

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-001-256

Program Review for BA and MA in English

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 11/12/2025

**Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded**

Date: 11/19/2025

Academic Senate

**Date: 12/3/2025
First Reading**

BACKGROUND:

The English BA and MA programs are housed in the English and Modern Languages (EML) department. Other program offerings by the department include a BA in Spanish and some minor options including a minor in English. Students majoring in English choose from three options, Applied Language Studies, Literary Studies, or English Education. This review is only for the programs in English (BA and MA in English). In the fall 2022, the program had 366 students majoring in English. Additionally, 63 students were enrolled in the MA English program. The department employs 21 full time tenured/tenure-track members, four retired tenured faculty members, and 33 part-time and full-time lecturers.

As part of the regular review cycle of campus programs, the English and Modern Languages Department conducted a self-study on February 24, 2024. The self-study covered the program's core values, its quality, curriculum and other recent changes, and faculty and administrative support. Drs. Shahnaz Lotfipour (CEIS) and Sara Langford (CLASS) evaluated the self-study report followed by a department visit on February 29 and completed an internal review report on March 22, 2024. An external program review over two days was conducted by Drs. Chris Fosen (CSU Chico), Ryan Skinnell (San Jose State University) and Danielle Spratt (CSU Northridge) utilizing a hybrid format (Tuesday, March 19 via Zoom and Monday, March 25 in-person) and an external review report was submitted on April 22, 2024. The Dean's response to program review identified three key program strengths and outlined four top priorities for action.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Dr. Kent Dickson, Chair, English and Modern Languages
Dr. Camille Johnson, Dean, College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences
Dr. Jocelyn Chong, Coordinator, Assessment and Program Review

DISCUSSION:

The department in general and the English program in particular was commended by internal reviewers for its diverse faculty with a wide range of expertise, faculty dedication to student success, program's effort to decolonize literary studies, and a well-designed curriculum that is aligned with the university mission to offer polytechnic experiences by way of research and various courses with PolyX designation. The department was also applauded for developing a wealth of study abroad programs. The internal reviewers identified that while the faculty diversity meant a wide range of non-composition course offerings, it also made it challenging for the program to schedule these in a way that offered equal opportunities to those teaching these courses. The other challenges cited by the internal reviewers were low morale, heavy workload, and the resulting "unrecognized labor" performed by the faculty to maintain the load. The reviewers pointed out that these coupled with budgetary constraints have made it

difficult to sustain the existing polytechnic offerings. Other challenges cited by the reviewers included increased interpersonal conflicts and inequity in service assignments. The reviewers further reiterated the critical importance of serving the URM and first-generation college students and how it has been challenging for the program to reduce its URM gaps owing to the pandemic, post-pandemic challenges, and the budgetary restrictions. Finally, in their feedback on the MA English program, the internal reviewers commended the program for mirroring the undergraduate program in terms of its diverse and decolonized curriculum, advising-intensive experience, professionalization practicum course, and job-ready graduates who benefit from the program's focus on learning-by-doing approach. However, as is the case with the undergraduate program offerings, these labor-intensive offerings without much structured support from the college and/or university have resulted in overworked faculty and less than optimal student experiences.

The external reviewers commended the program for its very detailed self-study that was data-driven and equity-minded and believed that it sets a strong framework and guideline for the next phase of the program. They also praised the program for its continued commitment to serve the students, faculty and the university. In their review, they shared that both BA and MA English students overwhelmingly shared being supported by their faculty and were thankful for strong faculty mentorship, and how well they felt prepared for their careers. The reviewers also praised the program faculty for being accessible.

Based on the information provided in the self-study, the external reviewers pointed out that the department didn't go through a formal review for over 20 years which made the data inconsistent at places due to changes in measures across time. The committee also pointed out the significant external and internal-motivated curricular changes the department underwent over the last 10 years owing to the quarter-semester transition, department name change, pandemic, and the creation of new programs.

Challenges identified by the external reviewers were to do with communication, lack of shared governance, and transparency in decision making processes as perceived by the program faculty. The reviewers felt that the communication breakdown further contributed to the interpersonal tension and a sense of not having a voice or being included (an issue particularly raised by the lecturers). An unsustainable workload, particularly because of overwhelming service, was another concern raised in the external review. A related concern was about women and people of color feeling overburdened by the service in the name of "inclusion." To systematically address these concerns, the reviewers recommended coming up with a clear service plan. Structural obstacles cited included a lack of succession planning and support for transition of department chair and program leads and a lack of formal training and support for the department leadership. Broadly, the external reviewers included specific recommendations at the program, department, college, and university levels (Academic Affairs). They also provided specific recommendations for the undergraduate and

graduate programs including creating a Blended graduate program (4+1) so as to offer more equitable pathways for student enrollment and success.

Department chair, Dr. Kent Dickson, who is new in this role, said that the demand for transparency in processes is a very legitimate one. He shared that they have already conducted a service audit and are working on developing service plans (clearly identifying and categorizing low, medium, and high intensity service) to make service allocation more equitable. Other interventions included developing a department handbook, having at least two meeting with lecturers every semester, and having newly elected chairs to serve as associate chair for a year so as to receive the much-needed guidance and mentoring for the new roles. The response detailed clear action plan and identified short-term and long-term priorities.

In her email response to a request for consultation, Dean Johnson expressed that having two distinct programs housed in a single department can be a challenge and applauded the shared leadership of the department in developing structures and content that serve the students well.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Academic Programs Committee commends the English program for their continued commitment to multiple stakeholders including the students, faculty, and students. The committee also commends them for their receptiveness to feedback. Despite its notable strengths, as expressed by both internal and external reviewers, the department is grappling with low morale issues, many of which are owing to inequity in service allocation, lack of shared governance and transparency associated with information sharing. The program's action plan in response to the review is both detailed and specific and sufficiently addresses the concerns and areas of improvement noted by the reviewers. However, implementing it successfully would require the support of leadership at the department, college, and university level.