

**Program Review of Liberal Studies Major
at
California State University, Channel Islands**

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by

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The Review Process.

The outside evaluators arrived at the Channel Island campus on October 30 and 31, 2008 and had the opportunity over a two-day period to visit the campus, to meet with a number of groups of faculty, administrator, staff, and students, and to get answers to questions raised in the self-study document. The arrangements for the visit were very well handled, the schedule provided us a chance to see the proper people and we were treated graciously wherever we went. We wish to express our appreciation for the hospitality shown during this visit. All the Channel Island campus people we encountered seemed very aware of the Liberal Studies program's curriculum, operations, and importance. We were especially impressed with the sense of dedication to the campus' mission and goals and the need to produce excellent K-8 teachers who have a high level of subject matter competence.

Responses to previous review recommendations.

This was the first focused program review for the Liberal Studies major since its inception. Therefore, there were no specific recommendations for the Liberal Studies program to respond to from previous program reviews. Previously, the institution had been focused on obtaining regional accreditation. This WASC review of the entire campus was laudatory of the campus, its mission, goals, and objectives, and the initial program offerings.

Department/ Program Background History.

The Liberal Studies major existed prior to the opening of CSU, Channel Islands as part of a long, successful history of operation as the off-campus center of CSU, Northridge. The Liberal Studies Program at CSU Channel Islands was one of the original majors offered upon the opening of the university in August 2002. With the founding of the new Channel Islands campus an almost entirely new faculty was hired and therefore a new curriculum was developed which allowed the campus to build on its unique mission, goals and objectives and on the interests and strength of new faculty and staff.

This fresh approach could be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity. Since all Liberal Studies programs in California had to be revised to meet the new standards of the teaching profession that grew out of Senate Bill 2042 and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing's newly announced guidelines for programs providing subject matter content preparation for prospective elementary school teachers, the development of a new Liberal Studies curriculum which met the needs of the campus service area and the opportunity to use the new campus faculty resources was clearly a challenge and a wise decision.

Mission.

The CSUCI Mission states "placing students at the center of the educational experience, California State University Channel Islands provides undergraduate and graduate education that facilitates learning within and across disciplines through integrative approaches, emphasizes experiential and service learning, and graduates students with multicultural and international

perspectives.” This is clearly articulated throughout the campus with signage, faculty wallet cards and on the university web site. In the Liberal Studies Program, faculty, staff, administrators and students all unmistakably know and believe in the mission of the university. A well articulated and shared vision for the university is among the strengths of the university and the Liberal Studies Program

Goals and Objectives

The learning objectives are clearly stated in the Liberal Studies Program:

1. Commitment to the development of content knowledge – breadth and depth;
2. Commitment and respect for diversity of all students;
3. Commitment to scholarship, teaching, and active, lifelong learning
4. Commitment to excellence across program areas
5. Commitment to active involvement with the surrounding community

These learning objectives carry out the university mission statement by sharpening the particular emphasis within this program.

The Curriculum of the Major.

The curriculum in the Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies reflects the goals and objectives of the program, with a comprehensive, multidimensional education in a variety of disciplines and the Teaching and Learning Option matches the program standards requirement last published by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

There are three Options in Liberal Studies: Concentrated Studies Option; the Teaching and Learning Option, and the new Accelerated Program Option.

The **Concentrated** Studies Option allows students to develop a Program of Study with a faculty advisor which focuses on a disciplinary or interdisciplinary area. In addition to students interested in non-traditional or interdisciplinary degree programs, this option is of interest to students who have taken substantial course work from a four-year institution in a discipline not currently reflected in the majors at CSUCI.

The **Teaching and Learning Option** provides multiple subject matter preparation for students to be admitted to the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. This option provides subject matter preparation for passage of the CSET, as an admission requirement for their Multiple Subject Teaching Credential program.

The **Accelerated Track Option** attempts to combine content and pedagogy, and, though there is some advantages to combining “what to teach” and “how to teach” in the same course, the outcomes of this arrangement should be carefully monitored and graduates should be assessed to see if Teaching and Learning Option and Accelerated Option students are doing well on the CSET and in the elementary school classroom.

