

# Language Arts

De Anza College

## Dean's Summary Annual Program Review Update

April 12, 2017

### Description of Division

The Language Arts Division is comprised of the Departments of English, English as a Second Language (ESL), Journalism, Reading, and Speech/Communication. The English Department offers courses in English Writing (EWRT) and Literature (ELIT). LART courses, which combine basic skills English and Reading curriculum into a learning community, are also housed in the Division. In addition, the Language Arts Division coordinates, supports, and maintains two computer labs that serve the entire Language Arts Division, and a third computer lab dedicated to the Journalism Program and *La Voz*, the student and college newspaper.

### Enrollment Trends

Key Enrollment Data:

- 2015-16 total enrollment: 30,452
- Four-year growth: 2.3%
- Targeted group success: 75%
- Non-target group success: 83%
- Overall success: 80%

As noted in last year's program review Language Arts Division enrollments grew 4.3% over the three-year period of 2012-13 through 2014-15. Unfortunately, in the last year of this program review data (between 2014-15 and 2015-16), enrollment in the Division declined from 31,064 to 30,452, resulting in a growth of 2.3% over four years. This growth was achieved while maintaining FTEF at a steady level, resulting in a 1.6% increase in productivity over the four-year period.

During the four-year period, enrollments grew in nearly all departments; however, most departments reached peak enrollments in 2014-15 and declined slightly in 2015-16. Reading is the only department that showed continued growth in all four years.

Enrollment data disaggregated by gender reveals that from 2014-15 to 2015-16 male student enrollments declined more than female. Disaggregating the

enrollment data by ethnicity reveals growth in all four years for Latino/a students, while white students declined in all four years. Asian student enrollments peaked in 2014-15. The outlook with regard to enrollment is worrying, and reinforces the need for strategic planning. In the short term, we see a need for additional outreach and recruitment efforts. Looking ahead two to five years, programs aimed at retention and persistence are key. And for longer term, five years and beyond, a crucial component in maintaining and/or growing enrollment is our reputation as the best option for the first two or more years of post-secondary education in the region.

### **Student Success and Equity**

Target populations grew at a faster rate or saw smaller declines than non-targeted populations in most Language Arts Division programs. Target populations are growing at a faster rate in the basic skills, and target populations comprise a significantly larger portion of the overall enrollment in basic skills classes compared to transfer level courses. This is most readily apparent when comparing the distribution by ethnicity in Reading classes, in which all enrollment is basic skills, to the overall division numbers. In Reading, Latino/a students are the largest demographic group, at 38%, ahead of Asian (36%), white (9%), Filipino (9%), and African American (5%). For the Division as a whole, Asian students are the largest group (47%), followed by Latino/a (25%), white (15%), Filipino (7%), and African American (4%). As these numbers show, target populations (Latino/a, Filipino, and African American) students are disproportionately over-represented in basic skills classes. Once they reach transfer level, their numbers are more in line with the general college distributions. The trend is consistent in basic skill EWRT courses, although the enrollment data for basic skills courses in English Writing (EWRT) is not disaggregated from the transfer level.

As the Latino/a population grows across the campus, the importance of closing the overall equity gap, and in particular the basic skills equity gap, cannot be overstated. The changing demographics present a clear case for greater investment in basic skills courses and support.

Success rates among targeted populations for the whole of the Language Arts Division was remarkably consistent during the four-year period from 2012-13 through 2015-16, with an increase in successful grades earned in each year. The overall percentage of successful grades earned for targeted populations reached a high of 75% in 2015-16, even as enrollment of targeted populations surged by 10% over the same period. Non-targeted populations saw similarly consistent success rates (from 82% to 83%), with enrollment growing by a nominal 1.6%. While it is important to note that the faster growth in targeted populations did not adversely affect the equity gap, it is equally important to recognize that the disproportionately larger number of Latino/a students in basic skills classes reinforces the need to review our placement processes, particularly in light of the transition to the Statewide Common Assessment. The faster growth of target populations in basic

skills courses and across the Division also calls for a renewed and intensified effort in order to make progress in closing the gap. To that end, the Language Arts Division is actively engaged on the College and District Assessment Task Force Groups, is supporting department retreats focused on placement and curriculum alignment, and is supporting additional placement reader norming/training workshops in English and ESL.

Success rates of targeted populations in individual departments remained constant or improved over the four-year period. In Speech, the success rate for targeted populations rose from 76% in 2012-13 to 79% in 2015-16. In Reading, success rates for targeted populations rose from 73% in 2012-13 to 76% in 2015-16. In ELIT, success rates rose from 69% to 72%, and in EWRT, the rate rose nominally from a low of 71% to a high of 73% over the four-year period. Likewise, the gap between targeted populations and non-targeted populations remained steady or closed over the three-year period in all departments in Language Arts.

