**Department/Program Review Summary**

**2018-19**

**Department:** HGMIL**/**Modern Language (ML), Political Sciences (PLS) and Philosophy (PHI)

**Date of Review:** March 15, 2019

**Review Team Members and Titles:**

Dave Collins, Provost

Jared Cutler, Assistant Provost of Accreditation and Assessment

Tim McKinney, Senior Academic Advisor, Academic Advising

Greg Dudash, Professor, Allied Health Instruction

Heidi McGrew, Chairperson, Communication

Clay Pittman, Chair/Professor, Aviation

Deborah Gavlik, Director, International Education Office

**Department Members Present:**

Lisa Mahle-Grisez Dean, Liberal Arts, Communication and Social Sciences

Faculty and Staff:

Bill Kamil, Chair, HGML Department

Yolanda Burgos-Olinger

Luis Gonzalez Acevedo

Bahar Hartmann

Amanda Hayden

Vonya Lewis-Thornton

Derek Petrey

Yufeng Wang

Connie Zornes-Padovani

Lora Bowling

Jamie Fries

Owen Jones

Varalaxmi Mitzka

Kathy Sooy

Jennifer Sooy

**Commendations:**

* While the department is a grouping of History, Humanities, Modern Languages, Political Science, and Religion components, there is a remarkable amount of unity and cohesion in the department, which is surprising – and admirable – given the variety of subject areas overseen by the department. This cohesion is so powerful that when it was suggested that the department should develop separate mission statements for each of its components, several members of the department argued eloquently and strenuously that it would undermine the sense of unity and solidarity that is currently experienced by faculty in the department. That such a sense of interconnection exists is a tribute to the spirit of collaboration that is part of the culture of the department.
* More than one faculty member commented on the strong leadership provided by the department chairperson, and the outstanding job he has done over the past five years in creating a culture of unity and collaboration, and supporting the disparate areas within the department. Without question, his influence has made a positive impact on the overall ambience of the department.
* The department submitted an outstanding self-study, which is all the more remarkable given that so many different areas in the department had to be represented. Because the self-study was so well-organized, each question was addressed completely yet concisely for each area in the department, without undue emphasis or underrepresentation for any of them. The department did a truly remarkable job of addressing each component equally, providing an excellent overview for each of them. This was particularly true of the Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis, where unique issues for each subject area in the department were explored.
* The Review Team was very impressed by the number of accomplishments of individual faculty members of the department – several pages of the self-study were devoted to nothing other than the faculty members’ accomplishments, which speaks highly of their dedication to their students and engagement in their field of expertise.
* Enrollment in College Credit Plus (CCP) has exploded at Sinclair in recent years – and few departments have felt that explosive growth as keenly as the HGML department. The department has handled this explosive growth with grace and professionalism, going above and beyond to meet the needs of this new program. The department is aware of the challenges associated with CCP, particularly when it was in its early stages, but has addressed those challenges with patience and efficiency. The Review Team was deeply, deeply impressed with the way that the department has handled the demands placed upon it by the growth of the CCP program, and hundreds of high school students have directly benefited from the excellent work that it has done.
* While the department is dedicated to the students in its programs, it also embraces its role at the institution educating the students from other departments with its general education / Ohio Transfer Module course offerings. The Review Team was impressed with the way that the department appears to selflessly provide important educational experiences for students across all departments on campus. At a time when it seems that higher education may not be prioritizing traditional liberal arts education to the extent it should, hopefully the department knows that all departments on campus recognize and appreciate the important skills and knowledge that the courses in this department impart to their students.
* The Review Team was also impressed by the use of experiential learning across the different areas in the department, such as field trips, Talk Abroad, Service Learning, etc. The department is committed to providing its students with hand-on, on-site experiences that go beyond learning within the walls of the classroom.
* Faculty in the department are highly engaged in extracurricular activities across campus, providing Sinclair Talks presentations, International Series presentations, and other presentations across campus. The department has been highly engaged with Model United Nations for many years, and has worked closely with the International Education Office. The department has also been active in promoting Women’s History in March. The History Symposium is another noteworthy example of this engagement. The department also has strong connections with the Diversity Office. In terms of making history, humanities, religion, political science, and modern languages visible on campus, the department is extremely proactive.
* The department also deserves a great deal of credit for volunteering to participate in the Cultural Diversity and Global Citizenship General Education outcome rubric pilot. Sinclair is working hard to establish use of the General Education rubrics in appropriate courses across campus as a means of assessing outcomes at an institutional level, and as a means of reducing the burden departments experience assessing the outcomes themselves. That the department volunteered to help pilot this rubric speaks to their engagement with assessment and willingness to help move the institution forward in this regard.
* The department has a well-earned reputation for being helpful, accommodating, and easy to work with. One example that deserves special mention is the development of the Symbolic Logic course that was developed as an alternative to fulfilling the OTM Math requirement. When the Completion Office and the Provost’s Office approached the department with the proposal for the course, the department went above and beyond in making the course a reality. The department’s willingness to take this on as a means of helping students across campus is a testament to their willingness to go the extra mile to help all students at Sinclair succeed, and their responsive, approachable reputation in working with other offices on campus. Another example was the department’s willingness to contextualize learning in one of its courses for the Vet Tech program. The department’s support of the “15 Month to Your Future” initiative is yet another example of this. Again, the willingness to help other departments that the faculty of this department and its leadership display is highly commendable.
* The Open Educational Resources (OERs) that the department has developed for Spanish 2201 and 2202 deserves special mention. OERs always involve a tremendous amount of work by faculty in terms of development and maintenance, yet few things hold as much potential for reducing financial barriers to students attending Sinclair.
* Sinclair appreciates the efforts at efficiency in managing course offerings that the department has demonstrated. For example, as new sections are requested, the department has attempted to add sections in ways that aren’t duplicative with an effort to rotate between subject areas when a new section is needed. This practice is highly commendable. This responsible approach to overseeing section offerings is greatly appreciated by the institution.

