

The Instructional (Academic Affairs)

Program Review Narrative Report

1. College: Berkeley City College

Discipline, Department or Program: *HUMANITIES (Dept. Arts and Cultural Studies)*

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2. Narrative Description of the Discipline, Department or Program:

Department Description:

The Department of Arts and Cultural Studies was formed in Fall 2008 out of a number of pre-existing departments and programs. The reorganization offers a cohesive grouping to inter-related programs, it offers more visibility to the smaller disciplines housed within it, and it promotes students' interdisciplinary perspective on culture, philosophy, and the visual and performing arts. The department is divided into distinct disciplines and programs all within the liberal and applied arts, including: Art History, Communication, Humanities (Film Studies, Religious Studies, Liberal Arts), Music, Philosophy, and Studio Art (Mural Art, Figure Drawing, Painting, etc.). Together these programs all support BCC's overall goals, missions, and ILOs.

Humanities Discipline Description

The discipline of Humanities is represented at Berkeley City College by a series of core humanities courses. These courses are structured as primarily transfer classes and as such focus not only on the major lines of inquiry within humanities (i.e., culture and civilization, film studies, religious studies) but also on strengthening general educational skills such as critical thinking, student writing, and student study skills. There are both online and brick and mortar courses offered. Humanities courses at BCC are also part of degrees, certificates and cohort programs at the college (i.e., Liberal Arts AA, Women's Studies certificate, and PACE).

Recommendations

-The creation of clearly designated pathways and support for other liberal arts and social science programs.

3: Curriculum

The Humanities curriculum is current and effective, reflecting recent trends within the large discipline of the Humanities and keeping in mind the changing needs of BCC's student body (by for instance, offering more transfer-level courses as well as more distant education sections of courses).

We continue to create and implement new courses. This semester we have created a new course called *HUM 5: Storytelling in American Culture* to strengthen the "culture & civilization" strand of our Humanities program to include critical curriculum on folklore and folklife, or traditional expressive culture. This course has just been articulated at Berkeley City College as a CSU and IGETC GE requirement under Area C2 and 3B. It also meets the UC American Cultures requirement.

Humanities curriculum can be divided into 3 subdivisions

- religious studies
- film studies
- culture and civilization

Humanities 1 "Introduction to Humanities"

Humanities 21 "Film: Art and Communication"

Humanities 26 "Global Cinema"

Humanities 30A (cross-listed with Phil 31A) "Human Values: Ethics"

Humanities 30B "Human Values: Aesthetics"

Humanities 40 "Religions of the World"

Humanities 46 (cross-listed with Philosophy 46) "Philosophy of the Human Experience"

Humanities 52 (cross-listed with Women's Studies 52) "Women and Cinema"

Humanities 53 "Comparative Film Genres"

Humanities 55 "The Representation of Immigration in Cinema and TV"

Humanities 56 "Meditation: Theory and Practice"

NOTE TO ABOVE:

ALL COURSES are offered across different times of the day and week, as well as in a combination of brick and mortar, online, and hybrid courses, thus assuring access to the greatest variety of students. We offer each course at least once every two years, usually more often.

Budget cuts have decreased the number of sections taught in the last year.

Recommendations

- More online courses developed and offered.
- Additional courses developed and offered in each section of the curriculum (culture and civilization; film studies; religious studies).
- Complete the course outline review of all courses and determine if any courses need to be updated or deactivated.

4. Instruction

To resist the narrow focus of most educational programs, our Humanities courses try to strike a delicate balance between cultural breadth and depth. We always take the time to listen compassionately to the stories each student tells about their lives. We tend to disperse authority and expertise throughout the classroom by drawing from the creative ideas and values of the students themselves. We often re-arrange the classroom setting to make learning more fun and group-oriented. With newer media technologies taking hold, we also tinker with new ways to give students a more powerful “voice” by re-defining the meaning of cultural literacy and mediated knowledge through visual, verbal, and kinesthetic means (currently by creating course websites with blogs, images, texts, slideshows, and resource links). We implement project-based forms of intellectual inquiry inside and outside the classroom – understanding that learning often flourishes when we are able to play and focus with others in an interdisciplinary manner.

While reflecting on various cultural practices, we expect students to gain a more experiential understanding of changing artistic tastes and emerging sacred spaces found among diverse groups around the world. In particular, we encourage students to discover forms of art and religion right in their own neighborhoods: street corners, school buildings, movie theaters, local parks, clothing stores, popular clubs, shopping centers, food markets, comedy shows, graphic novels, underground music scenes, video-game worlds, and local churches. From everyday conversation to extraordinary experience, students are thus expected to tell honest stories and give accurate depictions about various forms of expression they may or may not have encountered before. Our ultimate goal during this process is to empower students as they learn to engage with what is most familiar or strange to them.

