HUMPHREYS COLLEGE

REVIEW OF THE LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM
DECEMBER 2005

Introduction

During the Fall 2005 quarter, a program review team consisting of the following members evaluated the Liberal Studies Program: Shauna Johnson, Amanda Lukasiewicz, Kay Reindl, Kathy Tracewell, and Team Chairman Jason Wolins.

The Liberal Arts Department previously was reviewed in 1996. However, this was an evaluation of the entire department, which offers general education courses for all degree programs at the college and includes two majors, Liberal Studies and Community Studies. The Liberal Studies Program as a distinct major course of study within the Liberal Arts Department was created after 1996. The Liberal Studies Program offers both Bachelor and Associate of Arts degrees. The purpose of this review is to evaluate only the Liberal Studies Program and not the overall Liberal Arts Department nor the Bachelor of Science in Community Studies major it also offers.

Purpose of the Review

The purpose of this review is to evaluate the Liberal Studies Program in terms of the college's educational effectiveness C-DATA model. Thus, the team's goal was to look for evidence that supported the following:

1. Community:

   How effectively has the department consistently engaged the community through professional development activities, memberships, its advisory committee, graduates, and prospective students?

2. Curriculum Development:

   How effectively has the department used community input and program assessment results to improve its programs, and are program offerings aligned with major learning objectives as reflected in degree plans, course descriptions, and course syllabi that include course learning objectives and other syllabus requirements stated in the faculty handbook?

3. Advising:

   How effectively has the department scheduled courses to meet student needs, pursued and secured articulation agreements with other institutions, and provided course selection services to students?
4. Teaching Effectiveness:

How effectively has the department delivered course content to students as reflected in teaching methods, text selection, course assessment practices, writing across the curriculum requirements, instructor evaluations, and peer reviews; and how effectively has the department supported student learning through purchase of library materials and use of tutorial services?

5. Assessment:

How effectively has the department assessed student attainment of major learning objectives through ongoing implementation of program assessment plans, and how is student attainment informed by other success indicators, such as program enrollments, course enrollments, retention and graduation rates, job placement, professional certification of its graduates, and alumni enrollment in graduate programs?

Methodology

The review team chairman, Jason Wolins, requested documents from Liberal Arts Department Chair Cynthia Becerra for the team to evaluate. The team then held two formal meetings, October 13 and 20, 2005. The following is a summary of those meetings:

1. October 13, 2005:

Shauna Johnson, Amanda Lukasiewicz, Kay Reindl, and Chair Jason Wolins reviewed the materials submitted by Cynthia Becerra in response to Jason Wolins' request. The team discussed what the final report should contain according to the C-DATA model, and organized the materials submitted based on the elements of the model. Among the materials submitted were numerous syllabi--the team divided the syllabi among the members for them to review to determine compliance with content, format, and major learning objective requirements. The team also suggested that Cynthia Becerra recommend alumni survey questions.

2. October 20, 2005:

Shauna Johnson, Amanda Lukasiewicz, Kay Reindl, Kathy Tracewell, and Chair Jason Wolins discussed the team's syllabi review and noted areas for improvement. In addition, it reviewed additional materials submitted by Cynthia Becerra, including recommended alumni survey questions, and approved the final survey questions that will be sent to A.A. and B.A. graduates from the past five years. The team also reviewed samples of other program reviews.
In addition, the team members informally communicated with each other on several occasions.

It should be noted that there has been no previous review of the Liberal Studies Program, individually.

The following is a summary of the team's 1) review and analysis of the evidence and 2) conclusions and recommendations for each aspect of the C-DATA model.

**Community**

**Issue:** How effectively has the department consistently engaged the community through professional development activities, memberships, its advisory committee, graduates, and prospective students?

**Review and Analysis of Evidence:** The team reviewed and analyzed several items of evidence to determine whether the Liberal Studies Program has satisfactorily interacted with the community: 1) A September 2005 list of Liberal Arts advisory committee members, 2) a summary of the advisory committee's definition, purpose, function, and proposed meetings, 3) a draft of a September 1, 2005 advisory committee’s meeting minutes, 4) ten trip reports reflecting faculty attendance at professional development seminars/meetings, and 5) a list of faculty organization memberships.

