

## **Executive Summary**

Weber State University  
Telitha E. Lindquist College of Arts and Humanities  
Department of English

Self-Study Document, Fall 2015

**Department/Program:** English

**Semester Submitted:** Fall 2015

**Self-Study Team Chair:**

Dr. Hal Crimmel, Chair, Department of English

**Self-Study Team Members:**

Dr. Gary Dohrer, Dr. Siân Griffiths, Brooke Kelly, Dr. Mark LeTourneau, Sylvia Newman, Dr. Sally Shigley, Dr. Shelley Thomas, Dr. Jim Young.

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The following is a summary of the self-study document, highlighting important points. For complete information, please refer to the full self-study document.

### **Introductory Statement**

The Department of English is one of the largest departments at Weber State University, with 37 full-time faculty members, 3 full-time staff and 88 adjuncts. The department offers classes in fall, spring and summer semesters. These encompass a full suite of programs, including a Master of Arts Degree in English, a Bachelor of Arts in English, a Bachelor of Arts in English Teaching, an English Teaching Minor, a Professional and Technical Writing Minor, an emphasis in Professional and Technical Writing, a Professional and Technical Writing Institutional Certificate, an English minor, a Linguistics Minor, a Creative Writing Emphasis, a Bachelor of Integrated Studies degree in English, and English Departmental Honors. The English Department also participates in the Asian Studies and Environmental Studies Minor Programs, and teaches ESL classes. Many faculty also teach in the University's Honors Program and broadly for the Bachelor in Integrated Studies Program.

## **Introductory Statement, continued**

The Department is also home to the Developmental English program, which annually serves over 900 students in nearly 50 sections, and to the Composition Program, offering state-mandated English 1010 and English 2010 courses. Annually, the composition program offers over 330 sections and serves over 6000 students. The department also serves the university by offering roughly one dozen general education literature and creative writing courses per semester.

The Department oversees, in conjunction with Continuing Education, 50 Concurrent Enrollment Sections of English 1010 in area high schools. Beginning Spring 2016, English 2010 will also be provided as a Concurrent Enrollment option in area high schools.

The Department publishes *Weber: The Contemporary West*, a professional interdisciplinary humanities journal with an international scope, *Metaphor*, a student-run literary journal under the supervision of a faculty advisor, as well as *Aelerus*, a journal overseen by the Master of Arts in English Program.

The Department is home to the National Undergraduate Literature Conference, now in its 31<sup>st</sup> year. The event attracts students from across the country and hosts nationally and internationally-known literary figures. As such, the department is actively engaged in encouraging and supporting undergraduate research.

**Administration:** Dr. Hal Crimmel was appointed to a three-year term as Department Chair effective July 1, 2015, by Dr. Madonne Miner, Dean of the Lindquist College of Arts and Humanities, following a department referendum. The previous Department Chair, Dr. Kathleen Herndon, served for eight and one-half academic years. Effective January 1, 2015, Dean Miner appointed Professor Catherine Zublin, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, to be interim Department Chair while Dr. Crimmel was on sabbatical in Germany.

**Organization:** The Department utilizes Program Directors for Composition, Creative Writing, Developmental English, Linguistics, Literary and Textual Studies, the Master of Arts in English Program, Professional and Technical Writing, and Teacher Education. Program Directors report to the Department Chair.

## **Mission Statement:**

The Department of English Language and Literature prepares students to become critical readers and writers through the study of literature and language in English. Moreover, the Department serves the University community by providing students with reading and writing skills integral to their academic and career success.

**Curriculum:**

As indicated in the Introductory Statement, the department has multiple programs. The curriculum for these programs shares core courses. See complete report for curriculum maps. Assessment is done at the program level.

**Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment:**Measurable Learning Outcomes

Departmental Outcomes:

At the end of their study at WSU, students in this program will

1. Read, interpret, and analyze language and texts.
2. Compose, revise, and edit their writing.

Individual programs within the department (e.g., Creative Writing) have program-specific learning outcomes and assessment plans. Please see full report for details.

**Academic Advising:**

The Department uses one ¼ time faculty advisor, Dr. John Schwiebert, and also relies on the Senior College Advisor, Debbi Murphy and Associate Advisor, Janneca McClellan. All are located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Elizabeth Hall, where the English Department main offices are located.

