Department/School of English and American Studies in a College of Liberal Arts

A Proposal

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Current Unit: English Department

Proposed Unit: Department/School of English and American Studies in a College of Liberal Arts
Our Proposal:
We are moved to make this proposal with the aim of achieving
- greater excellence in teaching, outreach, research, and creative activities
- a net reduction in the number of deans
- a more efficient and cost-effective administrative structure that will facilitate greater interdisciplinary and international initiatives on the part of our faculty across many intellectual and pedagogical domains

We are eager to commit our energies in support of the vision of the University of Arizona as a Global Land-Grant University.

We propose the creation of one college that combines the present College of Humanities and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and offers opportunities to attract other complementary departments or programs as the process unfolds. Within the newly reconstituted College, we propose that the Department of English be maintained and strengthened with continued and renewed efforts, and further collaboration with other strategic partners and entities within and outside the new College. We are, however, cognizant that other proposals have suggested the creation of an intermediate administrative level of ‘schools’ between the College administration and individual program and departmental units. If such a structure is adopted, we propose that English, with the second-largest instructional program on campus and forming over 50% of the present College of Humanities, should be redesignated as the School of English and American Studies (SEAS), crucially retaining its present direct reporting line to the Dean. We look forward to the opportunity to welcome other programs into this school as this transformation process proceeds. We estimate that the restructuring proposed here, principally through the replacement of two deans’ offices with one, but also with economies within the unit itself, will yield a minimum of half a million dollars in cost-savings.

Explanation of how the reorganization or consolidation will strengthen the unit’s teaching, service, and research, or creative activities, and thereby advance the University in accordance with the UA Strategic Plan 2009-13.

This proposal is predicated on the dissolution of the present division between the Colleges of Humanities and Social and Behavioral Sciences, and the creation of a unified College of Liberal Arts, with a national search for a Dean charged with organizing the Office of the Dean and working with constituents to further stimulate interdisciplinary intellectual exchange and promote the University’s interest in international affairs. It is to be noted that all but three of the UA peer and aspirant institutions have a College of Liberal Arts (indeed, two-thirds retain the Liberal Arts and Sciences structure previously in place here), with constituent departments reporting directly to a Dean in most cases. A ‘best practices’ conclusion is that this administrative structure serves the leading universities in the nation quite well, and any departure from it should require significant justification. Prior to the separation of the ‘Faculties’, later ‘Colleges’, in 1980, this structure likewise satisfactorily served the interests of the UA for some decades. The present proposal also assumes that Ockham’s razor should be a guiding principle inherent in the Transformation process: entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem (“entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity”), i.e., the fewest levels of administrative structure are best, both operationally and in terms of budgetary cost.
The above proposal would enable the Department of English to contribute more directly to the vision of the UA as a ‘Global Land-Grant University’, in view of the worldwide role of English in many fields today. The restructuring would not only allow the Department to be aligned with other departments, such as History, Philosophy, Sociology, and Anthropology as in the majority of our peer institutions, but also would facilitate closer cooperation with strategic partners such as the Poetry Center and the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL), and possibly the interdisciplinary graduate program in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching (SLAT), Women’s Studies, Africana Studies, and the Southwest Center. Such a realignment would reinforce current collaborative relations, and encourage further synergies in every aspect of teaching, service, research, and creative activities.

**Explanation of how the reorganization will raise the unit’s and the university’s ranking or reputation.**

English, as the one department devoted to our national language, has long been recognized as a cornerstone of the liberal arts, a status evidenced by the universal presence of an English department in the UA’s peer/aspirant institutions. Further, the ranking of universities has been shown to have the highest correlation with the ranking of their English departments (Astin, 1988). The UA Department of English is among the most highly productive units on campus, ranking tenth among all departments on the Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index (Academic Analytics, LLC 2006), and sixth among UA departments in production of PhDs in 2007 (UA Fact Book). We are particularly proud of the phenomenal placement rate in full-time positions for our 52 Ph.D. graduates over the last 5 years of over 94% (compared to 57% nationally (Report on the Survey of Earned Doctorates, 2006)), which is one of the highest rates for PhD graduates in the nation. We attribute this success in part to the participation of our graduate students in the rigorous and effective teacher training and support program managed by our Writing Program. Students admitted to the Literature program in fall 2007 had a median score at the 96th percentile on the GRE verbal exam, continuing the first or second place ranking in the University for the past five years. As one of the two largest instructional units on campus, the English Department alone constitutes over half of the present College of Humanities, with 53% of undergraduate majors, 50% of MA and 54% of PhD students, 35% of the faculty, and only 24% of the classified staff (IIW FY 07-08), and provides 45.7% of Tier I and Foundations Gen Ed SCH within COH. The centrality of the mission of the Department to the strategic goals of the University has been confirmed in earlier cORE and SLRP reviews, and amply demonstrated in its most recent APR report. English faculty have among the highest overall ratings for teaching in the University, and members of the Department have received numerous awards.