The review team especially analyzed the advisory committee meeting minutes and faculty members' professional development seminar/meeting trip reports.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** The review team concluded that the evidence reflected the Liberal Studies Program has done a very good job of interacting with the community. In addition, the evidence specifically reflected there were a substantial number of trips to professional development seminars/meetings.

The team recommends that the Liberal Studies Program continue its current good community relations. However, it noted that there has only been one advisory committee meeting so far (on September 1, 2005). The Liberal Arts Department's summary of the advisory committee's definition, purpose, function, and proposed meetings states that advisory committee should meet at least twice per year. The review team recommends that the department advisory committee continue to meet according to this projection, making sure it meets at least twice during the current academic year. Since it is a department advisory committee and not specific to the Liberal Studies Program within the department, it should ensure that at least some of the meeting discussions include aspects that relate to the Liberal Studies Program.
Curriculum Development

**Issue:** How effectively has the department used community input and program assessment results to improve its programs, and are program offerings aligned with major learning objectives as reflected in degree plans, course descriptions, and course syllabi that include course learning objectives and other syllabus requirements stated in the faculty handbook?

**Review and Analysis of Evidence:** The team reviewed and analyzed the following items of evidence concerning the Liberal Studies Program's curriculum development: 1) The Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies learning objectives contained in the college 2005-06 catalog, 2) minutes of four Liberal Arts Department faculty meetings held during the 2004-05 academic year, and 3) minutes of one Liberal Arts Department training session in PowerPoint, conducted April 12, 2005.

The review team especially analyzed the evidence to see if the faculty meetings contained discussions of the "Curriculum Development" element of the C-DATA model.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** The team concluded that the evidence reflected the Liberal Studies Program, indeed, has been actively engaging in ongoing curriculum development. The faculty meeting minutes reveal that the department has discussed curriculum development. In addition, the learning objectives set forth in the current college catalog show that the objectives of the Liberal Studies Program curriculum have been well-developed. The set of objectives serves as a clear outline and model for instructors to follow when developing their syllabi and course content.

The review team recommends that the Liberal Studies Program continue its current practice of holding faculty meetings once per quarter and continue to discuss developing the curriculum so the program learning objectives can be updated, as needed. In addition, the Liberal Studies Program learning objectives are presently the same as the Liberal Arts Department general learning objectives. Thus, the team recommends that the Liberal Studies Program develop its own, individual set of learning objectives, which are separate from the general learning objectives of the Liberal Arts Department.

Advising

**Issue:** How effectively has the department scheduled courses to meet student needs, pursued and secured articulation agreements with other institutions, and provided course selection services to students?

**Review and Analysis of Evidence:** The team reviewed and analyzed several items regarding the Liberal Studies Program's advising: 1) A letter sent by Department Chair Cynthia Becerra to new students each quarter, 2) a list of Humphreys College Liberal Arts department courses transferable under an articulation agreement with the California State University system (as of April 25, 2004), 3) a memorandum indicating that Department Chairperson Cynthia Becerra is the only person currently advising...
Liberal Studies Program students, and 4) a memorandum reflecting the following Liberal Studies Program enrollments as of the Fall 2005 quarter: a) 58 Liberal Studies Program majors and b) an aggregate "headcount" of 693 course enrollments in Liberal Studies Program courses (in contrast to a total "headcount" of 874 course enrollments in all other college major courses of study combined).

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** The review team concluded that the Liberal Studies Program has performed its advising functions extremely well.

Chair Cynthia Becerra presented a list of a substantial number of courses under an articulation agreement with the California State University system. She also communicates by letter with new Liberal Studies majors concerning advising. The review team recommends that the department continue these things.

However, one item should be monitored. Department Chair Becerra noted that she is currently the only person advising Liberal Studies Program majors. Another faculty member had helped with advising, but has left the college. Presently, advising in the program is in a period of change; the Liberal Arts Department plans to add two more full-time faculty members who will also do advising. Thus, with the added demands of being department chair, the review team recommends that Ms. Becerra continue to monitor, as she has been doing, the demands of Liberal Studies Program advising and get assistance from other faculty as needed. The team also recommends that she hire additional faculty as soon as possible.