All departments have engaged in program level activities aimed at reducing the equity gap, and these efforts are ongoing. Some of the activities include department retreats, workshops, a division retreat, and department meetings, all of which were focused entirely or primarily on equity. A full-time counselor has been hired with the purpose of increasing the number of students who reach transfer level course success after beginning in basic skills English and Reading classes. Another dedicated counselor, focused on Adult School Student Transitions, ESL, and Basic Skills, will be hired this spring. New programs such as Jumpstart, a new summer bridge program; REACH, an athletics cohort; new LinC cohorts, such as Biology/EWRT; and new hybrid courses in ESL; along with ongoing programs such as Partners in Learning, the Caroline Keen Essay Contest, and IMPACT AAPI; are just a few of the many efforts that Language Arts faculty and staff are pursuing with the goal of closing the equity gap.

Because of the correlation between the growth in target populations and the demand for basic skills courses, closing the equity gap at the basic skills level will have a significant impact on the equity gap in other programs. The recently hired Language Arts Division Basic Skills Counselor and the soon to be hired Adult Education Transitions, ESL, and Basic Skills Counselor represent an important step in supporting students in basic skills classes and is expected to positively impact our equity numbers. As these positions become more closely integrated into the Division, we are developing methods of evaluation and processes for student and faculty input that will allow us to measure the impact on student success and assess their impact.

Current work being done in college-wide committees including DARE, SSSP, and the EAC presents an alignment of approaches and efforts that has the potential to close the equity gap across many disciplines. English and Reading faculty are heavily involved in the development of the Jumpstart program, which will run this summer for the first time. Similarly, greater coordination between and among Language Arts

Division instructional programs, Student Success & Retention Services, the Student Success Center, Learning in Communities, Counseling, and other support programs is vital to our equity efforts.

One final comment on the efforts in Language Arts to close the equity gaps—it is noteworthy that the department program reviews show significant analysis of the data at various course and program levels. I want to commend the Language Arts faculty and the leadership of the department chairs for the work they are doing to disaggregate and understand the data so that effective interventions can be made to create meaningful and sustainable improvements in the success of our students.

### **SLO/PLO Assessment**

All departments in the Language Arts Division have made progress assessing SLOs and PLOs. Along with equity planning and assessment, SLOs and PLOs and assessment results have been and will continue to be the focus of department and division meetings. We will begin a planning process in 2017-18 to develop PLOs and SLOs for Division-wide programs and support services, including the computer labs and dedicated counselors.

### **Staff and Faculty Levels**

Full-time faculty replacement and growth positions continue to be a central concern in the program reviews in the Language Arts Division. The total FTEF in the Division in 2015-16 is the same as it was in 2012-13, having risen only slightly in the intervening years. Full-time regular load, however, declined 7% over the four-year period, while overload increased to make up the difference. Part-time faculty load was unchanged. All departments have hired multiple part-time faculty each year, and all departments have struggled to find enough qualified part-time faculty to staff our classes. This has resulted in a greater reliance on full-time faculty overloads in order to cover classes and in some departments has resulted in having to reduce the number of sections offered. In Speech and Reading, the difficulty in staffing classes has been the primary reason for lost enrollment.

Full-time faculty positions are requested for these departments:

- Speech, 1 full-time growth position
- ESL, 1 full-time growth position and replacement of open positions
- English, 1 full-time growth position and replacement of open positions

In addition, the time spent in recruiting, training, and retaining highly qualified part-time faculty has placed a greater burden on full-time faculty. The diversity of the faculty in departments is also a concern, particularly as our student population demographics evolve. Our goal of recruiting and retaining a diverse and engaged faculty is made more challenging by the increasing cost of living and commuting

time. Staff and faculty are forced to choose between high housing costs and rising rents or commuting great distances.

Successful completion of current full-time faculty searches, including the additional dedicated counselor, will alleviate some of the difficulty in staffing classes and help us in our equity goals, but we will still fall short of being able to fully staff our schedules in some departments. In addition, we are concerned about the ongoing loss of qualified and talented part-time faculty as they retire or move out of the area in search of lower housing costs or shorter commutes.

A shortage of classified staff in the Language Arts Division also remains a concern. Staffing shortages have necessitated closing the Division Office during regular hours on occasion, and we are no longer able to provide evening support for the labs. Additional duties, such as key distribution, place a greater burden on our office staff, and are likely to impact our other services. The lack of evening lab hours has a disproportionate impact on non-traditional and working students, an impact which is magnified when combined with the loss of other evening support for students, such as tutoring. Additional part-time staff support for the Division Office and labs is a growing priority.

