Minnesota had just received the magnificent Ames Collection, and the federal government had finally awakened to the importance of foreign languages and area studies. I felt that the program at the University of Minnesota will eventually become a major national resource. And it did.

It therefore came as a shock to me when I first heard that the Department was being disbanded. I was sorry to see David Lelyveld and R. D. Munda leave Minneapolis for they were two very fine scholars and teachers. Now of course Munda is the Vice-Chancellor of Ranchi University in India and Lelyveld is a Dean at Columbia. Sajidah Alavi, another scholar who left, has been named to a chair at McGill University. These were sad losses for the program but it had at least retained a core of dedicated faculty and a reasonably viable, though restricted, program of South Asian Studies could be maintained. Now I hear from Prof. Junghare that even that may not continue. That is a most sad news.

I am in particular concerned about one aspect which perhaps does not get much attention. The University of Minnesota, in collaboration with such scholars as Elinore Zelliot and James Laine, at Carlton and Macalester respectively, has kept going a unique program in Marathi Studies. No other institution in the United States does that. Similarly, you have in M. A. R. Barker a major scholar of Urdu who is also uniquely qualified to teach Baluchi--spoken in Baluchistan which is where the Russians are always thought of looking for their warm-water seaport--Arabic and Punjabi. From my perspective, a South and West Asian Studies

program at the University of Minnesota is still highly viable and can serve significantly as a national resource. Apparently the federal government also feels that way for it continues to offer language fellowships there.

I wonder if it would at all be possible for the University of Minnesota to let the present South Asian Studies faculty continue to function as a distinct, degree-granting committee within the new proposed structure? Three areas of specialization come immediately to mind: (1) West Asian and Islamic Studies; (2) Ancient Indian Art and Culture; and (3) Marathi and North Indian Studies. I understand the University has no intention of curtailing the faculty, but it would be drastically minimizing the effectiveness of the faculty if it will not allow them to function as one academic unit.

Allow me to offer you my apologies once again. If you have read this far, I thank you for your courtesy and kindness.

Sincerely,
CMM

C. M. Naim,
Associate Professor of Urdu
& Chairman

cc: Junghare
Masica



PLEASE POST/CIRCULATE

Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans

TOWN HALL MEETING

The Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, a legislated State Agency will hold a Public Meeting, as follows:

DATE : May 5, 1987 (Tuesday)

TIME : 7:00 PM

PLACE : The Centrum - Free Parking
Lutheran Social Services
2414 Park Avenue, Minneapolis
Telephone 871-0221

AGENDA : COMMITMENT TO FOCUS
The University of Minnesota
* Minority Programs
* Asian/Pacific American Learning
Resource Center
* Proposed "dis-establishment" of the
Department of South and Southwest
Asian Studies

In compliance with the Council's legislative mandate to advise the Governor and the Legislature on issues confronting the Asian-Pacific people in the State of Minnesota, the Council is holding this Town Hall Meeting as an integral part of its "community outreach and education program" and to solicit public comments and recommendations regarding the "Commitment to Focus" Plan of The University of Minnesota. The Council will submit its findings and recommendations to the University President, the Governor, and the Legislature for appropriate action. Organizations and individuals who wish to speak may register in advance by calling - Dr. Albert V. de Leon, Executive Director at (612) 296-0538.

cc: President Kenneth H. Keller
Dr. John M. Taborn
Dr. Nobuya Tsuchida
Dr. William Malandra

Governor Rudy Perpich
Minnesota Legislators
Asian-Pacific Community

Summit National Bank Building
205 Aurora Avenue, Suite 100
St. Paul, Minnesota 55103

612-296-0538

Longer-range building and facilities needs involve programmatic planning for Murphy, Vincent and Pillsbury Halls and the more immediate relocation of college service support units with the remodeling of Fraser and Walter Library at hand.

Appendix I gives a more complete and detailed picture of necessary academic planning to precede physical remodeling but it should be made clear here that physical and architectural design planning must involve and follow college academic planning as a whole. The ad hoc procedures of the past, office by office, building by building have resulted in a lesser college, a much lesser University and an ill-served student body, faculty and community.

11.) PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITIES AND BUDGET DECISIONS

Programmatic Restructuring: Over the next several years, the College will proceed with restructuring of the following programmatic units by consolidation, coordination and relocation as rapidly as space availability and budget will allow. We will continue the process of rationalizing the curriculum and staffing these programmatic units as we currently are doing, and will initiate the necessary process of governance restructuring through the constitutional sequence of departmental, council and assembly actions. The pooling of office functions and technological support systems will proceed as rapidly as possible to attain optimal efficiency consistent with program size and instruction and research workloads.

SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST ASIAN STUDIES

- The College recommends the dissolution of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. The 1983 restructuring of the units of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies has not been successful in increasing student demand, faculty stability or continuity of curricular offerings.

We further recommend and will support the relocation of the Middle Eastern and South Asian studies curricular programs to the Institute of International Studies either as programs parallel in structure to the Latin American Studies program or as curricular options (or "tracks") within International Studies majors. Discussions on program structure should begin immediately between the relevant faculties in order to meet the next College bulletin deadline for 1988-90.

The South Asian and Middle Eastern language and literature curricular options not incorporated in other programs or units or not finding affiliation with other units in the college will be listed under the Interdepartmental Study designation in the next College bulletin. The basic weakness in the language majors suggests a reorientation of the curriculum around the International Studies core rather than the reverse which has been the focus in the past.

The budgeted faculty in the present department should explore other departmental affiliation as budgeted and tenured members of their chosen department. Faculty members not securing other affiliation will retain full budgetary and tenure status in the College but will not be arbitrarily attached to a department. The College will work to help faculty transfer to other college units but cannot force tenure changes.

The above proposals on the dis-establishment of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies must be recommended specifically by the Councils, the Assembly and the Dean of the College and be acted upon by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President and the Regents of the University before becoming effective.

ANEJ/CLASSICAL STUDIES

- Discussions have been underway on the consolidation of ANEJ and Classical Studies under a single departmental designation, budget and central office, but with several identifiable program clusters of separate but overlapping curricular, research and faculty interests. The College endorses and supports this unit consolidation and programmatic rationalization process and will expedite necessary space and resource reallocations to bring it about.

The College further encourages the reaffiliation of Sanskrit instruction and faculty within this unit and the development of faculty and program strength in Classical Civilization, Ancient and Medieval Art and Archaeology. (See Section II for details).

COMPARATIVE STUDIES

- The College endorses, over the next several years, the closer affiliation of the departments of Comparative Literature and Humanities and the Center for Humanistic Studies. In its space and facilities planning, the College has proposed the relocation of these units in the remodeled Fraser Hall complex. The plan envisions pooled office and technological space and adjacent suites for instruction, faculty and student research facilities and common space. We encourage the initiation of discussions to rationalize present curriculum proposals and shared faculty among these comparative studies units and with other units of the College. The College will support resource and governance proposals that coincide with the schedule of Fraser remodeling. Under present plans when Fraser is remodeled, the English faculty will move from

March 23, 1987

To: The Members of the CLA Assembly

From: B. David Burke, Ph.D. Candidate, Dept. of South & Southwest Asian Studies

CLA Administration at the University is recommending that you, the members of the CLA Assembly, vote to "dis-establish" the Dept. of South and Southwest Asian Studies. The Administration is working at break-neck speed, trying to get the proposal rubber stamped by you so that the issue can come before the Board of Regents at their June, 1987, meeting and, pending the Regents' approval, have the Dept.'s elimination a *fait accompli* by the beginning of the 1987-88 fiscal year, i.e. July 1, 1987.

