**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2021-2022**

**Department: 0330** – English

**Date of Review:** March 24, 2022

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Anthony Ponder, Vice President and Provost

Jennifer Kostic, Associate Provost

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Jena Beck, Chairperson/ Professor, Criminal Justice Sciences, Fire Science

Eugene Oswald, Supervisor, Tutoring and Learning Center

Gina Neuerer, Chairperson/Professor, Theatre & Dance

Kara Brown, Associate Professor, Computer Science and Information Technology

Rukhi Jan, Senior Academic Advisor, Academic Advising

**Department Members Present:**

Phyllis Adams, Interim Dean, Liberal Arts, Communication and Social Sciences

Kate Geiselman, Chair/Professor, English

Faculty:

Dair Arnold, Associate Professor, English

Denise Aselage, Associate Professor, English

Joyce Barnes, Associate Professor, English

Bernice Brown, Professor, English

Adrienne Cassel, Professor, English

Lisa Cook, Associate Professor, English

Jamey Dunham, Professor, English

Crystal Echols, Professor, English

Charles Freeland, Professor, English

Kjirsten Goeller, Professor, English

Furaha Henry-Jones, Professor, English

Sharyn Hunter, Professor, English

Heather Johnson-Taylor, Assistant Professor English

Sarah Kiewitz, Professor, English

Sally Lahmon, Professor, English

Dean Leonard, ACF, English

Felicia Monroe, Associate Professor, English

Aaron Moyer, Professor, English

Caroline Reynolds, Professor, English

Vicki Stalbird, Professor, English

Deborah Strehle, Associate Professor, English

Lisa Tyler, Professor, English

Tim Waggoner, Professor, English

Staff:

Tracie Puckett, Administrative Assistant, English

**Commendations:**

* First, the Review Team would like to commend the department on its leadership – both in terms of the strong, visionary leadership of the department chairperson, and the leadership roles that faculty in the department fill across the College. Put simply, this is a department of leaders. The level of faculty engagement across campus in terms of committee service by many faculty in the department is truly impressive.
* This is the largest academic department at Sinclair, housing the course with the largest enrollment at Sinclair. The department will always have a strong demand for the courses it offers. However, the department does not appear to take this for granted - faculty work hard to move onward and upward. Just in the past few years, the department has invested effort in revising its mission, developing new program outcomes, identifying and removing barriers to student success, and assessing performance data and using it to improve student learning. This is not a department that just sits back knowing it has a secure source of student enrollment – it makes impressive efforts to grow, to improve, and to better meet the needs of the many students it serves.
* The Review Team was particularly impressed with the department’s work with diversity, equity, and inclusion. The analysis of equity gaps, and the discussion of how to address them, is exactly what should be happening in every academic department at Sinclair. This is not only reflected in the department’s work with identifying barriers to course success, but appears to be something that is rapidly becoming simply the way the department operates. The department ensured that diversity, equity and inclusion were embedded within its mission statement in an attempt to holistically incorporate these principles into all of the department’s work. The department’s embrace of culturally responsive practices in course design speaks volumes.
* Few academic departments are so well positioned to become aware of mental health challenges that many students at Sinclair face, and it is impressive that faculty are so mindful of challenges of this nature that students experience.
* Open Educational Resources (OER) are a tremendous benefit for students. Many students at Sinclair struggle with the cost of higher education, and eliminating textbook costs can make a real difference for these students. However, the cost of a department developing OERs goes beyond the investment of time required to create them – they must be maintained, revised, and updated on an ongoing basis. The English Department has committed to this ongoing effort and deserves a tremendous amount of credit for the willingness to invest this work for the benefit of its students.
* Few departments at Sinclair are so heavily involved with initiatives targeting specific populations. The department has been as closely involved as any at Sinclair with CCP, AJT, TOPS, and others. This takes a great deal of time and work by faculty in the department, and their involvement in these programs are absolutely crucial to their success.
* CCP alone represents a huge commitment in time and work, but since the last program review great strides have been made by the department in working with their high school partners. While the department has certainly been cognizant of the challenges associated with CCP, they have been willing to develop strategies to make their relationship with CCP successful.
* The Review Team strongly commends the department for their support of Written Communication general education outcome assessment. While this was a heavy lift for the department, it has become formalized and is now part of faculty’s grading routines. The amount of institutional level data that has been produced as a result of the department’s efforts has been invaluable, and Sinclair owes the department a considerable debt of gratitude for not only providing essential general education assessment data, but for pioneering a new rubric-based approach to general education assessment that is now used for all other general education outcomes at the College.
* During the meeting with the department, the Review Team noted how quick faculty were to credit each other for work they had done and achievements they have made. It was apparent that faculty appreciate the work their colleagues do, and it was obvious faculty are a strong team that is appreciative of each other’s efforts. It was a pleasure to see such a spirit of appreciation among faculty.
* The department, and particularly the ESL course coordinator, deserve a great deal of credit for their work on the ESL self-study. While it may not have led to the result that was desired, without question it has made the department’s ESL programming stronger, and better prepared the department to meet the needs of ESL students.
* The English Department has made an impressive amount of outreach to invite outside departments to make classroom visits, particularly with Student Affairs. Because all degree-seeking students are required to take English courses, these courses provide great touchpoints to inform students of the services and supports that are available in Student Affairs.
* The department’s work on behalf of their adjunct faculty has been outstanding. The Review Team was especially impressed by the online resources and community that has been created in eLearn.
* The Review Team appreciated the department’s honesty and candor in the self-study in reference to some of the challenges they face There was no attempt to avoid thorny topics, and the self-study contained an unflinching discussion of such difficult topics as plagiarism, course capacity, student issues, etc. It is a sign of strength when a department is willing to discuss challenges and how they might be addressed, rather than ignoring or minimizing them.
* Faculty in this department have a keen awareness of student needs, which has become even more of a challenge in the past two years. Challenges for students are different than what we have seen before, but the department has kept abreast of what those challenges are and is striving to address them.

