



AHA Co-chairs (2022-25):
Prof. Emma Cayley (University of Leeds)
Prof. Thea Pitman (University of Leeds)

13 February 2023

Dear Professor Richardson

Cc: Dr Rachael McLennan, Head of the School of Art, Media and American Studies

We are writing to you in our capacity as Co-Chairs of the Arts and Humanities Alliance (AHA) to express backing for the American Studies programme at the University of East Anglia, which we understand is currently the subject of internal review.

From the perspective of the AHA, we would particularly like to highlight the crucial role that American Studies plays in the wider Area Studies community, both at UEA and nationally. We are aware that American Studies was absolutely central to the conception and success of UEA's REF submissions to the Area Studies panel in both 2014 and 2021 and that not only were the outputs from American Studies colleagues mentioned as especially strong in the sub-panel feedback for both those REFs, but the narratives in both cases were drafted by Americanist colleagues. Furthermore, American Studies provided highly rated impact case studies that allowed the submissions (especially in 2021) to submit as many colleagues as they did, thus maximising QR income.

At a national level, the impact and importance of American Studies is evidenced by the numbers of colleagues serving on (and having served on) subject association committees such as the British Association of American Studies (BAAS), the Association of British Nineteenth Century American Historians (BrANCH), and Historians of the Twentieth Century United States (HOTCUS), as members of the AHRC peer-review college, and on the editorial boards of the top journals in the field (*Journal of American Studies*; *Comparative American Studies*; *New Area Studies*; *European Journal of American Culture*, etc.). In particular, we would like to highlight the fact that Professor Susan Hodgett served as Chair of the Area Studies panel for REF2021, and Professor Nick Selby has recently taken over as Chair of the UK Council for Area Studies Associations (UKCASA). It is the case that, over the many years of American Studies at UEA, the department has founded, shaped, guided and stood at the forefront of interdisciplinary research and teaching in the field both in the UK and internationally. To mention just a couple of examples, on the research front, Dr Rebecca Tillett and Professor Jacqueline Fear-Segal currently coordinate the Native Studies Research Network, thus making an important contribution to debates around critical Indigenous and decolonial studies in the academy, and, in terms of pedagogical development, Dr Hillary Emmett is a member of the Steering Group of the Teaching American Studies Network which supports members to develop American

Studies pedagogies. Finally, in terms of impact, Drs Nicholas Grant and Rebecca Fraser have led UK efforts around public and community engagement in Black History.

We would hope that from the above the value of American Studies at UEA, particularly in relation to the wider field of Area Studies is clear for all to see. This is a thriving department, producing cutting-edge research and impact, and engaging in innovative interdisciplinary teaching. They really are a credit to the institution.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thea Pitman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Professor Thea Pitman
Co-chair, Arts and Humanities Alliance