

Undergraduate Program Review Report

Per university policy, this report addresses three major questions (sections B, C, and D of this report). Those questions are as follows:

- Are the students meeting the program's student-learning benchmarks or outcomes? (Section B of this report)
- Do the curriculum and the courses support the student-learning benchmarks or outcomes? (Section C of this report)
- Does the environment support student learning benchmarks or outcomes? (Section D of this report)

Within each section of the report, we include recommendations. These recommendations also are listed in Section E of this report. The combination of addressing the above-listed questions and developing recommendations has led us to conclude that the Undergraduate Program in English Language and Literature deserves a rating of ***EXEMPLARY***.

A. Review Information

a. Program Name: Undergraduate Program in English Language and Literature

b. Review Date: August through November, 2009

c. Internal Review Team Members and Chair:

Dr. Dave Knowlton, Educational Leadership (Committee Chair)
Dr. Lakesha Butler, Pharmacy
Dr. Greg Everett, Psychology
Dr. Song Foh Chew, Math and Statistics

d. Description of how the review was conducted

The internal review team began by reading the program's self study report. Based on our reading of that report, we devised a list of issues that we wanted to explore further. These issues manifested themselves as interview questions for students, administration, and faculty members. We include those interview questions within the appendix of this report.

The review team conducted two *interviews with English classes*. The first interview was conducted with the "Methods for Teaching Secondary English Literature" course (English 475). The Department Chair identified this course as an important one for us to interview. The students in this course are English Education majors; therefore their perspectives might be different from other English majors. The second interview was conducted with students in a Major Authors course (English 480).

The review team conducted two *interviews with administration*. We interviewed Dr. Wendy Shaw, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Associate Dean; Dr. Larry LaFond,

the English Languages and Literature Department Chair; and Professor Geoff Schmidt, acting Program Director. The Chair of the review team also spoke to Dr. LaFond via telephone as a second interview. Dr. LaFond initiated that conversation. After each interview, a review-team member wrote a short summary of the interview, and we sent that summary to the administrator for confirmation that we accurately heard his/her perspective.

The review team conducted nine *interviews with faculty members*. Specifically, the review team interviewed two assistant professors, five associate professors, and two full professors. Our interview participants were selected based on their response to an email that we sent to all tenure-line faculty members within the Department. The email requested an interview and listed the general topics that the review team was interested in discussing. We worked diligently to schedule a time for an interview with each respondent. We ended up interviewing all respondents, except for one. This one respondent was not interviewed because we never could find an acceptable time to conduct the interview. To verify the content of the interview, we used a process of summarizing each interview and sending the summary to the faculty member for confirmation that we heard correctly.

e. Program Director and Chair

The *Chair of the Department* is Dr. Larry LaFond.

The current Program Director is Professor Valerie Vogrin. However, Professor Vogrin was on sabbatical during the Fall of 2009, the semester during which the review committee conducted its review; thus, she was unavailable to participate in our interviews, and she was not available to provide the committee with information.

The Interim Program Director is Dr. Jeff Skoblow, and he has held this position since August 2009. Due to Dr. Skoblow's recent appointment to this position, Dr. LaFond suggested that we speak with Professor Geoff Schmidt, who was program director for most of the review period and prior to Professor Vogrin. Dr. LaFond noted that Professor Schmidt might be the most appropriate person to provide administrative insights into the program. Therefore, *the review team, in essence, treated Professor Schmidt as the acting program director* for the purposes of this report.

SECTION B:

Are the students meeting the program's student-learning benchmarks or outcomes?

a. Does the program assess student learning adequately?

The program does assess student learning adequately. This issue of assessment of student learning was brought up in the previous program review. According to the Department's self study, two recommendations from the previous program review read as follows:

- “By Fall ...2002, the English Department should establish the Senior Assignment course ([ENG497A]) and document how the Senior Assignment (SRA) that emerges from the course meets the baccalaureate goals of the department and the university....”
- “Carolyn Handa and the Ad Hoc English 101 Committee should continue to systematically examine and revise the goals of English 101 and revise the course as necessary to meet the goals.... [T]he effectiveness of the common final needs to be examined to determine if it is assessing what the students are supposed to have learned....”

