



WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY
Lindquist College of Arts & Humanities

— MASTER OF ARTS —
ENGLISH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Master of Arts in English Program
Weber State University
Self-Study Document, Fall 2019

CONTACT:

Dr. David Hartwig
Director, Master of Arts in English
801-626-7461
davidhartwig@weber.edu

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

MISSION:

The Master of Arts in English program (MENG) provides excellent educational experiences for its students through extensive personal contact among faculty, staff and students in an environment that encourages freedom of expression while valuing diversity. We take pride in a student-centered environment for learning and believe close associations between faculty and students contribute to student success.

The MENG program is designed to provide advanced preparation in writing, critical thinking skills, and English language and literature. The purpose of the advanced study of language and literature is to heighten humanistic values and the awareness of them, in order to serve a local community of scholars.

CURRICULUM:

The MENG curriculum has four tracks: Literature, Creative Writing, Education (with Secondary Licensure), and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). These tracks provide students with the specialization needed to best suit their interests, and to best prepare students for competitive jobs and doctoral programs.

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT:

The MENG program learning outcomes are:

LO 1: Gather, analyze, and communicate information and insights creatively and critically.

LO 2: Cultivate skills in close reading, critical thinking, creative expression, and persuasive writing.

LO 3: Understand and apply various theoretical perspectives and discipline-specific terminology to interpretations of texts and /or analysis of data.

LO 4: Acknowledge and articulate the significance of key text(s) in specific genres, periods, cultures, styles, or theoretical perspectives.

LO 5: Demonstrate knowledge of current scholarship and practices.

LO 6: Employ discipline-specific conventions and protocols for written or multimodal presentations.

The MENG program collects several artifacts from students for assessment: the final paper from MENG 6010: Introduction to Graduate Studies, and a portfolio of papers that students self-select as reflecting their highest quality work. The MENG Steering Committee then connects these artifacts with the courses they are from, and the programmatic learning outcomes fulfilled by that course, and assesses the artifacts accordingly.

ACADEMIC ADVISING:

Students in the MENG program are counselled by both the program administrator and the program director, with the goal of helping students successfully navigate their course of study with an average time-to-graduation of two years. Additional advising is provided by Dr. John Schwiebert, English Department academic advisor, and by the advising staff of the Lindquist College of Arts and Humanities.

FACULTY:

The MENG program faculty is comprised predominantly of faculty from the English Department, with several courses being taught by faculty from other departments. All MENG faculty have attained a terminal degree (PhD or MFA), and are typically tenure-track faculty.

PROGRAM SUPPORT:

MENG has a full-time administrative specialist. Additionally, the program works in concert with the staff of the English Department and the Lindquist College of Arts and Humanities.

RELATIONS WITH EXTERNAL COMMUNITY:

The MENG program maintains strong relations with community partners predominantly through our training of area educators. A majority of our students are active-service teachers, and many more aspire to become teachers, fulfilling a vital economic role in the communities we serve. Additionally, MENG is responsible for the Wasatch Range Writing Project, an intensive summer writing seminar that features prominent guest writers and serves as professional development for area teachers and aspiring writers.

RESULTS OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM REVIEW:

The program's previous five-year review was largely positive, with several issues raised which the program has addressed:

GRE Requirement-The previous review encouraged the program to reinstate the GRE requirement for admission to the program. The MENG program faculty did not think that the GRE provided substantive information pertaining to applicants' academic abilities. Further, the Steering Committee felt that the GRE requirement limited access to the program's educational opportunities and was not in keeping with Weber State's mission. We therefore did not follow the recommendation.

Dual-Designation Courses-The program review team noted concern regarding the academic rigor of these 5000- and 6000-level courses that are taught synchronously with undergraduate courses. The MENG program has done its utmost to limit the number of dual-designation courses by carefully scheduling to maximize course enrollments. Simultaneously, the Steering Committee has begun reviewing dual-designation syllabi in the semester prior to the course, to ensure that the courses are meeting graduate-level standards, and has begun assessing student artifacts from dual-designation courses.

Faculty Load and Remuneration-Concerns were raised regarding the heavy teaching load of faculty and pay for graduate level courses. The Steering Committee has approved an increase to the supplemental graduate pay, and has encouraged faculty (in concert with the English Department chair) to take advantage of opportunities to decrease teaching load, such as Eccles Fellowships, summer load, and foreign exchange opportunities.

Learning Outcomes-At the previous review, courses and assignments were not clearly tied to the program learning outcomes. The Steering Committee now requires all syllabi to clearly state which learning outcomes are fulfilled by the course, and to identify which learning outcomes are supported by each assignment in the course. Assessment of student learning has continued, and we have identified the need to further hone the programmatic learning outcomes to better reflect the four tracks of the MENG program.

Support Staff-The administrative staff position at the previous program review was a $\frac{3}{4}$ time position, which raised concerns for the reviewers given the workload of the position. Subsequently, the position was made full-time.

Library Resources-The program review team noted the inadequacy of the Stewart Library holdings. The program faculty have worked with the subject-area librarian to increase holdings, an effort which has led to improved access to online databases, increased multimedia holdings, and improved print collections. Additionally, the program is well-served by the Interlibrary Loan system, and our proximity to the research library of the University of Utah.

INFORMATION REGARDING CURRENT REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS:

External Reviewers:

Tyson Hausdoerffer, Director of Graduate Program in Creative Writing, Western Colorado University
970-943-2298, thausdoerffer@western.edu

Internal Reviewers:

Valerie Herzog, Prof. and Chair of Athletic Training and Director of Graduate Studies, Weber State University
801-626-7656, valerieherzog@weber.edu

Electra Fielding, Assoc. Prof. of Spanish, Weber State University
801-626-6452, electrafielding@weber.edu