Not all subject matter content areas specified in the state standards and covered on the CSET are included in the requirements for the LS major, however:

1. The Analysis of Literature is covered in a number of GE courses, but there is no specific course which provides all students with a consistent coverage of the techniques and methods of analysis of all genres and styles. Also needed is a broad survey of World Literature that covers aspects of fiction, poetry, drama, and non-fiction prose from an analytical perspective which would be more useful for GE breath and in preparing students for the CSET

2. In the Arts category it is possible for students to graduate without full coverage of all the arts disciplines. At present Music does not appear to be covered in the curriculum, and Dance is only thinly covered in the PHED 302 Motor Learning, Fitness, and Development in Children. Moreover, Art 102 focuses on Multicultural Art and PATH 343 Teaching Drama to Children seems to move to application of knowledge prior to gaining the background content knowledge, but actually is taught in lecture mode. The Arts are a difficult challenge for all Liberal Studies programs to cover full, but most CSU campuses require at least three of the arts to be covered in required courses.

(This expanded coverage of the arts could be accomplished at CSUCI by reducing the unit value of the Art, Music, and Theatre courses to 2 units while changing the course classification and format all activity mode. Because courses coded as activity are required to meet for 2 hours of class for each unit of credit, you could have three arts courses, each with four hours a week of class time. The Arts in particular would benefit from this mixture of content and hands-on application, especially since the credential program provides little coverage and attempts to integrate Social Science and Arts methods in one course.)

3. It is not clear how ENG 475 Language in a Social Context is aligned with the state standards. The course focuses on English Language Learners and the development of literacy in children, and appears to cover content normally covered in credential programs.

4. The two required Mathematics courses, MATH 208 and 308, have appropriate content and provide very strong preparation for K-8 teaching. The newly implemented Accelerated Program Option does not contain Math 308, however, and MATH 208 alone does not seem to be sufficient content knowledge for EDAP 426 and EDAP 428, the mathematics methods course in the Multiple Subject credential. (Of course the majority of incoming freshman will have had to take MATH 101 College Algebra as a hidden prerequisite for MATH 208.)

5. ESRM/GEOG 105 (a required course in the Liberal Studies major) does not appear in the 2008-09 catalog, so it is not possible to determine the range of coverage of this course, but the state standards and the newly adopted CSU Lower Division Transfer Pattern for Liberal Studies

requires a course in World Geography, which normally is broader than the current course title, Environmental Issues in Geography, would imply.

6. COMM/EDUC 345 Media Literacy and Youth Culture and COMM/EDUC 346 School Communication are very unusual choices in GE or the Liberal Studies major and seem more specifically related to the credential program than the academic subject matter content that is to be provided by the Liberal Studies major.

7. EDAP 425 Health and Physical Education in the Elementary School appears to be used in the General Education program and the major for the Accelerated Track rather than PHED 302 Motor Learning, Fitness and Development in Children, which seems to better provide the content that will be tested on the CSET.

8. The pedagogical content and curriculum coverage of the credential portion of the Accelerated track looks to be very strong and to cover all aspects of the basic teaching credential methods and materials very thoroughly. This extensive curriculum appears impossible for the majority of incoming freshmen to complete in nine semesters, however; and most area community college transfers are unlikely to have completed the full lower-division component and probably will have difficulty completing the Accelerated Track in the minimum number of terms as a number of required courses are not articulated yet.

Relationship of Liberal Studies major to GE Program.

As is typical for Liberal Studies majors in the CSU system, there is a great deal of overlap and double counting of General Education courses in order to focus the major's lower-division choices on GE courses that also meet the state standards for K-8 teacher and prepare Liberal Studies graduates to pass the California Subject Examination for Teachers of Multiple Subject (CSET.) The Channel Island program has made good use of the available GE courses and limited the choices where necessary.

Some of the GE courses used in the Major do not seem to be necessary to meet the state standards. Also, a number of the GE courses offered by the campus and required by the Liberal Studies major do not seem to conform to the state-wide guidelines for inclusion in their category of General Education and most likely would not be approved by the state-wide GE committee if submitted by community college. (For, example use of EDUC 101 Intro to Education and EDUC 320 in the History and Social Science category; and ART 102 Multi-cultural Children's Art and in the Arts category. The focus of these GE course should be academic content and breadth of knowledge rather than application to the teaching profession.