These above recommendations urged the Department to better consider the degree to which the program assesses student learning. As a result of these recommendations, the program has revised its assessment approach for both English 101 and the senior assignment—two key milestones within the curriculum. This revised approach is based upon a portfolio assessment system, which allows for broader assessment of student work than will assessment of a single paper. According to both the Department’s self study and various faculty members who were interviewed during this review, this new portfolio assessment system includes the use of rubrics as a means of assessment, a committee of faculty who will assess, and various processes that will allow faculty to evaluate their own assessment processes.

Based on this information, we conclude that there are program-level structures in place to assess student learning in adequate ways. In fact, we find this system to be quite rigorous in its nature and scope. The Department’s faculty members should be recognized campus-wide for the meticulousness of their approach for assessing student learning within the first-year writing courses and within the senior assignment.

b. What changes have been made in the program as a result of assessment?

The Department has implemented a new curriculum. The curriculum is being implemented for the first time during the fall 2009 semester. This curriculum has been in various stages of development for years—in some faculty members’ estimation, for over five years. We are impressed with the ways that the program has articulated a rationale for the new curriculum; part of this rationale has included connections to their past assessment efforts. To some extent, it is clear that the new curriculum has emerged from those assessments.

The Department’s self-study describes these curriculum revisions in terms of being “altogether modest” in a certain sense. While the revisions are “small,” according to the self study, they include “significant tweaks to catalog offerings in order to open up new and more culturally diverse possibilities for students’ selection of courses, and with the hope of giving a broader sense of what a degree in English means today in the contemporary university.” Through information obtained from both the self study and interviews, the review team has concluded that these changes did emerge from past assessment efforts—both informal and formal. The already-mentioned portfolio

assessment systems for both the first-year writing courses and senior assignment are examples of program change as a result of past formal assessments.

c. Are the changes appropriate to reflect continuous improvement?

We found that one of the strengths of the Department is its willingness to engage in open communication toward the goal of continuous improvement. Said plainly, the Department is *not* stuck in a that's-the-way-we've-always-done-it mentality. Therefore, as the new curriculum matures through implementation, we are confident that improvement will be seen.

Part of our confidence is based on the fact that faculty members could clearly articulate a vision of this new program. That vision is based on stronger diversity of topics taught within the curriculum. This diversity better allows a variety of cultural perspectives to be integrated into courses. There also is a common belief among faculty that the new curriculum offers stronger opportunities for teaching core knowledge. So, in many respects, the revised curriculum that is being implemented in the Fall 2009 is evidence of continuous improvement.

While we are impressed with the Department's approach to assessing student learning and past changes that have been made based on assessments, it became a bit more unclear to us how assessments of the new curriculum would feed back into additional program revisions in the future. Plans for completing the loop from assessment of the new curriculum to future program improvements do not seem clearly articulated; or, if articulated, they do not seem to be at the forefront of the Department's collective consciousness and priorities. To this end, we offer the following recommendation:

Recommendation #1: The Department should articulate a plan for using assessment data toward future curriculum revisions.

SECTION C:

Do the curriculum and the courses support the student-learning benchmarks or outcomes?

a. Is the curriculum based upon a solid core of knowledge that supports the entire learning experience for students?

Our review suggests that the new curriculum is based upon a solid core of knowledge. In terms of writing, students are required to take a discipline-specific writing course. In the Department's self-study, it is noted that such a course "will give students an opportunity to explore the discursive practices of other disciplines, such as Biology or Business."

A solid core of knowledge is evident throughout the new curriculum beyond this interdisciplinary approach to writing instruction, as well. Particularly relevant is the fact that the new curriculum allows individual faculty members to design courses around themes, authors, and historical periods that align with the faculty member's expertise and

interests. For those faculty members who would like to abide by a traditional canonical view of the field, they have the opportunity to do so because of the flexibility of the new program. For those faculty members who view the field in broader terms, the opportunity exists for them to design their courses in more innovative ways. While we heard a minority view that such innovation might belittle the strong tradition of the canon, we more clearly heard a majority view that the new curriculum allows core knowledge to be taught in stronger ways. The new curriculum will expose students to cultures, authors, and even genres that they might not otherwise experience.

b. Are the course content and the program of study of sufficient intellectual rigor? Does the program immerse students in the discipline?

Dr. Wendy Shaw, Associate Dean, pointed specifically to increased rigor as a benefit of the new curriculum. Our review suggests that Dr. Shaw's perspective is not unfounded, and we see the intellectual rigor as being directed both toward student learning and toward faculty teaching.