Sample creative activities and assignments include: working collaboratively with other instructors and across programs (e.g., ESL, Anthropology), collecting oral histories, inviting guest lecturers, artists, musicians, and actors, publishing chapbooks, conducting fieldwork within the community, requiring fun note-taking techniques within the classroom in groups (using index cards and body movement), using advanced forms of PowerPoint and Prezi with interactive lectures (especially by integrating short sound, music, and video clips), creating multiple shifts during the class to retain student interest, assigning randomized discussion groups, and using a variety of team-building learning games, improvisational ice-breakers, positive forms of humor, and trust-building work.

Our faculty are constantly integrating new forms of technology inside and outside the classroom by using LCD projectors and speakers; managing online blogs, assignments, and lecture slides; and allowing students to use technology in various projects (e.g., audio recording devices, photo/video documentaries, online chapbooks and portfolios, etc.)

Humanities at BCC is taught using an active learning community model—teaching with student’s diverse learning strategies in mind and aware of making the student an active, engaged

learner. Feedback is key to such a learning model and students are frequently asked for ideas and suggestions in order to assess student learning effectiveness.

To maintain integrity and standards within the discipline, our faculty ensures that students clearly understand the grading, attendance, and academic policies for our courses. For example, students can always access this information online (individual grades and assignment due dates, blogs, resources links, etc.). In addition, we do our best to create a safe classroom that is conducive to the learning process by stating general rules and guidelines throughout the course (e.g., no cell phone use, disrespectful behavior, etc.). If any problems arise, we always work with students individually or seek help from colleagues to resolve any potential conflicts.

Multiple sections of the same course are offered at different times of the day/week (as well as through distant education) in order to meet the needs of students with diverse schedules.

Our instructors (both the two contract faculty and our part-timers) maintain an active dialogue with Humanities instructors at our sister colleges, especially at Laney College. All instructors are also actively involved with service to the college—from attending department meetings, to sitting on committees, to participating in Title III and other important initiatives.

Moreover, the contract instructors and the part time instructors remain active in their respective scholarly disciplines beyond their work at BCC. They are each, as individuals, connected to larger academic communities (both within and beyond community colleges). They frequently attend conferences, present papers, and publish articles. Many of our part-time instructors hold other positions, including teaching other colleges and universities where they are likewise involved in disciplinary conversations about pedagogy and scholarship.

The two contract faculty are both tenured and have continued to be evaluated as per the contract. The program has also kept up with the evaluation of part-timers and the prioritized hiring pool.

Recommendations:

- Humanities instructors should be encouraged to stay active in their fields and take advantage of any available funding (staff development) to attend discipline-specific conferences or enroll in disciplinary professional associations, etc.
- Humanities instructors should be supported and encouraged to incorporate new media and new pedagogical methods into their teaching through proper administrative support of such training and implementation.
- Humanities instructors should be encouraged and supported to continue to meet regularly in order to exchange ideas and teaching approaches..
- Work with counselors and BCC's PIO to improve the marketing of the course offerings.

5. Student Success:

Review of attached data shows the following trends:

Productivity rates have been steady, and in fact are well above the minimums for the district.

Our persistence rates and success rates were consistent though we noted a drop in the Fall of 2011—we believe this drop may have been due to the fact that we had a turn-around of new instructors that semester who had not taught for us before/for a long time. Given the otherwise steady persistence and success rates we are not concerned with this dip but will continue to monitor and re-assess student success.

Approximately 95% of the course outlines and updated have been reviewed in the last 3 years.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) have been written for all courses (see task stream) and assessment has continued (closing the loop, rotating assessment) since Spring 2008. It has been key to have a point person (coordinator) within the department who can help manage and assist with all SLO and assessment issues.

Recommendations

- Continue having a paid assessment/SLO departmental coordinator
- Work with counselors to better connect students to appropriate courses
- Improve the marketing of the course offerings.
- Continue assessing and closing the loop as well as assessment on the ILO level.

6. Human and Physical Resources (including equipment and facilities)

The BCC Library is very supportive of the program with online links and other aids for our classes. However, more philosophy books should be added to the catalogue and a subscription to JSTOR would be beneficial.