Tenured faculty members within the Dept. are being asked to seek out tenured homes in other departments. The Administration is recommending that Sanskrit go to Classics and Arabic to Afro-American and African Studies. At first it was suggested that Arabic also go to Classics, but the Administration ran into resistance on that suggestion. All other positions, if not taken in by other depts., will become "floating" within CLA. Secretarial support will be essentially withdrawn. The faculty members have been told that if they need secretarial support they will have to ask the Linguistic Dept. secretary, who already has a full workload, for help. All courses not taken over by other depts. will be placed in the ID (Interdepartmental) category of the *Class Schedule*, if taught at all. This includes Hindi, Urdu and Marathi. Students wishing to pursue undergraduate study will have to take an IDIM major or a "track" in the International Relations Program. The International Relations Program's academic perspective is not that of languages and literature, and it is ill-equipped to take on such duties. Graduate students will be required to take a "traditional" discipline and try to incorporate relevant South and Southwest Asian coursework as best they can.

The fact that the Dept. was originally formed to bring its separate, scattered components into focus and to create a cohesive whole greater than any one of its parts is no longer seen as relevant in these days of "Committment to Focus." The ironies are rampant. This is the very time that students are being required to incorporate cultural pluralism courses into their degree programs. Incoming freshmen are going to be required to have three years of language training in the commonly taught high school languages or to take the equivalent at the U of M before they can receive degree credit for their language courses. The exception to this is for those students opting to take language courses not normally offered in Minnesota

high schools. For those students wishing to study a less commonly taught language (read: Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Arabic, Persian, etc.), degree credit is available from their first day in the classroom. Obviously, the cultural pluralism and language requirements will make it attractive for students to take coursework from the Dept. of South and Southwest Asian Studies. So what is the administration's response to this anticipated increased student demand? Cancel the Department!

CLA's administrative plan presents some serious issues that no administrator seems willing to address:

(1) Within CLA, only the depts. of Afro-American and African Studies, American Indian Studies, Ancient Near Eastern and Jewish Studies, Chicano Studies, South and Southwest Asian Studies and Comparative Literature are being asked to coalesce with larger units. Only the South and Southwest Asian Studies Dept. is up for immediate elimination, but the others seem to be slated for the future. In other words, the depts. whose primary concerns are the languages and literatures of ethnic and minority peoples are at stake. The exceptions to this are the East Asian Studies and Russian and East European Studies Depts. These exceptions are apparently due to the strong U.S./Minnesota business interests in Japan and China and the need for a major university to study the large Communist block countries. The 10% budget cut that Central Administration has asked each College to endure is not being spread in an equitable manner across the board. Rather, the primary force of its fall is to be upon the minority and ethnic studies depts.

No academic rationale has been put forward for this move other than a harkening back to tradition. The civil rights movements of the 1950's and '60's helped make it patently clear just what "tradition" has meant to the minority people of this country. We are being told that this is not an affirmative action issue but, rather, a question of the quality of the depts. involved. The fact that University Administration has for years overlooked these depts.' fiscal health and has not allowed for their academic growth is being conveniently overlooked. In the case of the South Asian Dept., in 1982, CLA Administration flatly told the faculty members that they would either incorporate the Middle East Dept. into their ranks or Administration would recommend the Dept.'s elimination. With no third alternative, the Dept. of South and Southwest Asian Studies was formed. It was also stated that no new faculty members would be allowed to be added to the new Dept. until such time as four tenured faculty members resigned, retired, etc. For the past five years, CLA has bought out the tenure contracts of several of the Dept.'s faculty members who, for separate reasons, felt it best to leave the U of M. These include Dr. Ram Dayal Munda, now the Vice-Chancellor of Ranchi University, Bihar, India; Dr. Sajida Alvi, who now holds an endowed chair for Islamic Studies at McGill University, Montreal, Canada; and, in the History Dept., Dr. David Lelyveld who is

now Dean of the Extension Division at Columbia University. We have lost some very talented faculty. The Dept. was also told that it needed to serve the interests of more students and should, in the future, concentrate on developing courses for the undergraduate curriculum. This was done, at the expense of furthering graduate level research which was the traditional strength of the Dept. These policies on the part of CLA Administration have worked in a coordinated fashion to sap the vitality of the Dept. and the enthusiasm of its faculty members. The Administration — choosing to overlook the outstanding research and publication record of many of the Dept.'s members, among whom are two recipients of the CLA Distinguished Teaching Award as well as one faculty member whose ten books on the Urdu language have become the world's (yes, including Pakistan's as well as the Defense Dept.'s) standard for teaching that language — now claims that the quality of the Dept. is sufficiently weak, that it serves primarily undergraduates and should be slated for elimination.

The question of graduate level research versus undergraduate teaching has been a real Catch-22 for the Dept.'s members since 1982. They have been blamed for being a graduate research dept. when the Administration wanted to emphasize undergraduate enrollment and, now that the Administration is intent on decreasing the enrollment of undergraduate students, they are being blamed for increasing their undergraduate enrollment. While CLA and Higher Administration attempts to claim that the issue is quality of teaching and curriculum, the underlying and primary issue is why this Dept., as well as the other ethnic and Third World Depts., have not been financially helped to achieve full-strength over the years. Area studies departments came into being nationwide in the late 1950's. The rationale and importance for their being was fully established at that time and still holds true today. It is just not equitable that these Depts. be asked to take on the full impact of the financial cuts being brought about within CLA by the Commitment and Strategy to Focus plans. This may well be an Affirmative Action issue at root. And this University's traditionally poor record in that area is well known. Has it been forgotten already that the nationally important Rajender Decree came about as a result of the unjust and inequitable treatment of a female U of M faculty member of South Asian descent?

(2) While CLA Administration is not currently threatening to fire tenured faculty members, it has been established that tenure resides in the department not the university as a whole. The fact that the Administration proposes to grant those faculty members in "floating" positions tenure in the College makes this clear. It also acts as a deterrent for a tenured faculty member in a "floating" position to speak out against the administration's plans for the Dept. If the tenure is in the Dept. and the Dept. is cancelled, the tenured members must rely on the goodwill of the Administration to carry through with its stated commitment to granting

tenure in CLA. This underlying and implied threat, though not articulated, in and of itself seems to constitute an abridgment of academic freedom of speech.

(3) If the Dept. is eliminated, the Ames Library of South Asia will be in serious jeopardy. Already, the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin, Madison, hearing that the Dept. may cease, have made inquiries about the possibility of buying the collection. With internal pressure for increased library space within the library system itself, the elimination of the Dept. may give the Library Administration an added impetus to divest itself of this major national collection which is second only to the holdings in the Library of Congress.

