

Dean's Summary
Annual Program Review Update

April 12, 2019

Description of Division

The Language Arts Division is comprised of the Departments of Communication Studies, English, English as a Second Language (ESL), Journalism, and Reading. The English Department offers courses in English Writing (EWRT) and Literature (ELIT). The Language Arts Division includes two embedded counselors who serve students needing additional support to be successful in their English or ESL courses. In addition, the Language Arts Division coordinates, supports, and maintains two computer labs that serve the entire Language Arts Division, and a third computer lab dedicated to the Journalism Program and *La Voz*, the student and college newspaper.

Enrollment Trends

Key Enrollment Data:

- 2017-18 total enrollment: 26,818
- One-year change: -7%
- Five-Year change: -11.1%
- Targeted group success: 72%
- Non-target group success: 84%
- Overall success: 80%

As noted in last year's program review Language Arts Division enrollments grew 4.3% over the three-year period of 2013-14 through 2017-18. Unfortunately, since peaking in 2014-15 enrollment in the Division has declined, resulting in a drop of 11.1% over five years. The losses for the college as a whole were much greater, declining 15.8% over five years. Over that same five-year period, overall FTEF for the Division declined 7% and productivity declined 2.2%.

Enrollments peaked in nearly all departments in 2014-15 and declined in the subsequent years. The specific department enrollment data over the five-year period from 2013-14 through 2017-18 is as follows:

- COMM: Enrollment declined 10.4%, FTES grew 9.6% (due to the addition of one unit to most COMM courses)
- ESL: Enrollment declined 6.0%, FTES declined 5.9%
- EWRT: Enrollment declined 12.2%, FTES grew 12.0%

- ELIT: Enrollment declined 25.7%, FTES declined 24.8% (In response to this sharp decline English reduced its ELIT offerings in 2018-19)
- JOUR: Enrollment declined 7.5%, FTES declined 3.5%
- READ: Enrollment grew 8.7%, FTES grew 8.8%

Overall, enrollment in Language Arts is trending downward. This trend, combined with new state initiatives and mandates, calls for strategic planning efforts within the division and for the college as a whole. Perhaps the greatest impact on enrollment in Language Arts will be the result of curriculum changes necessary to comply with AB705 regulations. As we adopt the new curriculum and plans called for by AB705 for English writing, relying on co-requisite support alongside transfer level writing in place of pre-transfer level coursework, we will need to provide significant support and training for faculty and students. In the short term, we see a need for additional professional development, outreach, and recruitment efforts. Looking ahead two to five years, programs aimed at retention and persistence will be key to student success.

Student Success and Equity

Success rates among targeted populations for the whole of the Language Arts Division were remarkably consistent during the five-year period from 2013-14 through 2017-18, with an increase in successful grades earned in each year. The overall percentage of successful grades earned for targeted populations reached a high of 75% in 2015-16. Non-targeted populations saw similarly consistent success rates. Moving the needle on closing the equity gap is likely to remain a challenge, particularly in light of the major curriculum and placement changes necessitated by AB 705.

All departments have engaged in program level activities aimed at reducing the equity gap, and these efforts are ongoing. Some of the activities include department retreats, workshops, a division retreat, and department meetings, all of which were focused entirely or primarily on equity. Two full-time counselors have been hired with the purpose of increasing the number of students who reach transfer level course success after beginning in pre-transfer level ESL, English, and Reading classes. These two counselors, along with faculty members from English and Reading, have taken a leadership role in the implementation of the Starfish early alert system. Every department in the division has developed new programs and initiatives, from new corequisite courses and new approaches to embedded tutoring and counseling to increased professional development activities. Along with ongoing programs such as Puente, FYE, Umoja, and IMPACT AAPI; these new programs represent the persistent effort of the Language Arts faculty and staff in closing the equity gap.

The recently hired Language Arts Division Basic Skills Counselor and the Adult Education Transitions, ESL, and Basic Skills Counselor are an important step in supporting students in basic skills classes and are expected to positively impact our equity numbers. The demand for counseling services far outstrips our current capacity, and we hope to grow our services in the years ahead.

One final comment on the efforts in Language Arts to close the equity gaps—it is noteworthy that the department program reviews show significant analysis of the data at various course and program levels. I commend the faculty leadership and department chairs for the work they are doing to disaggregate and understand the data so that effective interventions can be made to create meaningful and sustainable improvements in the success of our students. Effective access to and analysis of data will be crucial as we transition to the new courses/curriculum necessitated by AB 705.

Commendations:

Each of the Departments in the Language Arts Division is undergoing significant transformation as a result of their own internal initiatives and/or as a result of changes imposed on them by external agencies. Innumerable hours of hard work and dedication to student success have gone into the transformative efforts in these departments, and the faculty, counselors, and staff who have contributed to these changes deserve commendation for their work.

