

Program in English Sonoma State University

Self Study Document

OUTLINE:

A. Program Introduction and History

Description of Our Program

Setbacks and Changes: From the 2007-08 Program Review to Today

A Note on Adjunct Faculty in this Self Study Document

The Purpose of this Self Study: Taking Stock

Program Statistics as of Fall 2014

B. Learning Goals and Outcomes

C. Diversity

D. Student Body

E. Faculty

- a. Pedagogy
- b. Participation
- c. Professional Contributions

F. Institutional Support and Resources

- 1.a. Library
- 1.b. Computer Technology
- 1.c. Student Support Services
- 1.d. Faculty Development and Support Services
- 2.a. Physical Facilities
- 2.b. Financial Resources
- 2.c. Human Resources

G. Assessment and Findings

- 1. Lower Division Composition Curriculum Development
- 2. December 2014 Focus Group with Adjunct Faculty
- 3. Single Subject Matter Program and Recent Update for the CA CTC
- 4. M. A. Program
- 5. Spring 2014 English Major Survey
- 6. Discussion of Changes Necessary to Improve Effectiveness of the Outcomes of the Program
- Key List: Progress on 2008 Action Plan*
- 7. Dissemination of Program Review

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Tenure-Line Faculty CVs

Attachment B: Recommendations from 2007-08 External Consultant's Report

Attachment C: Section on Learning Goals and Outcomes from 2007-08 Self Study

Attachment D: Syllabus Materials for Humanities Learning Community (HLC) and Second Year Research & Creative Experience (SYRCE) Courses

Attachment E: FTES/FTEF Table

Attachment F: Directed Self Placement Memoranda

Attachment G: SSMP Update 2014

Attachment H: SP 2014 English Major Survey Responses, Quantitative

Attachment I: SP 2014 English Major Survey Responses, Qualitative

A. Program Introduction and History

The SSU English Department familiarizes students with the written documents that define the past and give meaning and purpose to the present, encourages them to investigate the sources and structure of language, enriches their awareness of language in written and oral forms, stirs their creative and re-creative impulses, and provides them with multiple ways to envision their world and themselves. Current and future students can find these goals discussed in detail on the main page of the English Department website. (<http://www.sonoma.edu/english/>). For the CVs of the department's full-time, tenure-line faculty, see **Attachment A: Tenure-Line Faculty CVs.**

Despite significant setbacks and changes since the last Program Review in 2007-08, the English Department has continued to innovate, to participate in School-wide initiatives, and to maintain the quality of its programs and the zest of its intellectual life. The English Department provides a variety of courses of study that allow majors and non-majors to connect with vibrant and diverse traditions of writing, thinking, and storytelling, and it also provides the foundational instruction in writing that is crucial for the success of all SSU students. As an anonymous student notes in response to a Spring 2014 survey, English is "a deeply enriching major" (see section G.5). The keynote of the English program is strength-in-diversity. While working together toward a common goal, English Department faculty draw from a wide variety of methods, insights, and areas of expertise. In doing so, they provide students, and the campus community, with a richness of experience unattainable by a one-size-fits-all approach.

Description of our Program

The SSU English department offers students a rich variety of experiences to match their aptitudes, needs, goals, and talents: a three-branched B.A., a choice of minors, an M.A. program, indispensable lower-division writing instruction, a range of general education offerings, and a rich set of literary curricular and co-curricular experiences including student-run publications and high-profile literary reading series.

The English B. A. offers three concentrations, each of which provides a coherent plan of study with a particular focus: *Literature* (literary history and theory, analysis, and criticism), *Creative Writing* (the craft of writing poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama, memoir, and other genres), and *English Education* (pedagogy and teacher preparation, also known as the "Single Subject" concentration). The English Education concentration offers students a program of study that satisfies the subject matter preparation

requirement for entry into a secondary English teaching credential program and exempts them from the CSET (California Subject Examination for Teachers). The Literature and Creative Writing concentrations entail 40 units of coursework, while the English Education concentration entails 54 units plus a field work component.

At the undergraduate level, the English Department also offers a 20-unit English Minor and a 20-unit Linguistics minor, the latter in collaboration with the departments of American Multicultural Studies (AMCS), Anthropology, Chicano and Latino Studies (CALS), and Modern Languages.

The English department enthusiastically supports a two-year M. A. program that allows for a choice of emphases in literary criticism, creative writing, or English education, while offering significant opportunities for the teaching of composition to students in all emphases. English M. A. education at SSU includes an oral exam on a set book list, language proficiency requirements, and the completion of a significant culminating project, offering a thorough grounding in advanced scholarship. Between 2007-08 and 2013-14, the department conferred M.A. degrees in English on an average of 8.5 students per year.

The English department plays a crucial role in the General Education program at SSU. The department provides the crucial first-year writing courses that satisfy the GE Area A2 requirement ("Fundamentals of Communication"), and it has traditionally participated in the Freshman Year Experience (FYE) program and Freshman Interest Groups (FIGS) for first-year education. The department also offers a range of GE courses in Area C ("Arts and Humanities"). Recently, at the request of the School of Arts and Humanities, the department has also developed and offered new first-year Humanities Learning Community (HLC) courses as well as courses in the Second Year Research and Creative Experience (SYRCE).

Finally, the department's creative writing faculty and students make available a rich variety of experiences that both officially and unofficially contribute to the intellectual life and development of English program students and faculty, as well as that of the larger university community. The English department supports and publishes *Zaum*, an undergraduate creative-writing journal and *Volt*, an internationally recognized journal of poetry, along with sponsoring *Burning Daylight*, a student-run publication featuring graduate scholarly work. The English department, largely through the hard work of Professor Gillian Conoley, runs the *Writers at Sonoma* literary reading series, which brings prominent writers to the campus and the larger community.

Setbacks and Changes: From the 2007-08 Program Review to Today

Significant changes have occurred since the last program review, and will be addressed here. The English department completed a program review in the 2007-08 academic year, with an external consultant's report from Dr. Susan G. Bennett, then Chair of the English Department at Humboldt State University (<http://www2.humboldt.edu/english/susan-bennett>).

Since the 2007-08 program review, the English department has weathered significant setbacks both unique to the department and shared by the university and the CSU system. The Great Recession of 2008 struck immediately after the previous program review. The CFA plan for faculty furloughs affected department work in 2009-10, as did the various other recession-catalyzed budget shortages and reductions. As one key example, in the summer of 2011 the English Department Chair position went from a 12-month to a 9-month position. Although there is limited reimbursement available for a small amount of over-the-summer chair work, the current arrangement for the chair means that work over the summer is only minimally supported. This lack of summer chair support is a far-from-ideal situation for a department that mounts a robust amount of first-year courses in the fall semester and engages in substantial hiring of lecturer faculty -- involving both attention to union regulations and coordination with the curricular needs of the incoming class -- over the summer.

Our most striking tragedy occurred in April of 2011, when Professor Robert Coleman-Senghor passed away suddenly while still active in a distinguished career of teaching and service. The bureaucratic prose of this document cannot convey the sense of loss that we felt collectively as a department. The hundreds of students, alumnae/i, and current and former faculty who attended his on-campus memorial service on April 29th, 2011 spoke of Bob's contributions to the university, the department, the local community, and so many lives. On a logistical level, we lost a full-time tenured faculty member who participated tirelessly and tenaciously in all levels of faculty governance and who taught crucial courses in 19th and 20th century American literature and California Cultural Studies -- but more importantly we lost a colleague and friend.

The department has also lost faculty due to retirements, promotions, and reallocations. Professor Helen Dunn, a long-term tenured faculty member who taught medieval and 18th-century literature, fully retired at the end of Fall 2009. Professor Sherril Jaffe, the primary teacher of fiction writing in the department, began her Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP) process in the fall of 2011. Several faculty have helped support other Arts and Humanities programs at SSU by partially devoting their teaching time

to other departments such as American Multicultural Studies (AMCS), Chicano and Latino Studies (CALS), and the interdisciplinary program in Jewish Studies. Professor Thaine Stearns, the English department's specialist in British modernist literature, was appointed interim Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities in 2011 and subsequently appointed Dean as the result of a national search in 2014. While the department warmly congratulates Dr. Stearns on his achievements, and while the department deeply appreciates Dr. Stearns' generosity in continuing to voluntarily teach courses for the department, Dr. Stearns' appointment nevertheless amounts to the loss of a faculty member. From a total of fifteen full-time tenure-line faculty members in the department in the fall of 2007, the department has been reduced to eleven full-time tenure-line faculty members by Spring 2015.