(4) It is becoming very clear that Commitment to Focus — which was at first proclaimed to be a commitment to focus on focusing itself — is, in reality, a Commitment to Focus on the Social Sciences and the Technological Fields at the expense of the language, literature and ethnic studies components of this university. This represents a major ideological shift with important ramifications for all depts. at the U of M. The President of the University is an engineer who is more intent on providing the latest \$10,000,000 piece of equipment to the Institute of Technology than he is to serving the interests of the language, literature and ethnic studies components. That \$10,000,000 would more than fund all the international depts. and programs on campus, both proposed and in place. It is time that President Keller be reminded that the citizens and educators of this state demand that the U of M be much more than a highly rated technological research institute.

The importance of the Middle East and South Asia to our nation is critical. The lack of understanding in this country about the Middle East and Pakistan is legendary. India is the world's largest democracy, wishing to be our friend but flirting dangerously with the U.S.S.R. This is not the time to disband the only Dept. on campus that studies these parts of the world in an academically focused and coordinated manner from the combined perspectives of the social sciences, languages and literatures. If the Dept. is currently seen as weak due to lack of faculty expertise in certain social science disciplines, President Keller should see to it that enough resources are expended to bring the Dept. to full-strength. Faculty members already in place whose research primarily relates to South Asia, though tenured in other depts., should be given full-voting rights as Adjunct Members to encourage their cooperation and participation. Adding five positions — one in Arabic, one in Hindi, one in Advanced Sanskrit and Indology, one in Economics and one in History — plus secretarial and professional/administrative support, would cost the U of M approximately \$200,000 per year and the result would be one of the top South Asian and Middle Eastern Area Studies Depts. in the nation. Actually, three of these positions would merely be replacement positions for departed faculty

members. The net additional cost to the U of M would only be around \$100,000. If these funds are not currently available, they should be raised by our Development Officers for this specific purpose. There is currently so much business interest in the Middle East and South Asia that that should not be difficult to accomplish. Both Control Data and Cray Research sell computers to India, perhaps they would like to contribute to this. And surely Pakistan and the Middle Eastern countries would be willing to contribute to this major Islamic research Dept., perhaps even to establish an Islamic Studies Center. One wonders why CLA Administration has spent six years of full-time salary expense to buy out three talented tenured faculty members when that same amount would have brought the Dept. to full strength. Surely, out of a \$300,000,000 development drive and an annual budget of several hundred million dollars, President Keller should direct that the small additional amount of money needed to create one of the top Depts. in the country be invested for that purpose. By not doing so, the U of M will no longer have an effective focus on the Middle East and South Asia. Can this university achieve President Keller's plan of becoming one of the top five public institutions of higher education in the country without such a focus? Not in this day and age! What accrediting board would take such an institution seriously? The academic soundness and prestige of this major university are clearly at stake. The Dept. of South and Southwest Asian Studies has the potential to become a major graduate research department once again with a focus that is unique among such depts. in the nation. Its faculty members are not inferior to those at other universities' South Asian and Middle Eastern Depts. and, indeed, are called upon both to sit on the doctoral examining committees of students from those universities as well as serve as evaluators on those Depts.' committees.

CLA Administration's proposal to make this Dept. -- which carries full weight in the Graduate School catalog -- a "track" in the International Relations Program is not well conceived and will ill-serve the students at the University. In contrast to the Dept. of South and Southwest Asian Studies, the International Relations Program is not a Dept., it doesn't offer degrees through the Graduate School, and it cannot adequately take on the added duties of teaching the languages and literatures of India, Pakistan and the Middle East. Surely, a better solution than this can be found, one that will acknowledge the importance of the languages and literatures while yet encouraging students to balance those offerings with courses from the social science disciplines -- a balance our Dept. has always recommended and sought to achieve.

The Dept. of South and Southwest Asian Studies was officially established by the University in 1968. There have been nineteen years of financial support given it by both the University and the Federal Government. The Federal Government alone has invested hundreds of

thousands of dollars in seed money, faculty research grants, fellowships and Center funding. It is unconscionable to throw this investment away in the space of half a year. The University has already made the commitment to the Dept., its faculty members, students, and citizens of this State and Nation. It is now time to stand behind that commitment. I ask that you vote "No" to the elimination of the Dept. and that, instead, you appoint a committee to work closely with the faculty members of the Dept. in an effort to discover exactly what needs to be done to help the Dept. achieve full-strength. Plainly, if the Dept. is eliminated, the fact that the University no longer has a Middle Eastern or a South Asian Dept. has the potential to become a major public embarrassment to this Administration. Let's not throw nineteen years of financial investment and plain old hardwork away. Once eliminated, such a Dept. would be very hard to secure federal and state money for if, in the future, it was decided that the Dept.'s elimination was a mistake.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
TWIN CITIES

Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies
192 Klæber Court
320 16th Avenue S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
(612) 624-7030

March 31, 1987

TO: The CLA Assembly Members

FROM: Indira Y. Junghare *Junghare*

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies has existed at this university under some rubric for the past two decades. Until 1982, it was called the Department of South Asian Studies. As scholars, we have achieved national and international recognition and have attracted well over \$1,000,000 in federal funding. We still continue to receive Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship support.

In 1982, the Department was reorganized and what remained of the disbanded Middle Eastern Studies Department was merged with us. The administration claims that this marriage between the South Asian and Middle Eastern Departments has not been successful. In point of fact, the only remaining faculty member in the Middle East Department left at the time of the merger. Actually, all that our department gained from the merger was office equipment. The so-called marriage never took place.

From 1982 until now, the composition of the Department has consisted of two wings: South Asia and (nominally) the Middle East. At present there are six core faculty and six associated faculty members with full voting rights. Of the six core faculty, 3½ teach and are engaged in research in the languages and literatures of South Asia. The other 2½ constitute the entire "Middle Eastern" or Islamic component. In this "wing", one member has been hired on a tenure track basis this academic year. The six associated faculty members have tenured homes in various social science departments. They conduct research and teach courses centering on South Asia and the Middle East.

In the process of the departmental merger, three Middle East tenured positions were lost and have never been replaced. The Department has also lost three tenured positions in the South Asian component due to retrenchment and tenure buy-outs. Thus, the department's core faculty has been reduced to one-half its pre-1982 strength.

Out of the present six core faculty, two have received CLA Distinguished Teaching Awards. The faculty members of the department have also received substantial federal funding for research, including NEH grants, HEW, Smithsonian, American Institute of Indian Studies awards, etc. Additionally, they have received numerous University of Minnesota grants.

The importance of the scholastic contribution of the faculty of the Department is recognized nationally and internationally. As evidence of this, I

have on file letters from leading scholars: scholars from such institutions as the University of Chicago, the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, the University of Wisconsin (Madison), the University of Michigan, etc.

In spite of the loss of faculty, the Department has experienced, we continue to attract a large number of students to our cultural and language courses due to the cultural pluralism, World Studies and foreign language requirements. Out of these increasing enrollments, a new body of graduate students is emerging and in the near future the graduate program will flourish.

