



To: Jiren Feng, Chair of the Languages Department

From: Kris Roney, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Subject: VCAA Feedback on Languages Program Review

CC: Bonnie Irwin, Chancellor
Michael Bitter, Interim Dean for CAS
Seri Luangphinit, Accreditation Liaison Officer

This document is intended for the department's reflection on their review and the subsequent feedback as they prepare the Academic Plan for the next 5-year cycle for review.

Assessment

By far the most important portion of any program review is that of the examination of and reflection on student learning in the reviewed programs. Mahalo for providing your work in this important area. The faculty should look carefully at the guiding questions provided by the external reviewer, as Dr. Sellman's questions and suggestions along with Dr. Luangphinit's guidance, may help to divine a more cohesive path forward. I would add to that future assessments should provide for a far more robust process in closing the loop and reassessment; moreover, the actions in closing the loop need to be more than simple faculty conversation. In the instance of information literacy, given the paucity of success, was the assignment itself reviewed by faculty for alignment to the matters to be assessed? The consistency of poor performance suggests something in the instruction or instrument (or both) need to be examined and changed. Dr. Sellman's suggestions on creating similar, cross-language instruments might help better understand student learning on a broader level.

I would also ask that future iterations of the review and practice for the programs examine the spaces in which mastery is defined and measured, and those in which learning is developed. In Chinese Studies, for instance, only one of the 5 outcomes are mastered. In the others, mastery appears repeatedly often beginning with year 2, where one might otherwise anticipate further development. Perhaps the outcomes themselves need to be reconsidered if there is no means by which students can master or can master extraordinarily early in the programming.

Items to consider:

1. What are the most effective changes available for the long-term in terms of student learning? Students are transitory. Substantive change has to occur in one of two areas to be long-term: pedagogy or curricular structure/content. Having an assignment carefully tuned to the outcome being assessed is an essential first step to identifying where resources (be that time or money) need to be allocated to meet the learning needs.
2. To repeat Dr. Sellman's question: what is the learning the faculty are seeking to understand?

Resourcing

It is difficult to ascertain what the future resource needs might be, given the assessments provided and the intentions on closing the loop, save for professional development planning around assessment. I suggest a model for such development be crafted systematically for the College, rather than for a single department.

Certainly, further questions on resourcing can be revisited as future planning is put forward in this process.

Most of the observations regarding finances were about University operation and not within the scope of departmental responsibility.

Those opportunities for additional funding or strategies observed by the last two external reviews (item G., 2021 external review) are worthwhile considerations.

Enrollment

The various analyses regarding enrollment seem apt throughout. I would suggest careful attention to recommendations from Dr. Sellman, as there several that are particularly of note regarding creative strategies.

Curricular Revision

Two points of concern arise.

The first is the use of the fourth hour in the introductory language classes. In order, per the review, to conform to the MWF/TR schedule, the department has largely turned the fourth hour into an inconsistently operationalized "lab" hour. For some faculty, this is apparently used as instruction time; for others, tutoring. This creates an uneven experience for the students, and it creates a peculiarity in resource allocation, in which the faculty may not be providing direct instruction for that fourth hour, in spite of it being used in workload calculations. There are any number of ways of addressing it, many of which have been discussed (though are not in

the review). This is a matter that should be addressed in the process of planning for the future—how is that fourth hour used? Is it direct instruction or is it lab practice (which should be regarded as the extracurricular preparation for the course)? Consistency—particularly within a single language—is essential.

The Asian Languages Program, though not reflected in the review itself, is still worth consideration. However, the following should be addressed: it is true that it could create a larger umbrella for counting majors, there is still only one major in the languages department—are we aware of a significant call for others (say, Chinese Studies)? Otherwise, the program is simply the Japanese Studies students within a different umbrella that, as the review notes, may in fact dilute that pool. The critical questions here: what are the student learning advantages of such a program? What are the post-graduation and career opportunities made available here vs. the current curricular design? In what ways does such a program advance a truly interdisciplinary curriculum?

Mahalo for your work, and I look forward to addressing your planning for the future with you.