The Communication Studies Department began work four years ago revising their curriculum in order to include a unit of information literacy in each of their courses. Their courses increased from four to five units and the additional unit was added online. Through careful planning and preparation, digital resources were created and all faculty were trained to teach the new hybrid courses.

English and Reading faculty have responded to AB 705 mandates thoughtfully and creatively and have accomplished an extraordinary amount of work in the past year. A few highlights of their accomplishments include implementation of HS GPA placement rules, creation of new corequisite and stretch model courses for students needing support in their college-level writing, and development of an online guided self-placement tool. The two departments have begun meeting as one unit and they sponsored a campus-wide professional development event.

The ESL department has begun work on creating mirrored, noncredit versions of their first four levels of courses. They hope to fully implement the new courses in the coming academic year. Although we are still waiting for the guidance from the Chancellor's Office with regard to ESL, the faculty have been full participants in the division, college, and district work on AB 705 implementation.

Few fields are changing more rapidly than journalism. The movement away from print journalism to online journalism as well as the change from paid professional journalists to independent, untrained contributors to websites has transformed the industry. Working with the support of the advisory board, Journalism has moved to a greater online presence and an 'online first' approach to publishing.

SLO/PLO Assessment

All departments in the Language Arts Division have made progress assessing SLOs and PLOs. Along with equity planning and assessment, SLOs and PLOs and assessment results have been and will continue to be the focus of department and division meetings.

Staff and Faculty Levels

The Language Arts Division has been very fortunate with regard to full-time faculty hiring. Since 2014-15, we have hired full-time positions in English, Reading, ESL, Counseling, and Communication Studies.

The total FTEF in 2017-18 (114.7) represents a significant reduction in force compared to the previous four years. In 2017-18, full-time FTEF grew to a high of 36.6% of total FTEF, full-time overload grew to 11.7% of total, and part-time FTEF declined to a low of 51.7%. With declining enrollment overall and the elimination of nearly all Reading and basic skills English courses, the trend toward an increased percentage of instruction being taught by full-time is likely to continue.

The diversity of the faculty in departments remains a priority, particularly as our student population demographics evolve. Our goal of recruiting and retaining a diverse and engaged faculty is made more challenging by the increasing cost of living and commuting time. Staff and faculty are forced to choose between high housing costs and rising rents or commuting great distances.

Additional funding for tutoring and counseling to support students impacted by AB 705 changes is requested.

Equipment and Facilities

Improved use of technology-enhanced instruction, whether in a traditional face-to-face class, a hybrid class, or a fully online class, is vital to the success of our programs and our students. Replacing/upgrading existing equipment in classrooms and labs and adding state-of-the-art equipment will help us keep pace with social change and assure our students and graduates are well prepared to succeed in employment or after transfer. Some of our multimedia equipment is more than five years old and is not industry standard. In addition, there is a clear need for increased wifi access and greater bandwidth in all buildings, including faculty offices and classrooms, with particular attention to rooms where we offer technology enhanced classes.

The following is a list of the most essential equipment/facilities requests from the individual department program reviews:

- Replacement of the majority of chalkboards in the L-Quad with white boards to reduce dust allergens and protect computers and multimedia equipment

- Dual or adjustable light switches in L-Quad classrooms to allow some lights to be turned off and reduce ambient light while the projector is in use
- Sound baffling to reduce sound spillover in L4 classrooms—student presentations as well as general instruction and collaborative work need limited distractions and disruptions
- Expanded and enhanced wifi access in the L-Quad classrooms and office buildings

Other Budget Needs

B-Budget augmentation is needed for staff and faculty development, for equity work, and for better alignment of courses and norming standards. We continue to plan for upcoming challenges that will require increased norming and participation from all faculty such as the implementation of AB 705 and Guided Pathways. In combination with other statewide and local initiatives, the implementation of AB 705 requires support and resources from departments across the college as well as a significant investment in faculty and staff development.

Increased part-time faculty inclusion in department, division, and college-wide initiatives is crucial to our efforts to close the equity gap, diversify the curriculum, and to contribute to the college mission of civic engagement and social justice. We cannot achieve our student equity goals without including our part-time faculty at every step along the way.

Although we have made a concerted effort to adopt digital tools, an increased budget for printing continues to be a concern across all departments.

Challenges and Opportunities

Looking ahead, the implementation of AB 705, Guided Pathways, and other mandated initiatives along with enrollment and budget pressures are the greatest challenges facing the Language Arts Division. Achieving our equity goals while facing these challenges will require an increased investment in efforts that provide specific support for students with different levels of access to academic resources. Effective efforts have been those that are collaborative and involve a coordinated effort by multiple individuals in different disciplines and departments. Faculty and staff need to be supported as they implement the new curriculum and other requirements of AB 705 and other initiatives, such as the adoption of new technology or the development of more inclusive pedagogies and teaching methods.

Each of these challenges is also an opportunity; there is a clear correlation between the increase in diversity of the students and staff and the opportunity to foster inclusiveness and promote equity in our classes and on our campus.