In light of Commitment to Focus, we are already ranked number #1 nationally for Marathi and Urdu. Our Arabic enrollment is the largest in the country. Our research in South Asian Linguistics is of international repute. In order to place the Department in the top 5 nationally, we have been requesting several additional positions from the administration which we have not received. On the contrary, we have been told that the Department is going to be "dis-established." We ask you the members of the Assembly not to approve the administration's recommendation. We are very close to being in the top 5 nationally; it would not take much additional funding to put us over the top.

We ask the Assembly to give us your support in setting up a committee or a task force to work in cooperation with the departmental faculty and CLA Administration to help develop a more positive alternative than what is proposed to you today.

To end with a personal note, we the faculty members of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies would like you to consider the fact that we have worked very hard for two decades and gave the best of ourselves to this institution. Just at the time we are being recognized nationally and internationally as excellent scholars and teachers, we are told to abandon our life-long professional investment and reorient ourselves academically. We are being told that we, ourselves, must seek out new tenure homes. At this point in life, it is humiliating to go to another department and have to beg for a place. Even if some departments are kind enough to accept us, we will have to develop courses according to the needs of the new departments. We will have to start all over again. This is not only unfair, it damages the University of Minnesota's reputation nationally.

March 25, 1987

To: CLA Assembly Members

From: Certain members of the Dept. of South & Southwest Asian Studies

Dear Colleagues:

This open letter is being sent to all who are concerned with the quality and variety of education provided by the College of Liberal Arts. At the CLA Assembly meeting to be held on March 31, 1987, at 3:15 P.M., Room 30, Law Building, the College Planning Statement, we believe, will be presented for rapid passage. This document includes the "dis-establishment" of the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. We urge you to consider this action carefully. We further urge you to vote against "dis-establishment" and strive for some better solution, one that maximizes the use of personnel and resources (e.g. the unique Ames Library of South Asia and the Middle East holdings) now present at Minnesota. We hope that you will act to delay the administration's rather hasty proposal until all its ramifications can be studied.

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies has six "core" faculty, five of whom are tenured and the sixth on the tenure track (he is new this year). The department offers a B.A., and at the graduate level an M.A. and a Ph.D. under the rubric of "South Asian Languages." "Southwest Asia" is an awkward term chosen to represent the Arabic and Persian components of this program -- legacies of the now-defunct Middle Eastern program -- while "South Asia" stands largely for India and Pakistan, although Bangladesh is included to some extent. Hindi and Urdu are the two major South Asian languages taught, while Marathi (an important regional language) and Sanskrit (the Indian equivalent to Classical Greek or Latin) are also offered. In terms of enrollments, Arabic is the large language offered, as may be expected in view of the importance of the Middle East, and Persian enrollments are also about as high as any university in the United States.

The department also offers courses in the cultures, literatures, religions, etc., of its areas of expertise. Further areal courses are taught by scholars in other units: e.g. Anthropology, History, Humanities, Linguistics, Political Science, and others. Several of these "adjunct faculty" serve on the department's committees, take part in its research, enhance its offerings, sit on its graduate examining committees, and participate in its national and international activities. Most core members similarly work in other programs and departments: e.g. the current department chair is also the chair of Religious Studies; he and others are members of the Center for Ancient Studies, etc. A South Asian Consortium joins the efforts of the university's program with those at Carleton College, Macalester College, and others, and members of the unit are active in cultural and religious organizations focused upon South Asia and the Middle East. The unit is thus an active and integral participant within the College, the university, and the State of Minnesota.

The department's research activities are impressive. One member has produced a definitive study of the art of medieval Bihar (in India); another has developed a nationally-known and recognized course in the Urdu language, as well as a three-volume reader of classical Urdu poetry, a two-volume course in the Baluchi language, and five or six other major linguistic and pedagogical works; still another has produced a seminal Persian course, plus several literary and linguistic studies. Other members have made similar important contributions. The department's personnel are internationally known: several serve on national and international committees, hold offices in scholarly bodies, evaluate grant proposals for major agencies, and the like.

The department's teaching is highly effective: two members of this small unit received the CLA Distinguished Teaching Award, and two more have been nominated. The elementary Arabic class draws over forty students each Fall Quarter, and courses on Persian fiction in translation, religious developments in South Asia, etc. are always attended by 60-up students.

In 1978 the department underwent a major self-survey. An evaluating committee was formed within this university, and three external evaluators were brought from South Asia programs at other American institutions. The findings of this survey fill two volumes, but the essential bottom line is that the program was given high marks. One major weakness cited was the lack of local support by the College administration.

Given the above, why the hurry to "dis-establish" this department?

Enrollments are a big factor. Students have not been plentiful. Even so, Minnesota has more students in its Urdu program than anywhere else in North America. It also has a surprisingly large enrollment in its Arabic courses, and Hindi and Persian are also reasonably well attended. The cultural courses are now heavily enrolled, but these are often housed under other rubrics: e.g. Religious Studies, Humanities, History. These "external" courses do not show up very clearly when heads are counted. There is also an automatic "built-in" pressure towards the "traditional" European languages and cultures in American society, and students often do not "find" the department until late in their careers. Other programs at the university are sometimes also so heavily concentrated upon their own requirements that they do not send students for training in South Asian and Middle Eastern languages and cultural matters urgently relevant to their disciplines.

One strongly negative factor cited by the administration is that of "critical mass." This appears to relate to the small student population, the paucity of majors (but cf. above!), plus the number of "core faculty." The dwindling of the department's faculty, both "core" and "adjunct" is indeed a problem. There are still six core members, and the "Adjunct Faculty" numbers about six more. This, certainly, is sufficient for "critical mass" -- and, if not, why cannot further personnel be appointed from within the university? There are examples of units with as few as one tenured faculty member within the College; five, plus the adjunct members, make up a reasonably sized body. "Critical mass" can be achieved through broader cooperation, coordination with other programs, and publicity.

University support has not been lavish. In the late 60's, the department was given "seed money" by the U.S. Government to half-fund posts within other disciplines. These "seeds" were supposed to be picked up by the university and the money redeployed to add still further needed personnel to the program. The latter was never done; the university eventually did fund all of these "seed" posts -- but the "seeds" were not given back to the program. This matter is now a "dead issue" as far as the administration is concerned.

All during the 1970's the department sensed a constant effort on the part of the College and Central Administration to reduce it, to eliminate certain offerings, and to discourage its personnel. Much of this was militated, of course, by the climate of budgetary gloom and retrenchment that pervaded the university in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Demoralization set in. The department was "designated" at the end of the retrenchment process. Four of its tenured faculty were to be released or urged to go elsewhere

before there could be any talk of replacements or new incentives. Several colleagues did leave the university, some citing the mood of depression and the lack of a future at this institution. To cooperate, the department eliminated Bengali, placed Marathi on a "demand-only" basis, pressed for the expansion of Arabic (which does draw students) and its Middle Eastern component, and reoriented itself toward teaching "cultural" courses in order to attract students and service the needs of other units. Nevertheless, subtle pressures to "dis-establish" the department continue and now culminate in the action urged upon the CLA Assembly on March 31st.

