

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Academic Program Review
College of Arts and Sciences

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM
English Department

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS
Daniel Contreras, Associate Chair of English, Fordham University
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CAMPUS VISIT
April 26th -28th 2017

The review team read the *Self Study* written by the faculty in USF's English Department; reviewed the curriculum, course syllabi and evaluations; interviewed faculty, students and staff; and met with the Dean, Associate Deans and other relevant members of the campus community. Prior to their visit, the reviewers were also provided with USF's Vision, Mission, Values Statement and other university materials.

1. How did the external review committee rate the quality of the program – excellent, very good, good, adequate, or poor? How does the program compare with benchmark top-tier programs nationally? Please provide a brief rationale for the external review committee's rating.

The committee gave the English Department an overall rating of **very good** and on "its way to becoming excellent." The committee was impressed with the "vibrant and dedicated USF English faculty" who are offering the "high-caliber education one expects from a top-tier liberal arts university in the Jesuit tradition." The committee stated that the USF English Department "compares very favorably with the best in the country" and noted "the course of study is intellectually rigorous with high standards of achievement and diverse offerings and bright, enthusiastic students. Within both of its tracks, the program seeks to provide holistic educational experiences that translate into constructive life-long skills for use both within and outside the academy."

2. What are the most important general issues that emerged from the external review process?

Curriculum and Instruction

The committee noted that the English Department is experiencing an "exciting" transition and has been "revitalized" by the recent new hires. The committee also noted several courses that will need to be restructured based on a revived vision of the Department and its current strengths, interests and population.

The committee noted concerns with the current two-track structure of the Department and stated that English Majors suggested, "that courses incorporate *both* components of Literature and Writing tracks."

Faculty and Staff

The committee stated that the USF English Department is a “community of teachers” that “encompasses a wide variety of professors at different stages of their careers, with diverse interests and approaches” with “a love for teaching” that binds and unites them all.

The committee noted the Department recent new tenure track hires “are ideally positioned to make a major contribution to diversity at the university at large.” There new hires contribute to the areas of African-American literature, Latino literature and Trans-Atlantic studies; however, the Department continues to lack a permanent teacher-scholar dedicated to Asian American literature.

The committee reported, “The leadership of the Department is in great hands,” stating that Rader and Steinberg are “ideally positioned to preside over a smooth transition of leadership in the Department and provide wise counsel for the revitalized English program.”

The committee also reported, “USF English is blessed with excellent support staff. Kimberly Garrett (Program Assistant IV) is a major asset for the Department.

Regarding Adjunct Faculty, the committee reported, “A further sign of this departmental wellness comes in its treatment of adjunct instructors. While the conditions of adjunct teaching are rarely ideal, the review team applauds USF and the English Department for its highly successful efforts to make adjuncts feel welcome and valued.”

Students

The committee stated, “You should be very proud of the high caliber of students attracted to and enriched by the program.”

Diversity

The committee reported, “The USF English Department benefits from and contributes to this diverse climate. As mentioned earlier, recent hires among the full-time faculty contribute to the demographic and curricular diversity of the Department.”

Resources

The committee noted, “The *Self Study* reports that fiscal resources are adequate to meet the needs of the English program, and the reviewers found no evidence to the contrary during our campus visit. The English Department is housed in a modern suite of offices in Kalmanovitz Hall with a spacious and sunny meeting room.”

3. What specific recommendations for improving the program’s quality has the external review committee made to the Dean?

Curriculum and Instruction

The committee stated, “A primary priority for the Department is to clarify its vision and to revise the curriculum according to these freshly articulated values. A secondary byproduct of those discussions should be reconsideration of the PLOs and rubrics to ensure that they accurately measure learning outcomes of the revised curriculum.”

Once the Department has revised its vision, the committee suggests curriculum restructuring of *Capstone Experience*, *Introduction to Literary Study*, *Literary History*, *Literary Journal*, *Internships*

and *Professional Development*, and 200-Level courses.

Additionally, consider creating:

- multi-level Core/Special Topics courses for combined student populations.
- hybrid courses that can employ innovative approaches to pedagogy allowing for both tracks to study the same materials and to write (or otherwise provide) critical or artistic responses.
- a special recognition certificate in publishing, editing or professional writing for English students who both complete the Ignatius course and a writing internship.

Faculty

The committee noted that the Department “very desperately” wants faculty specializing in Modernisms and other more contemporary literatures. Of particular urgency is the need for faculty specializing in Asian American and other Asian diasporic literatures in English.

4. In the opinion of the external review committee, is the program following the University’s strategic initiatives?

The external reviewers state that “In essence, members of the Department will discover that their own training in analysis, organization, and creativity will allow them to create the environment they want to live in together, one that also best supports student learning and integration of USF’s educational mission.”

5. In what way is the program contributing to the goal of making the University of San Francisco a premier Jesuit, Catholic urban university with a global perspective that educates leaders who will fashion a more humane and just world?

“The English Department’s mission is aligned with the University’s mission and strategic priorities in both practice and theory, even as the Department reimagines its approaches to contemporary English literary education as a relevant way to study and practice USF’s progressive Jesuit values.

6. What is the timetable for the response to the external review committee’s recommendations for program improvement? What can the Office of the Provost do to appropriately respond to the review?

The next step is for the Dean and Associate Deans to meet with the Chair and full time faculty members of the English Department and develop an *Action Plan* based on the *Self Study* and the *External Reviewers’ Report*. Based on the agreed upon *Action Plan*, the Office of the Provost can assist the program by allocating necessary resources to implement those actions.

7. What general comments or issues, if any, are crucial to understanding the reviewers report?