It would also appear that a number of allowances have been made in GE to accommodate the high unit demand of the Liberal Studies major.

The inclusion of three science courses with laboratory sections is laudable as the hands on experience in Science is essential to understanding and applying the concepts from the lecture and readings.

The use of a hidden prerequisite of MATH 101 College Algebra before allowing students to take MATH 208 is somewhat deceptive and confusing for students. Since MATH 101 is not remedial and acceptable for meeting the GE Mathematics requirement for other majors, why not for Liberal Studies. Consideration should be given to the fairness of this arrangement and whether this course is really necessary for success in MATH 208.

Program Learning Outcomes.

The program's stated Teaching and Learning Outcomes are:

Students will be able to:

1. Evaluate effectively oral or written communication for accuracy of content, logic of argument, and clarity of reasoning.
2. Demonstrate high levels of computer literacy, information literacy, and technological literacy.
3. Compare and contrast other cultures and their customs and societal issues that may arise
4. Demonstrate content area knowledge related to their program of study and intended career goals.

These program goals are laudable expectations, but a more detailed set of measurable objectives also needs to be developed which would allow the program to quantify and track the progress of its students so that you can determine what on average students know and are able to do in each of the subject matter content areas.

The kind of matrix used for alignment of the overall CSUCI Curriculum and Institutional Mission-based Learning outcomes, which identifies and describes Modern World in term of the content, issues and the methodologies, tools and techniques of the academic disciplines, would be very useful to the Liberal Studies major. This document could be developed by creating a matrix of the objectives and expected outcomes of each course in the major with the program's specific objectives and expectations for learning outcomes.

Findings of Student Learning Outcomes Assessments. The Liberal Studies major is definitely meeting the needs of its students and its broadly stated goals. It is very successful in providing a degree program that prepares its majors for the subject matter content examination over all the required subjects evaluated by the CSET. The program apparently produces successful credential candidates and a growing number of public school teachers who are working in the area schools and becoming leaders. However, without more fully developed assessment measures and several years of data from summative assessments of each of the content areas of the Liberal Studies major it is difficult to know whether the Liberal Studies major is fully meeting its objectives. In fact, the current objectives are still rather vague and unmeasurable as currently stated. They are broad and lack embedded criteria for determining how students will demonstrate their knowledge and skills and there needs to be a much more detail process for measuring the level of achievement expected, and for knowing at what level of competency each graduate has attained.

The CSET is one strong measure, but unfortunately not all Channel Island students stay there for their credential, so we do not know how many pass the CSET the first taking or over time; and, neither the CSET test company nor CCTC provide any breakdown of scores by specific discipline tested or parts of the three sub-tests. All we know for sure is that all those admitted to the credential program have gotten 65% of the questions correct in each Subtest and overall. (This is a frustration at all institutions at present, the CSU Liberal Studies program coordinators have strongly urged the Chancellor's Office to pressure CCTC to change the format of CSET score reporting to provide more meaningful breakdown of the results. We do not need individual student scores broken down, but we do need further disaggregation of the overall results for the campus in each of the subtests.)

Currently, other CSU campus have developed multiple means of assessing their seniors through local developed and norm or criterion referenced exams, analysis of portfolios of student work, course embedded questions in a number of key courses, interviews and oral exams, and even practical tests of the application of knowledge.

Any changes in goals and objectives needed/planned? As noted above some consideration should be given to the development of a more finite and measurable set of objective for the Liberal Studies majors. Because of the large, complex and broad curriculum, it is difficult to measure and evaluate all aspects of the curriculum at one time, but development of a cycle of assessments which focus year by year or term by term on different categories of the major (e.g. Language and Literature in one round, Social Sciences in another, Natural Science and Mathematics in another, etc., would allow the faculty to focus and balance their efforts at regular intervals and collect data that would, over time, yield information about trends in the competency of your students--and, of course, use the findings for improvement of the curriculum and methods of instruction.

Instructional modes or formats used. The Lecture/Discussion format is used primarily, though there are a number of excellent opportunities in the curriculum for hands-one activities, laboratories, and field experience. Students seem to appreciate the practical nature of the courses and how the ideals and goals of the institution area applied in almost all courses. There is field work based component to many classes. Students need these opportunities and requirement to decide if teaching is a viable career option for them. Service Learning in LS 492 and Independent Study in LS 494 and LS 497 are available through the Liberal Studies Program, but are not required.