The department is pleased to welcome Professor Mercy Romero, who was hired by the Hutchins School of Liberal Studies in Fall 2014. Dr. Romero was hired with the understanding that she would be able to teach one course per semester for the English department, though as of Spring 2015 the English Department and the Hutchins school have not yet coordinated in order for this arrangement to see full implementation. This Spring 2015 also finds the department in the process of hiring a new full-time, tenure-line faculty member specializing in the teaching of fiction writing and contemporary literature. The department applauds the work of the hiring committee, Professors Conoley, Goldman, Hester-Williams, and Oxenhandler. Our community has been energized by the fantastic teaching demonstrations of the finalist candidates selected by the committee. We warmly welcome Stefan Kiesbye to our department. As a department, we hope that additional curricular gaps will continue to be filled by new faculty hires.

Coping with these changes, the department has been able to continue to foster our diverse set of programs, to innovate, to keep up with developments in the School of Arts and Humanities, and to respond to the action plan devised in our prior program review.

Dr. Bennett's 2007-08 external consultant's report recommended eight points. Six of the points were recommendations to the department itself, namely: 1) the development of a "mechanism" for better communication among "students, staff, adjunct, and full time faculty," 2) the creation of "orientation and regular professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty," 3) the establishment of an efficient method of distributing "collateral duties" among faculty, 4) on a related note, a move to further "shar[ing] of time and space resources" among faculty, 5) similarly, further

"sharing" of graduate and undergraduate teaching opportunities, and finally 6) examination of programs for "overlap."

Dr. Bennett's last two recommendations were directed at the administration, namely: 7) a request for better support from the administration, including release time for important faculty responsibilities, and 8) a request for recognition from the administration that the issues of, one, properly integrating technology into teaching, and, two, recruiting and supporting a diverse student body, are both "all university concern[s]" and should therefore be considered in a broader and more systematic way. **See Attachment B: Recommendations from 2008 External Consultant's Report.**

As this 2014-15 Self Study document will illustrate, the department has diligently addressed many issues of communication and cohesiveness, from the creation of a department website to the creation of departmental leadership positions for adjunct faculty members. The department has tried out various methods for assuring a fairly shared workload, but has also been disrupted in these experiments by unforeseen budgetary and personnel change. The department has also achieved demonstrable results in acting upon its own 2007-08 action plan, and has engaged in focused assessment activities, most notably in its sustained development of the first-year writing program to match current pedagogical best practices.

A Note on Adjunct Faculty in this Self Study Document

The 2007 Self Study document mentioned adjunct faculty (referred to as "lecturers" at SSU) in only three locations: a mention of the "rigorous" hiring process for adjuncts in the section on Faculty pedagogy (p. 16), discussion of adjunct faculty teaching of lower-division writing courses in an analysis of lower division composition program modifications (pp. 24-25), and, more significantly, the inclusion of action plan items about communication with adjunct faculty (p. 32). A list of "faculty members" on pages 18-20 of that document listed only tenure line faculty members.

Since 2007, a growing national debate about the role of adjunct faculty in the life of departments has increasingly occupied discussions at professional organizations for the teaching of writing and English. In a local manifestation of this national debate, Sonoma State University responded to CSU-wide legal issues concerning lecturer voting rights, initiating campus discussion of, and then passing, a policy on "Lecturers in Departmental Governance" in December 2014. The policy contains the following wording:

The role of lecturers in departmental governance shall reflect the rights of all faculty unit employees in participating in governance matters. To this end, individual lecturers shall not be excluded from participating in decisions made by departments, consistent with CSU policies, Collective Bargaining Agreements, and University policy.

(http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/policies/lecturers_governance.htm)

The English department has participated in these changes as well. As the department has lost tenure-line faculty and the curriculum of the composition program has changed, adjunct faculty have taken on a much larger role in delivering the composition program and developing writing pedagogy. During the years between Fall 2011 and Fall 2014, the department tenured faculty largely phased out of teaching lower-division composition in order to teach necessary major courses. With very few exceptions, the English 101 and 100A/B courses are now delivered exclusively by lecturers. This is an important change. At the same time, enrollment numbers of lower-division composition courses continue to enlarge, so the department increases its lecturer pool despite regular loss of lecturers due to retirement, relocation, and so forth.

The department has engaged in its own extended discussion of lecturer roles in departmental governance, and it accorded lecturers voting rights. Discussions in 2013-2014 led to a full-day "retreat" meeting to discuss the role and rights of lecturer faculty, held on February 21, 2014. In the March 11, 2014 department meeting, the department voted to grant lecturers 1) the vote in elections for department chair, 2) the vote for staffing committee positions, and 3) the vote in decisions regarding "all curricular matters relevant to the program in which they [lecturer faculty] are assigned to teach that academic year." In reaction to these discussions, The Lower Division Composition Committee (LDCC) was created to help further include lecturers in discussions about reading/composition pedagogy (see section E.a). These developments connect with advice and action plan items from the last program review that encouraged increased communication between tenure-line and lecturer faculty. For more information on the relation of these developments to the 2007-08 Action Plan, see section G.6 C.1-3.

This self study document, therefore, finds the department in a transitional phase with regards to the role of adjunct faculty. It is recognized from the outset that this self study document, following the template and the model of the older document, reports mainly on the activities of tenure-line faculty. It is nevertheless crucial to mark at the beginning that the role of adjunct faculty in the program review process, and in future self study

documents, is an important item of discussion for the English department and for the university in general.

The Purpose of this Self Study: Taking Stock

As of Spring 2015 the department is in mid-transformation, recovering from difficult years and hopeful for new hires and more stable years ahead. Professor Chingling Wo began her service as chair in Fall 2014, and the department has welcomed a new Administrative Analyst, Bron Anderson, who takes over for long-serving Administrative Analyst Merle Williams. The department collectively finds new routines after many years of Williams' support and coordination. Issues regarding adjunct faculty continue to be considered in relation to university-wide discussions. Meanwhile, campus-wide changes such as the use of the new Live 25 scheduling system and top-level emphases on undergraduate research provide both challenges to face and opportunities to embrace. This program review is an opportunity for taking stock of a richly diversified department in a changing SSU.

Program Statistics as of Fall 2014

Number of Majors: 238 (as of Fall 2013)

Number of Minors: 25 English Minors, 4 Linguistics Minors (as of Fall 2013)

Number of M. A. Level Students: 25 (as of Fall 2013)

Department Chair: Dr. Chingling Wo

Department Composition Coordinator: Dr. Catherine Kroll

Department Graduate Coordinator: Dr. Anne Goldman

FTEF & FTES - 2013 and 2007 compared

FTEF for Fall 2013:

Lower Division: 12.201 Upper Division: 7.374 Grad: 1.336 Total: 20.847

FTEF compared - Fall 2007

Lower Division: 13.520 Upper Division: 9.980 Grad: 1.399 Total: 24.889

FTES for Fall 2013:

Lower Division 335.8 Upper Division: 179.3 Grad: 14.8 Total: 529.9

FTES compared - Fall 2007

Lower Division: 293.4 Upper Division: 153.2 Grad: 13.2 Total: 459.8

Student Faculty Ratio - 2013 and 2007 Compared

SFR for Fall 2013

Lower Division: 25.9 Upper Division: 20.8 Grad: 11.1 Total: 23.2

SFR compared - Fall 2007

Lower Division: 21.7 Upper Division: 15.4 Grad: 9.5 Total: 18.5

Graduates Per Year, Averaged:

B.A.: 69 (average 2007-14)

M. A.: 8.5 (average 2007-14)

Number of Concentrations:

Within the B.A., Three: Creative Writing, English Education, Literature

Sources:

- "Historical Factbook" SSU Institutional Research
<http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/ir/enrollment/>
- "Fall Quick Factbook" SSU Institutional Research
<http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/ir/enrollment/>
- "Major by Department 1996-2013"
http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/ir/documents/major_by_department_96_13.pdf
- "Graduate Level Enrollment/Ethnicity, Fall 2013"
http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/ir/documents/graduate_level_enrollment_firsttime_ftpt_ethnicity.pdf
- Additional Information, provided by Chelsea Kilat, Institutional Research

B. Learning Goals and Outcomes

The English department retains its commitment to the Learning Goals and Outcomes, and the related pedagogies, articulated in the 2007-08 Self Study document. **See Attachment C: Section on Learning Goals and Outcomes from 2007-08 Self Study.**

Since the last Program Review, the English department has designed and implemented innovative new General Education courses. Professor Noelle Oxenhandler has been instrumental in designing English 207, "Introduction to Creative Writing," a General Education course. Collaborating in initiatives across the School of Arts and Humanities, English faculty have also developed a year-long first-year "Humanities Learning Community" course, English 160A/B, as well as a second-year course focused on student-driven research and creative projects for the SYRCE (Second Year Research and Creative Experience) program. **See Attachment D: Syllabus Materials for HLC and SYRCE.**

C. Diversity

As the previous program review noted, although "Sonoma State does attract underrepresented students, the university's record here does not match that of the CSU as a whole." The 2007-08 program review noted that white students made up 67% of the student body at SSU compared to 44% in the CSU. Fall 2013 statistics indicate that white students make up 60% of the SSU student body, compared to approximately 30% of the CSU. In the English program, the level of diversity in 2014-15 remains comparable to that of 2007-08. Approximately 71% of English Majors identified as white in Fall 2007 and approximately 69% in Fall 2013. Statistics indicate that Latina students are joining the department in greater numbers; while 12 female students identify as Hispanic in Fall 2007, 23 do so in Fall 2013. As the previous external consultant's report noted, recruiting and supporting a diverse student body needs to be addressed at a systematic level in the University, as the successful recruitment and support of a diverse student body needs to address issues such as campus environment that the department can affect only in a limited way.

