

**Revised Memorandum of Understanding
2005 Program Review
English Department
College of Arts and Sciences
October 26, 2005**

Members of the English faculty, the Division Director of Humanities, and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences met with the Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs on October 26, 2005, to review and discuss issues resulting from the English Department Memorandum of Understanding of May 13, 2005. The self-study report by the English Department (on file), the report by the external reviewer (on file), and the initial Memorandum of Understanding were the basis for the discussion. Summary points and an action plan for the English Department follow:

Part I. Summary Points

- The English Department is the second largest department in the Humanities Division in terms of majors, student semester hours offered, and graduation rates.

- The English Department has reviewed its curriculum and its faculties' teaching and research strengths and has decided to eliminate the two-track system (Writing and Literature) in favor of a four emphases system (Composition, Rhetoric, and Creative Writing; Literary Studies; ESL/Linguistics; and Cultural Studies) with a common core of courses for all majors. This shift also may address the "two-class society" identified by the external reviewer that has existed between the Literature and the Writing faculty.

- The shift in the curriculum mentioned above can assist in making the department more focused, a recommendation made by the external reviewer.

- On-line courses have not been a source of contention as the external reviewer suggests, but rather a source of interest or non-interest. The department intends to continue offering on-line courses as faculty show interest.

- The Writing Intensive Program and The Writing Center have gravitated toward the English Department for their support and oversight. These programs, however, are university-wide programs, not English Department programs, although the English Department has sponsored the Writing Center through released time for an English instructor to direct the Center.

- Assessment activities are undergoing continual discussion. The department has decided to drop the Major Field Test in Literature and focus efforts on revising curriculum to meet the needs of majors in literature in English. Ways to assess majors' skills and knowledge, particularly through portfolios, are being explored.

Part II. Plan of Action/Recommendations

1. Although an introductory course (ENG 300) has been developed since the external reviewer's visit, a capstone course still needs to be developed to lend cohesion to the experience of the English major and to serve as an assessment tool for the department in future planning.
2. Other department assessment activities, as well, need to be developed per requirement of our university-wide accreditation by WASC. As part of the assessment process, the department would like a listing of its graduates from the Foundation in order to initiate formal contacts with alumni.
3. Although the department is not interested in offering an on-line English major, the department will continue to explore offering on-line courses periodically as faculty show interest in doing so. In addition, the development of a hybrid, multi-disciplinary on-line program that involves the English Department is in the discussion stage.
4. In order to add clarity to the tenure and promotion process for assistant professors and all other tenured faculty in the English Department, the department should consider forming its own Personnel Committee. The number of tenure-track faculty would allow the department to have its own Tenure and Promotion Committee.
5. The department shall maintain consistent policies and procedures for the hiring of all new faculty.
6. The department should begin to divest itself from assuming almost total responsibility for the university-wide Writing Intensive Program. Support for the Writing Intensive Program needs to be a *university-wide commitment*, not just an English Department commitment. Support needs to include basic training of faculty and more widespread recruitment of Writing Intensive courses and faculty across all departments.
7. The Writing Center theoretically is not a part of the English Department, but it seems to get placed there because the director is an English Department faculty member and because typically English Departments are held responsible for the teaching of writing skills. The *university* needs to assume responsibility for the Writing Center, not just the English Department, and the university needs to investigate the impact of shifting the reporting structure for the Coordinator of the Writing Center out of the English Department and into a line that reports directly to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. At the same time the university needs to make resources available to support the efforts of the Writing Center, including more financial support for the training of tutors and support for a more viable space within which to conduct the activities of the Center.

8. Now that the department has become a member of the Association of Departments of English, as recommended in the external reviewer's report, the department chair should plan to attend the annual summer workshops sponsored by this group and report back the work of these workshops to department faculty.
9. Structurally speaking, leadership and participation roles of the department faculty need clarification. In particular, the role of the department chair needs to be clarified, and the department needs to move toward more inclusion of all department stakeholders in the work and decision-making of the department.