**Faculty:**

English utilizes tenured, tenure-track, contract and adjunct faculty. Tenured and tenure-track faculty hold doctorate degrees; contract faculty and adjuncts typically hold M.A. degrees.

**Program Support:**

The English Department currently has three full-time administrative specialists, though one is dedicated to the Master of Arts in English (MENG) Program. During Fall and Spring semesters an hourly student assistant is also employed; MENG also employs an hourly student assistant.

**Relations with External Community:**

The Department reaches the broader community via the National Undergraduate Literature Conference. The conference attracts students from across the country and brings together members of the northern Utah community for the events held on campus.

The Department also reaches the broader community via its international peer-reviewed journal, *Weber: The Contemporary West*, published three times annually. The journal publishes non-fiction, poetry, fiction, literary criticism, interviews and reproductions of visual art.

Also in the publication space, the department publishes *Metaphor*, an annual interdisciplinary journal created entirely by undergraduate students which publishes art, fiction, non-fiction and academic papers, poetry, music, dance, theater, and other artistic media. *Metaphor* is distributed

not only to the student body, but also to alumni, community members, and to participants of the National Undergraduate Literature Conference.

The English Department program maintains relationships with local external communities through our contribution to K–12 education through the English Teaching Program and through the Wasatch Range Writing Project.

Finally, the department connects with the community via its Community Education classes and its Concurrent Enrollment offerings in local high schools.

### **Student, Faculty, Contract/Adjunct Faculty and Staff Statistics:**

The Department has 20 Tenured Faculty, 5 Tenure-track faculty, 13 Instructors, and 88 adjuncts, including 8 Teaching Assistants in the Master of Arts in English Program.

The student/faculty ratio has declined from 25 in 2010-2011 to 19 in 2014-15. The University student/faculty ratio average is 21. English Department classes are capped at various maximum number of students for a variety of reasons.

Our declared majors and Student FTE has declined by roughly 20% in the last five years, mirroring declining enrollment in the humanities nationally. However, the department is committed to making a concerted effort to improve recruitment and retention of students.

The department conducted a survey of its majors this fall to determine scheduling preferences. Data indicate that students want more online classes, more evening classes, more classes at the Davis campus, and course schedules more than a semester in advance. The Chair, in concert with the Program Directors is working on this.

### **Teaching Standards and Ongoing Review:**

The Department regularly reviews its faculty members and their teaching in accordance with university, college, and department policies.

### **Professional Development for faculty and staff:**

Faculty and Staff are encouraged and supported in their various professional development efforts (conference presentations, research, and administrative development). The Department should allocate more funds to this area, especially for the Composition Program.

### **Program Support:**

The department is adequately staffed in terms of administrative and secretarial support.

### **Adequacy of Facilities and Equipment:**

The Department teaches 86% of its classes in state-of-the-art modern buildings on the Ogden and Davis campuses, with the remaining 14% taught online.

**Adequacy of Library Resources:**

The Stewart Library services multiple WSU campuses. Print, electronic including databases, and audio-visual materials are provided in adequate titles. Hours of operation are extensive and meet student and faculty needs. The library website (<http://library.weber.edu>) assists with meeting 24/7 needs. Compared to the print holdings at the University of Utah, the WSU Stewart Library has limited holdings. However, a well-managed interlibrary loan program and the proximity of the University of Utah, Utah State and Brigham Young University simplify student and faculty research.

**Financial Analysis:**

The English Department has an adequate budget that allows it to fund its operations. The Department Chair and Budget Supervisor in the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities actively seek ways to identify cost savings and strategies to increase revenue/funding.

**Results of Previous Program Reviews:**

The 2011 English Department Program Review identified issues requiring attention, including:

1. Assessment;
2. Mild to moderate Balkanization of programs within the Department;
3. Master of Arts in English (MENG) Program Issues;
4. Overloading of Support Staff;
5. No Mandatory Advising; and
6. No prerequisite system of courses.

Some of these issues have been resolved; others are being worked on and will continue to be monitored and addressed.

## **Information Regarding Current Review Team Members:**

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