Trends in Class size. Class sizes are generally fairly small compared to most CSU campuses, community colleges and even nearby private institutions. The students all commented on how much they appreciated this compared to other institutions they had attended.

Use of Computers, Multi-media and other Technology for student learning. Up-to-date and appropriate technology and media support is available in almost all classrooms. The library is well-equipped for information access and retrieval both on and off-campus. We did not have a great deal of opportunity to see the use of appropriate technology in individual classes, but faculty and staff seemed very satisfied with the availability and condition of equipment in the classrooms. (The movement of some activity-based and equipment-oriented courses to different

classrooms, such as the PHED 302 course, each term and the lack of specialized classrooms and equipment is awkward and appears to be a growing issue, but one which the administration is aware of and seeking to remedy as more of the older buildings are upgraded).

Grading practices. The grades of Liberal Studies majors are somewhat higher than the average of the campus. The grading practices in those courses taken primarily by Liberal Studies majors were not examined in the self-study. It would be useful in subsequent reviews to examine grading trends in the major by course, by category, by level, and for graduates. For example, it would be interesting to compare grades as “formative” assessment with the finding of summary assessments of seniors and graduates.

Faculty.

The faculty members teaching the Liberal Studies major core course are highly qualified and committed to the program. Both the full-time and part-time instructor we met with seemed genuine interested and proud of their involvement in the Liberal Studies major. There is a rare degree of enthusiasm and intimate knowledge of the curriculum and the purpose of the course that they are teaching. The Liberal Studies program provides learning opportunities that are guided by a caring and dedicated faculty. Students report that they feel faculty provide personal attention to students in a close-knit campus atmosphere.

The Professional backgrounds and accomplishments of the full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members teaching in the program are remarkable and any institution would be proud to have them on their staff. Channel Islands was highly successful in attracting its first faculty hire from a variety of high level universities and hired some distinguished and able teachers and scholar. Faculty staffing is focused on the kind of persona needed to meet the institution mission, and a balance of teaching and research interests. The novelty of becoming part of a brand new university in an attractive setting mild climate and having the chance to put their mark on the curriculum and develop degree programs that were driven by a solid mission may not last forever, however. The budget crisis, the cost of living in Southern California and the area around the campus, and a diminished sense of commitment to innovation and interdisciplinary course may, however, make it more difficult in the future to find new faculty who balance and complement the faculty hired in the first five years of the institution.

Percentage of Full-time faculty. The ratio of full-time to part-time instructors was not addressed in the self-study, but given the range of courses and departments servicing the Liberal Studies major one can assume that the overall campus ratio and patterns of staffing are similar in the Liberal Studies major. However, with the recent budget situation (and on-going budget crisis) in California and in the CSU, it would be wise to monitor both average class sizes and the percentage of part-time faculty used to staff key core courses in the Liberal Studies major. With any interdisciplinary program it is easy for departments to favor the upper-division courses that serve their own major by driving up class size and keeping down cost for the “service” courses for GE and other majors.

Support Staff.

The number of support staff seems minimal, but adequate for the time being. This may need attention as the Liberal Studies major starts to grow to its earlier numbers and again increases its percentage of campus majors and FTES.

Adequacy of administrative and budgetary support. The program has recently revised its administrative structure, reporting lines, and advisory bodies. In addition, there have been very rapid changes in program directors, which may reflect some dissatisfaction with the level of budgetary support and authority. From our discussions with administrators and faculty it cannot be determined why the rapid turnover of directors has occurred.

We are concerned primarily about the need for additional assigned time and/or advising support for the Director. The position was reduced from full-time to half-time recently and the lack of summer appointment and salary for the director make the position more unattractive. Summer is often a time when planning, assessment, curricular revision, recruitment, and advising of incoming students are necessary for the smooth functioning of the program during the academic year. Students we met were particularly aware of the lack of a state-support summer session as their progress through this very large, complex, and highly structured major is impeded by not being able to attend in the summer. For those working full-time and taking courses part-time, the lack of a summer session and the ability to attend school year round delays their graduation, especially if they encounter schedule conflicts or closed classes during the rest of the year. This may particularly affect the Accelerated Track Option where students will be pursuing high unit loads and may benefit with some unit relief with a summer session of classes.