The SSU English department is actively committed to promoting diversity on campus. Our curriculum features the literatures of a wide variety of cultures and traditions, and our courses actively engage with questions of power dynamics, privilege, and inequality. Recent upper-division literature course offerings have included, for example: "Jewish Immigrant Narrative," "Postcolonial African Literature," "Octavia Butler and the Black Female Imagination," "The Novel in World Englishes," and "Gothic Fictions and the British Commonwealth." The department regularly offers general education courses in California Ethnic Literature (English 315, a course that fulfills the university's Ethnic Studies requirement) and Women Writers (English 345, often taught from a multicultural or cross-cultural perspective). Diversity issues are addressed by courses that might seem at first to be dominated by one tradition: the senior-level Chaucer class (481, 484) addresses issues of gender identity and sexuality, while Professor Kunat's Shakespeare courses (339, 439) regularly deal with issues of race and cultural interaction in the Early Modern Period, drawing from the strength of Professor Kunat's published research in that area. Diverse traditions are also a key part of the core courses of the major; the early survey course considers Native American literature alongside Early British literature, and the English 301 "Literary Analysis" course reading lists programmatically feature writers from a variety of traditions. Our courses encourage students to reflect on the nature of canon formation and to think critically about the political and social implications of their engagement with literature.

The previous program review noted that SSU's faculty are deeply invested in researching and writing about topics that directly relate to diversity issues. Faculty work since 2007 shows the strength and vibrancy of this commitment, with faculty publishing or presenting scholarly work on Shakespeare and race, medieval poetry and disability, Oprah and "Post-Racial Economic dispossession," race in contemporary film, border literature, postcolonial readings of romantic love, teaching African novels in the "Global North," and high-school curricular material on "language, gender, and culture" -- to name only a few examples. Faculty also participate in University-wide diversity efforts, with one faculty member serving on the Diversity Subcommittee of the SSU Academic Senate.

As noted in the 2007-08 program review, the English Department shows leadership in recruiting a diverse student body by ensuring that the pedagogy of first-year writing courses serves a diverse group of students and by providing personalized advising to all students in the major. The English Education concentration in particular focuses on aspects of diversity in education. Many graduates of that program go on to attend the Multicultural Urban Secondary English Master's and Credential Program (MUSE) at UC Berkeley. The English Department also works regularly with the SSU campus McNair scholars program, a program whose mission is to "place more historically underrepresented students in Masters and PhD programs" (<http://www.sonoma.edu/mcnair/>) and the department actively collaborates with SSU's Multilingual Learners (MLL) program, a program designed to support low-income or first generation college students whose first language learned was not English.

Sources:

- SSU Office of Institutional Research, Common Data Set Fall 2013
<http://www.sonoma.edu/aa/ir/cds/f2013.html>
- "CSU Systemwide Enrollment by Ethnic Group",
https://www.calstate.edu/as/stat_reports/2013-2014/feth01.htm

D. Student Body

The 2007-08 program review noted that SSU was in the process of transforming from a largely commuter to a more residential campus because of dorm construction. The 07-08 self study document noted that the mean age of major and non-major students was decreasing and it noted that the English department was, as a result of campus trends, serving more and more lower division students. These trends have continued in subsequent years. Information provided by the office of institutional research indicates that the average age for English majors has consistently decreased since 2007-2008, from an average of 29.9 in 2007 to an average

of 23.4 in 2013-2014 (and this despite the number of transfer students remaining roughly the same).

"As the number of underclassmen continues to grow," the 2007-08 document notes, "we will increasingly be forced to shift our resources toward GE and composition courses." The department has retained a robust major program largely by staffing lower-division writing courses with adjunct faculty in order to allow tenure line faculty to teach major courses. Although the 2007-08 program review expressed concern about low upper-division FTES, it is difficult to make conclusions about trends since then; upper-division FTES soared in 2008-2012 but then declined sharply in 2013. Overall FTEF is easier to read: it has, with few exceptions, declined, from 24.9 in 2007 to 21.8 in 2013. Lower division and upper-division FTEF have remained roughly in balance, with lower division FTEF accounting for as much as 59% of total FTEF (2013) to as little as 48% (2010). **See Attachment E: FTES/FTEF Table.**

Questions of student needs and FTEF/FTES bring up issues of assigned time for faculty work done above and beyond the usual teaching, research, and service. Students benefit from a vibrant program, which is made possible by the careful advising and coordination done by special faculty positions such as Single Subject Credential Advisor, Composition Coordinator, Graduate Director, and editor(s) of nationally-prominent department publications. For information on this issue of crucial importance to the department, see section *E.2.c* "Human Resources."

The department divides advising along the three tracks, with faculty from each track advising students in the relevant concentration. Students need assistance in choosing courses that will fulfill their major concentration, in charting their path to graduation, and in filling out graduation forms. Faculty also provide advice and consultation about internships and about graduate school applications and potential jobs for English majors. Faculty also help with research and creative projects and help students connect course material to larger intellectual interests. Students are not assigned an official advisor, but rather are encouraged to find advisors in their track who are available at convenient times and/or with whom they like to work. Faculty have found this shared-advising arrangement largely functional, although there are occasional concerns about workload, especially during sabbatical periods when on occasion only one faculty member from a given track is currently teaching.

According to the emphasis in the department's 2007-08 action plan, the department has focused on improving advising. The new department website of March 2013 helps communicate advising information to majors

on its "Advising: Graduation Tips and Forms" page.¹ Faculty have also kept themselves informed as the campus has moved to using the online "Academic Requirements Report" (ARR) as the primary record of a student's path towards graduation. Advising forms have been revised for increased clarity. Faculty regularly seek out each other's advice for advising best practices.

E. Faculty

The English Department faculty possess extensive teaching experience, terminal degrees from top-ranked universities, and a sustained record of significant achievements in publication, creative work, and campus governance.

a. Pedagogy

English Department faculty regularly develop their pedagogy. The English Education faculty, especially, are actively involved in cutting-edge pedagogical and curricular research, and they share this with the faculty at large. For example, Professors Kroll and Vollmer presented a two-hour faculty development workshop in March 2011 on the theory and practice of teaching analytical reading. English faculty have actively participated in developing first year "Humanities Learning Community" courses and second-year "Second Year Research and Creative Experience" courses at the request of the School of Arts and Humanities. Professor Anne Goldman was in 2010 awarded the Bernie and Estelle Goldstein Award for Excellence in Scholarship, an award that recognizes "faculty who exemplify the teacher-scholar model," and Associate Professor Brantley Bryant was awarded the SSU Excellence in Teaching Award for the 2013-2014 academic year. Faculty have also negotiated the significant change between the previous WebCT course support software and the newer Moodle course support software introduced in Fall 2010, and they have kept up with the Moodle system's frequent changes and updates. In Spring 2015, Professor Catherine Kroll has been named the lead faculty advisor on a Microlectures Video Project in the Faculty Center.

The English Department has recently focused on innovative lower-division writing pedagogy by establishing the Lower Division Composition Committee (LDCC) in Spring 2014. The LDCC was created as a way to bring lecturer faculty voices into department conversations about composition/reading pedagogy and policies. The LDCC includes two lecturer faculty members elected for two-year terms by their peers, and Professor Catherine Kroll, Composition Program Coordinator, and

¹ www.sonoma.edu/english/advising/grad-forms.html

Professor Greta Vollmer, Bay Area Writing Project Director and consultant on professional development. The LDCC offers significant professional development workshops as well as a bi-weekly Composition Roundtable and monthly composition/reading pedagogy discussion groups. Further developments in the lower-division composition program are noted in *section G.1* of this document.

b. Participation

The 2007-08 self-study charted the English Department faculty's extensive involvement in service and governance at both School and University levels, as well as their extensive service to their communities. The department has continued to build on these strengths. The following notes cover the achievements only of faculty who remain in the department.

