

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, HAYWARD

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DATE SUBMITTED: May 20, 1999

TO: The Academic Senate

FROM: The Committee on Academic Planning and Resources

SUBJECT: Five-year Program Review for the Liberal Studies Program

ACTION

REQUESTED: That the Academic Senate approve the CAPR Program Review of the Liberal Studies Program

BACKGROUND: On May 6, 1999, CAPR met with Tom Hall, Director of the Liberal Studies Program, to discuss the five-year program review for Liberal Studies. The Five-Year Review Report prepared by the Liberal Studies Program; the external reviewer's report, prepared by Helen Goldstein, the Liberal Studies Program Coordinator at San Francisco State University; and the Program's response to the external Liberal Studies review were all part of the Five-Year Program review submitted to CAPR.

The Liberal Studies Program allows students at CSUH to obtain a B.A. Major in Liberal Studies via one of two tracks - the credential track, designed for K-8 teachers, and the Liberal Studies track, intended for those with other goals who desire a broad liberal arts background. The Program is designed to provide breadth of academic experience across the arts, humanities, sciences and social sciences, as well as depth in a particular area of study, through completion of an option or a minor. The Liberal Studies Major is unique in that it subsumes all General Education and University graduation requirements, and those who follow the credential track will complete the California State approved Multiple Subject Matter Preparation Program. The design of the Liberal Studies Major - breadth, depth, required and selective courses, credential track, option and/or minor completion, and incorporation of all general education and university graduation requirements - necessitate the primary function of the Program office and staff to be the provision of accurate advising. The scope of this program at CSUH is further expanded by its numbers - 1186 (10-12%) of CSUH undergraduate students were enrolled in the major in Fall 1998.

PROGRAM REVIEW

CURRICULUM: The review found that the CSU Liberal Studies Program did "an excellent job of combining breadth and depth" of course work and was strong in the areas of English and science; the program was responsive to the changing demands of the State education system as well as the interests of students; the program did an excellent job of serving a broad spectrum of students through courses offered at both the Hayward and Contra Costa campuses and through the PACE program. Particular strengths were: a student's ability to choose a minor for either satisfaction of the program Option, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) depth requirement, or preparation for graduate study; the incorporation of specified General Education courses into the major; and enthusiasm for the design and quality of the Program, expressed by students and faculty alike. The reviewer's few concerns about program curriculum were the 'other side' of what was considered to be its strengths. The abundance of

course and option choices may not provide a clear sense of a cohesive major program. However, it appears that students choose from only a small number of the many options (thereby creating a de facto major), and few students choose to develop depth in the areas of science and mathematics. The reviewer also suggested that some form of summative assessment, including a portfolio of course work, be required for all Liberal Studies majors, not just those completing the Multiple Subject Matter Preparation Program. This would help insure every student's 'active' involvement in the learning process (as per Cornerstones).

FACULTY, STAFF, RESOURCES: The Liberal Studies Program has no faculty of its own and only a small staff of 1.33 PY faculty appointments (three advisors) and two temporarily full-time clerical who are all doing an admirable job of providing advisement and course evaluation to over 1000 CSUH undergraduates, considered by many to be "the best advised students on campus." Recent changes in staff assignments have allowed the program to better provide service (office hours, transcript evaluation, advising) to meet the demands of a growing number of students. However, with the pending Cornerstones implementation, the statewide push to recruit teachers and the subsequent increased enrollment in credential track programs, the need for facilitating transfer students' transitions to the University, as well as increased advising loads, the reviewer is in agreement with the Program self-study that the Director position should be full-time, the two staff positions should be of permanent full-time status and in classifications that better reflect their duties, and increasing enrollment should drive additional allocations for release time for faculty advisors, particularly in the Summer Quarter. The reviewer also recommends that all staff receive formal training in advising. Of further concern was the reviewer's perception that those faculty involved in the Program are 'senior' and may be retiring soon, and that much of the curricular and operational decisions of the Program are made 'informally' by the Director, with minimal outside input. The reviewer recommends involving newer faculty member participation and cross-campus collaboration.