Three solutions to this staffing issue would seem evident. The first would be to extend this position to include a summer appointment. The second idea would be to provide a full time appointment or a nine unit appointment. The third solution to this support for the Director would be to eliminate his responsibility for advising for the Concentrated Studies Program. In other CSU campuses this program is under a Special Majors degree program and not under the Liberal Studies Program. Moving this program to another area such as the Center for Integrative Studies would free up some of the Director of Liberal Studies time. It was estimated by the current Liberal Studies Director that this advising takes 50% of his current workload.

The current program director is highly experienced, very capable, dedicated and able to make the program function on this limited assignment. He is approaching retirement age, however, and it will be very difficult to find another person of this senior level who would take on the task on a part-time basis.

The assignment of a full-time professional staff advisor from the Advising Center might mitigate the concern because the advisor would not have other majors to advise and would concentrate on just Liberal Studies students. Students tell us that they experience great difficulties in getting appointments with the key staff advising in the central advising office, so simply moving this person to the Liberal Studies office would not solve all the problem or greatly expand the need for involvement of an experienced senior person to guide the program, guide the students,

monitor the curriculum and student progress and due substantive analysis of data from student work and assessments—which will need more attention in the next few years. Summer is the best time for much of this reflection, planning, and developmental work.

Success in recruiting and retaining women and minorities. It appears that the campus and the program has made an outstanding effort to hire a balanced and representative faculty, staff, and administration. Given the changing demographics of Southern California, maintaining this mix will be a critical element in attracting incoming students and ensuring that new K-8 teachers produced by the campus reflect their classroom's ethnicity and background. The modeling and mentoring roles of faculty should be recognized, celebrated and rewarded.

Students.

Historical Trends in number of majors and graduates. The number of declared Liberal Studies majors has declined substantially over the past five years. There is every potential for this trend to be reversed, given the demographics of the service area, the ongoing demand for K-8 teachers, and the growing reputation of the program for excellence and good service.

Student Recruitment and Retention Efforts. There is little indication of systematic recruitment and a comprehensive plan for attracting and retaining students. Work with the areas high schools to develop an early consideration of a career in teaching and development of a strong pipeline of students will be essential to the long term growth of the Liberal Studies major. There is as great deal of competition from nearby campuses and branch operations of private institutions.

Graduation rate. The program has a mixture of full-time and part-time students who complete the program at their own pace. The rate of attrition of majors does not appear out of line with other majors on the campus or throughout the CSU system; however, regular attention should be given to tracking the 4-year, 6-year, and 8-year graduation rates. Exit interviews and follow-up of students who drop out of the program and the campus should be considered. Students generally leave for personal or financial reasons beyond the control of the institution, but deeper probing often reveals hidden problems and perceptions of the program, the campus climate, the level of academic and support services support and interpersonal factors.

Results of Surveys of Current Students and Alumni. We did not see evidence of regular, on-going surveys of students and program graduates. This is something that would be well worth doing at this stage of the program's development and history. Brief on-line surveys as part of the computer registration process have been very easily implemented at other institutions and have yielded very useful information about student perceptions, needs, and preferences.

How is effectiveness of departmental program assessed? This first five-year program review is a good step as are a number of other planning and analysis projects the campus is developing. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment has been started, but, the operational aspects of the program also deserve and would benefit from systematic measurement and

evaluation. Development of bench marks, trend data, cost-benefit analyses, and average class sizes by level and mode, and comparative staffing ratios across the campus would provide excellent information for making decisions and allocation of staff. In addition to comparative data, the use of more program specific internal indicators of changes in the program and its operations would likewise provide the kind of information needed for on-going program adjustment and improvement.

Advising. Advising of the Teaching and Learning Option is done by the Academic Advisors in the Advising Center. As previously mentioned student report this can be sometimes take a two week wait to see the most knowledgeable advisors for Liberal Studies. The Concentrated Studies Option students are advised by the Director of the Liberal Studies Program. The Accelerated Track Option will also be advised by the advisors in the Advising Center.