As stated earlier the new building has aided the effectiveness of Philosophy teaching, although it is problematic for instructors to teach off-site, due to the lack of adequate technology access.

A proper film and video library and screening space for small group screening is needed—the contract faculty has worked with the head librarian over the last few years to develop the library's film and video library. More funding and more development can occur.

Recommendations

- If the tiered classroom or other larger classrooms are used and filled to capacity (above the current 40 student max per transfer-level course), the program will need to hire teaching assistants to help instructors in the classroom of the larger classes.
- All Humanities courses should be offered in 2050 Center Street unless offsite locations have current technology easily accessible in the classroom.
- We would like adequate funding to the BCC library to support a JSTOR subscription and to further develop a film and video library.

7. Community Outreach and Articulation

The Program in Humanities ensures that the curriculum responds to the needs of the constituencies that it serves by keeping into close communication with the four-year public and private universities within our service area. Our students frequently transfer as, for instance, Rhetoric Majors at UC Berkeley or Humanities Majors at San Francisco State. Our faculty remains in contact with these and other programs to keep course curriculum consistent and to confirm that all current and future courses articulate.

From an articulation perspective, we have made sure that our courses fulfill important general education requirements and meet rigorous academic standards. One of our full time-faculty members, Dylan Eret, is also involved deeply in curriculum processes as chair of the Curriculum Committee. We also maintain regular contact with the articulation officer at BCC and staff within the UC and CSU systems to make certain that our courses both fulfill transfer requirements and prepare students for upper-division course work at any college of university.

We are presently writing several federal and local grants together to meet the needs of our diverse community through new curriculum design, interdisciplinary methods, and collaborative research: e.g., “Advancing the Humanities: A NEH Bridging Culture Grant” and faculty support grants from the Peralta Foundation. One of our major program goals is to take our diverse class composition and creatively construct a “democratic community” from a humanistic perspective, one where students learn to “bridge cultures” through more exciting, aesthetically marked practices of civic engagement. We intend to do this by encouraging our students to explore, record, and interpret expressive traditions both familiar and foreign, and to critically recognize their public value across different institutional contexts. Given the diversity of BCC’s student body, we believe that courses that investigate foundational humanities topics in localized ways—through studies of identity, aesthetics, ethics, history, and memory—have the benefit of reaching a broader range of learners. In particular, we have just created a new course for Spring 2013, HUM 5: Storytelling in American Culture, to inspire more community engagement among students.

We organize a yearly Graduate Lecture series in Humanities in conjunction with local doctoral programs. This outreach benefits both the universities as graduate students obtain important lecture experience and BCC students who are exposed to new voices and have an opportunity to

meet with instructors at universities many of our students hope to transfer to. Some of those graduate students have gone on to teach for us as well.

Since the majority of our instructors teach part-time at other colleges and universities, they bring those experiences to BCC as well.

Recommendations

-Continue to find ways to collaborate and dialogue with four-year universities, community organizations, high schools, and private institutions.

- Apply for grants.

8. BUDGET-RELATED QUESTIONS:

a. If your department experienced a reduction in resources, describe the impact of that reduction on the overall educational quality of your unit and the College.

Because we had had steady but careful growth in the years prior to budget cuts we have been able to cut sections with minimal impact. We were able to cut sections but keep a diversity of offerings (i.e., juggling daytime and night time and online offerings, create a rotation, etc.). Nevertheless, the impact was felt by students who turn to all of our department's offerings, but especially Humanities to fulfill certain basic GE requirements as well as AA in Liberal Arts offerings, Global Studies, Women's Studies, and PACE requirements, etc. –we were not always able to meet those student's needs.

b. How does the department plan to sustain the quality of instruction and/or services offered through your department in the current environment of reduced resource?

We will continue to offer courses on a rotation when necessary and cut multiple sections when necessary. We will advocate for the need for BCC to have its basic GE transfer disciplines all represented by at least one full-time instructor per discipline before expanding other programs or starting new ones (i.e., for careful and steady growth).

c. What does the department recommend that the college do to maintain quality educational programs and services?

- a. Hiring of full-time faculty in each core collegiate discipline which does not currently have a full-time faculty member before further growth of new or existing programs.
- b. Focus on success and retention with AA-Ts
- c. Focus on 4 year institution preparation and transfer skills
- d. Hiring of more dedicated counselors
- e. Hiring of an Academic Dean
- f. Faculty advising with stipend/ release time and training
- g. Sabbaticals for Faculty
- h. Assess interdisciplinary programs for effectiveness
- i. Development of a Transfer committee to oversee specific transfer needs