And what does the College propose? To "dis-establish" the department, to parcel out its cultural and areal offerings to the International Relations Program, give Sanskrit to Classics, possibly put Arabic into Afro-American and African Studies, and let the rest dangle in limbo. The International Relations Program is not a bad choice. Areal and cultural courses are not the true focus, we understand, of that Program -- but how about putting all international courses over there? Sanskrit is indeed "classical" in the sense that it is a dead language, like ancient Greek or Latin. The vagaries of American education often compel Sanskrit's inclusion in a "classics" department. This choice in itself is not indefensible. It does obscure the relationship between ancient and modern India, just as putting "classical" Greek into Classics and modern Greek into, say, East European Studies would be unfortunate. As for Arabic, it is indeed the national language of all of north Africa, from Morocco over through Egypt; it is thus "African." But this is clearly a make-shift decision, one calculated to sweep the oddities under the carpet, and not one based upon scholarship or logic. Arabic originates in Arabia; it is the tongue of millions of persons in Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. Again, the administration's action serves to obscure real and important relationships.

What, exactly, is saved by this administrative "streamlining?" No one seems willing to answer this question succinctly, head-on. Is it proposed to terminate staff? Five core members are tenured; the sixth is on the tenure track. These scholars wish to remain at Minnesota -- they have the same right to this as professors of Physics, Sociology, etc. True, tenure is vested in the department, not in the College or University. Kill the department, there goes tenure! These staff members can be given pink slips at once, unless they beg entrance into some other department in order to get a "tenure home." There is no legal recourse. The administration says that these displaced persons also will not be aided in finding other tenure homes, although they will be transferred if they do find refuge. Why is this? Several examples can be cited of cases in which the College aided refugees from dying programs to find shelter elsewhere. Why not in this case? The department's personnel are good and even excellent scholars and teachers.

One can always "float" without a tenure home, the administration says, but that is at the administration's discretion, which seems a very shaky branch from which to hang these days. In any case, the demoralization resulting from having no tenure home, no department, no services, would be devastating -- and, given the current job market, it is possible that such "floating" faculty may be compelled to remain at Minnesota in this condition for years!

That brings up the ugly word "termination." Does the university want the bad reputation that certain other American institutions got when they fired tenured faculty a few years ago? Not very encouraging for new staff! Not very heartening for members of other small departments already here -- and, rumor has it, possibly also threatened.

Again, what is really saved? A secretary's salary --! Stationery, lights, heat? Wherever the refugees from the deceased department go, they will still need these services. Office space? Not while people still have jobs! The fact is that financial savings accruing from the demise of this department will be minuscule. No, monetary savings cannot be the issue here.

What about the curriculum? The administration says that most offerings will continue to exist, although they will be dispersed here and there. The present department offers a cohesive curriculum; its offerings are all together and visible in the catalog. Students can be easily advised, and their programs can be coordinated. To scatter them around would be to lose their visibility and cohesion entirely -- a student who wants a program in Middle Eastern affairs would have to look under International Relations Programs, under Afro-American and African Studies, under History, under -- what? No, programmatic logic can hardly be the reason for the urgency of this "dis-establishment."

It must also be noted that the department is currently visible as an "entity" to the federal government and to granting agencies. The Department of Education gave nearly a quarter of a million dollars in the mid-1970's to produce A Reader of Classical Urdu Poetry. A sizeable part of this was taken by the university as "indirect costs." Other members of the department have been successful with grants as well, and Professor Joseph Schwartzberg's Historical Atlas of South Asia would have been much more difficult to produce had his colleagues in the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies not been here. In the current year, two faculty members were granted computers and support by the Woksape Project (the only new Woksape grant funded within CLA), and these same scholars have also applied for roughly a hundred thousand dollars in supplemental funds from outside the university. Granting bodies look very hard at requests from a university where there is no recognizable program, no "entity."

What, then, are the reasons for the rush to "dis-establish" this unit? "Critical mass?" A handy term without real content. What else? We haven't heard any sound academic or financial reasons yet.

The languages of the Middle East and South Asia are absolutely crucial to an understanding of events in those troubled regions. It is true that student enrollments in these subjects are tiny, but these will undoubtedly increase as the new language and cross-cultural requirements are applied to incoming students. Cultural courses have already surpassed the present abilities of the department to teach them, and Arabic, similarly, requires another professor in order to attain its potential. Instead of "dis-establishment," thus, the department deserves support and encouragement. Doubling the size of the present department would cost only about 1/50th as much as the cost of one ten-million dollar machine which has been proposed for one of the technical departments! Double the size of the current Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies, and we could have one of the finest and most respected programs in this field in the country.

There is also a hint -- justified or not, who can be sure? -- of racism in the actions now being taken against the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. Rumors abound to the effect that such "ethnic" units as Afro-American and African Studies, Chicano Studies, and American Indian Studies may be in trouble as well. We hope these rumors are untrue. However, the traditional university departments do not seem to be threatened, while various "ethnic" units are indeed found at the bottom of certain administrative lists. We ask the administration to prove its good faith by supporting programs and scholarly endeavors in the "ethnic" areas.

In the last analysis, the citizens of Minnesota have as much right to learn Arabic, Persian, and Hindi-Urdu as they have to study engineering, medicine, or French. The Middle East and South Asia are high on the list of national priorities. A department-- perhaps not the present format but some other logical structure -- can, should, and must exist on this campus.

Wait, one may say, we can't teach everything. Money is scarce, and we can't provide for every language in the world, every culture, every literature! True. But when one looks at the urgency of Arabic and the Middle East, at the situation in Iran, at the hundred and some-odd million people who speak Urdu or the couple of hundred million who speak Hindi -- one must admit that these are not just "unimportant little languages we can't afford to teach!" Minnesota is one of the largest universities in North America; can it call itself a "university" without full and detailed coverage of these vital regions? The citizens of Minnesota must not leave

these subjects to be taught "at Berkeley, at Harvard, or at Columbia"; we have a right -- and a duty -- to do this for ourselves. These directions tie in strongly with President Keller's Commitment to Focus, to the needs of Minnesota's international businesses to such programs as Public Health and the Medical School (which train physicians for work abroad), to the government of the State of Minnesota, and to the Federal government.

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies is conscious of its role as a "good academic citizen." There is no intention here to "defend the pass at Thermopylae to the last Spartan." Administrative streamlining is a useful objective. In this case, however, it will likely result in the destruction of what is now a small but useful program, the cramming of its components into units where they do not fit, the diffusion and obscuring of offerings, and the further demoralization of staff -- not only the staff of the department itself but also of other units that may feel "threatened" by this development.

Let's look at something positive instead. If "streamlining" is needed, one might propose an "umbrella" department along the lines of the British School of Oriental and African Studies: a centralized office providing services and budgetary unity, while its components retain localized autonomy and prosecute their disciplines in cooperation with other sub-units. Such an umbrella could serve as a convenient home for smaller programs that do not fit easily into other structures. It would be feasible later to join -- or coordinate -- this umbrella with a centralized institute (center, whatever) for linguistics and English as a Second Language, putting all of such offerings (except the traditional European language departments, although they might wish to join in, of course) into one useful, centralized, "service" department.

