

The Accelerated Instructional Program Review Narrative Report

Humanities

1. College: Merritt College of Peralta CCD

Discipline, Department or Program: Humanities

Date: 2/10/10

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

Mission: To help learners clarify their personal values through the analysis of multiple viewpoints in ambiguous moral situations, examining the process of valuing, and understanding the nature of moral decision-making.

Currently, the Humanities Department at Merritt College consists of one university transfer-level course, Humanities 2: Human Values. In addition to on ground sections of the course, the department offers an alternative mode of delivery in online sections. Because enrollments have decreased in the last three years, humanities sections have been reduced to 2—one on-ground section and one online section. No contract faculty member teaches Humanities. For Humanities to develop a full-time faculty member is needed.

The college offers an AA in Humanities. But Humanities 2 is not a required course for the degree. It should be.

3. Curriculum:

- *Is the curriculum current and effective? Have course outlines been updated within the last three years? If not, what plans are in place to remedy this?*

The course outline is up-to-date and includes a distance education addendum.

- *Has your department conducted a curriculum review of course outlines? If not, what are the plans to remedy this?*

Yes.

- *What are the department's plans for curriculum improvement (i.e., courses to be developed, updated, enhanced, or deactivated)? Have prerequisites, co-requisites, and advisories been validated? Is the date of validation on the course outline?*

Until there is a contract faculty member teaching in Humanities, the department faces a challenge in developing other courses. There are no pre-requisites, co-requisites or advisories for Humanities 2.

- *What steps has the department taken to incorporate student learning outcomes in the curriculum? Are outcomes set for each course? If not, which courses do not have outcomes?*

We are in the process of reviewing student learning outcomes for Humanities 2.

- *Describe the efforts to develop outcomes at the program level. In which ways do these outcomes align with the institutional outcomes?*

We are using the Institutional Learning Outcomes as the program outcomes for Humanities.

- ***Recommendations and priorities.***

Hire a full-time Humanities instructor; complete SLOs and assessment for the course; advocate that the course be required for the AA degree in Humanities.

4. Instruction:

- *Describe effective and innovative strategies used by faculty to involve students in the learning process. How has new technology been used by the department to improve student learning?*

We have developed online Moodle courses in Human Values/ Ethics and Human Values/ Through the Arts that are both experiential /hands-on and promote involvement in the community as well as researching and creating web-based materials. The courses draw on the resources and personal experiences and critical reflection of the students' own lives

- *How does the department maintain the integrity and consistency of academic standards within the discipline?*

We have identified Learning Objectives and activities /evaluation methods that address these student-centered outcomes in terms of developing a knowledge/content base and process for critical inquiry.

- *Discuss the enrollment trends of your department. What is the student demand for specific courses? How do you know? What do you think are the salient trends affecting enrollments?*

Enrollment has declined from 2004 to 2008 because Humanities 2 is no longer a required course for some degrees. Students have many other courses to choose from in meeting the humanities GE/transfer requirement.

However, students are interested in humanities courses as electives --and because of personal interest-- they enroll in high numbers. They are aware of the social demands relevant to an economically and culturally diverse society, and these courses lend context /strategies to navigate challenging information and conflicting perspectives.

- *Are courses scheduled in a manner that meets student needs and demand? How do you know?*

Courses are scheduled both on ground and online. Enrollment is strong in both sections indicating we are scheduling classes at a time convenient for students

- *Recommendations and priorities.*

Hire a full-time Humanities/English instructor; complete SLOs for the course; advocate that the course be required for the AA degree in humanities. 50% of the Humanities program is no online, and there is an acute need for support for online learners. Add another online section of Humanities 2.

5. Student Success:

- *Describe student retention and program completion (degrees, certificates, persistence rates) trends in the department. What initiatives can the department take to improve retention and completion rates?*

The overall retention rate in the two Humanities courses is 66%, which is below the college average. Since this is the first time we have been given retention data, we have not yet initiated any changes.

It would be helpful to have retention data disaggregated for the on ground course and the o-line course. We do know that online students often struggle especially with courses that have demanding reading and writing components.

- *What are the key needs of students that affect their learning? What services are needed for these students to improve their learning? Describe the department's efforts to access these services. What are your department's instructional support needs?*

Many students who have assessed into basic skills English or ESL also enroll in Humanities 2. It would be helpful to have data on this dual enrollment pattern.

The Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum tutors are available to help on- campus Humanities 2 students with their assignments. No such support is available to online students

- *Describe the department's effort to assess student learning at the course level. Describe the efforts to assess student learning at the program level. In which ways has the department used student learning assessment results for improvement?*

We have not yet assessed the Humanities 2 class.

- ***Recommendations and priorities.***

Hire a full-time Humanities/English instructor; complete SLOs for the course. 50% of the Humanities program is no online; there is an acute need for support for online learners. Obtain disaggregated data for the on ground and online sections to take a closer look at retention.

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

- *Describe your current level of staff, including full-time and part-time faculty, classified staff, and other categories of employment.*

Two adjunct faculty teach the two sections of Humanities 2. No contract faculty teach in the program.

- *Describe your current utilization of facilities and equipment.*

The online section uses the Moodle CMS. The on ground section uses video playback equipment.

- *Are the human and physical resources, including equipment and location, adequate for all the courses offered by your department (or program)? What are your key staffing and facilities needs for the next three years? Why?*

The Humanities program needs a full-time faculty member. The online section needs more support for students and faculty; the on ground section faces the same facility challenges as the faculty in English:

The **English/Humanities Department** needs a home. We are the only department in the college that does not have offices in the buildings where we teach. English and humanities classes are offered in three different buildings—A, D, and P. Faculty offices are in four different buildings—A, D, F, and P. This situation makes it extremely difficult for the department to support the technology needs of faculty. Unlike all other departments in the college, English/Humanities has no place to store and secure equipment for classroom use. Lack of centralized offices and classrooms also negatively impacts opportunities for formal and informal collaboration amongst faculty.

We need a centralized location for our classes and offices.

Faculty has to carry LCD projectors and computers from building to building or push video playback equipment between buildings. All classrooms should be smart classrooms with state of the art technology.

- ***Recommendations and priorities.***

Make all classrooms smart classrooms with state of the art technology. Find a centralized location for classes and offices. Hire a full-time Humanities/English instructor.

7. Community Outreach and Articulation

For vocational programs:

- Describe the department's connection with industry. Is there an Advisory Board or Advisory Committee for the program? If so, how often does it meet? Is the program adequately preparing students for careers in the field? How do you know?
- Have students completing the program attained a foundation of technical and career skills? How do you know? What are the completion rates in your program?
- What are the employment placement rates? Include a description of job titles and salaries. What is the relationship between completion rates and employment rates?

- What industry trends are most critical for the future viability of the program? How do you know? What are the implications of these trends for curriculum development and improvement?

For transfer programs:

- *Describe the department's efforts in meeting with and collaborating with local 4-year institutions. Is the program adequately preparing students for upper division course work? How do you know?*

The Humanities 2 course articulates with all UCs and CSUs. The reading and writing assignments in the class prepare students for upper division work.

For all instructional programs:

- Describe the department's effort to ensure that the curriculum responds to the needs of the constituencies that it serves.

See above.

- Recommendations and priorities.