### **Equipment and Facilities**

Improved use of technology-enhanced instruction, whether in a traditional face-to-face class, a hybrid class, or a fully online class, is vital to the success of our programs and our students. Replacing/upgrading existing equipment in classrooms and labs and adding state-of-the-art equipment will help us keep pace with social change and assure our students and graduates are well prepared to succeed in employment or after transfer. Much of our multimedia equipment is more than five years old and is not industry standard. In addition, there is a clear need for increased wifi access and greater bandwidth in all buildings, including faculty offices and classrooms, with particular attention to rooms where we offer technology enhanced classes. We now offer four or more sections each quarter in which the students are provided with iPads, placing a high demand on the wifi.

A short list of the most pressing and most crucial equipment/facilities requests follows:

- Expanded and enhanced wifi access in the L-Quad classrooms and office buildings
- Replacement of the majority of chalkboards in the L-Quad with white boards to reduce dust allergens and protect computers and multimedia equipment
- Dual light switches in L-Quad classrooms to allow some lights to be turned off and reduce ambient light while the projector is in use
- 35 tablet computers (iPads) for the Journalism program for use in news media production classes

- 3D viewing glasses (Google Cardboard) and software for use in Speech classes
- Upgraded and/or refreshed furniture, including tables and chairs in L-Quad classrooms, tall stools or height adjustable chairs for use by teachers at the multimedia consoles, new lecterns in L4 classrooms, removal of broken chairs and tables, and replacement of missing and broken furniture; current reliance on folding chairs make effective collaboration difficult and poses a safety concern for some students or spaces
- Sound baffling to reduce sound spillover in L4 classrooms—student presentations as well as general instruction and collaborative work need limited distractions and disruptions
- Additional electrical outlets in classrooms to support students bringing multiple devices

### **Other Budget Needs**

B-Budget augmentation is needed for staff and faculty development, for equity work, and for better alignment of courses and norming standards. We continue to plan for upcoming challenges that will require increased norming and participation from all faculty such as the transition to the Common Assessment. In addition, there is a greater demand for professional development related to student equity, curriculum alignment workshops (particularly in sequential courses in English, Reading, and ESL), and to achieve the institutional metrics for ESL and Basic Skills. Further, we have a growing need for norming in English and ESL courses for grading essays and portfolios. Stipends are needed for workshop presenters and to encourage part-time faculty to attend department/division retreats to meet division/department equity objectives.

Increased part-time faculty inclusion in department, division, and college-wide initiatives is crucial to our efforts to close the equity gap, diversify the curriculum, and to contribute to the college mission of civic engagement and social justice. We cannot achieve our student equity goals without including our part-time faculty at every step along the way. As the Speech Department implements its new hybrid course structure with the additional hour of information literacy, additional stipends will be needed to ensure all faculty are equally capable of delivering the new curriculum and competent in the online environment. Expanding the use of the information literacy materials into other courses and departments will also require stipends for part-time faculty.

An increased budget for printing continues to be a concern across all departments. A disproportionate impact on underserved student populations and students in basic skills courses is of foremost concern. Increasing the budget for developmental courses to allow instructors some flexibility in supporting students who have limited digital access or familiarity.

## **Challenges and Opportunities**

Shifting demographics are having an impact on the demand for basic skills courses, and we have seen surprising changes in enrollment in some areas. Specific State driven factors that have and will add to the challenge are SSSP, the Common Assessment Initiative, and Multiple Measures. At the same time, meeting the needs of a changing student demographic challenges instructors in all courses to make their classroom more inclusive, and rapid changes in technology and communication add an additional layer of complexity to instruction. Students are often familiar with emerging technology but lack the understanding of how and when to use different tools and applications for academic purposes. Varying degrees of access to technology and digital resources have a disproportionate impact on developmental students and other historically underserved student populations.

Achieving our equity goals will require an increased investment in efforts that provide specific support for students with different levels of access to and experience with instructional technology and other educational resources. Effective efforts have been those that are collaborative and involve a coordinated effort by multiple individuals in different disciplines and departments. Achieving the necessary level of coordination and inclusion requires additional human and financial resources. Faculty and staff need to be supported in the adoption of new and existing technology and in the development of more inclusive pedagogies and teaching methods. Faculty and staff need to be encouraged to participate and collaborate through stipends and other material resources.

Each of these challenges is also an opportunity; there is a clear correlation between the increase in diversity of the students and staff and the opportunity to foster inclusiveness and promote equity in our classes and on our campus.