**Recommendations for Action:**

* Other departments need to know about some of the work the English Department is doing. While it is true that the department is already active in making CTL and FFPPD presentations, there are some initiatives that the department has undertaken that can serve as models for others at Sinclair. Specifically, faculty in the department need to present their work on disaggregation of success data by demographics and the identification of equity gaps. The same is true of the creation of the online community for adjuncts – other departments might benefit from doing this and should have the opportunity to learn how the English Department has approached it. The department’s exceptional work with the Written Communication rubric is another effort that should be shared with other departments. In short, the Review Team strongly recommends that the department share these remarkable efforts with other departments that may benefit from them via CTL workshops, FFPDD sessions, etc. The Review Team was so impressed by everything the English Department is doing with assessment data. This is a department that is engaging in excellent assessment practice – other departments need to see this so they can emulate these efforts.
* It was clear from the self-study that faculty in the department have strong feelings about section capacities in English Composition classes. Keeping in mind that the Review Team is not in a position to guarantee any outcome of this effort, the department is encouraged to produce a one-page document making the case for reduction of class sizes. This document should reflect common practice and be informed by innovative approaches that other institutions may have implemented that allowed them to reduce class sizes without reducing institutional capacity. Are there opportunities to structure courses differently that would allow for reduced course capacities?
* The Review Team strongly recommends that the department continue its impressive work addressing equity gaps. The department is doing some important work in this regard, and the Review Team encourages the department to continue in this direction. These efforts should be reported annually in association with reports for this recommendation in Annual Updates over the next five years.
* The department discussed the challenges with upscaling Coaching to Complete in the meeting with the Review Team. Given the successes associated with this program, how can strategies be developed that would benefit a wider selection of sections in spite of the limitations that preclude fully upscaling the program across all sections of English Composition? What can be gleaned and applied from the pilot on a larger scale?

**Overall Assessment of Department’s Progress and Goals:**

If the Review Team could distill its thoughts on the English Department’s self-study into a single sentence, it would be this: “Keep up the good work!” This is a strong, effective department that benefits from both the skillful leadership of the chairperson and a spirit of mutual support and dedication among its faculty. The work that faculty in this department does influences the entire campus – every other department on campus relies on this one, and its exceptional work serves as one of the foundations for much of what students achieve in other departments across the College. It is in their English coursework that students learn many of the foundational skills they need to be successful in the rest of their academic endeavors. We hope the faculty in the English department know how much their work is valued and appreciated by all other departments across Sinclair.

There was abundant evidence in the self-study that attested to the positive impact this department has on student learning – among the many data points provided, none of the indicators in the self-study seemed to be pointing in the wrong direction. This is a department that is moving its students in the right direction, one that is fiercely committed to its role within the College in terms of preparing students as writers in every discipline. It is also a department that is an exemplar in terms of assessment practice – one that uses data to identify areas for improvement, implements strategies to address those areas, and then uses data again to determine whether those strategies had an impact.

The Review Team strongly encourages the department to keep finding and taking advantage of opportunities for improving student learning, to keep exploring new ways of meeting student needs. This is a department that is positioned to move boldly forward in the next five years – the self-study documented that goals from the last program review have been achieved, or have demonstrated great progress. With nothing left undone from the previous Program Review, this department is prepared and ready to move on to the challenges of the next five years.

**Institutional or Resource Barriers to the Department’s Ability to**

**Accomplish Its Goals, if any:**

* Marketing. The English Department is one of many in Instruction that has marketing needs that are not being met. There are widespread feelings across academic departments that there is not adequate support from Marketing to effectively market academic programs.
* Tracking of graduates. Tracking graduates is a challenge for all departments at Sinclair, and while departments are frequently given recommendations in Program Review to improve tracking graduates and their outcomes, relatively few tools exist for them to do this. This is a college-wide issue.
* Funding, particularly in terms of reassigned time. The loss of reassigned time has been a challenge for many departments, who still have the same tasks and activities that need to be done, but have fewer resources with which to do them. Re-evaluation of reassigned time is something that should be looked at frequently across the college to ensure appropriateness and equity, particularly given that when reassigned time for departments is lost or reduced, it often seems like it never comes back. It may be that there needs to be a formal, regularly scheduled process for analysis of reassigned time across the College.
* Course capacities have been an issue for many departments – what process can be developed that helps assess and analyze course capacities for departments on a regular basis? How can departments who experience this issue make the case that capacities need to be adjusted?
* Classroom layouts are a challenge for many departments – is this something that can be incorporated into Backfill consideratons? This department must use rooms across campus – at times room layouts aren’t conducive to how the class is conducted.