Faculty participation in the School of Arts and Humanities includes participation on the Curriculum Committee, Professional Development and Travel Committee, the RTP (Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion) Committee, and on a hiring committee for Hutchins Liberal studies as well as RTP committees for various departments both inside and outside of the school of A&H.

Faculty participation at the University level includes membership on the Academic Freedom Subcommittee, the Accessible Technology Initiative Steering Committee, the Educational Policies Committee (EPC), the Faculty Special Sponsored Projects (FSSP) Review Committee, the Senate Diversity Subcommittee, the Sonoma State Enterprises Board, the RTP and Sabbatical Committee, the University Scholarship Committee, and on the Search Committee for the Dean of the Library in Fall 2014. English Department Faculty also single-handedly organize the *Writers at Sonoma* reading series, which brings writers of national and international prominence to the campus for regular readings. Finally, Professor Timothy Wandling served as chair of the Faculty Senate in 2007-2008.

SSU faculty actively serve their community by being involved in local organizations and providing opportunities for education outside the classroom. In the 2007-2014 period, SSU faculty have given lectures at local libraries, participated in fund-raising activities for local libraries, served as judges in creative writing competitions, volunteered to support "The Sitting Room" (a community library that "emphasizes women's issues and achievements"²), facilitated workshops for local high schools, volunteered as docents at local museums, and been interviewed for web

² <http://www.sittingroom.org>

and radio publications. Professor Vollmer provides distinguished service to the community as the Director for the Bay Area Writing Project, an organization that "offers professional development in schools around the Bay Area, workshops and seminars for teachers in over nine Bay Area counties, and holds 10-12 young writer & teen creative writing summer camps, thus serving hundreds and teachers and students each year" (see Professor Vollmer's CV for more information.)

c. Professional Contributions

The 2007-08 self study document notes that "[d]espite their heavy teaching and administrative duties, department faculty are exceptionally productive as scholars and writers." The years since 2007-08 confirm this statement. Our faculty publish actively, and they bring the energy, insights, and perspectives from their scholarship and creative work back to the classroom, using it to develop courses that address urgent scholarly issues and timely creative developments. It is, indeed, hard to keep track of the numerous faculty achievements, but a representative sample will speak for the whole. The sheer variety of venues, meetings, publications, and genres attests to the strength-in-diversity of the English Department faculty.

SSU English faculty are active in their fields, serving as officers for organizations, on editorial boards, and as official or ad hoc readers for journals. Between Spring 2008 and Spring 2015, English faculty have participated in the following local, national, and international conferences: The American Anthropological Association, The American Association of Applied Linguistics, The American Comparative Literature Association Annual Conference, The American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Conference, The American Studies Association Annual Conference, The African Literature Association Conference, The Cultural Studies Association Annual Conference, The Biennial International Congress of the New Chaucer Society, The California Association of Teachers of English, The CSU Shakespeare Symposium, The Digital Humanities Summer Institute Colloquium, The Half the World Symposium on Environmental Issues in East Asia, The International Congress on Medieval Studies, The Learning and the Brain Conference, The Modern Language Association, The National Council for Teachers of English Annual Convention, and The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States/The United States Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (MELUS/USACLALS). Department faculty have presented papers in Reykjavík, Iceland, in Johannesburg, South Africa, and in Puli, Taiwan.

Recent years have been especially productive for the English Department's Creative Writing faculty. Professor Gillian Conoley has published two

volumes of poetry, *The Plot Genie* (2009) and *Peace* (2014), as well as translations of the poetry of Henri Michaux, published as *Thousand Times Broken: Three Books by Henri Michaux* (2014). Conoley's poetry has been collected in the high-profile anthologies *Lyric Postmodernisms: An Anthology of Contemporary Innovative Poetries* (2008) and *American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry* (2009). Professor Noelle Oxenhandler's memoir *The Wishing Year* appeared in 2008 and was supported by a book tour across California, Washington, New Mexico, Colorado, and New York. Professor Oxenhandler wrote *The Buddha is Still Teaching* (2010), her second collaboration with Professor with Jack Kornfield, director of the Spirit Rock Meditation Center and a prominent teacher and writer in the Buddhist tradition. Oxenhandler is currently at work on her third book with Kornfield. Oxenhandler's work has also been recently published in the anthologies *Paris Was Ours* (2010) and *The Beatles are Here* (2014). Professor Sherril Jaffe published the short story collection *You Are Not Alone And Other Stories* (2013) and the novel *Expiration Date* (2011), as well as receiving the Spokane Award for Short Fiction in 2011 and a MacDowell Fellowship in 2010. Writing both in scholarly and essayistic modes, Professor Anne Goldman has published creative nonfiction in the *Gettysburg Review*, the *Georgia Review*, *The Pedestrian*, the *Southwest Review*, and *Zeek*. Professor Goldman's essays have garnered repeated recognition (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014) in the volume *Best American Essays* as well as two nominations for a Pushcart Prize, one resulting in a special mention (XXXIV).

English Department faculty have also published widely in a variety of scholarly venues, including the journals *ASIANetwork Exchange*, *Cultural Dynamics*, *International Journal of Innovation in Language Teaching*, *Journal of Teaching Writing*, *postmedieval*, *Research in African Literatures*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* and *Studies in English Literature* as well as in the anthology volumes *Dark Chaucer*, *History of California Literature*, *Medieval Afterlives in Popular Culture*, *Negotiating Afropolitanism*, *Teaching Africa*, *Teaching Immigrant and Second-Language Students* and *Undoing Whiteness in the Classroom*. Professor Katz edited the book *Moving Ideas: Multimodality and Embodied Learning in Communities and Schools* (2013) and Associate Professor Bryant published the book *Geoffrey Chaucer Hath A Blog: Medieval Studies and New Media* (2010).

F. Institutional Support and Resources

1.a. Library

The 2007-08 self study observed that the department was "ably supported" by library services. The department has continued to receive excellent

support and maintain an extensive and positive working relationship with the library. English faculty have collaborated with library faculty on research and information competence pedagogy. Library faculty regularly present to English classes from first-year writing to M. A. level research seminars. Library faculty consult with English department faculty about the development of library collections, and library faculty make books, media, and specialized databases available as needed for English department faculty developing new classes. The English Department applauds the excellent work of our library faculty and staff. We could not wish for a better library or more committed library colleagues.

1.b. Computer Technology

The 2007 self study document noted the gradual appearance of "more rapid refreshment" for staff computers. This trend has continued, and department tenure-line faculty feel adequately supported by the refresh program. The need for access to scanners noted in the 2007 document has been alleviated by the availability of more scanners on campus and the purchase of a new copier (2014) with scanning capacity.

The English department faculty have put in significant work to train themselves with the new Moodle course support software system. While the faculty applaud and appreciate the many workshops, consultations, and advisory sessions offered by SSU IT, the faculty would also like to note that keeping up with new software developments is a significant drain on faculty time that might otherwise be used for research, developing courses, or participating in university governance. Frequent Moodle software updates mean that material for repeated courses must be transferred from an old site (labeled a "Moodle Archive") to the current site every year or so. Even though this Moodle update system can be streamlined into a backup/restore process, it still takes time that could be better spent. The faculty would urge the university to reconsider the frequent updates of the Moodle course support software and to align course support software initiatives more smoothly with the goals and needs of all faculty.

Many faculty use video and computer visuals in their teaching. Since many faculty also teach in classrooms that do not have built-in projection equipment, our faculty rely on the IT "Equipment Delivery" service (<http://www.sonoma.edu/it/faculty/equipment.html>). Although the faculty are grateful for the hard work and expertise of campus IT, it is important to note that the delivery system, in which pre-ordered "carts" are moved to and from classrooms, sometimes impedes teaching because of the need for last-minute setup or the presence of broken or improperly configured equipment. Teaching using audiovisual technology is now a norm and not

an innovation, and in order to fully implement this teaching tool English faculty need more access to smart classrooms or to more and better technology dedicated exclusively to departmental use, such as data projectors and computers. In order for faculty to be able to implement truly cutting-edge teaching techniques involving multi-media research and the digital humanities even further support will be necessary in the future.

