

# LIBERAL STUDIES UKIAH

## Response to External Review Summary of Self Study

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SSU EXTERNAL REVIEW SUMMARY for LIBERAL STUDIES UKIAH  
Dr. Paula Selvester, Chair Liberal Studies Chico State University

*“Sonoma State’s Liberal Studies Ukiah program needs a little buffing to shine as the jewel of rural outreach programs that it is.”*

**Outside Reviewer Commendations:** Dr. Selvester’s review points out the laudable aspects of our group and contributes various suggestions to improve the program as a whole. In candid remarks, Paula Selvester highlights the aspects of the Liberal Studies Solano BA Program as “unique and special”. When meeting with the diverse population of majors, Selvester gleaned crucial evidence that students are succeeding, but, as in any distant endeavor, she also sees some of the genuine needs of these under represented groups, as they pursue their college BA degree as a step in their path to a career in teaching. Professor Selvester commended SSU as a public institution for committing to the altruistic outreach for the duration of over four decades. She encouraged us to continue to promote such a valuable endeavor for distant students, who often are unable to commute to a distant California State University to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree. She notes that this is the perfect time to respond to the teacher shortage in all of California that has reached crises proportions.

**Outside Reviewer Recommendations:**

**Student Need:** Selvester emphasized the urgency of serving distant and underrepresented groups in our tri-county (Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake) area. Presently, we have a colorful variety of majors including reentry students, adult learners, Hispanics and Dreamers, Veterans, ELL, ESL, and students from various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Selvester concurred in our conversations that these groups often have special needs; and some have hardships that our more traditional students do not encounter.

**SSU’s Mission and Liberal Studies Ukiah Program Description:** Dr. Selvester suggests that we rework and post on our department website a clearer paragraph that shows the Liberal Studies Ukiah major as in concert with SSU’s mission.

**Outreach and Course Offerings:** She suggests we “ramp up advertising the program as a (2 plus 2 plus 1 program), offer a rich set of courses using fully online, hybrid, and face to face, building into the electives credential program prerequisites. She suggests that SSU’s School of Education and Ukiah could work together to design a very innovative outreach program to meet the needs of future teachers, serve the local student population who need affordable education and who are often low income, reentry, single parents, Hispanics, Veterans, and first generation students. These populations are ones that the Chancellor’s Office has continued to urge the state university to target and serve.

**CSU Liberal Studies Programs and Statewide Meetings:** She encouraged SSU to meet with the Liberal Studies CSU chairs at statewide meetings and get on the CSU Liberal

Studies Listserve that distributes current information regarding the teacher credentialing parameters.

**Resource Issues:** In order to solve some of the resource burdens of paying the costs of the general program as well as faculty travel from SSU to Ukiah, a concerted effort needs to be put into place. Expanding the teaching pools to include faculty in these distant counties is one option. Fully online and hybrid courses could be offered more frequently and consistently if and when the curriculum parameters warrant such delivery methods (as determined by respective departments and schools). Examining the CSU CourseMatch might add course offering and speed graduation. Also, Dr. Selvester emphasizes that departments and schools that offer courses in the Liberal Studies Ukiah Program take “collective responsibility for the creation and delivery of effective instruction, and the continued improvement of instructional efforts and innovation in the instructional processes. All of these efforts could be done through regular team meetings among schools or by forming an advisory board that includes deans, chairs, faculty and staff from academic advising, practicing local teachers and local school administrators.

**Hybrid, Online, and Alternative Modes of Delivery:** Our outside reviewer suggested that we explore, create, and deliver a wider variety of hybrid, computer supported, and online courses. And that we explore other CSU’s innovative designs in the area of delivery.

**Maintaining and Attracting Majors.** Selvester suggests that to maintain a healthy number of majors and/or to increase the number of majors in the Ukiah Program, we devote more funds to advertising and PR.. She also suggested that we work with and recruit from the Education and ECE majors at Mendocino College and that we partner with local schools to encourage classroom aids and interested parties to enroll in our SSU program.

**Offer Education’s Prerequisites and add Math:** Selvester suggested that we include in our degree offerings on the Mendocino Campus the prerequisites for local credential programs. The beauty of our Liberal Studies curriculum is that we can be extremely flexible and creative in hiring a variety of qualified professors as well as accommodating numerous career choices among our Liberal Studies majors; however, she reminds us that most “liberal studies” majors focus on those students interested in teaching. Selvester also urges the program to consider adding a 300 level Math series as a component of teacher preparation in Ukiah.

**Veterans:** Selvester suggests we be “friendly to veterans.”

**Student Cohorts:** As for curricular shifts, Professor Selvester suggests that if we create cohorts, with a specific focus, [and with] staggered entry, we may have a more solid group to work with as they make their way through their BA.