Clubs and Student Activities. No clubs apparently exist especially designed for the Liberal Studies students. There is great potential for development of an organization that allows Liberal Studies majors to work together with their peers. Perhaps a Future Teachers club or involvement in the Student California Teachers Association (SCTA) which also includes credential students would be the best way to get students involved. Those we talked with seemed to know each other from being in lots of classes together, but they did not have the kind of group cohesion and professional focus that an organization would build.

Involvement of students in research. Apparently, a good number of students are involved in community service and pre-service work in the area schools. It may be difficult to get the majority of Liberal Studies majors involved in the research projects of the subject matter disciplines, but Education faculty do lots of applied research that would be appropriate for involvement of undergraduates and prospective teachers.

There appears to be a hunger among the students for earlier application of their subject matter content. Several students asked for more focus of their Liberal Studies major core course on practical matters, applying their knowledge to a real world” school situation, or just in working with kids.

Library and Information Resources.

Quality and size of holdings. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the Liberal Studies major, library resources and availability of specialized books and journals is not an issue. The Library holding are growing and the completion of the new Library addition provides an attractive place for Liberal Studies majors to study, congregate with their colleagues, and avail themselves of any needed reference materials.

Because of when it was developed, the library’s collection looks much different than that of a traditional university library with a great deal more reliance on quick retrieval of material from other libraries, on-line data bases, full-text on-line journals, document delivery, etc. This access to information via media is a great strength of the library, but one hopes, somewhat nostalgically, that the physical library, its rich resources of printed material, and its place as the center of the university’s source of knowledge will continue to grow in the number of books, journals, audio

and video, maps, and art works, etc. It is clear from the extensive availability of computers, study carrels, group study rooms, meetings, room, art exhibits, and even place for refreshments, that the library is currently a focal point of student life, study, and interaction.

Needs for additional library resources. We did not have time to review all the Education discipline holding, but, if it has not already been developed, development of a carefully selected set of books that bolster the reading for the specific Liberal Studies program courses in Children's Literature, Math and Science Education, Social Studies Education, Human and Child Development and Arts in the Classroom would be a good step in collection development. Likewise, the development of a collection of easily accessible current K-8 textbooks and teacher's manuals would assist the Liberal Studies majors both in the content areas and in the credential courses.

Space and Facilities.

Office Space. The location of the Liberal Studies office near the Credentials office and the School of Education administrative suite is advantageous and adequate for the current size of the program. Long term additional space for adviser, student files, and perhaps a student lounge would be very helpful in developing a sense of place and focus for the majors. As the number of students grows, eventually office space may have to be moved out of the hallways from direct student access so that staff might concentrate on their job responsibilities.

Instructional Space. The availability of a large physical plant and spacious campus grounds is a great advantage for this fledgling young campus. Development of new facilities and the renovation of old building for new functions is proceeding apace. The administration is to be commended for the rapid establishment of the campus, the development of a long-term master plan for capital outlay and the construction plan. For now the amount and types of instructional space certainly meet the needs of the Liberal Studies major and the lower-division General Education courses which underpin it. Specialized classroom space for classes such as the PHED 302 Motor Learning, Fitness, and Development in Children will be needed.

Student Advising, Lounges, Activities Space. No specially designated facilities currently are available where Liberal Studies majors can congregate, hold club meetings, or feel like they are part of a department. There exists on the Channel Islands campus the potential for having such a Liberal Studies. Even if this space were not contiguous or even nearby the program office, having such a home base for Liberal Studies students would greatly facilitate their sense of belonging, their retention, and the possibility of group activities, study groups, etc.

With such a large major (and one which is bound to grow rapidly along with the university), having a place to gather and interact with their colleagues will be an increasingly important factor in student success. It is very easy for Liberal Studies majors to become isolated. Other campuses which have instituted student activities spaces and lounges for students have had good success.

In addition, group advising and meeting with larger numbers of students for special programs, lectures and events would further develop this common esprit and pride in the program.

Departmental Governance.

Functioning as an interdisciplinary program drawing courses and faculty from many disciplines, Liberal Studies is not an independent department with its own assigned faculty and courses. As noted above under the history of the development of the Liberal Studies major program, the leadership and oversight of the Liberal Studies major has undergone fairly rapid changes. The recent reconfiguration of the older advisory body--which was a very good way of getting diverse faculty involved and committed to the program, but which was too large to be functional over time--with a working advisory group with key representatives from each of the core subject areas, the credential program, and academic advising staff has great potential for providing the kind of guidance the program needs and the kinds of ongoing support the Director needs.