On a significantly more positive note, the English Department faculty have been deeply grateful for the support of Barbara Moore, the Director of Web Services, in the design and implementation of the new department website. Ms. Moore offered a significant amount of time in helping the department create the site, contributing everything from organizational templates, to software instruction, to design of individual pages, to original photography for page backgrounds. The department is supremely grateful for Ms. Moore's expertise, care, and work above-and-beyond expectations.

1.c. Student Support Services

The English Department maintains a close and positive working relationship with Disability Services for Students. DSS and department faculty collaborate to ensure proper accommodations are provided for students with disabilities, and DSS provides ample advising and information for faculty when necessary. The English Department coordinates with other Student Support Services as necessary, and working relations are positive.

1.d. Faculty Development and Support Services

The English department appreciates the opportunities given for faculty development. It should be noted, though, that because of workload issues, faculty time is often "squeezed" and required university duties of teaching, research, and service are prioritized. In order to fully develop the potential for faculty development, the university could provide further time specifically cleared out or allotted for faculty development. In addition, the English department creates and provides development opportunities for its own faculty that grow from their specific disciplinary knowledge and address the distinctive pedagogies necessary for writing instruction and the teaching of literature.

2.a. Physical Facilities

The English department finds itself hampered by a lack of available classroom space, inappropriately designed classrooms, and a shortage of office space.

In general, campus classrooms do not match the level of elegance and design showcased by premier campus buildings such as the Student Center and Green Music Center. The English Department applauds the efforts of the Academic Senate and Administration to improve the appearance, cleanliness, and design of classroom space.

The 2007 self study noted that the department was "consistently unsatisfied with its classroom allocation." The campus has recently moved to a new computer-algorithm-driven scheduling system, "Live 25," replacing and changing the previous methods for scheduling courses. The English Department faculty believe that the campus-wide move to the "Live 25" scheduling system has, for the moment, only increased dissatisfaction with classroom and time-slot assignments for courses. When scheduling, the English department has found its strategic effectiveness limited by the lack of availability of classrooms during "prime time" hours (the times when students -- who often have significant work and family obligations -- are most available and eager to take classes). Additionally, the English department has found that classes are scheduled, with little possible input from faculty, in rooms inadequate to specific pedagogical needs: discussion classes must be taught in rooms with tables that do not move, small seminars end up scheduled in large echoing lecture rooms, and packed classes are bundled into spaces that match the size requirements on paper but are in fact cramped and uncomfortable. More attention of scheduling systems to "on the ground" issues of spatial arrangement, furniture, accessibility, and pedagogy could help faculty teach to the best of their ability.

English Department faculty consistently report difficulty in obtaining "smart" classrooms (classrooms with built in computer, dvd playback, and screening capabilities). Although faculty keep up with best practices in using media, video, and interactive internet-based activities, the dearth of "smart" classrooms reduces their ability to teach to their strengths. A December 2014 meeting with lecturer faculty (See *section G.2*) indicated that lack of availability of smart classrooms was perceived as a *significant* impediment to the instruction of lower-division composition courses and a *significant* source of stress and inconvenience for our lecturer colleagues. A point made above bears repeating: teaching using audiovisual technology is now a norm and not an innovation in our field.

Classroom dynamics affect student learning, and the English department hopes that improvements can be made both in campus-wide classroom space and in scheduling that will match the pedagogical needs of faculty.

2.b. Financial Resources

The 2007-8 self study noted the "reduced financial state" of the department. In the 2007-08 and 2008-09 period, indeed, the department established limits on photocopying to manage reduced operating expenses and budget. Departmental consensus seemed to be that the photocopying limits *also* limited teaching and research possibilities. The 2007-08 self study called the photocopy limits "hardly a state of affairs conducive to building morale in the department."

Budgeting has, however, been less of a concern for the department in recent years. Although the department operating expenses have varied from Fiscal Year 2010 to Fiscal Year 2013, ranging from a low of \$7,959 (2011) to a high of \$10,981 (2014), these variations seem to reflect accounting practices (travel advances, extra money for retirement events) and have had little bearing on the real work of the department. In many cases, the department actually seems to have used only *part* of its allocated operating expenses per Fiscal Year: 82% (2010), 86% (2011). More pertinently, tenure line faculty members have not felt the squeeze of photocopying or office supply limits, though the opinion of lecturer faculty has not yet been sought about the availability of photocopying and supplies. The department can surmise that the good management of Dean Stearns and the Arts and Humanities office, widely praised for bringing the school of A&H from deficit to surplus, is to be credited for the relaxed operating expenses situation.

2.c. Human Resources

The English department continues to address the loss of meaningful levels of assigned time for many significant and work-intensive departmental positions that support our students and curriculum and bring distinction to the university; this is a major source of concern for faculty. As noted in the 2007-08 self study, the English Education concentration requires significant levels of advising time and expertise -- work on display, for example, in the *Single Subject Matter Program Update*: see section G.3. Similar situations apply to the faculty who serve as Composition Coordinator, Graduate Director, and as editors of departmental publications. In regards to the last item, Professor Conoley has edited the nationally prominent poetry magazine *Volt* since 1991, yet she currently receives no assigned time from the school of A&H to support her efforts.³

³ For more on *Volt*, see:

- *Volt* homepage: <http://www.voltpoetry.com/html/about.html>
- *SSU News Center Story about Volt*:

Receiving around one thousand submissions on average per issue, publishing award-winning writers, and stocked in university libraries around the country, *Volt* is a source of pride for the department, school, and university that requires significant effort and labor.

The department noted in 2007-08 that these positions receive little or no assigned time to cover the additional workload, and negotiations and arrangements have varied through the years since then, with the general consensus being that the department needs more support. The question of support for these important advising and publication positions remains an ongoing issue for the department. As of Spring 2015, the course release at A&H is now either project-based or requires annual approval from the Dean. The department has yet to anticipate this new arrangement's impact on equity among department members, the workload for the faculty involved, and programmatic health.

The English department is also negotiating a significant staff transition in the 2014-2015 academic year. Administrative Analyst Merle Williams retired in summer 2014 after many years of service to the English department. New Administrative Analyst Bron Anderson has taken over. Mr. Anderson supports both the English and Philosophy departments at 40 hours/week. Mr. Anderson was joined in November 2014 by Angela Follenvaider, who supports the English Department for 20 hours/week. The department warmly welcomes Mr. Anderson and Ms. Follenvaider and is grateful for their service and expertise. It remains to be seen, however, how the current level of administrative support will serve departmental needs, especially since both AAs' time is divided among other departments and programs.

G. Assessment and Findings

As one of the largest departments on campus and the force behind a wide variety of diverse programs, the English Department has focused its energies on a select set of changes and assessments since 2007-08.

1. Lower Division Composition Curriculum Development

The English department takes great pride in being able to offer SSU students a cutting-edge lower-division composition program based on innovative pedagogy. The years since 2007 have seen sustained innovation in first-year writing from the department thanks to the hard work of our

<http://www.sonoma.edu/newscenter/2012/05/volt-runs-with-the-top-50-literary-magazines.html>

composition faculty. The English 100A/B stretch program, focus on information competency, and recent Directed Self Placement initiatives are all points of pride for the department.

Stretch Program: English 100A/B

The English department revised lower division composition offerings to offer a year-long Stretch writing course, comprising English 100A in the Fall semester and English 100B in the Spring semester. This Stretch course is offered to students who do not place into the one-semester English 101 with their EPT (English Placement Test) exam scores. English 100A/B draws from current composition pedagogy to re-envision an older "remediation" model into a dynamic, sustained, and supportive long-term engagement between first year students and composition faculty. The design, implementation, and guidance of the stretch program has involved intense amounts of labor for our composition faculty, involving work with campus committees, creation of curriculum, and professional development.

Assessment efforts indicate that the 100A/B program is effective. Six years ago, at the end of the 100A/B stretch program's first year, English composition faculty and instructional librarian Felicia Palsson did a holistic assessment comparing a selection of about 70 English 101 students' research essays with about 70 English 100B students' research essays. Results of that assessment indicated that English 100B was successfully enabling students to produce work equivalent to that of students in English 101. Professor Catherine Kroll, Composition Coordinator, reports that conversations with Elaine Sundberg, Associate Vice President for Academic Programs at SSU, indicate that the English 100A/B program is succeeding at its goals: with the implementation of the Stretch program, SSU has seen a higher retention rate of first-year students and greater persistence toward graduation. A more important index of the success of the stretch program is the high regard in which it is held across campus. Those who have praised the program include: academic advisors; John Kornfeld, Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Programs; Julie Greathouse, Director of Transition Programs; Edie Brown, Advisor and Compliance Officer; students themselves, and many others at SSU.

