



**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, EAST BAY  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

December 10, 2007

From: *Michael Mahoney*, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs

To: *Ben Bowser*, Interim Dean, CLASS  
*Dennis Chester*, Director, Liberal Studies Program

Subject: MOU Meeting – B.A. in Liberal Studies

On November 29, 2007, I met with Ben Bowser, Interim Dean of CLASS; Jim Okutsu, Associate Dean; Aline Soules, CAPR Chair; Dennis Chester, Director, Liberal Studies Program; and Carl Bellone, AVP Academic Programs and Graduate Studies to discuss the Program Review for the B.A. in Liberal Studies and to develop an MOU as required by CAPR 9.

The B.A. in Liberal Studies is a major composed of courses from a variety of departments. Traditionally, it has been the undergraduate degree for students interested in earning a teaching credential. It still serves this purpose but is also a good major for students interested in completing their bachelor's degree with a broad-based liberal arts background.

The focus on teacher preparation and stricter requirements of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) resulted in a modification that met teacher credential needs but removed flexibility for non-teachers. The external reviewer for the Liberal Studies Program suggested developing a second track for non-teachers. This subsequent modification was proposed and passed by the Academic Senate at the end of the 2006-07 academic year. The non-teacher track is especially important for students in the PACE Program who are interested in a bachelor's degree completion program but have no desire to be a teacher.

In addition, the Liberal Studies major incorporates the requirements for a blended or integrated teacher preparation program making it possible for a transfer student to earn a B.A. in Liberal Studies and a Multiple Subject Teacher Credential in two years.

The non-teacher track gives students the opportunity to take any minor in the university as part of the depth-of-study requirement for the degree.

There is a high need for the B.A. in Liberal Studies to be online but since the program has no courses of its own, it must work with departments that are offering courses in an online format such as Human Development to make this happen.

## **Understandings**

The CAPR report for the B.A. in Liberal Studies (2006-2007, CAPR 14) made five specific recommendations. CAPR recommended that the Liberal Studies Program 1) write measurable student learning objectives (SLOs), 2) gather outcome data for SLOs across a five year period, 3) describe the relationship between the assessment plan, SLOs, outcome data and program modifications, 4) continue to track program alignment with credentialing programs, and 5) conduct planned outreach activities to increase enrollment.

The results of the MOU meeting are as follows:

1. The development and measurement of SLOs for Liberal Studies is different for each of the two tracks. For the teacher-track the SLOs derive from the requirement set forth by the CCTC and can be measured by success on the CSET test. The Liberal Studies Program should therefore track the success of its students who take the CSET.
2. The development and measurement of the SLOs for the non-teacher track is more difficult. Although CAPR recommended that the Liberal Studies Program write measurable objectives, the program has SLOs which are listed in the university catalog. It is not appear, however, that the Liberal Studies Program has developed a system for measuring them. It is recommended that Liberal Studies work with the AVP for Institutional Research and Assessment, Colin Ormsby, (and other assessment experts at the university) to devise a way of measuring the SLOs. Measuring SLOs for the Liberal Studies program is especially challenging since there is no standard curricular requirements. However, use of pre and post tests and/or portfolios may be useful. The Liberal Studies program needs to explore these and other assessment methods.
3. The resources for the Liberal Studies program seem sufficient but there may be resource needs associated with the assessment methods mentioned above. For example, if there is a portfolio requirement, who would read the portfolios? The resource implications of this and other assessment models needs be worked out the Dean of CLASS and the Provost and may require additional resources.
4. The Liberal Studies Program needs to continue and expand its outreach efforts especially with neighboring community colleges. Enrollments have declined due to changes in CCTC requirements. A Liberal Studies degree no long will exempt students from taking the CSET. Since this change, Liberal Studies enrollments across the CSU have declined. Our decline was not as great as some other campuses. However, Liberal Studies is a large major and rebuilding its enrollment should be a priority.

5. The Liberal Studies Program is strongly encouraged to explore with its contributing departments means for putting the last two years of the degree online. This proposed online alternative with several pathways would surely be a valuable choice for many students and would increase enrollment in the program.
6. The B.A. in Liberal Studies will need to continue to respond to changes in CCTC requirements as it has in the past.

AVP Carl Bellone and I sincerely appreciate the very important work that the Liberal Studies Program continues to do and we thank the Director for his continuing strong efforts on behalf of our students and for the needed curricular revisions that he skillful accomplished. We'd also like to thank CAPR for their time and informative report.

Cc: Carl Bellone  
Aline Soules  
Hank Reichman  
Susan Correia