As presently constituted, the Department of English offers a highly successful model for the administrative efficiencies and integrative academic synergies sought in the current Transformation Planning process, in housing four strong graduate degree programs under a common roof: Literature; Creative Writing; Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English (RCTE); and English Language/Linguistics (EL/L). These jointly contribute significantly to both the undergraduate Writing Program, which is fundamentally central to the university enterprise and nationally recognized as a model of its kind through providing a significant interdisciplinary aspect to the program, and to the Undergraduate English Program, which performs a valuable function in preparing students as educated citizens for a wide variety of careers. The Creative Writing program has been ranked fifth in the country, and the RCTE program has been rated No. 2 in its field. The EL/L Program has the singular distinction of having had two past presidents of the global association for English language teaching professionals, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), on its faculty. In the past five years, English Department members have generated almost one million dollars in grants from a variety of foundations and...
collaborative partnerships. After a long relative drought in recruitment, this Fall the Department has welcomed seven exceptional colleagues to our faculty, who bring exciting new strengths and perspectives to our programs, and will contribute significantly to our future direction. By maintaining the Department of English in the newly configured college, we believe the rankings in all our programs will continue to move upward.

The Department of English has a long tradition of interdisciplinarity which forms a foundation for the present proposal. No fewer than two other departments on campus, *Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences*, and *Journalism*, have their origins in English, and the internationally acclaimed *Poetry Center* was initiated and, until recently, nurtured under English auspices. The English Department, particularly the Literature program, was significantly involved in the creation of *Women’s Studies, Africana Studies, and Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Studies*, and continues to collaborate closely with these, including with joint and affiliate faculty appointments. English also has close relations with *American Indian Studies*, which it has long supported through shared distinguished faculty and course offerings. English Department faculty from the Literature program actively participate in *GEMS* (Group on Early Modern Studies) and *UAMARRC* (UA Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation Committee). English has provided three of the four chairs of *SLAT*, including the founding chair and the incumbent. EL/L faculty teach core courses in the SLAT program, and SLAT serves as the de facto PhD program for EL/L. Also, English provides the largest number of graduate teaching assistantships for SLAT. English has many close ties to *CESL* as well. English has been the home of folklore studies since the 1930s, and has shared appointments in this field with the *Southwest Center* for the past 15 years. The Writing Program collaborates with over 20 units on campus and has a number of community outreach partnerships as well. All four of our graduate programs have collaborated in an innovative MAT program for teachers which we see as part of our land-grant mission. We look forward to extending these strategic interdisciplinary, campus, and community partnerships within the new college. By maintaining the Department of English in the newly configured college, we believe that we will further strengthen the interdisciplinary objectives of the University.

**Description of the processes of consultation with deans, heads, faculty, staff, appointed personnel, and students and the extent to which this proposal has the support of those affected (with the understanding that it may not have been possible to conduct full consultation with all parties at this point in the process).**

In the brief time available to us, we have not had a chance to consult extensively with many of our prospective strategic partners. However, this proposal has been vetted intensively within the Department, in a town hall meeting with the full faculty, graduate students and staff, in meetings with Program Directors and staff members, and with the Department Council, and has received enthusiastic and unanimous endorsement in all of these venues. In addition, our central proposal to merge the College of Humanities and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences into a single college unit has already received near-unanimous support and endorsement from the COH Dean’s Advisory Committee (DAC), a representative body elected by all constituencies within COH.
New college entity cost-savings
The proposed new College will result in a projected net savings of approximately 3% of the current COH personnel state budget (less permanent instructional monies) which would total approximately $500,000. This estimate considers reorganizing and restructuring the two colleges’ primary administrative and support offices, and some departments within the current structures. Additional savings will be realized from the merging of complementary units within the current two college structures. These moves at a minimum would eliminate a Dean’s position, free faculty in redundant administrative positions to teach additional classes, eliminate duplicate faculty committee work (e.g., P&T, sabbatical leave, post-tenure review), and allow for the reassignment of vacated office space. Minimum net savings: 1.0 faculty FTE, 1.0 classified staff FTE, **$500,000**

Curricular Innovation
The Department currently enjoys effective collaborations with many units across campus (e.g., Second Language Acquisition and Teaching, Women’s Studies, Africana Studies, American Indian Studies) through cross-listed classes and other mutually beneficial relationships, and we plan to explore more cross-listed courses to enhance interdisciplinary excellence. The Department is also committed to making curricular innovations to change some of the current practices. As such, we are looking into curricular changes for undergraduate students and in the Writing Program. For instance, we might add more Gen Ed classes to meet the demands of students, and we also plan to consolidate some of the courses in the Writing Program. Furthermore, we are planning to create dedicated sections devoted to writing in the disciplines (WID). Students who are placed in Honors Composition may satisfy their English Composition requirement in one semester rather than two. The Department continues to explore on-line courses and plans to pilot a course in Fall 2009. Minimum net savings in the overall curricula innovation will be **$50,000**

Projected personnel savings
Projected faculty retirements and resignations during FY2009-2014 will yield approximately $1,118,000 in permanent funds (29% of faculty budget). By replacing lost faculty at the assistant professor rank, we expect considerable permanent salary savings. Minimum net savings: **$338,000** (9% of faculty budget).

Enhancement of revenue streams
The Department has made great strides in actively participating in the grant application process and has been successful with various international and national agencies. Over the last five years faculty members have received the following support from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation - $200,000, National Endowment for the Humanities - $176,626, National Science Foundation - $236,283, National Writing Project (on-going) – $217,000, Spencer Grant - $50,000 and the Shantou University Collaboration Grant - $105,000, for a total of **$984,909**. In addition, the Department has also recently established a revenue-generating partnership with The New Oriental University in Beijing. Expanded efforts are planned in these areas.