Common Assignment on Information Competency

First-year writing at SSU has also featured a common assignment program since 2012. The English department's Composition Coordinator and the library instruction coordinator have hosted workshops and helped with faculty development for first-year writing instructors who give their classes a shared assignment focusing on information competency. In Spring 2013,

English faculty and instructional librarians met to analytically score a random sample of student projects from this assignment and found qualitative evidence of students' ability to critically read sources, summarize core arguments, draw conclusions, and make progress as researchers. This program sees ongoing development. In October 2014, collaboration between the English Department and the library on this project continued in the form of a workshop for faculty on first-year composition projects. Additional workshops are being scheduled for Spring 2015 to help instructors acquire further skills in guiding students' research projects: from the stage of asking informed questions through the final stages of reflecting on what has been learned in the research process.

Directed Self Placement

Catherine Kroll, composition coordinator, has been working extensively with figures around campus to create a Directed Self Placement program (DSP) for incoming first-year students. DSP will allow entering students to make their own, informed choice about which first-year writing course to enter, the one-semester English 101 or the Stretch 100A/B program.

The Directed Self Placement program follows current best practices in writing pedagogy. It will be integrated into university orientation procedures and supported and implemented by the university's Moodle course support software. As of the writing of this self study, the development of Self Placement is an active and developing project that continues the sustained record of hard work and thoughtful curricular development in the English Department's lower-division composition program. The English Department formally approved the Directed Self Placement initiative by vote in a department meeting on February 10th, 2015

The implementation of Self Placement will allow for further assessment and "closing the loop" about the 100A/B Stretch program. Now that DSP has been passed as a policy in the Department, Professor Kroll will be devoting time next year and in following years to gathering and analyzing statistics on many more aspects of first-year composition courses, as well as on the functionality and outcomes of DSP. **See Attachment F: Directed Self Placement Memo.**

2. December 2014 Focus Group With Adjunct Faculty

The department greatly values the teaching and collegiality of the lecturers and temporary faculty. They are an integral part of the department, whose hard work and commitment to student learning is vital to the mission with

which we have been tasked by the university. We therefore think that it is extremely important that feedback from lecturers be included in this review. To that end, the chair and a member of the Assessment Committee held an open meeting for lecturers to provide us with their thoughts about the functioning of the department. Those who could not attend were encouraged to send feedback via email.

An issue raised by almost every lecturer was the difficulty in obtaining a smart classroom. The university has been renovating classrooms over the last decade and turning them into smart classrooms. However, most of the smaller classrooms have not been renovated, and these are precisely the rooms in which most compositions courses are scheduled. Many lecturers have purchased their own projectors in order to compensate for the lack of classroom technology. However, setting up a projector is a time-consuming process that cuts into instructional time. It is also quite burdensome to lug a projector, laptop, and speakers from one side of campus to the other. Moreover, most of the classrooms on the bottom floor of Ives Hall, where many composition courses are scheduled, do not even receive an internet signal, so instructors can't even use their own equipment. This has been a very frustrating experience for many lecturers. One lecture noted:

My main gripe is with the classrooms. For the second year in a row, I'm crossing my fingers that [the Administrative Coordinator] can get me out of a too-small non-smart Nichols classroom into something more suitable. I've built my 100B curriculum around visual rhetoric and media literacy, and so rely on having a smart classroom.

Every semester, lecturers go through the process of trying to find a space with suitable technology. They point out that they are being encouraged to employ multi-modal teaching practices, yet are not given the institutional support to implement these teaching strategies effectively:

We desperately need technology within each classroom we are assigned. This is really a campus-wide issue, I know, but it is such a drag to be stuck in an 'un-smart' classroom, especially with the population we serve. We are constantly advised to use multi-modal teaching modes, but that is nigh impossible in an Ives classroom, for instance, when the only technology is a piano.

The department has made the appropriate administrators aware of this problem on numerous occasions, but so far there has been no effective response. Given that the university has been mandated to increase its retention rates, the lack of attention to technology is rather baffling. Often,

a composition instructor is the faculty member with whom students have the strongest relationship. Compared to other courses on campus, English 100 A/B and English 101 are relatively small classes with 25-28 students. Instructors generally meet with all their students and get to know them in a way that is not possible in a larger class. To hamstring composition instructors by not providing them with adequate technology does not seem to be a good way to serve students or to achieve the university's retention goals.

Lecturers also commented on what they perceived to be a lack of coherence and direction in the composition program. Some suggested that the lecturers should be meeting regularly as a group to exchange ideas and share problems with one another. Most felt that the Lower Division Composition Committee (LDCC) was a step in the right direction, but others believed that more needed to be done. A few suggested that a lecturer should be appointed to a leadership role in the composition program because the lecturers are the ones who actually teach the courses.

Some lecturers commented upon ongoing problems in the assignment of work. Courses are often not assigned until very late, which prevents lecturers from finding work elsewhere. One lecturer also stated that she was not offered courses that were instead given to an outsider, which would be a violation of the contract. However, several lecturers also noted that progress had been made in this area in recent years:

On the plus side, I think the progress we as a department have made in terms of lecturer teaching assignments, evaluation, clarity and transparency has been extraordinarily helpful. I feel we are really moving in the right direction in that regard. I would like to see that continue even further.

One lecturer suggested holding a course assignment workshop so that lecturers could better understand how work was allotted. In a similar vein, another lecturer suggested that more mentoring was needed, especially for newly hired lecturers.

3. Single Subject Matter Program and Recent Update for the CA CTC

The Single Subject Concentration is a significant benefit for students in our program, since it leads programmatically and directly to a career in teaching. In addition to special advising and overseeing matriculation through the Single Subject Matter Program (including students' accrual of Early Field Experience hours in local secondary school classrooms, networking with teachers in SSU's service area and collaborating with the

Sonoma County Office of Education), the SSMP faculty are involved in liaising with the SSU School of Education regarding program alignment and requirements, attending Single Subject Advisory Committee meetings, continuing to improve the English Department's Single Subject courses and program, and maintaining coherence and consistency between the Department's program and the SSU School of Education. The Single Subject Concentration attracts students to the English department, sustains a commitment to diversity, and contributes to the greater good of the state of California. The Program is kept running by the hard work of the SSMP faculty, who regularly coordinate with state educational bodies to make sure that our curriculum effectively meets the requirements for the state's Single Subject Matter Program Requirements. One might say that the Single Subject faculty maintain an ongoing and robust continuous assessment of their program, to an extent often unrealized by other department faculty. As an example, Professor Mira-Lisa Katz, the Single Subject Coordinator, recently completed a Single Subject Matter Program Update for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, an extensive document outlining how our Single Subject Program is integrating the new California Common Core State Standards. **See Attachment G: SSMP Update 2014.**

4. M.A. Program

The department has maintained a robust M.A. program whose core aspects have gone unchanged since the 2007-08 program review. The department has, however, experimented with new pedagogies and has modified specific aspects of the program as necessary. In 2008, the department experimented with establishing a shared theme for M.A.-level courses so that students would be encouraged to see productive overlaps and comparisons (for example, "Material Culture"). The themed approach added energy to the program and the department may return to it in the future. The department has also repeatedly modified the set reading list for the 494 Exam, a breadth exam required of all M.A. candidates. The department updated the reading list in October of 2009. The department has also met to consider the larger purpose and pedagogy of the 494 oral exam. Several faculty who served as Directors of Graduate Studies have experimented with coordinating the exam to ensure that students complete it in a timely fashion and get the most out of the experience; changes have included imposing early deadlines for taking the exam and also establishing different methods of encouraging collaborative student preparation. English Department faculty have also experimented with new ways of providing graduate education during times when M.A.-specific courses could not be offered. Faculty have provided individual "graduate study" courses and have also added advanced components to existing

undergraduate classes so that M.A. students can enroll in those courses as graduate seminars. A conclusion to be reached is that close mentorship and positive and consistent communication between students and M.A. faculty helps the department make sure that curriculum and policies best match the needs and talents of a given graduate cohort. Overall, the department prides itself on maintaining an M.A. program in English that provides talented students with small seminar classes, personalized mentoring and advising, and the chance to teach undergraduate writing courses. The M.A. program serves local teaching professionals who wish to increase their subject-area knowledge, local residents eager for a chance to engage in scholarly reading or creative writing, and SSU graduates who wish to develop their skills on the way to careers or to academic graduate programs. Total graduate enrollment in English fluctuates between Fall 2007 and Fall 2013, ranging from a low of 25 to a high of 41. Recent graduates of the M. A. program have gone on to teach as adjunct faculty or as permanently-hired faculty at local academic institutions and have also been accepted to advanced degree programs (Ph.D., MFA, and other) at the University of Arizona, the University of Denver, the Graduate Theological Union, the Iowa Writers' Workshop, the University of Michigan, Mills College, Rutgers-Newark, Temple University, the University of San Francisco, the University of South Dakota, and SUNY Stony Brook. Faculty report that many graduates of the M.A. Program have seen considerable long-term success in fields such as advertising, editing and publishing, graphic design, and legal work. Creative writing graduates from the program have received awards including a National Endowment of the Arts grant, National Poetry series winner, a finalist place in the National Book Critics' Circle Award, the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, the Northern California Book Award, the National Book Critics' Circle Award for Poetry, and a Guggenheim Fellowship.