In terms of the program of study having rigor toward student learning, the portfolios that students develop both as a part of the English 101/102 experience and as a part of the senior assignment are guided by portfolios that clearly articulate the degree of rigor that is needed. Furthermore, the senior assignment is guided by a detailed handout that provides instructions to seniors as they develop their portfolios. The students' senior presentations also are guided by handouts and rubrics. These materials are useful for approaching the level of rigor within the program.

In terms of guiding faculty teaching toward sufficient rigor, the program has established an online resource for teachers of English 101/102. This resource includes example assignments, syllabi, and classroom activity sheets that are indicative of the Department's perspective on teaching excellence. Through this database, faculty members who teach these courses have an already-existing support system for promoting a rigorous learning environment.

c. Does the program provide the students with appropriate opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills (internships, practica, fieldwork, laboratories, assistantships, research, papers, theses)

According to the Department's self-study, students have opportunity both within the classroom and outside the classroom to apply their knowledge and skills—in some respects, these opportunities immerse students in the discipline. Within the classroom, students engage in the creation of two different portfolios. General education students create a portfolio as a requirement for the English 101 course. English majors create a portfolio as a part of their senior assignment. An abiding piece of these portfolios includes providing students with the opportunity to self-assess and reflect upon their own work. Self-assessment and reflection upon one's own work is substantive application of the knowledge and skills that students should be developing within an English Department.

Furthermore, the Department's self-study listed opportunities that department publications (e.g., *River Bluff Review* and *Drumvoices Revue*) provided students. As stated in the Department's self-study, "These journals, edited by members of the English faculty, provide opportunities for English majors and others to gain first-hand experience in scholarly and literary editing."

The review team found these opportunities admirable, but the stated opportunities also raised questions about the limitations of these opportunities, given the future careers of students. For example, according to the self-study, "The most common industry employing [alumni from the program] is educational services, including secondary school teaching." We recognize that current students who are pursuing the B.A. "plus Secondary English Language Arts Teacher Certification" would gain practical experience through their education courses, such as during student teaching. But, the review team was left wondering how English courses provided undergraduate students with opportunities for applying English from a pedagogical and educational perspective.

As a second example of questions that were raised for the review team about the congruence between practical experiences and future careers, we point to the catalog description for the English degree. The catalog notes that "English majors are well prepared for graduate and professional studies in business, law, and library science...." Furthermore, the catalog copy lists public relations, journalism, teaching, consulting and editing, art and design, mass communication, and speech communication." We recognize the virtues of an English degree as a liberal arts degree, but we are unsure of the ways that undergraduate English majors are prompted to apply knowledge within these fields.

As already noted in a previous section of this report, students must take a discipline-based writing course. The Department's self study notes that the "range" of these writing courses allows students to select "genres that suit . . . their future plans, from creative to scientific to technical and business writing." Still, the review team was struck by the narrowness of course choices, which contrasts strongly with the broadness of career opportunities listed within the catalog.

The review team finds the incongruence between the catalog copy and the taught curriculum to be confusing. It could mislead students into thinking that the degree will explicitly and overtly prepare them for the career opportunities listed. To this end, we make the following recommendation:

Recommendation # 2: The Department should ensure that the taught curriculum and the program description within the catalog are congruent. This congruency could be achieved in a variety of ways, and the remainder of this recommendation is meant to offer suggested routes for creating congruence. The Department could (a) document alignment between the possible career opportunities listed within the university catalog and the opportunities for skill and knowledge application within the Department and/or curriculum or (b) rewrite the catalog copy to ensure that there is no possibility for

misleading students about the opportunities for applying knowledge that the undergraduate program provides.

SECTION D:

Does the environment support student learning benchmarks or outcomes?

a. Is there sufficient institutional support for the learning environment (library collection, equipment, computing, laboratories/studios, resources, etc.)?

It is clear from our review that classroom space is an issue within the Department. The Department seems to cope well with these limitations; they have held classes in Founder's Hall, Alumni Hall, Peck, the Engineering Building, and even in various residence halls. Still, the limitations in classroom space do influence the learning environment in negative ways, according to some data. For example, a faculty member described that sometimes when events in a residence hall overlap with a scheduled class that is meeting in that hall, the class gets "bumped" from their space and has nowhere to meet.

