

Program Review

Executive Summary

Kathleen Cassity, Dean, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Western Oregon University: Department of English Studies (Humanities Division)

Majors Reviewed:

- *English: Literature (B.A.)*
- *English: Writing (B.A.)*
- *English: Linguistics (B.A.)*
- *English: Language Arts (B.A., in partnership with WOU College of Education)*

Minors and Certificates Reviewed:

- *English: Literature*
- *English: Writing*
- *English: Linguistics*
- *Certificate: Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)*

Dates of Program Review: Academic Year 2017-18

External Reviewer Visit: October 2018

Date of Executive Summary: June 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES (HUMANITIES)

The Department of English, Writing and Linguistics (now renamed the Department of English Studies) conducted a formal program review during the 2017-18 academic year, with external review taking place in the Fall term of the subsequent academic year (Fall 2018). The self-study was co-written by Drs. Gavin Keulks, Rob Troyer and Lärs Soderlund, and was submitted to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (LAS) in July 2018. Dr. Barry Milligan, Professor of English at Wright State University, conducted an external review in October 2018 and submitted a report in November 2018. The LAS Dean visited the English faculty during a department meeting in January 2019 to discuss both the self-study and external review, as well as the strategies for continual improvement identified by the Department. The implementation of most initiatives was already underway at that time, and the Dean made additional recommendations.

The program review emphasized the following programmatic strengths:

- a. award-winning faculty and students;
- b. wide-ranging co-curricular engagement;
- c. personalized support and outstanding student mentorship;
- d. numerous high-impact learning practices;
- e. successful recent hire of a First-Year Writing Coordinator;
- f. creation of course goals and alignment with ULO's;
- g. robust engagement with Willamette Promise; and
- h. MOU with University of Oregon to assist TEFL certificate-earning students with MA degree completion.

The following weaknesses were identified:

- a. past challenges with collegiality;
- b. declining enrollment trends (in accordance with national norms);
- c. diverging goals and interests of faculty in the various sub-disciplines;
- d. low attendance at department meetings;
- e. some faculty resistance to assessment;
- f. a vacuum in potential future leadership.

Opportunities included:

- a. new incentives to degree programs more streamlined and student-centered;
- b. numerous approaching retirements, providing an opportunity to reshape future direction;
- c. enhanced professional development and curricular alignment in First Year Writing.

Threats were identified as:

- a. increased assessment work load;
- b. lower enrollments and major numbers;
- c. problems with scheduling;
- d. need for long-term replacement faculty;
- e. somewhat low faculty morale, due in part to the threats identified above.

As a result of the program review, the Department decided to pursue new program-driven initiatives and continue with numerous academically effective practices. The Dean also recommended new initiatives. All of these are outlined in the Implementation Matrix below.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

New Program-Driven Initiatives	Completed/Ongoing	Underway (Target Completion Date)	To Be Done (Will be Ongoing)
Change name to Department of English Studies	X		
Add an Integrated English Studies track to its major (note: this new track entirely draws upon existing curriculum and resources)	X		
Reduce common core requirements in major to facilitate smoother graduation pathways	X		
Contribute significantly to new Gen Ed program	X		
Bring total required credits into alignment with WOU's 30-60-90 initiative	X		
Increase number of online and hybrid course offerings	X		
Revise curriculum, with focus on modernizing/adding diverse literary courses	X		
Emphasize workforce preparation and preparing students for professional life in marketing and advising materials			X (Start in 2019/20 academic year)
Develop Certificate in Professional and Technical Writing		X (Fall 2020)	
Form Professional and Technical Writing Advisory Board	X		
Contribute to offerings on WOU's new Salem campus	X		

Continuation of Ongoing Effectiveness	Completed/ Ongoing	Underway Target Completion Date)	To Be Done (Will be Ongoing)
Participating significantly in Willamette Promise dual credit initiative	X		
Contributing to Honors Program	X		
Offering the desirable TEFL certificate	X		
Continuing its robust professional development program for First-Year Writing faculty	X		
Delivering multiple high-impact learning practices, including student literary journals, writing prizes, Writing Center internships and more	X		
Engaging enthusiastically with annual Academic Excellence Showcase and PURE	X		
Offering high-quality personalized education and student mentorship	X		
Developing smooth transfer pathways and community college partnerships	X		
Monitoring success of new curriculum and engaging in programmatic assessment and improvement	X		
LAS Dean Recommendations	Completed/ Ongoing	Underway Target Completion Date)	To Be Done (Will be Ongoing)
Emphasize and articulate the value of the English degree in the workplace in advising and marketing documents, web site and other relevant venues			X – Start in 2019/20 academic year
Help students develop and articulate marketable skills, such as through enhanced internship opportunities		X (Will be ongoing)	

Track post-graduation outcomes more closely and engage more robustly with successful English alumni, publicizing alumni successes and potentially using alumni as mentors			X – Start in 2019/20 academic year
Improve web site as well as marketing materials; engage in more robust publicity and marketing efforts			X – Start in 2019/20 academic year
Continue to develop partnerships with feeder institutions and enhance accessibility of curriculum through multiple modalities		X (Will be ongoing)	

The Department of English Studies is pleased to report that, as the above matrix demonstrates, almost all of the identified initiatives as well as practices to continue are already in place or substantially underway. In addition, a new TT hire in Global/World Literatures and a new NTT hire in Professional Writing, along with a new NTT in First Year Writing, are scheduled to start in Fall 2019. The Department, the Humanities Division, and the LAS Dean also plan to advocate vigorously for appropriate replacement faculty, in light of numerous recently submitted and pending retirements. As pointed out in the report, this provides an opportunity to shape the future direction of the Department of English Studies in an academically sound and sustainable manner.