5. Spring 2014 English Major Survey

In Spring 2014 the English Department Assessment Committee administered a survey to assess student perception of department goals and to learn more about how to improve advising. The survey was provided to all upper-division courses in the major (with students instructed to not take duplicate surveys in multiple courses).

For purposes of accuracy, surveys completed by non-majors, by minors, or by students who did not indicate major/minor status, were omitted in the results. 134 surveys completed by English Majors were gathered, a significant percentage, given that there were 234 English Majors in Fall 2013.

The survey contained both quantitative questions about learning outcomes related to skills, knowledges, values, and experiences, and well as qualitative response questions. The survey data summary is attached, but significant results are discussed here.

The department received the highest marks in areas key to the department's academic goals. Many students noted that the department did "very well" in equipping them with the skills of "reading texts closely," and of "recognizing and appreciating the importance of major literary genres, subgenres, and periods." Students also noted that the department did very well in instilling the values of "a sustained interest in language and literature" and "an awareness of the literary past." With regard to the different experiences that department courses offer, students noted high satisfaction with their ability to "exchange...ideas with faculty and students in classroom settings."

The survey indicates room for improvement in advising, in addressing other areas of the department's academic mission, and in connecting students with departmental events. A large amount of students noted that "departmental advising materials such as worksheets and website information" were unsatisfactory (a vexing item, given the efforts to improve the website). The overwhelming majority of students observed that they were "uninformed" or "not very well informed" about faculty specialties and publications and about departmental publications. Students also noted general dissatisfaction with course availability and timing. Some of the largest amounts of "unsatisfactory" marks (though remaining small - at or under 9% of responses for a given query) were in the following areas: Knowledge "an understanding of the historical development of the English language and of literature written in English from Old English to the present," Knowledge "familiarity with the nature of literary canons and canon formation," and Value "an increased awareness of my own linguistic heritage and history."

Qualitative responses to a question about advising show that students are eager for clear and informed advising in a confusing university environment in which multiple overlapping requirements are necessary for graduation (the English Major making up only one of those sets of requirements). Student responses include: "I feel that some faculty members aren't very helpful when it comes to advising because it seems like they lack the knowledge in certain areas," "most English majors don't feel like they get enough advising with GE classes," "I felt like it was difficult to find an advisor with hours that fit with my schedule." Several students also noted frustration at irregular or canceled faculty office hours. Some students noted that they desired more direct contact with the department in first or

second year, and some noted that they desired *assigned* advisors instead of the drop-in system. In response to the advising question, students also proposed ideas: "events or open forums where students can meet other English majors and faculty," "make important information like next semester class lists and upper division GE classes easier to find." and "update the website more often."

Student general qualitative responses point to a strength in the department: personal connections and a shared enthusiasm for language and literature. In response to the question "Would you recommend the department to others? Why or why not?" 74 out of 86 responses were unambiguously and, indeed, often glowingly, positive. Responses emphasized the quality of faculty (capitalization added):

"Best professors on campus"

"Teachers are very dedicated"

"The professors actually care about what they teach"

"A wonderful department full of dedicated professors and staff"

"The English department has some of the greatest professors"

"The department faculty is impressively qualified and capable"

"Really wonderful professors who care about their students"

Other observations praised the department's atmosphere (capitalization added):

"Provides a safe environment to express interpretations"

"Has been very supportive in my growth as a student and person"

"A deeply enriching major"

"It molds you into a better reader or writer"

"The small nature of the department has been helpful in my success in the major as a student with learning disabilities"

"I feel as if I am part of a dynamic community"

"I feel like I found a home in the English department"

"I feel like there is a sense of camaraderie and trust between the students and the teachers"

Overall, the survey points to the underlying issues with scheduling and logistics that the department has long sought to address. It draws attention to learning outcomes that could be more fully emphasized. It reaffirms the need for continued and consistent departmental communications. But most reassuringly, it indicates that students notice and benefit from the commitment of our faculty and staff and achieve not only success but also personal enrichment in our courses. **See Attachment H, Survey Quantitative Responses and Attachment I, Survey Qualitative Responses.**

6. Discussion of Changes Necessary to improve effectiveness of the outcomes of the program:

At the end of the 2007-08 Program Review, The English department created an action plan based on the insights and recommendations of the external consultant. While facing the difficulties noted in section A, the department has nevertheless made considerable progress in addressing these action plan items.

Key List: Progress on Previous (2007-08) Action Plan

Action Plan Items A.1-4: Advising

07-08 Action Plan A.1: "The department has begun to highlight advising by spending portions of its spring faculty meetings walking faculty through diverse advising scenarios, and it plans to spend a greater proportion of the meeting time this fall in this pursuit. The department recognizes that providing consistent training to faculty for GE advising in particular is crucial."

A.1: Actions taken and remaining: The department has kept up with the crucial advising change from the use of paper forms to the use of the software-based and centrally-administered *Academic Requirements Report* (ARR). In the Fall/Summer of 2013, the department coordinated with Amanda McGowan, then of CMS Advising Technical Support, to ensure that the ARR properly interpreted the English department's curriculum. The department spent significant time making sure that its flexible and varied curriculum was properly "encoded" in the category-driven ARR system. At the September 10, 2013 department meeting, faculty received training from Amanda McGowan. Although the department did not regularly and consistently continue its focus on advising scenarios, faculty consistently consult with each other when necessary about advising.

07-08 Action Plan A.2: "Undergraduates will be advised beginning next fall [08] not only through one-on-one time with faculty, but through global email communications at the opening and closing of the semester. These announcements will welcome students, outline key advising issues, and provide students with specific instructions as to registration."

A.2: Actions taken and remaining: The department, through the initiative of ACs Merle Williams and Bron Anderson has established and maintained regular advising email contact with English major students. Course announcements and advising announcements are regularly sent.

07-08 Action Plan A.3: "The department will revise the worksheets for majors it currently uses for advising purposes, to make its course sequence more transparent for students."

A.3: Actions taken and remaining: The forms were revised after the 07-08 program review. They have been revised since then. Currently, the department is evaluating how best to modify the forms to reflect the current prominent use of the online ARR (Academic Requirements Report) at SSU.

07-08 Action Plan A.4: "Additionally, the department will formalize mentorship of its junior faculty by assigning new faculty mentors drawn from amongst its tenured staff; mentors who are not currently serving on the department's RTP committee."

A.4: Actions taken and remaining: No new full-time tenure-line faculty have been hired between Fall 2007 and Spring 2015. The department will, however, implement this mentorship program upon the hire of a new tenure-line faculty member in Fall 2015. The department is also considering new and better ways of orienting and mentoring new adjunct faculty (see **Action Plan Items C 1-3** below).

Action Plan Items B.1-3: Communication with Undergraduate Majors

07-08 Action Plan B.1: "[T]he department plans to sponsor a series of symposia in which faculty and graduate students jointly will present work of interest to undergraduate majors in an informal setting and with refreshments. Such a seminar series, the department believes, will serve at once to develop our graduate cohort and, most importantly, to draw communication with and amongst undergraduates."

B.1 Actions Taken and Remaining: The department has created a number of symposia that share work, though not always with an undergraduate audience primarily in mind. These symposia have been organized in various ways over the years, depending on faculty and student availability and interest. The 2010 and 2011 academic years saw extremely lively events for M. A. students sponsored by an active and committed group of students; these events included reading groups and symposia to share work. Additionally, between the Fall of 2010 and the Spring of 2013, the feminist reading group "Locating Lysippe" provided a venue for graduate, undergraduate, and faculty discussions of shared reading and new work. This group was also the result of the commitment of graduate students. Most recently, in Fall of 2014 Professor Goldman has established a Faculty Seminar Series, in which faculty present recent creative or scholarly work

to a department audience; audiences have included graduate students, and more room can be made for undergraduates in the future.

07-08 Action Plan B.2: "Continue highlighting faculty achievements by reworking our web pages so that they more accurately foreground the work of individual faculty and the department as a whole. Identifying faculty areas of expertise will improve advising for undergraduates by foregrounding possible mentors for majors. Revised, the department's web pages will foreground the following: faculty publications, student achievements and activities, alumni achievements and activities."