A good deal of study is needed before any step should be taken. This has not been done -- not, at least, in consultation with the personnel of the department most concerned! Nor have other relevant units been brought into this planning process. Meetings with representatives of the administration have not been collaborative, cooperative discussions. The administration seems to make up its collective mind and then enforce its decisions, rationalizing them as best it can. It apparently has the will and the power to "dis-establish" a department -- against the wishes of its members and possibly of the College and the community-at-large -- but it lacks the interest, the vision, or whatever it takes to see that the defunct unit is replaced by a better and more viable one.

In response to comments voiced by the deans and various committees of the CLA administration, Professors Bashiri and Junghare prepared a new planning statement which was edited by Professor Schwartzberg. To date, there has been no substantial response to this document.

In summary, the proposal to eliminate the department has been imposed on the faculty by administration -- not done in the spirit of mutual consultation and cooperation. The academic rationale for the department's "dis-establishment" doesn't strike us as appropriate or in the best interest of the academic community. There is neither financial gain to the university nor a gain in faculty or programmatic coordination. In view of the lack of productive results, the proposed dissolution of the department strikes us as unhappy and unfortunate. The department's research potential and ability to attract grants is being seriously hindered. This is especially important as regards proposed and ongoing research relating to language proficiency testing which President Keller strongly favors and the Federal government has as a top priority.

Some further thought and effort are required. Please join us in opposing this unwise and hasty action.

Thank you.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT
MACALESTER COLLEGE
1600 GRAND AVENUE
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA 55105
612-696-6353

25 March 1987

Vice-President Roger Benjamin
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis MN 55455

Dear Dr. Benjamin

I have been informed by members of the University of Minnesota's Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies of the proposal to dissolve the department. I write to express my concern.

There is no question that in recent years, South Asian Studies (the half of the department with which I am familiar) has not had the resources to be a national center in the field. But for the University to abandon South Asian Studies under a "commitment of focus" is a statement that the major university of the state, concerned to establish a national reputation, is content to ignore one of the world's four major civilizations. Moreover, despite its limitations, the department has offered, among other things, a high quality of instruction in the languages of Urdu and Marathi. These important South Asian languages are not offered at many other institutions, and the University could make a unique contribution to the field in this area of language study. Professor Barkar has written a definitive book of Urdu instruction, and Professor Junghare's pupils--including Peter Hook (a linguist at the University of Michigan) and Phillip Engblom (a leading translator of modern Marathi poetry) have made major contributions to Marathi-studies, a testament to Dr. Junghare's good work.

In my own case, as a scholar interested in the religious traditions of the Marathi-speaking area and involved with the Associated Colleges of the Midwest program of study-abroad in this region, I depend on the resources and the scholarly community of the University of Minnesota.

Much could be done to develop certain particular areas in South Asian studies where the University of Minnesota would not directly compete with other major programs (e.g., University of Wisconsin). Certain improvements are necessary to make South Asian Studies a viable program of study at the University of Minnesota, but its elimination would be, from curricular and intellectual points of view, dangerously Europocentric and tragic.

Sincerely

James W. Laine

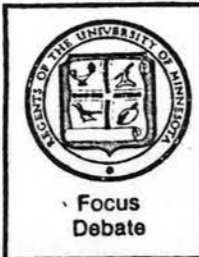
James W. Laine

MACALESTER
COLLEGE

Focus must spare South & Southwest Asian Studies

By B. David Burke

At today's CLA Assembly meeting (3:15 p.m., Room 30, Law School), the CLA administration will recommend that the Department of



South and Southwest Asian Studies be "disestablished." If the Assembly approves the administration's plan, it could come before the Board of Regents as early as June, with the department's elimination a *fait accompli* by the beginning of the 1987-88 fiscal year, i.e. July 1, 1987.

This would be unwise. Instead of eliminating the department, the University should devote the funds necessary to improve its quality and make it competitive.

Tenured faculty members within the department are being asked to seek out tenured homes in other departments. The administration is recommending that Sanskrit go to Classics and Arabic to Afro-American and African Studies. All other positions, if not absorbed by other departments, will become "floating" within CLA, and secretarial support will be essentially withdrawn.

According to the plan, all courses not taken over by other departments will be placed in the interdepartmental category of the class schedule, if taught at all. This includes Hindi, Urdu and Marathi. Students wishing to pursue undergraduate study in these areas will have to take an interdepartmental, individualized major or a "track" in the international relations program. Unfortunately, the international relations program does not focus on languages and literature and is ill equipped to take on such duties. Graduate students will be required to take a "traditional" discipline and try to incorporate relevant South and Southwest Asian course work as best they can.

The fact that the department was originally formed to bring its separate, scattered components into a cohesive whole greater than any one of its parts, is no longer seen as relevant in these days of "Commitment to Focus." Instead, the administration is proposing to eliminate the department at the very time that students are being required to incorporate cultural pluralism courses into their degree programs.

Incoming freshmen will need to have three years of language training in the commonly taught high school languages or to take the equivalent at the University before they can receive degree credit for their language courses. The exception to this is for those

students who opt to take language courses that aren't usually offered in high school. For those students wishing to study a less commonly taught language (read: Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Arabic, Persian, etc.), degree credit will be available from their first day in the classroom.

Obviously, the cultural pluralism and language requirements will make it attractive for students to take course work from the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies. So what is the administration's response to this anticipated increase in student demand? Eliminate the department!

Minority, ethnic programs jeopardized
Within CLA, only the departments of Afro-American and African Studies, American Indian Studies, Ancient Near Eastern and Jewish Studies, Chicano Studies, South and Southwest Asian Studies and Comparative Literature are being asked to coalesce with larger units. Only the South and Southwest Asian Studies Department is up for immediate elimination, but the others seem to be slated for future elimination.

In other words, the departments whose primary concerns are the languages and literatures of ethnic and minority peoples are the most jeopardized.

The exceptions to this are the East Asian Studies and Russian and East European Studies Departments — apparently because

of the strong Minnesota business interests in Japan and China and the need for a major university to study the large Communist block countries.

In sum, the 10 percent budget cut that the University's central administration has asked each College to endure is not being spread in an equitable manner across the board. Rather, the primary force of its fall is to be upon the minority and ethnic studies departments.

No academic rationale has been put forward for this move other than a harkening back to tradition. The civil rights movement

"That the administration has for years overlooked these departments' fiscal health . . . is being conveniently overlooked."

of the 1950s and 1960s helped make it patently clear just what "tradition" has meant to the minority people of this country. We are being told that this is not an affirmative action issue, but, rather, a question of the quality of the departments involved. That the administration has for years overlooked these departments' fiscal health and has not allowed for their academic growth is being conveniently overlooked.