**Student Advising and Advising Orientations:** In the area of advising, Selvester’ suggests that we add more group advising and use peer advisors.

**Capstone Course connections to Internships:** Selvester suggests that we combine the Senior Project Portfolio with major electives and internships to give the capstone a more cohesive center.

**Buy-in for AB1756:** Dr. Selvester suggested we examine the potential of AB 1756 (Amended March 2016) which offers grants of \$250,000 to post-secondary institutions to design a subject matter degree such as Liberal Studies in which the credential preparation is integrated allowing students to get into the field and begin wage earning after four years rather than waiting out one more year to complete a credential program. I alerted our School Manager and Dean of this option several months ago. Ukiah and the School of Education could work together to design a very innovative outreach program to meet the needs of the area for teachers and serve the underrepresented groups in these outlying areas.

**Teaching Credential and Teacher Pathway Recommendations:** Professor Selvester suggests that we devote more effort and time to developing a clear path for students who aim to complete a teaching credential and pointed our group to the CTC. She suggested that SSU opt into the 2017 waiver revisions process that would enable our students to prepare for a credential. After meeting with Libs Ukiah students, Selvester, claims, “When I asked [the students] who wanted to be a teacher, ninety percent of them raised their hands.”

**CTC 2017 Waiver Process:** Dr. Selvester was so enthusiastic about our students’ success in the program, she urged us to focus more on connecting with local schools, and she says we need to encourage the local community colleges to adopt the ATT degree template for Elementary Teacher Education which streamlines the creation of the AAT degree program. If ATT were in place at Mendocino College, the students could be advised that that they could get their AAT in Elementary Teacher Education in two years and complete their Liberal Studies BA degree from SSU in 2 years and be prepared to apply to a credential program. This would be a very attractive program and would assist in solving the California K-12 teacher shortage (2 plus 2 plus 1). She urged Liberal Studies to opt into and write the new waiver which will allow students to bypass the battery of CSETs and go right into the BA waiver program. Few, if any, California State Universities partner with community colleges to offer upper division coursework at a distance, let alone, a Bachelor of Arts Degree! Liberal Studies Ukiah is a “Jewel!” She encouraged a renewed investment in this unique one-of-a-kind CSU program.

We thank Professor Paula Selvester for the very thorough assessment and appreciate her valuable suggestions to our Liberal Studies Ukiah program assessment process.

Liberal Studies Ukiah Program Review covering the period of 2009-2016  
SSU Program Review cycle 2015-2016  
Completed December 10, 2016  
Brief Summary, Parameters of Program, Department Goals, Action Plan

**Background and Program History:** The Liberal Studies Ukiah Stateside Program, housed in the School of Social Science is one of the smaller departments in the School and the only teacher preparation program outside of Arts and Humanities and Education. The Liberal Studies teacher preparation pathway BA degree was started in 1976 in the city of Ukiah by then Professor of History and later Dean of Social Sciences, Robert Karlsrud. The School of Social Sciences designed the curriculum, hired SSU faculty, funded, and delivered the BA degree, a teacher preparation program to address the needs of underrepresented groups north of Sonoma State, seeking a BA degree and a teaching credential. The nearest university other than SSU, in the Northern California area is Humbolt State, which is a four-hour drive one way from the city of Ukiah. Mendocino College and the College of the Redwoods are the community colleges that serve as the first step in students' path to a higher education. The reality, for these students, of completing a BA degree, meant facing an unrealistic commute prior to the formation of the distant Liberal Studies Ukiah Program. The first cohort in the late 1970s consisted of 7 students. The number of majors grew to up to 60, while in any given semester, approximately 30 students are expected (our current number of majors was 34 in December of 2016). Faculty from various SSU departments drive up the freeway to Ukiah, and teach 3 and 4 unit courses, using the same course curriculum as they use on the resident campus. Courses are offered on weeknights and weekends. The program continues today in its original format except for periodical changes mandated by the CTC. New waiver program guidelines are now being met by Libs programs across the state. SSU departments CALS, AMCS, Hutchins and Ukiah all are applying to meet the new waiver standards.

**The Liberal Studies Major:** Our Liberal Studies Major is a 50-unit upper division program offered to juniors who complete a BA in four semesters (12, 14, 12, 12=50). Most students transfer from local community colleges with 60-70 units, and have completed the CSU pattern of GE requirements. The concentration for teachers is an International Studies curriculum consisting of 16 units of Arts and Humanities (American Multi-Cultural Studies, Art, Chicano/Latino Studies, English, Native American Studies, Philosophy, or Theater Arts), 16 units of Social Science (Anthropology, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Geography and Environmental Planning, History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, or Women and Gender Studies), 6 units of Physical Science (Astronomy, Biology, Physics), and 12 units of Electives (comprised of courses from the three areas). The CTC lays out the parameters in each of the broader areas for the Elementary School Teaching Credential pathway waiver.

