

Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo
English BA, MA
Comparative Literature, BA

The 2019-2020 Program Performance Review (PPR) process for English, BA, MA, and Comparative Literature, BA programs concluded with a culmination meeting on September 18, 2020.

The following people attended the meeting: Carolyn Thomas (Provost), Mark Filowitz (AVP for Academic Programs, AVPAP), Sheryl Fontaine (Dean, HSS), Jessica Stern (Associate Dean, HSS), Stephen Mexal (Chair), Marlin Blaine (Faculty), Irena Praitis (Faculty), Brian Norton (Faculty), Elise Wang (Faculty), Erin Hollis (Faculty), David Kelman (Faculty), L. Maria Bo (Faculty), Cornel Bonca (Faculty), Kay Stanton (Faculty), and Su Swarat (AVP for Institutional Effectiveness, AVPIE).

The Provost thanked the department for its excellent contribution to the university. She specifically highlighted the following accomplishments:

- Robust department with committed faculty of teacher-scholars, diverse group of enthusiastic students, skilled staff, and an established department culture committed to thoughtfulness, fairness, transparency, and self-reflection.
- Faculty feel ably led by the Department Chair. His leadership contributed significantly to a very healthy department culture for both faculty and staff.
- Faculty committed to students outside classroom, regularly leading Study Abroad, Study Away programs, and eagerly participating in Student Success initiatives.
- English programs' common book initiative shows promise to improve retention rates. This is another sign of the faculty's commitment to student success.
- Department regularly excels in terms of graduation rates.
- Department is applauded on recent hires of faculty who specialize in areas such as African diaspora literatures and queer theory.
- The high number of majors has not decreased in recent years and remains above nationwide trend in the humanities, despite the national decline in enrollment in the humanities. This is a testament to the department's reputation, as well as the positive student experiences provided in the department.
- Successfully navigated recent outside pressures and regulatory changes for teaching remedial English and for preparing students to teach English.
- Successfully serves an impressive 10,000 students annually via partnerships (e.g. Single Subject Matter Preparation Program, TESL, CBA, and EO 1110), 520 undergraduate majors, and 61 MA students while managing multiple budgets and targets. The department's effort to meet students' GE needs is much appreciated by the entire campus.
- Impressive roster of activities including newly developed minors, revamped advising strategies, successful alumni career panel, recently revised assessment plans, and newly established high impact practices.

Major recommendations and issues raised through the PPR process were discussed as follows:

Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo
English BA, MA
Comparative Literature, BA

1. Faculty workload and support:

- The external reviewers and the Dean recommended the department to recognize additional burden of writing instruction on English faculty by decreasing the overall number of students they are expected to teach every semester. The department is encouraged to explore methods to continue balancing faculty service and teaching, seeking out structures to reward faculty mentoring of students, and providing funding for part-time faculty to attend conferences and workshops.
- The Chair pointed out the challenge of balancing faculty workload (in term of WTU) and FTES targets. While the department would like to be able to provide high quality advising and rigorous curriculum with core courses taught by tenured/tenure-track faculty, the resource available makes it difficult to do so. It would be desirable to identify metrics other than FTES that determine resource allocation.
- The faculty echoed the Chair's statement, and acknowledged the difficulty in teaching large classes while striving to provide one-on-one feedback, which is time consuming but essential in writing-intensive courses.
- The Provost inquired about the relationship between classroom availability and workload. The Chair stated that having certain class size is necessary to maintain a 3-3 teaching load, but finding large classrooms at the desired times could be difficult. It requires balancing faculty availability, classroom availability, curriculum balance, and student date/time preferences.
- The AVPAP suggested that the university should establish a routine process to examine classroom utilization. The external reviewers also suggested running a college-level analysis on classroom usage to alleviate shortages and determine equity across all departments.

2. Department growth:

- The AVPIE inquired about the department's plan to grow, since the external reviewers recommended the department to further publicize new minors.
- The Chair stated that the department is interested in growing both majors and minors on the undergraduate side. In terms of the graduate program, the student composition has changed over the years, so the program can no longer rely on teachers who want to earn the degree for salary increase. The department is working to determine the appropriate outreach population.
- The Dean commented that the college fundraising efforts have resulted in scholarship opportunities for graduate students, which may help increase the program's attractiveness. She also suggested that there may be more opportunities due to AB1460, where more teachers are needed in K-12 to teach ethnic studies. She recommended the department to explore collaborative MA programs with ethnic studies to increase enrollment.

3. Faculty hiring:

- The external reviewers and the Dean recommended the department to hire at least three new tenure-track faculty, including at least one in composition/rhetoric and one in global Anglophone Literature.

Program Performance Review: Culmination Meeting Memo
English BA, MA
Comparative Literature, BA

- The Chair stated that the department has recently lost three faculty members, and hired two new ones. The proposal to hire one in composition/rhetoric is postponed due to the pandemic. There is also some interest in hiring in creative writing, since there has been related interest and growth in the minor.
4. Student success and equity gap:
- The Dean recommended the department to examine the fluctuating six-year graduation rate and the equity gap for underrepresented students majoring in English (in comparison to non-underrepresented populations), and to identify promising practices to narrow the gap.
 - The Provost suggested the use of multiple data sources (e.g. dashboards) available through the Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness and the Chancellor's Office.
 - The Dean reported that the college hosted a speaker early in the fall on the topic of closing the equity gap. The college intends to continue providing similar workshops to Chairs, and encouraged the department to use them as resources.
5. Transfer student processing:
- The external reviewers pointed out the need to expedite processing of community college transcripts for transfer students.
 - The AVPAP acknowledged the need, and reported that a review is taking place by AACRAO to examine how the admission and enrollment process can be improved, with transcript processing as one of the areas.

The Chair thanked the faculty for their commitment to the discipline and to the community on campus and beyond. The faculty expressed their satisfaction within the department. The Provost concluded the meeting by thanking the department for its wonderful performance, and thanking the faculty for their hard work.