Furthermore, many of the faculty members that we talked with mentioned the need for more access to smart classrooms, computer labs, and rooms that were more conducive to group discussion and group work. One faculty member noted that smart classrooms have been added recently, but it's "still not enough." More than one faculty member noted that there seemed to be a priority of making larger classrooms more technologically advanced. However, these faculty members also noted that technology often is needed even in smaller, seminar-sized courses.

Based on the issue of limited classroom space, we offer the following recommendations:

Recommendation #3: The Department's administration should include the limitations of classroom space as a part of any long-term strategic planning initiative. If long-term strategic planning initiatives exist at the CAS level, we recommend that the Department's administration feel obligated to proactively advocate for additional classroom space as a part of that initiative.

Recommendation # 4: In terms of short-term planning, the Department should consider the feasibility of a broad range of innovative alternatives for best dealing with the limitations of appropriate classroom space in ways that benefit students. The following list of suggestions is solely illustrative of this recommendation: (a) team teaching of courses whereby enrollment in a single section can be doubled, thus allowing the Department to access larger rooms that otherwise would not be viable alternatives; (b) rotating room schedules for courses meeting within the same time slot, such that more courses have partial access to smart classrooms; (c) alternative scheduling of course sections in terms of days and times that have not previously been considered as viable.

Recommendation #5: The Department's administration should proactively and regularly communicate their classroom technology needs to their representative of the College of Arts and Sciences Technology Advisory Committee.

b. Does the program provide adequate mentoring/advising for students?

The College of Arts and Sciences is transitioning from a faculty advising model to a professional advisor model. With this transition, faculty within the Department can focus more on mentoring students, as they no longer will have to deal with some of the perfunctory issues of advising (e.g., dealing with PIN numbers and checking transcripts against program requirements).

Evidence suggests that faculty members already are providing adequate mentoring for students. One faculty member noted that good teaching is good mentoring because good teaching requires faculty members to provide thoughtful feedback to students. Beyond the classroom, some faculty members occasionally host informal talks on topics of interest (e.g., applying to graduate school).

Still, we see room for faculty members to continue mentoring students on a number of levels. The most obvious level is still related to helping students navigate the program in terms of course selection. We came to see this need through a clear conflict in perceptions. On one hand, Dr. LaFond noted that most data neither supports the view that course selections are limited nor sections of courses are scarce. He noted that he receives few complaints about course availability.

On the other hand, students who were interviewed seemed to agree that more sections of classes are needed because of scheduling conflicts among courses. As one student expressed it, there seems to be "limited sections offered at limited times." One English Education student made the point that the conflicts aren't just within the English Department, but that they bleed over into conflicts with required speech courses (English Education majors are required to be Speech minors) and courses in the School of Education.

Clearly, there is a contradiction between student perceptions and administration perceptions, with a division amongst the perception of faculty members. Some faculty members suggested that they saw no evidence of course availability problems. Other faculty members did note that some course caps had been increased and students sometimes petition being admitted into already-full sections (particularly in 400 level courses).

The varying perceptions might be evidence of a need for stronger mentoring from faculty in the area of course selections. Even though the CAS is moving to a professional advising model, we suggest that part of mentoring students still connects to helping students with course selection and navigating the curriculum.

Recommendation #6: As the transition from faculty to professional advisors continues, the Department should formalize and articulate a shared vision of expectations regarding mentoring undergraduate students. Due to the perception differences regarding appropriate times for course offerings, an abiding piece of this mentoring should be related to helping students better understand how to schedule their courses in efficient ways.

c. Does the Senior Assignment provide a quality culminating experience?

The revised program is too new to answer this question fully. However, based on content from the program's self-study, we believe that sufficient rigor has been put into designing the senior assignment with a "quality learning experience" as the goal. Both the rigor of the design and the aim toward learning have been discussed earlier in this report.

d. Does the program set a standard of excellence?

In terms of the environment of the Department as it relates to teaching and learning, we have found that the Department strives for excellence—excellence is usually achieved with a high degree of success. Without exception, each review team member was quite impressed with the way that the environment set a standard of excellence. Discussing each area in which the program has established a standard of environmental excellence would be far beyond reasonable in a report of this scope.

To point to a couple of areas that have not been mentioned elsewhere in this report, we note that the environment promotes excellent teaching through training opportunities for faculty members and teaching assistants. Particularly rigorous is the training of teaching assistants who teach English 101 and 102. The training begins prior to the fall semester and continues in the form of a pedagogy course during the fall. In addition, Teaching Assistants are observed while teaching on multiple occasions. This training for Teaching Assistants is a rigorous means for enhancing the 101 and 102 level courses to meet a standard of excellence.

