Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
2015-16 Program Review
English Department
College of Arts and Sciences

May 6, 2016

The basis for this MOU is the English Department's 2015-16 self-study and the external reviewer Dr. Ernest Stromberg's report.

Summary facts:

The English Department consists of four tenure-track faculty members (Seri Luangphinith, Kirsten Møllegaard, Mark Panek, and Jennifer Wheat), three instructors (Bela Conley-Ramsay, Lauri Sagle, and Susan Wackerbarth), and between five and seven regular lecturers from the community.

The English Department offers a BA in English and a certificate program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Commencing in Fall 2016, the English Department will also offer a Creative Writing Certificate.

The English undergraduate program has four main sections:

1. First-year composition courses (ESL 100/T and ENG 100/T)
2. 200-level service courses:
    a. Writing courses for business and science majors
    b. General education courses in film, literature, creative writing (prose and poetry), pop culture, and rhetoric
3. The major: 300-400 level language, literature, film, and creative writing courses
4. TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) academic certificate program

One semester of 100-level first-year composition is required for all UHH students. ENG 100/T/H make up 35-40% of all classes taught each semester in the English Department.

The English Department offers 31 courses that contribute to UH Hilo's General Education curriculum in the following fields: English Composition, Language Arts, World Cultures, Humanities Electives, Hawai'i Pan-Pacific, and Global and Community Citizenship.

The English Department is also a prominent contributor to UH Hilo's Writing Intensive Program. Currently there are 41 certified WI/ENG courses.

Every semester, English courses are cross-listed with other disciplines including Communication, Drama, Japanese Studies, Geography, Linguistics, and Gender & Women's Studies.

Over the past ten years, the English Department has had an average of 60 English majors per year. Currently there are 62 declared English majors. During this period, the number of TESOL certificate program students has risen steadily from 5 in 2005-06 to 17 in 2014-15.

In the 2005-2014 period, the English Department generated an average of 1,848 student semester hours (SSH) and 12 graduates per year. This ranks the English Department as the second largest unit in the Humanities in both categories. The English Department's student/ FTE ratio of 14:1 is the average for Humanities Division.

Assessment activities are ongoing. Not only does the English Department critically assess the five core competencies identified by WASC, it also regularly surveys its majors/minors for input on changes in curriculum, and it has conducted a comprehensive alumni survey. The Department intends to continue these assessment activities.

The Department has revised the requirements for the BA in English, effective Fall 2016, to reduce its credit requirements from 45 to 36 in order to align with the requirements of UH Manoa.

The Department is a member of the Association of Departments of English.

External reviewer's observations and recommendations:

External reviewer Dr. Stromberg is impressed with the English Department's ability to develop and fulfill nearly all of the AAC&U's learning outcomes and deliver a quality program despite limited resources. He is cautious in making suggestions for improvement, because "the budget situation for the English Department is particularly dire" (External Reviewer's Report, page 6). "The Department is truly stretched to the breaking point in terms of being able to continue to fulfill its mission and service without more resources" (page 8).

He suggests the following areas of low-cost improvements to the program: (1) more curricular collaboration, (2) better marketing of the program, (3) increases in service learning/internships, (4) elimination of catalog-listed courses that are no longer taught, (5) development of a senior capstone, and (6) recruitment of faculty to teach professional and scientific writing.

(7) Regarding the importance of ENG 100/T as a barometer for student retention, the external reviewer recommends that administration provide additional support for the Director of Composition, such as professional development opportunities and release time.

Department action plan:

In response to the recommendations of the external reviewer, the English Department agrees to the following:

(1) and (7): The Department's designated Director of Composition is responsible for coordinating the Department's responses to changes in secondary education that may impact readiness and preparation of students. This duty will also include monitoring P-20 developments and their impact on freshman writing. This entails collaborative work on adjusting the curriculum in ENG 100/T in partnership with local English high school teachers and the UH System. The Director of Composition oversees the work group of ENG 100/T teachers, coordinates events for faculty development, and is the go-to person for enrollment and retention issues in ENG 100/T. The Director will submit an annual report to the VC for Academic Affairs on the Friday after May graduation.

(2): The Department agrees to update its website to include more visible presence for Creative Writing and TESOL. This update will take place in AY 2016-17.