In South and Southwest Asian Studies, CLA has spent the past five years buying out

the tenure contracts of several of the department's most talented faculty members who, for separate reasons, felt it was best to leave the University. The department was also told that it needed to serve the interests of more students and should, in the future, concentrate on developing courses for the undergraduate curriculum. This was done at the

"The academic soundness and prestige of the University are clearly at stake."

expense of furthering graduate level research which was the traditional strength of the department.

These policies on the part of CLA administration have worked in a coordinated fashion to sap the department's vitality and the enthusiasm of its faculty members. The administration — choosing to overlook the outstanding research and publication record of many of the department's members, among whom are two recipients of the CLA Distinguished Teaching Award, as well as one faculty member whose ten books on the Urdu language have become the world's standard

for teaching that language — now claims the department serves primarily undergraduates and should be slated for elimination.

Catch 22
The question of graduate level research vs. undergraduate teaching has been a real Catch 22 for the department's faculty members since 1982. First, they were blamed for being a graduate research department when the administration wanted to emphasize undergraduate enrollment, and now that the administration is intent on decreasing undergraduate enrollment, they are being blamed for increasing their undergraduate enrollment.

While the administration claims the issue is quality of teaching and curriculum, the true issue is why South and Southwest Asian Studies and other departments have not received the financial support necessary to achieve full strength over the years.

Area studies departments came into being nationwide in the late 1950s. The rationale and importance for their being was fully established at that time and still holds true today. It is just not equitable that these departments be asked to take on the full impact of the financial cuts being brought about within CLA by the Commitment and Strategy for Focus plans.

This may well be an affirmative action issue at root. And this University's traditionally poor record in that area is well-known. Has it been forgotten already that the nationally important Rajender decree came about as a result of the unjust and inequitable treatment of a female U of M faculty member of

South Asian descent?

Abridgment of academic free speech

While CLA is not threatening to fire tenured faculty members, it has been established that tenure resides in the department and not the University as a whole. The fact that the administration proposes to grant those faculty members in "floating" positions tenure in the college makes this clear. It also deters a tenured faculty member in a "floating" position from speaking out against the administration's plans. If the tenure is in the department and that department is eliminated, the tenured members must rely on the good will of the administration to carry through with its slated commitment to granting tenure in CLA. This underlying and implied threat, though not articulated, in and of itself seems to constitute an abridgment of academic freedom of speech.

In addition, the Ames Library of South Asia will be in serious jeopardy if the department is eliminated. Already, the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin, hearing the department may cease, have inquired about the possibility of buying the collection. With pressure for more library space intensifying, the elimination of the department may give the library administration an added impetus to divest itself of this major national collection, which is second only to the holdings of the Library of

Congress. If that should happen, graduate-level and faculty research on South Asia here would be devastated.

It is becoming very clear that University President Ken Keller's Commitment to Focus — which was at first proclaimed to be a commitment to focusing itself — is, in reality, a commitment to focus on the social sciences and the technological fields at the expense of the language, literature and ethnic studies. This represents a major ideological shift with important ramifications for the entire University. It is time that Keller be reminded that the citizens and educators of this state demand that the University be much more than a highly rated technological research institute.

Department is critical, deserves more funding

The importance of the Middle East and South Asia to our nation is critical. The lack of understanding in this country about the Middle East and Pakistan is legendary. India is the world's largest democracy, a leader among the non-aligned nations, wishing to be our friend but flirting dangerously with the Soviet Union. This is not the time to disband the only department on campus that studies these parts of the world in an academically focused and coordinated manner that combines the perspectives of the social sciences, languages and literatures.

If the department is currently seen as weak due to lack of faculty expertise in certain social science disciplines, President Keller

Burke to 9

Burke from 7

should see to it that enough resources are expended to bring the department to full strength. Adding five positions — one in Arabic, one in Hindi, one in Advanced Sanskrit and Indology, one in Economics and one in History — plus secretarial and professional and administrative support — would cost the University approximately \$200,000 per year. For that relatively small cost, it would have one of the top South and Southwest Asian Studies Departments in the nation.

If these funds are not currently available, they should be raised by the University's Minnesota Campaign for this specific purpose. There is currently so much business interest in the Middle East and South Asia that that should not be difficult to accomplish. Both Control Data and Cray Research sell computers to India; perhaps they would like to contribute. And surely Pakistan and the Middle Eastern countries would be willing to contribute to this major Islamic research center, perhaps even to establish an Islamic Studies Center.

Surely, out of a \$300 million development drive and an annual budget of several hundred million dollars, President Keller should be able to direct that the small additional amount of money needed to create one of the top departments in the country. If he doesn't, the University will no longer have an effective focus on the Middle East and South Asia. Can this university become one of the top five public institutions of higher education in the country without such a focus? Not in this day and age! What accrediting board would take such an institution seriously? The academic soundness and prestige of the University are clearly at stake.

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies has the potential to become a major graduate research department once again, with a focus that is unique among such departments in the nation. Its faculty members are not inferior to those in other universities' South Asian and Middle Eastern departments and, indeed, are called upon to sit on the doctoral examining committees of students from those universities as well as serve as evaluators on those departments' committees.

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies was officially established by the University in 1968. There have been 19 years of financial support given it by both the University and the federal government. It is unconscionable to throw this investment away in the space of half a year.

B. David Burke is a Ph.D. candidate in South and Southwest Asian studies.



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
TWIN CITIES

Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies
192 Klæber Court
320 16th Avenue S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455
(612) 624-7030

March 31, 1987

Professor Fred Lukermann, Dean
College of Liberal Arts
215 Johnston Hall
University of Minnesota

Dear Dean Lukermann:


Enclosed please find all the material that is to be sent to the Central Administration. The material includes:

- 1) My statement to the Assembly;
- 2) One-page statement signed by my colleagues which indicates a "critical mass";
- 3) An eight-page letter addressed to the CLA Assembly members from certain members of the Department;
- 4) Copies of the letters from many eminent scholars in the field of South Asian Studies from other U.S. universities, which address the issue of the quality of our department and the reasons for its continuing existence;
- 5) A copy of graduate student David Burke's statement to the CLA Assembly;
- 6) A copy of his letter to the CLA Assembly members;
- 7) The Opinion page of the Minnesota Daily (March 31, 1987), entitled "Focus must spare South and Southwest Asian Studies" written by David Burke.

We respectfully request that you send us a copy of the CLA covering letter to the Central Administration along with the present Planning Document.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,


Indira Y. Junghare
Professor

IYJ/tc

April 17, 1987

Dr. Roger W. Benjamin
Vice President for Academic Affairs
213 Morrill Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Re: South and Southwest Asian Studies Department.

Dear Dr. Benjamin:

We, at the School of India for Languages and Culture (SILC) are dismayed to hear that the South and Southwest Asian Studies Department is being eliminated. The instruction, curriculum and quality of the programs offered by this department are superior and have garnered many credits for the University of Minnesota. The well renowned Ames Library has drawn scholars from all over the country because of its vast and rare collection of books on South Asia. Faced with these facts we do not see any sound reasons to do away with this department.

Who are we and how does this move affect us?