Another area in which we found a high level of excellence was within the faculty. During student interviews, we were consistently informed about the dedication of current faculty members. In addition, we were most impressed with the descriptors that often were used by one faculty member to refer to the collective group. One senior faculty member noted that recent hires among faculty had brought a "series of fresh ideas," which had "unleashed energy in synergistic ways." Others described their colleagues with terms such as "vibrant," "passionate," and having "sparked growth" in curriculum revisions and pedagogy. One faculty member noted that the new-hire faculty had indeed added "high degrees of intellectual activity." We have concluded based on our conversations with Department personnel that, from a human capital perspective, the Department is in a strong position to maintain a standard of excellence across time.

In terms of excellence, we did encounter an issue that should be addressed. The issue is related to *perceptions* about the evaluation and rewarding of good teaching. The

evaluation of teaching within the Department is an issue that needs to be addressed in order to better stand the students in good stead toward the goal of providing them with an excellent experience.

The issue of evaluation of teaching struck us while we were reading the Department's self study. During the previous program review, the Department received a recommendation that they should "[e]xamine the faculty's perceptions that they must focus on getting good student evaluations and that this focus decreases the rigor of course offerings." In addressing this point, the authors of the self study note that the focus on getting good student evaluations "is always a danger in a top-down climate that still emphasizes the importance of student evaluation as a central tool in assessing teaching." It struck us that if student-evaluations are considered a "central tool" for evaluating teaching, then faculty members' concerns—if they still existed—may not be unfounded.

Later, the self-study notes that "[f]aculty are consistently invited to contextualize student evaluations in their annual conferences with the department chair, and annual evaluations of teaching by the department chair are focused less on 'good' student evaluations and more on ensuring the integrity of instructors and a pedagogical practice of self-reflection." It was the softness of the language of "invited" (as opposed to "expected" or "required") that raised further questions for the review committee.

Based on our reading of the self-study, we did decide to ask faculty members a very broad question about the ways that "teaching was evaluated and rewarded within the Department." Most faculty members immediately narrowed the discussion solely to the role of student evaluations. Multiple faculty members made points related to the problems of the student evaluations and the process of reporting student evaluation data:

- Questions on the evaluation sometimes are not relevant to all courses, faculty members, or sub-areas within the Department.
- Questions on the evaluation form skew students toward giving negative opinions about the course and the teacher, rather than providing constructive comments that can serve as the basis of self-improvement.
- Student evaluations are not contextualized within an understanding of discipline-based pedagogy.
- Too much weight is placed on student evaluations as a measure of good teaching.
- Faculty members must type their own student evaluations in full—a time consuming process that detracts from opportunities of contextualizing teaching and emphasizes only the reporting of raw data.

We would be remiss not to acknowledge that some of the faculty members that we interviewed did mention openness within the Department to other forms of assessment (peer review was most commonly mentioned). Several praised the Chair for his approach of urging faculty members to set (and reflect upon) goals related to teaching. We sometimes followed up these praises with questions about whether the Chair's approach was idiosyncratic to the Chair or built into Department bylaws and operating procedures. None of the faculty members who we asked could connect the more open approach to formal and documented Department procedures.

The Department's self study also pointed to the process of tenure and promotion deliberations. Specifically, the self study noted that discussion among tenured faculty about candidates "goes well beyond a single-focus evaluative tool such as student evaluations." This is a point that was re-emphasized in a discussion with Department Chair LaFond. In a telephone conversation with the review team chair, Dr. LaFond described an elaborate and meticulous process of tenure and promotion deliberations. Dr. LaFond noted that a broad range of evidence supporting the case for good teaching is included within the deliberations.

To add to the differences in perceptions between administration and faculty, Dr. Shaw, Associate Dean of the CAS, noted that CAS faculty members are *expected* to contextualize their teaching beyond just reporting data within dossiers—the College of Arts and Sciences promotion and tenure documents emphasize the importance of self-evaluation, which would *require* contextualizing of one's teaching. This CAS requirement never was brought up by faculty members during our interviews.