(3) & (5): Beginning in Fall 2016, the Department agrees to develop faculty and student exchange partnerships with English Departments at other institutions, both nationally and internationally. Should these partnerships lead to growth in the certificate programs, the Department will request additional lecturer funding in order to offer needed classes.

(4): In AY 2016-17, the Department agrees to review the current list of courses in the catalog to eliminate courses that are no longer being taught.

(6): The Department agrees to follow this long-range hiring plan:

- One instructor to permanently dedicated to teach ENG 100/T. This position is needed to make ENG 100/T instruction more stable and uniform, and to reduce the dependence on long-term lecturers. It is very difficult to recruit lecturers with expertise in this area. Additionally, a long time ENG 100 lecturer plans to retire after Fall 2016. The new hire should have a remedial reading or developmental education background.
- One instructor at the 200-level to develop professional writing courses (i.e. business, journalistic blogging, online, legal, etc.) that are currently not covered by ENG 225. This hire would expand the range of the 200-level writing classes that can be recommended by programs in light of concerns over student performance upon exit from ENG 100/T.
- A tenure track in technical and professional writing. This area was highly popular with majors before the departure of our two specialists in rhetoric/comp. The number in majors has significantly declined since the loss of this area of study, which is far better aligned to workplace readiness than our literature track.

In addition, the Department agrees to survey and track alumni annually. This will provide additional assessment data that can be used to analyze the quality of the major and the certificate programs. At this time, assessment reveals we have generally competent students exiting our program; however more qualitative data is needed in order to gauge the effectiveness of recruitment as well as the perceptions of alumni on their experiences and skills once they leave the program.

The Department will continue to follow the Core Competency assessment plans set forth by the Assessment Support Committee, which includes several members from our Department. Assessment of ENG 100/T may need to be further resourced as we are hoping to continue random testing of Lexile ability ($7,500 per year) as well as generate quantitative data on writing skills (Written Communication and Information Literacy), the latter of which requires readers for over 500 papers per year.

Administration action plan, given the availability of funds:

(1) After reviewing and approving the general report from the Director of Composition, the VC Academic Affairs (VCAA) will award a one-course release per semester to the Director of Composition. If the VCAA decides to discontinue the course releases for performance based rather than financial reasons, s/he must state in writing why the Director of Composition's duties and report were found deficient.

(2) The administration agrees to provide funds and/or technical support for updating the Department's website, beginning in Fall 2016, in order to feature the Creative Writing and TESOL certificates more prominently. The hope is to generate a minimum 5% increase over the next five years for TESOL. Right now, the Department has around 10 majors who have repeated the upper division fiction courses—ENG 421 and 422. This can serve as a baseline with plans to reach minimum 5% growth over the next five years.

(3) The administration agrees to provide funds, up to $500 for the development and printing of multi-lingual brochures and other promotional material for the Department's national and international partnership endeavors.

(4) Should exchange partnerships lead to growths in the TESOL and/or Creative Writing certificate programs, the administration agrees to fund additional lecturer positions so that students can graduate from these programs in a timely manner.

(5) To rectify the near 50% loss of instructors and tenure-track faculty in the English Department since 2008, which the external reviewer identifies as a direct challenge to the Department's ability to fulfill its mission and service, the administration agrees to support the Department's hiring plan, which is subject to the availability of position numbers and finances, in this order of priority:

1. ENG 100/T instructor.
2. Instructor to develop 200-level professional writing courses.
3. Tenure-track faculty position in technical and professional writing.

(6) The CAS Interim Dean agrees to continue to allow the Department to retain its share of the CCECS summer funds.

Department approvals:

Bela Conley-Ramsay Bela Conley Ramsay

Seri Luangphinith 5/6/16

Kirsten Møllegaard KMøllegaard 5-6-16

Mark Panek 5/9/16

Lauri Sagle 5/10/16

Susan Wackerbarth 5/11/16

Jennifer Wheat Jennifer C. Wheat 5/9/16

Administration approvals:

Seri Luangphinith, Humanities Division Chair

Susan Brown, Interim CAS Dean MAY 13 2016

Matthew Platz, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs MAY 16 2016