**Teaching Effectiveness**

**Issue:** How effectively has the department delivered course content to students as reflected in teaching methods, text selection, course assessment practices, writing across the curriculum requirements, instructor evaluations, and peer reviews; and how effectively has the department supported student learning through purchase of library materials and use of tutorial services?

**Review and Analysis of Evidence:** The Liberal Studies Program provided the team the following items for review and analysis: 1) The Liberal Arts Department writing across the curriculum policy statement, 2) six student writing samples that were used in Liberal Studies assessment projects, 3) a sample of 16 syllabi from Liberal Studies Program courses, 4) a sample of 25 student course evaluations, 5) a sample of 3 peer observation summaries, 6) a list of current library requisitions, and 7) a list of tutoring services available for English and Math.

The review team was especially interested in evaluating the sample of 16 syllabi. The team analyzed those syllabi from two perspectives: 1) Did the learning objectives set forth in the syllabi matched the B.A. degree in Liberal Studies major learning objectives set forth in the college catalog? 2) Did the syllabi include the 10 college-required categories of information?
To determine whether the syllabi matched the catalog learning objectives, the team divided the 16 syllabi among team members for each to review by cross-referencing the syllabi to the catalog's learning objectives for communications, humanities, social and behavioral sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, and general learning (e.g., critical thinking).

In addition, the team reviewed the sample to see if they included the following 10 categories of information required by the college:

1. Heading.
2. Catalog course description.
3. Faculty contact information.
4. Textbooks and other required or recommended material.
5. Learning objectives.
6. Course policies.
7. Overview of course assignments.
8. College support services.
9. Grading policies and procedures.
10. Weekly schedule of classes.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** The evidence presented reflects that the Liberal Studies Program is very concerned about teaching effectiveness and does a fine job of monitoring it. The writing across the curriculum policy statement and writing samples that were assessed indicate that the program is concerned about student writing capabilities. The student course evaluation responses and the faculty peer review conclusions reflect the program's faculty perform well. The list of current library requisitions indicate the program is trying to establish a significant research base. The program also provides substantial tutoring support services through the college Library and Learning Center.

However, the team reached a mixed conclusion concerning the course syllabi. The team felt that the learning objectives set forth in the syllabi, indeed, matched the B.A. degree in Liberal Studies major learning objectives set forth in the college catalog.

On the other hand, the review team saw discrepancies between the content of the syllabi and the 10 categories of information required by the college. Although there was good compliance overall, the majority of the syllabi were missing at least one of the 10 categories of information.

Therefore, the review team recommends that the Liberal Studies Program continue the good job it is doing enhancing student writing capabilities, encouraging high quality faculty performance, ensuring a good base of library research materials, and providing tutoring services.
The team also recommends that the program monitor the course syllabi to ensure that they include all required categories of information, perhaps by covering this at a faculty meeting.

**Assessment**

**Issue:** How effectively has the department assessed student attainment of major learning objectives through ongoing implementation of program assessment plans, and how is student attainment informed by other success indicators, such as program enrollments, course enrollments, retention and graduation rates, job placement, professional certification of its graduates, and alumni enrollment in graduate programs?

**Review and Analysis of Evidence:** The team reviewed and analyzed the following assessment information: 1) A February 24, 2004 report on the assessment of the humanities general learning objective of all college bachelor degrees, 2) a March 7, 2005 report on the assessment of the communications learning objective of all college bachelor degrees, 3) an October 14, 2003 general education graduate survey for all college bachelor degrees, 4) an alumni survey the review team sent to Liberal Studies Program associate and bachelor degree recipients who graduated during the past five years, 5) the six student writing samples that were used in Liberal Studies assessment projects set forth above in the "Teaching Effectiveness" section of this report, and 6) Liberal Studies Program enrollment data.

As set forth in the "Advising" section of this report, the Liberal Studies Program enrollment data indicate that as of the Fall 2005 quarter, 58 students were Liberal Studies majors. In addition, there was an aggregate "headcount" of 693 course enrollments in Liberal Studies courses (in contrast to a total "headcount" of 874 course enrollments in all other college major courses of study combined).