**Program Student Learning Outcomes/Goals:**

- 1). Critical Thinking:** Students polish the ability to think critically in various situations, in the classroom, in the work world and when assessing arguments, positions, opinions and world views. Students polish an increased critical awareness and intellectual independence. Students foster the development of intellectual traits or dispositions along with the skills and abilities they presuppose.
- 2). Oral Communication Skills:** Students are able to construct and present a cohesive talk or oral argument in an informal or formal setting using specific facts or data to support a position. Students learn and practice communication skills they can use in one to one settings, as well as in small and large groups. Students master the art of public speaking as it applies in

the college classroom setting and as it may apply in the work world. Students also practice using various technical platforms.

3). **College Writing:** Students are able to make a clear point, impart critical information, and mount a viable argument using proof, research, outside or course materials to support a position. Students are able to respond imaginatively to the content of course materials/texts, to write clearly, effectively, and to respond to the content and nature of the subject or topic. Students are able to develop and carry out research projects and to articulate them within appropriate conceptual frameworks. Students are familiar with basic practices of academic research and documentation, including electronic forms of information retrieval.

4). **Cultural Awareness and Diversity:** Students are able to demonstrate an understanding of the ways disciplines and topics connect across cultures; to value diversity in every aspect of our world; to have an understanding of the relations between culture, history, and texts; to cultivate an enriched understanding of the complexities and nuances of the human experience across time and culture; to take an interest and get involved in intellectual, aesthetic, cultural, and sociopolitical issues.

***Assessment of Achievement of Student Learning Goals:*** The department depends on individual faculty members' willingness to share their planning and assessment expertise with the larger group either in faculty meetings, in informal conversations, in meetings with the coordinator, or in the group effort of writing up self-study components. As a faculty, we evaluate the effectiveness of our teaching in assessing student performance in each of these areas using their course assignments and presentations in class, in their self-assessment required in the capstone courses, and in the overall portfolio assessment in our capstone courses. We also mine the SETEs for feedback and comments on the ways students have reached the goals we have set for them; teacher effectiveness translates into student learning. We continue to fine tune and create assessment tools, tests, and assignments that enhance and improve student achievement. We also update, rethink, and revise our student learning outcomes considering best practices throughout the CSU, as a regular exercise in our assessment process.

***Liberal Studies Majors:*** Our majors live in the counties of Northern Sonoma, Mendocino and Lake, the most distant of which is 75 miles north of Rohnert Park. Students come to complete their BA in Liberal Studies at the Mendocino SSU center from Windsor, Cloverdale, Fort Bragg, Willits, Ukiah, Round Valley, Apple Valley, Lakeville, Lower Lake, Kelseyville and other remote urban cities, and surrounding areas. The program has been operating successfully for over forty years and has graduated over 400 students (generally 5 to 12 students currently graduate per year), who after earning a BA, go on to complete a teaching credential or to work in local communities as teachers, school resource personnel, social workers, business owners, law professionals, school counselors, and in various other fields. In any given year, 80% to 90% of our students pursue careers in the teaching field. We are very proud of the contribution SSU has made to assist these students to study in, remain in, and ultimately work in and serve their local communities' schools and businesses.

***Urgent Need for Teachers in Northern Tri-County Service Area:*** Currently, there is an urgent need for teachers, school counselors, and school administrators in the tri-county areas of Sonoma, Mendocino and Lake Counties. Some claim there is now one of the most serious teacher shortages – a crisis- in the history of California. Most majors want to be teachers.

**Student Career Interests:** Over the course of four decades, the majority of our Liberal Studies Majors have moved from SSU's BA to a career in schools, in teaching, in counseling, or, in general to a career in the field of education, such as opening private preschool home centers and working at day care centers. Some students go on to work in the Social Services sector, and a few seek careers in business or law. Several of our students, for example, have generated income from opening restaurants, planting and selling produce from organic gardens, animal farming, or operating small retail establishments.

**The SSU Center at Mendocino College:** The school of Social Science along with the administration of SSU built two classrooms in a small complex which includes two faculty offices, a small kitchen/prep work area, and two multi gender bathrooms, on the Mendocino College campus over 20 years ago. SSU and Mendocino College offer classes both during the daytime hours, on weekday evenings and on weekends, sharing the facility. Our MOU with Mendocino College lays out the parameters for our building, i.e. HVAC, facilities maintenance, AV and computer technology updates, general repairs, parking, and classroom use. The partnership, sharing our SSU-owned facility, upkeep, and use has benefitted both SSU and Mendocino College students! SSU has maintained a thriving partnership with Mendocino College for nearly three decades now. Prior to teaching in our building in our own classrooms, Liberal Studies Ukiah classes were taught at Ukiah High School, at the Mendocino County Fairgrounds, and on the Mendocino College Campus (we rented the space prior to installing our own facility).