We understand that discussions have started within the Department about student evaluations, as an ad hoc committee is examining the content and scope of the student evaluation form. Our interviews with faculty lead us to believe that there is interest among faculty members in taking conversations to a deeper level. One faculty member noted that "teaching is notoriously difficult to evaluate." Another seemed to agree noting that the evaluation of teaching is "subjective." The difficulty and subjectivity, these faculty members noted, make it important for discussions about teaching to occur at the Department level.

Both of our following recommendations are geared toward the purpose of better communication about teaching evaluations at the Department level.

Recommendation #7: The ad hoc committee examining student evaluations of teaching should continue its work (and, if necessary, expand the scope of its work). Findings and recommendations regarding all phases of the student evaluation process (e.g., questions on the form, processes of data collection and analysis, and the use of the evaluations as a tool to support the case for good teaching within both annual reviews and promotion/tenure dossiers) should be brought to the Department Faculty for discussion and potential action.

Recommendation #8: The Department should formalize a process for ensuring that their approach to evaluating teaching is (a) appropriate given the discipline and sub-disciplines of the Department, (b) clearly communicated to Department faculty, and (c) in-line both with CAS policy and Department bylaws. This alignment process should also include a review and revision (if appropriate) of the teaching evaluation form.

E. Major findings and recommendations with rationales

As noted in the introduction of this report and as will be restated in section F of this report, we find the Department to deserve a rating of **exemplary**. Therefore, readers should in no way interpret our recommendations as vital criticisms of the Department and its operation. Because we find the Department to be exemplary, our recommendations should not be viewed as vital criticisms of the Department; rather, our recommendations are offered as counsel to the Department about areas in which the Department administration and faculty might gear future efforts.

Recommendation #1: The Department should articulate a plan for using assessment data toward future curriculum revisions.

Rationale: Plans for completing the loop from assessment of the new curriculum to future program improvements do not seem clearly articulated; or, if articulated, they do not seem to be at the forefront of the Department's collective conscious and priorities. Yet, such a loop is necessary for future curriculum and pedagogical improvement.

Recommendation # 2: The Department should ensure that the taught curriculum and the program description within the catalog are congruent. This congruency could be achieved in a variety of ways, and the remainder of this recommendation is meant to offer suggested routes for creating congruence. The Department could (a) document alignment between the possible career opportunities listed within the university catalog and the opportunities for skill and knowledge application within the Department and/or curriculum or (b) rewrite the catalog copy to ensure that there is no possibility for misleading students about the opportunities for applying knowledge that the undergraduate program provides.

Rationale: The possible career opportunities for students as discussed in the catalog seemed quite broad and seemed to overlap with other academic programs within the CAS (e.g., public relations, journalism, art and design, mass communication, and speech communication). Since students look to the catalog for guidance concerning the utility of the degree, that catalog should accurately reflect the opportunities that the program provides.

Recommendation #3: The Department's administration should include the limitations of classroom space as a part of any long-term strategic planning initiative. If long-term strategic planning initiatives exist at the CAS level, we recommend that the Department's administration feel obligated to proactively advocate for additional classroom space as a part of that initiative.

Rationale: We found this issue of classroom space to be the most problematic issue of the review. Short-term solutions are not easy; when long term strategic planning is occurring, the Department administration would be remiss to not strongly advocate for solutions.

Recommendation # 4: In terms of short-term planning, the Department should consider the feasibility of a broad range of innovative alternatives for best dealing with the limitations of appropriate classroom space in ways that benefit students. The following list of suggestions is solely illustrative of this recommendation: (a) team teaching of courses whereby enrollment in a single section can be doubled, thus allowing the Department to access larger rooms that otherwise would not be viable alternatives; (b) rotating room schedules for courses meeting within the same time slot, such that more courses have partial access to smart classrooms; (c) alternative scheduling of course sections in terms of days and times that have not previously been considered as viable.

Rationale: Perhaps opportunity exists for the English Department to turn the weakness of classroom space into a strength of innovative scheduling and/or course delivery models. The Department should consider strategies beyond ones that have been tried.

Recommendation #5: The Department's administration should proactively and regularly communicate their classroom technology needs to their representative of the College of Arts and Sciences Technology Advisory Committee.

Rationale: Associate Dean Shaw indicated to us that some money is available and priorities are set through this committee. Dr. Shaw emphasized the need for the Department to be persistent. If a classroom is not updated in one fiscal year, Dr. Shaw suggested, then the Department should communicate the needs in that classroom during the next fiscal year.