**Recommendations:**

* The department’s support of CCP is highly commendable, and the Review Team was impressed at the way the department was able to meet the increasing demand for CCP instruction with existing resources. The Review Team felt that an examination of department resources in relation to support of CCP may be appropriate. Would the department still be able to accommodate continuing increases in CCP enrollment, and at what point would additional resources need to be dedicated to meet this demand? Are there additional needs for reassigned time, full- or part-time positions, supply and travel funding, etc.? It may be that existing resources could accommodate continuing growth, but there may be some value in the exercise of analyzing - the current and projected status and whether there would be undue strain on resources should CCP enrollment continue to grow.
* The department’s implementation of OERs in Spanish 2201 and 2202 is highly commendable, and the department mentioned the possibility of the development of additional OERs in some of its courses, Western Civilization courses, for example. While this entails considerable time and effort on the part of faculty, the dividends in terms of expenses saved to students can be life changing. The department is strongly encouraged to move forward with development of additional OERs, and take advantage of institutional supports in doing so. Close communication with the dean and the Provost’s Office would be of benefit in this regard, as would connecting with existing cross-departmental groups on campus that are exploring OER development.
* While not discussed during the meeting with the Review Team, it was noted that program outcome assessment appeared to be an opportunity for improvement for the department. The department should develop an assessment plan for assessment of its program outcomes, in consultation with the Division Assessment Coordinator. The goal should be to have some program outcome assessment results reported in the next Annual Update, and data for all of the program outcomes in the next Program Review self-study in five years.

* The possibility of the department developing an Advisory Committee was discussed at length. The department should explore this possibility, keeping in mind the suggestion of developing an overall committee composed of several subcommittees devoted to the various subject areas in the department as a model that may be appropriate.
* The department will soon experience a transition in leadership. Given the exceptional leadership the department currently experiences, there will no doubt be a smooth transition, but what steps can be taken to facilitate this change? How is succession planning handled in the department, and what improvements could be made in this regard? What documentation is available to the new chairperson, and is there additional documentation that should be developed that would help orient the next chairperson? The department should take steps to help the next chairperson be as successful and effective as the current one.

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

The Review Team was astounded by the level of unity, cohesion, and camaraderie that exists in a department that houses so many different and distinct subject areas. It takes a remarkable group of faculty and staff to create such a culture of harmony and mutual support in a department that could so easily be factionalized and divided by the differences between them. There were many impressive and remarkable accomplishments that were shared in the Program Review self-study, but this was one of the most compelling, and this sense of unity allows the department to focus on what is best for its students in ways that less cohesive departments struggle to achieve.

This was an exceptional Program Review self-study – which shouldn’t be surprising, given that this is an exceptional department. The organization of the self-study allowed for comprehensive but concise discussion of each subject area in the department. From the self-study it was evident that the department has prioritized the goals that were stated in the last Program Review.

Looking forward, the goals that the department has developed for itself through the next five years are strategic, appropriate, achievable, and most importantly, student-focused. If the department shows the same level of dedication to achieving these goals as it did the ones in the last Program Review, there is no question it will accomplish them. The department should be aware that it can count on the support of the division dean and the Provost’s Office in achieving these goals.

**Institutional or Resource Barriers to the Department’s Ability to Accomplish Its Goals, if any:**

* Support of the CCP program remains a concern for many departments at Sinclair. The CCP Faculty Liaison position has been developed to help address concerns and meet needs as they arise, and all departments on campus should develop close connections with the person in this position and reach out as needed to address issues and concerns.
* The department made an intriguing suggestion during the meeting with the Review Team. Noting that it is difficult for CCP students taking a college course in a high school classroom to truly get the feeling of being in a college course, the department suggested the possibility of inviting CCP students meeting at the high school to visit a course being held at Sinclair’s campus. This is a suggestion that Sinclair should explore, it may be something that could be beneficial to students if implemented across the entire CCP program. An approach like this could potentially not only allow students to see what a class that meets on a college campus is like, but may also help build additional connections between CCP students and Sinclair that could potential lead to more of them coming here after high school graduation.
* Staffing concerns are common across many departments at Sinclair. While departments often intuitively feel that upon retirement a full-time tenure-track faculty member should be hired, in general most departments could probably provide more data to support the case for these needs. Full-time part-time ratios, faculty loads, course enrollment, average class size data, projected retirements, reassigned time, and other factors should be analyzed and reported to help provide evidence that there is a need for replacement faculty to be hired when retirements or other transitions occur.