Since the humanities, communications, and general education surveys applied to all college majors, and not just Liberal Studies, the review team focused more on the two items that were specifically used to assess Liberal Studies Program students: 1) Student writing samples and 2) the alumni survey the review team sent to program graduates.

The Liberal Studies alumni survey presented 10 statements and the responses were scaled according to the following point system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (SD)</th>
<th>Not Applicable (NA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Not scored)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Based on this scale, the following is a summary of the mean (average), median (midpoint), mode (most frequently occurring response), and standard deviation (dispersion from the mean) for the 10 statements presented to the alumni:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Liberal Arts faculty were knowledgeable of their subject areas and prepared for class.</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The academic advisement you received within your Liberal Studies Program met your needs.</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Your Liberal Studies Program prepared you to be successful in your career goal.</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Your Liberal Studies Program prepared you for advanced degrees and/or training.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Your Liberal Studies Program prepared you to communicate in a diverse workforce.</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Your Liberal Studies Program provided you with the foundation for intellectual growth, both professionally and personally.</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Your present position is related to your Liberal Studies degree.</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Library materials were current and adequately supported Liberal Studies Programs.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The breadth of Liberal Studies courses offered was sufficient for your program.</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Your degree program included the technological skills required in your career.</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey was sent to 36 alumni. Four were returned as undeliverable. Initially, only two people returned their surveys within the two-week response period the team set (one who is still a student at Humphreys College and one who is an employee at the college). To get enough survey responses for a statistical analysis, the college faculty assistant called all survey recipients at least once as a reminder. Some people orally gave their answers when she called. Eventually, the team received 10 responses.

In analyzing the responses, Statement 1 received the highest mean score, indicating that Liberal Studies Program graduates felt the faculty were knowledgeable and prepared. The lowest mean score was for Statement 7, concerning whether the graduate was working in a position related to the Liberal Studies degree. However, this result was not surprising since the Liberal Studies degree is general in nature and not limited to preparing a graduate for work in a specific occupation. The second-lowest mean score was for Statement 10, which suggests that students may want more technological skills taught. All overall scores were at the high end of the scale, with the most frequently occurring response being "Strongly Agree." The standard deviations are relatively small, indicating that most responses were close to the respective means.
**Conclusions and Recommendations:** The review team concludes that the program is doing a good job of assessing student writing and keeping enrollments high. The surveys sent to all bachelor degree students assessing the humanities, communication, and general education components were not targeted specifically to Liberal Studies Program students. However, their responses indicate that students seem to feel they have received a good education in those areas.

Similarly, the alumni survey sent by the review team indicates alumni were pleased overall.

The team recommends that the program continue to review writing samples and possibly adopt new forms of assessment, such as pre-and post-tests. The team also recommends that if the Liberal Arts Department does future surveys, at least some be targeted specifically to Liberal Studies Program students/alumni.

Finally, based on the alumni survey, the review team recommends adding some technological courses to the curriculum.

**Overall Conclusions and Recommendations**

The team feels that the Liberal Studies Program has done a very good job of meeting all of the elements of the C-DATA model.

The following is a summary of the review team’s recommendations:

**Community:**

- Continue the present community relations, which include professional development seminars/meetings and faculty organization members.

- Make sure there are at least two advisory committee meetings per academic year.

**Curriculum Development:**

- Continue the current practice of holding quarterly faculty meetings where curriculum development is discussed to update learning objectives, as needed.

- Develop a set of specific, individual Liberal Studies Program learning objectives which are separate from the general learning objectives of the Liberal Arts Department.
Advising:

- Continue the current advising activities, with the chair monitoring the demands of the program advising and getting assistance from other faculty as needed.

- Hire additional faculty members as soon as possible.

Teaching Effectiveness:

- Continue to enhance student writing capabilities through the writing across the curriculum policy, encourage high quality faculty performance, ensure a good base of library materials, and provide tutoring services.

- Monitor course syllabi to ensure they include all required categories of information, and discuss this at a faculty meeting.

Assessment:

- Continue to assess student writing and keep enrollments high.

- Consider new assessment tools, such as pre- and post-tests as well as surveys targeted to Liberal Studies Program students/alumni.

- Based on the alumni survey performed by the review team, consider adding some technological courses to the curriculum.