Recommendation #6: As the transition from faculty to professional advisors continues, the Department should formalize and articulate a shared vision of expectations regarding mentoring undergraduate students. Due to the perception differences regarding appropriate times for course offerings, an abiding piece of this mentoring should be related to helping students better understand how to schedule their courses in efficient ways.

Rationale: The shift to professional advisors will change the dynamic of mentoring undergraduate students. This recommendation is made to create an impetus for the Department to be intentional in shaping the changing dynamic in ways that will benefit students. We specifically mention the issue of course offerings in response to the perception differences as described in the body of this report.

Recommendation #7: The ad hoc committee examining student evaluations of teaching should continue its work (and, if necessary, expand the scope of its work). Findings and recommendations regarding all phases of the student evaluation process (e.g., questions on the form, processes of data collection and analysis, and the use of the evaluations as a tool to support the case for good teaching within both annual reviews and promotion/tenure dossiers) should be brought to the Department Faculty for discussion and potential action.

Rationale: As noted within the body of this report, problems with student evaluation forms and processes seem to be the largest point of contention surrounding the issue of the evaluation of teaching within the Department. Our recommendation aims the Department toward a democratic process for reconsidering all aspects of student evaluations and their use. An aim toward stronger processes involving student evaluations will allow for better feedback that directly will help toward the goal of the continuous improvement of teaching within the Department.

Recommendation #8: The Department should formalize a process for ensuring that their approach to evaluating teaching is (a) appropriate given the discipline and sub-disciplines of the Department, (b) clearly communicated to Department faculty, and (c) in-line both with CAS policy and Department bylaws. This alignment process should also include a review and revision (if appropriate) of the teaching evaluation form.

Rationale: Whereas recommendation #7 focuses explicitly upon student evaluations of teaching, recommendation #8 is geared toward a broader consideration of evaluating teaching. Such broadness provides a necessary perspective, if faculty members are expected to see teaching evaluations as one data source that can provide evidence toward the goal of improving teaching.

F. Rating

We find the program to deserve a rating of **exemplary**.

Appendix A

Questions for CAS Administration

- What general perceptions do you have of the English Department? (Strengths & Weaknesses?)
- One issue that has arisen within our review is the issue of classroom space. What thoughts do you have on that topic?

Questions for Chair

- One question that we will be asking faculty is to discuss their perceptions of the revised curriculum. Are there any wide-spread issues or concerns about the revised program that you are aware of?
- Given the large amount of instructors and TAs that you have, could you talk a little bit about how they are trained to teach in ways that fit with the goals of the new curriculum?
- What impact do you think that the enrollment increase has had on teaching effectiveness? (Scheduling issues? Space issues?)
- Your documents did mention the teacher/scholar model a few times. How is that model being discussed and cultivated among the faculty? Is it a formal part of evaluations of professors?
- Your report was very meticulous in justifying the new program; what was a little less clear to us was how the new program will be assessed and revised—other than using student portfolios as data. Can you tell us about that?
- Are you receiving the types of support from the Dean's office that you need?
- What else would you like to tell us about your program that we might consider to help you in our recommendations and approach to this report?

Questions for Program Director

- What are your perceptions about the revised curriculum in terms of faculty and student “buy in” to what you are trying to do? (Is alumni “buy in” an issue? Are they involved?)
- With enrollment increases (which your self-study discussed), what implications have you seen for (a) class scheduling; (b) space; (c) teaching effectiveness?
- Do you have any role in training TAs and Instructors? Effectiveness of that training?

- What could we do to help you in this report? Based on your experiences as program director, what recommendations would you like to see that would move the program in the right direction?

Questions for Faculty

Loosely stated, we are interested in hearing your perceptions of the . . .

- ways that teaching is evaluated and how that evaluation is integrated into tenure/promotion processes.
- impact on teaching effectiveness of your increased enrollment
- new curriculum revisions that are currently being implemented
- ways that the department has built a community of learners, an abiding piece of which is alumni involvement
- general strengths and weaknesses of the department and curriculum

Questions for students

- Are you aware of the revised curriculum that's being put in place this semester?
 - How have you been informed?
 - What do you know?
 - What are your perceptions?
- What are your perceptions of scheduling of classes—times of classes? Place of classes?
- What are your perceptions of teaching effectiveness? (Goal here is to see if anything comes up about differences among TAs, instructors, and tenure-track.)
- Strengths? Weaknesses? What else do you want the English Department to know?