STUDENTS: The reviewer did not have the opportunity to meet with students but had access to student exit surveys and the Program self-study information. She found that though Liberal Studies students are predominately female (86%), they otherwise reflect the diversity of the campus and community (over 45% minority). The majority (90%) are transfer students and the program does an excellent job of recruitment, outreach and articulation. The reviewer's only concern was a seeming unbalance in the attention given to Liberal Arts track versus credential track students.

LIBERAL STUDIES PROGRAM RESPONSE

The Program Director, advisors and staff expressed pleased agreement with the external reviewer's overall report: praise for the rigor of the program, the dedication of advisors and staff, and advising success; the observation that the Program is well designed to meet many of the Principles of the Cornerstones document; the endorsement of recommendations for increased staff allocations. Specific responses addressed some of the reviewer's concerns and recommendations.

- While it may appear that credential track students receive more advising and attention and are more actively involved in their course work and self-assessment than Liberal Studies track students, the Program staff avow that all students receive the same care and attention and there are no complaints of neglect. Further, the majority of students praise the Program's extensive curriculum, as well as the required common courses and experiences, and are not passive or self-limiting in their course, option and minor choices. The credential track and the PACE program both provide their students with a common major experience and cohesiveness, and the Liberal

Studies track students, by seeming to choose from only a small number of options, create a similar experience for themselves. The idea of requiring a portfolio assessment of all Liberal Studies majors has been considered at various times, but must continue to be rejected because of lack of resources for evaluation and archiving. For assessment purposes, the portfolios completed by 43% of the graduating seniors provide an excellent sample of both individual development and program value.

- All staff members agree that formal training in the 'art' of advising, rather than the specifics of information, is an excellent idea and have accordingly planned an advising workshop to be held during the Spring or Summer Quarter.

- The suggestion for recruitment of young faculty for the Program was well received and will be enthusiastically pursued when the Program receives additional resource allocations. Also noted was the fact that both Professors Henig and Elkin are 'younger' faculty who have no intention of retiring soon, and were selected in part to provide a measure of continuity.

- The reviewer's perception of the lack of formal campus-wide structure and input for the continued development of the Liberal Studies Program drew a critical response. Administrative structures of CSU Liberal Studies programs vary widely across the system, being shaped by many factors particular to each campus, including local culture and tradition and the competition for resources. At CSUH the Liberal Studies Program is not an 'orphan' program, but is accorded the status given to other academic departments and majors. In the CSUH tradition of governance, departments and programs carry out their own day-to-day administration, presenting curricular changes to School and faculty committees and the Academic Senate for approval. Special problems and innovations are handled by ad hoc committees drawn from across the campus. Formal responsibilities of the Director position include membership on many ALSS School and university-wide committees. Additionally, all Liberal Studies Program staff meet on a regular quarterly basis to address curriculum, advising and new problems or initiatives.

CAPR'S EVALUATION

In the meeting and discussion with Tom Hall, Program Director, CAPR learned that in addition to continuing to do an excellent job of serving a broad spectrum of CSUH students, the Program will be revising the major to incorporate new standards for Liberal Studies subject matter competency programs to be used by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing in December 2000. The Program will also be looking at general education cluster courses to determine which can best be incorporated into the Liberal Studies major for satisfaction of Liberal Studies requirements, and will work as well with other departments to ensure the continuation of solid overview courses that may be used by Liberal Studies majors for satisfaction of general education. In February 1999, negotiations were begun with Teacher Education for delivery of advising services to 300+ employees of the Oakland Unified School District. Finally, Teacher Education has accepted the Liberal Studies proposal for an accelerated four-year degree/credential program which will be implemented in the 1999-2000 academic year.

CAPR finds the external review and the Liberal Studies response to be satisfactory, concurring that this Program is necessary and vital and will continue to make an excellent and significant contribution to its students, the University, and the larger California community. CAPR supports the Outside Review and Program Self-study recommendation that the Director position should be full-time and the two staff positions should be permanent full-time status and in classifications that better reflect their duties. CAPR recommends approval of the five-year review and continuation of the Liberal Studies Program without modification.