B.2 Actions Taken and Remaining: The department has taken *full and significant* action on this item. In Fall of 2011 then-chair John Kunat tasked the English Department Assessment Committee with creating a completely new department website. The Assessment Committee, in consultation with the department, worked with Barbara Moore, the Director of Web Services at SSU Information Technology. Ms. Moore provided expertise, help, and assistance above and beyond the department's expectations. In March 2013 the new website appeared. This website currently featured individual pages that highlight faculty achievements, areas of expertise, teaching interests, and publications, including links to publications when applicable. The website has capacities for including announcements and events; the site has been used for announcements about the *Writers at Sonoma* series and the M.A. program deadlines. In the future, the department can continue to explore the potential of the website for announcements and calendars of events, and can also continue to add more profiles and information to the site.

07-08 Action Plan B.3: "Create a lounge space for graduate students."

B.3 Actions Taken and Remaining: In Fall 2011 the department designated Nichols Hall 361 a student lounge space. 361 is conveniently close to the department office and to faculty offices and it has been equipped with couches and a desktop computer. Students use the lounge for study and socialization, and the lounge space is also used for occasional spillover meetings. As of Spring 2015 the fate of the lounge space is becoming unclear because of a shortage of office space for adjunct faculty.

Action Plan Items C.1-3: Communication with Adjunct Faculty

07-08 Action Plan Items C.1-3: 1. "Continue the practice of inviting adjuncts to our annual fall retreat. Several adjunct faculty will be invited to present recommendations for the 101 course at our September retreat." 2. "Communicate scholarly and professional activities of interest, as well as

departmental concerns, through more regular email. (In fact, these plans are already underway this [spring 08] semester.) The department notes here that this will require technical support." 3. "Invite adjuncts to attend 1 or 2 faculty meetings over the course of the year when issues of interest to them will be raised. (Again, this recommendation has already been instituted.)"

C.1-3 Actions Taken and Remaining: Since the 2007-08 the department has taken *significant and considerable* action to foster better communication and collaboration with adjunct faculty (known as "lecturers" at SSU), and has also reacted to a series of system- and campus-wide changes that transform the role of lecturer faculty within the department. The department began to formally invite all lecturers to all department meetings as of Fall 2011. In reaction to a ruling concerning adjunct voting rights at Fresno State, a significant department discussion concerning the role of adjunct faculty began in the Spring of 2014, including a formal faculty retreat titled "Lecturers' Rights" in February 2014, and resulting in a series of votes in the Spring 2014 department meetings. In the March 11, 2014 department meeting, the department voted to grant lecturers 1) the vote in elections for department chair, 2) the vote for staffing committee positions, and 3) the vote in decisions regarding "all curricular matters relevant to the program in which they [lecturer faculty] are assigned to teach that academic year." The University as a whole followed suit in Fall 2014, establishing the policy on "Lecturers in Departmental Governance" on December 12, 2014, which contains the statement: "To this end, individual lecturers shall not be excluded from participating in decisions made by departments, consistent with CSU policies, Collective Bargaining Agreements, and University policy."⁴ Departmental organization also reflects the increasing sharing of governance with adjunct faculty. Since adjunct faculty teach a majority of the department's lower division composition courses, the Lower Division Composition Committee has been formed. It includes two adjunct representatives (elected by their fellow adjuncts) since Spring of 2014. The end result of these changes is that the English Department has seen a significant increase in communication, collaboration, governance, and work-sharing between tenure line and adjunct faculty that addresses and, indeed, goes beyond the goals set in action plan Items C.1-3.

07-08 Action Plan D. 1: "Develop a course schedule that effectively serves student needs across days of the week and times of day."

⁴ http://www.sonoma.edu/UAffairs/policies/lecturers_governance.htm

D.1. Actions Taken and Remaining: The department has experimented with practices for M.A. course scheduling exclusively during the evenings, and has encouraged faculty to avoid overly restrictive class scheduling. This issue remains an item for future consideration and planning. Current university-wide shifts in routines and protocols for scheduling provide both challenges and opportunities related to this issue.

07-08 Action Plan D.2: "Initiate a rotation for committee assignments and committee chairs. This rotation should additionally allow for more equitable representations of all three undergraduate concentrations. We note that a rotation schedule for graduate courses has already been put into place."

D.2. Actions Taken and Remaining: The rotation for assignment of (often prized) graduate teaching opportunities has been maintained and faculty have been content with their graduate course assignments. As for committee assignments, the department produced a detailed and effective course rotation plan in the Fall of 2009 through the efforts of Professor Wandling and Professor Vollmer. Although this rotation plan offered potential for solving equity issues, the department was not able to follow it due to the disruptions caused by budgetary and personal issues. Currently the department feels that the "equity" issue has been "solved" by the reigning perception that *everyone* has far too much to do because of reduced numbers and increased demands for service on all levels.

07-08 Action Plan D.3: "Reinstate release time for the graduate advisor, the composition coordinator, and *Volt*. Encourage rotation of both the graduate advisor and the composition coordinator."

D.3 Actions Taken and Remaining: This recommendation has not been acted upon in full. The issue of assigned time for several of these vital positions, all of which contribute to the experience of students and the distinction that the department brings to the university, has not been sorted out in a consistent, permanent, and positive way for the department. As of Spring 2015, the course release at A&H is now either project-based or requires annual approval from the Dean. The department is yet to anticipate this new arrangement's impact on equity among department members, the workload for the faculty involved, and programmatic health.

7. Dissemination of This Program Review

The department has created a number of feedback loops for disseminating program review data and reports, allowing ample opportunity for input and

response to the developing self study document. Program review information was disseminated on email, discussed in department meetings, and made the exclusive focus of a faculty retreat on November 21st, 2014. All faculty were invited to contribute information and ideas to the program review and to provide feedback on the process and the document. The department participated actively and collectively in the selection of an external reviewer. Electronic copies (and hard copies) of the self study were made available for comment to all faculty (tenure-line and lecturers) with clear deadlines set for comment and revision. The external reviewer's report was distributed and discussed. The action plan was formalized in an all-faculty retreat on April 24th, 2015, and this action plan was then officially approved by department vote in the May 5th, 2015 department meeting. The completed program review will be made available to all faculty and will serve as material for upcoming department retreat discussions and planning efforts.

H. Action Plan

The department developed its action plan in the Spring of 2015 in response to the information in this self study document and to the external consultant's report (attached).

English Department 2014-2015 Program Review Action Plan

As its 2014-2015 Program Review Action Plan, the English Department highlights the following items:

Hold Three Yearly Retreats: In addition to regular meetings, the department will hold three substantial retreats per year. Retreats will be held on a relatively regular schedule, with one in late August, one in late January, and one in May.

Create a Senior Capstone Course: The department will create a required senior-level capstone course for majors, starting with the literature track. The capstone course will feature a senior thesis requirement.

Build Four Years of the English Major: The department will continue to build a curriculum that will engage our majors from their first year to their senior year and, for some, beyond through the M. A. program. Such planning might involve renumbering and re-sequencing of courses, evaluation of department-wide goals for student skills and writing

development, and consideration of additional curricular requirements such as diverse literatures, language and linguistics, or courses that focus on information literacy and digital humanities.

Enhance Department Culture for Students and Faculty: The department will work to build on its existing strengths as a vibrant community distinguished by frequent readings and lectures, renowned publications, enthusiastic students, and small class sizes featuring personal mentoring. The department will strengthen this “culture of belonging” by improving advising, by continuing the faculty symposium series, by increasing communication and coordination to ensure more support and attendance at events and readings, by fostering the re-creation of the English Students’ Association (ESA), and by creating opportunities (both in one-off events, programs, or courses) for students to learn more about meaningful lives, jobs, and careers relating to the many aspects of the major.

Enhance Diversity in the Major: The department will build on its previous diversity commitments by even more fully and purposefully including diversity and diversity issues in the major. The department will find ways to make the major even more welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds. The department will also think strategically about cross-listing courses and about seeking faculty hires who can help support a more diverse student body.

Develop New Ways of Fairly Apportioning Faculty Workload: The department will revisit its committee structure, its plans for release time, and its ways of defining workload for tenure-line and lecturer faculty in order to improve our working experience. The department will develop new ways of acknowledging and respecting both shared and individual work. In acting on this item, the department will avoid *at all costs* the creation of additional or unnecessary work. The department will strive to find equitable, fair, and realistic ways of making certain that necessary work is done in order to allow faculty to thrive.