School of India for Languages and Culture (SILC) is a parent-teacher non-profit organization which was founded in 1979. We teach languages, culture and performing arts of India. Presently we have 100 students ranging from five to 20 years of age enrolled in eight Indian languages. We also provide instructions to interested adults from the community at large. SILC is regarded as the first level building block by those who are interested in Indian languages and culture. After graduating from SILC they look upon University of Minnesota's Department of South Asian Studies to help them continue with their interests as SILC is simply not equipped with the resources and experience available at the University of Minnesota. To eliminate the department on which we depend so heavily would have a drastic effect on us.

We as parents, teachers and students strongly urge you to continue the South & South Asian Department for the following reasons:

1. Cultural Heritage: There are over 3000 families of Indian origin who have adopted this country and have chosen to live in Minnesota. Just like everybody living here, our children too will yearn for their ethnic roots and would like to learn and maintain the cultural and language heritage of their parents' homeland. It is for this reason many enroll in SILC. As mentioned earlier we cannot take care of their needs for too long. At college level they turn to the University's South and Southwest Asian Studies Department to advance their goals further. These students find that they don't have to travel abroad to learn Indian languages for the very best facilities are available right here.

2. Second Language Option: Most schools in Minnesota provide second language options only in traditionally taught languages such as French, German and Spanish. No other community college, state university or private college offers instructions in any South or Southwest Asian language. To those who want to fulfill university's second language requirements by learning a non-traditional language from South or Southwest Asia, the Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies is their only choice. It is only a big university such as the University of Minnesota that can offer such a wide choice of languages. In fact this wide variety has been touted as an asset of the university. To do away with this choice especially when it is already available and very much capable appears to us an unwise decision.

3. South Asia Exchange: The concept of a global village is a reality today. World boundaries and barriers are shrinking at a very rapid rate. Peace Corps volunteers have made great contributions to the South Asian sub-continent. Minnesota based corporations such as 3M, Honeywell, Control Data, Cargill and many others are involved in many trade activities with South Asian countries. It is a well proven fact that business people proficient in the language and culture of the country they are dealing with are more successful than those without. The South and Southwest Asian countries where the world's largest population lives is vital to the interests of Minnesota and the United States of America. Minnesotans and University of Minnesota students should be able to enhance their careers by having a choice to learn any of the South Asian languages. Doing away with an entire department that caters to the languages and cultures of these countries communicates to us that the University does not attach any importance to this part of the world. Can a large educational institution who has repeatedly stressed the importance of liberal arts and has made second languages and culture courses compulsory afford to be so discriminatory?

4. Ames Library Resources: The Ames Library houses one of the best collection of books on South Asia. We have used it extensively and it has played vital role in promoting our culture. Such a rich resource will become ineffective without the backing of the South and Southwest Asian Department. In fact without the departments backing it will probably be eliminated because years down the road it will be seen as ineffective and not serving any purpose.

In conclusion, we raise the following questions that should be considered before a decision is made:

1. Do we want to deny the only opportunity for learning South and Southwest Asian languages to one of our ethnic minorities in the state?
2. Do we want to deny a second language option choice (which is not available at High Schools or at other colleges in the state) to our youth?
3. Do we want to ignore foreign trade market edge in South and Southwest Asian sub-continent?
4. Do we want to see the decay of our rich resource in the Ames library without the expertise of South and Southwest Asian Study Department?
5. Are we doing this due to financial constraints?
6. Are we short sighted reactionaries or long term visionaries?

We, at SILC, urge you to consider our concerns with open minds. Please consider South and Southwest Asian Study as the University of Minnesota's asset, and invest in it to realize more dividends.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Godan Nambudripad,
President
School of India for Languages and Culture (SILC)
1716 James Place
Burnsville, MN 55337
Phone: 894-8945

cc: Prof. Fred Lukermann, Dean of CLA
Members of the CLA Assembly

Text of the Oral Statement of B. David Burke, Ph.D. Candidate, Dept. of South & Southwest Asian Studies, before the CLA Assembly on March 31, 1987.

My name is David Burke. I'm a Ph.D. Candidate in the Dept. of South & Southwest Asian Studies. Many of you have by now received an open letter I sent under my name to the CLA Assembly members. You may also have seen my article on the opinion page of today's Minnesota Daily. For those of you who have not yet had the opportunity to read these statements, extra copies are available to you here today.

Within CLA, only the departments of Afro-American and African Studies, American Indian Studies, Ancient Near Eastern and Jewish Studies, Chicano Studies, South and Southwest Asian Studies and Comparative Literature are being asked to coalesce with larger units. Only the South and Southwest Asian Studies Department is up for immediate elimination, but the others seem slated for the future.

In other words, the departments whose primary concerns are the languages and literatures of ethnic and minority peoples are the most jeopardized. The exceptions to this are the East Asian Studies and Russian and East European Studies Departments -- apparently because of strong Minnesota business interests in Japan and China and the need for a major university to study the large Communist block countries. The ten percent budget cut that the University's central administration has asked each College to endure is not being spread in an equitable manner across the board. Rather, the primary force of its fall within CLA is to be upon the minority and ethnic studies departments.

No serious academic rationale has been put forward for this move other than the arguments of "critical mass" which the department's faculty members have just spoken to and a harkening back to tradition. The civil rights movement of the 1950's and '60's helped make it patently clear just what "tradition" has meant to the minority people of this country. We are being told that this is not an affirmative action issue, but, rather, a question of the quality of the departments involved. That the administration has for years overlooked these departments' fiscal health and has not allowed for their academic growth is being conveniently overlooked.

The importance of the Middle East and South Asia to our nation is critical. The lack of understanding in this country about the Middle East and Pakistan is legendary. India is the world's largest democracy, a leader among the non-aligned nations, wishing to be our friend but flirting dangerously with the Soviet Union. This is not the time to disband the only department on campus that studies these parts of the world in an academically focused and coordinated manner -- that combines the perspectives of the social sciences, languages and literatures.

It is becoming very clear that University President Ken Keller's Commitment to Focus -- which was at first proclaimed to be a commitment to focusing itself -- is, in reality, a commitment to focusing on the social sciences and the technological fields at the expense of the language, literature and ethnic studies components. This represents a major ideological shift with important ramifications for the entire University.

Surely, out of a 300 million dollar development drive and an annual budget of several hundred million dollars, the small additional amount of money needed to create one of the top departments in the country should be allocated to it. If it isn't, the University will no longer have an effective focus on the Middle East and South Asia. Can this university become one of the top five public institutions of higher education in the country without such a focus? The academic soundness and prestige of the University are clearly at stake.

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies has the potential to become a major graduate research department with a focus that is unique among such departments in the nation. Its faculty members are not inferior to those in other universities' South Asian and Middle Eastern departments and, indeed, are excellent scholars.

The students in the department who have not yet passed their Ph.D. preliminary examinations are being counseled to leave the University and seek their degrees elsewhere. We do not wish to leave. Wisconsin, Illinois, California and New York do not have a responsibility to teach us. Minnesota does. We ask for your help.

The Department of South and Southwest Asian Studies was officially established by the University in 1968. There have been 19 years of financial support given it by both the University and the federal government. It is unconscionable to throw this investment away in the space of half a year.

Thank you.