**Faculty, Faculty Advisors and Program Coordinator:** Our courses are taught by tenured, tenure-track and adjunct faculty, drawn from various departments and from departments' hiring pools (fully vetted by respective departments' hiring committees, recommended by department chairs, and approved by school deans) from ours and other schools. Each department and school receives the FTES (toward targets), while the School of Social Sciences fully funds the courses. The School of Social Science hires and pays the faculty; the program faculty coordinator is appointed by the Dean of Social Sciences and is paid by the School; the faculty advisors are appointed by the Dean and Program Faculty Coordinator (the faculty coordinator can also serve as a faculty advisor); travel to and from the site is funded by the School of Social Sciences. The LSU Program offer a full load of 12-15 units each term, hiring from 4 to five faculty. The ratio of full-time tenured or tenure track faculty to lecturers varies from semester to semester; there is a concerted effort to keep a representative balance. The faculty coordinator is released for 3 units per semester, and faculty advisors are assigned 1-3 units of advising each semester depending on the number of majors. The faculty coordinator and faculty advisors are appointed by the dean of Social Sciences and have, in the past, been hired from the pool of faculty who have taught in the program.

**Curricular Description:** The Liberal Studies major is primarily designed to prepare elementary school teachers for K-12. For four decades Liberal Studies Ukiah has served as both a waiver program and a teacher pathway program (depending on the current trend in U.S. Schools, the Department of Education, and California's CTC group who sets the standards in pedagogy and practice when credentialing teachers, i.e. *NCLB*, *CSET*, *AP College Board*, or *Common Core*), leading to a BA degree, in partnership with local community colleges. Students complete 50 units of upper division coursework in four semesters/two years after transferring into SSU with a minimum of 60 units and their required GE courses. The curriculum varies slightly from year to year reflecting the State of California's shifts in waiver and teacher preparation programs' parameters.

**High-Impact Educational Practices, Hands On Learning, Project Based Learning, and Student-Centered Methodologies:** Liberal Studies Ukiah is known for its across-discipline approach to teaching, its use of project based learning in the capstone courses and in other various courses. In our curriculum, pedagogies, and co-curricular activities, we emphasize collaborative assignments and projects, common intellectual experiences, writing-intensive classes, internships, diversity and international/global awareness, community-based learning (in schools and other various local community venues), and undergraduate mastery of information competence.

**Funding and Budget:** The School of Social Sciences Manager oversees the budget and funding for the Liberal Studies Ukiah Program. Each department and school receives the FTES (toward targets), while the School of Social Sciences fully funds the faculty to teach the courses. The School of Social Science hires and pays the faculty, the program faculty coordinator, covers travel costs, and pays faculty advisors' stipends. The budget for the program per semester is approximately \$30K, or \$60K per year. Liberal Studies Ukiah has maintained this budget for over forty years without an increase, save for the varying mileage compensation standards. The program has maintained from 30-60 majors in any given semester which translates to approximately 25-50 FTES, which earns the SSU approximately \$270K (average/ 30 students x \$9K per student) in tuition compensation per year. The long standing BA offering serves underrepresented groups and URM's, including reentry adults, single parents, Veterans, Native Americans and Hispanics living and working in the Northern Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake Counties.

**Program Assessment:** The quality of the program is monitored using numerous assessment tools, such as the capstone student portfolio and student senior, exit, and alumni surveys, the self-study, using the 5-7-year Program Review cycles, SETEs, oversight by the School of Social Sciences Curriculum Committee, the Dean, the faculty and the various governing bodies at SSU, such as the EPC.

**Student Satisfaction:** Students are surveyed regularly in an attempt to capture their goals, their accomplishments and follow through on their overall experience at SSU. Over the many years, we find that students working in schools fulfill their long time goal to become elementary school teachers; those who work in jobs, earning an income, attribute the SSU program to helping them succeed. Students regularly ask for more advising, some career counseling and help with job placement. Our faculty are active in writing letters of support and letters of recommendation for our graduates who will continue their education or who seek jobs. We continue to try to reach out to alumni to get their stories and use their suggestions to improve our program, faculty success, course delivery, and the use of technology in the classroom.

**Action Plan:** To fine tune our department website upgrading publication of student learning outcomes in concert with SSU's mission; To address ongoing student advising needs; To find ways to survey seniors and alumni more effectively; To write a waiver that adheres to the CTC parameters; to work to attract more majors by working with local groups; To address the current teacher crises in the tri county area; To gather teaching faculty, advisors and administration more often; To continue our outreach in the vast area between SSU and Humboldt State; To work with Mendocino College to implement more effective pathways for students seeking careers in teaching; To implement a more comprehensive and concerted campus wide effort to ensure the quality outreach of SSU Liberal Studies Ukiah Program.