Ideally, each of faculty members on the Advisory body would represent each of the broad areas of the major would take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate faculty were teaching the required Liberal Studies courses, informing new instructors about the special needs and focus of the Liberal Studies major, engaging in subtle types of “quality control,” and taking part in student learning outcomes assessment for their area of the curriculum. These tasks largely fall on the half-time Director of Liberal Studies, who has little time or authority to carry out such duties.

We were not able to meet all the faculty representatives to the Advisory group, and it would have been good to be able to gauge the entire level of commitment and involvement of each of the members. Nonetheless, the representatives we did meet all seem highly energetic and enthused about being involved with prospective teachers, doing interdisciplinary work, and ensuring that the Liberal Studies program is well-supported and of high quality and good reputation. In fact, they were remarkably knowledgeable about the program, very eager to serve the major, and aware of the importance of this broad major for enrollments in their fields and the long term health of their disciplines as the programs graduates influence the education of the next generation of their students.

One caution: in other institutions with a similar mix of membership, there is a tendency for support staff and representatives from teacher education to be more loyal in attendance and, thus, begin to dominate and influence the direction the group, program operations, and even the curriculum. (This is definitely not the case at Channel Islands yet, but there is a potential for this type of lopsided division of interests.) Consideration of adding a student member to the advising group is recommended.

Organization, Responsibilities, Committees. The Liberal Studies program does not need an elaborate set of committees and governance structures, but some consideration might be given to the development of subcommittees of the Advisory body for areas such as curriculum, assessment/evaluation, and program promotion and recruitment

Policy development process.

Curriculum review process. The process of curriculum development and review of courses and programs is just being solidified after the rapid evolvement of the campus while trying to get everything started at once. In subsequent program reviews, for instance, it would be important to focus more on evaluation of the success of the curriculum, its operations, and its impact on majors. Having a strong faculty involvement in the advisory boards is the first step. In an era of declining resources it is all the more important that good planning, budgeting, and evaluation take place; and that the Liberal Studies major have a strong voice in setting its own course and flourishing in a setting where specialized departmental interests are sure to grow.

Interpersonal Relationships. It is clear that there is widespread support for the Liberal Studies program and that the key players and faculty involved in the program get along and respect each other. In general, the Channel Islands campus seems to have a more positive attitude among the faculty, staff and administration than that found at most other CSU campuses. The current budget situation, lack of enrollment and growth, delay of new facilities and programs may begin to strain relationships after this “honeymoon” phase of the campus’ development. Some consideration should be given to methods of maintaining this feeling of strong campus community, involvement in common goals, and shared responsibility for successes and improvements. The faculty courtyard, where faculty can congregate, appears to aid efforts to support this relationship building.

Extra-mural Funding and Fundraising Activities.

The Liberal Studies major does not yet raise a great deal of outside money for Scholarships or gifts to support it in ways that state funds cannot provide. It is not clear from the self-study document if any specific grants have written to support the program, but there is good potential for state and federal support for projects and contracts with local school districts. Having the Liberal Studies program housed in the School of Education should greatly facilitate this fundraising and efforts to develop community and alumni support. There is every reason to believe that extra-mural funding will grow with the success and reputation of the program for excellent in teacher training and for community service.

Community Support. The review team did not have time to determine the level of support for the program in the community. There appears to be good potential, however, for developing strong relations with the public and the K-12 community. Eventually, this will lead to partnerships, joint grant activities, and heightened potential for fundraising and gifts. As a new institution, this is the time to start building these connections and relationships.

Alumni Support. As the university and the Liberal Studies Program begins to have a larger pool of alumni, the Liberal Studies Program must begin to draw upon these alumni in reviewing curriculum (perhaps by adding a alumni member to the Liberal Studies Council) and to generate financial support.

Perception of Department/Program by Others.

On-campus. Clearly, students, faculty, and staff have a high regard for the Liberal Studies program and see it as central to the campus mission and the development of long term enrollment. It was one of the original majors chosen to open the campus and was one of two majors chosen to undergo the initial program review process. This speaks volumes about the relative importance of this program. Many comments were heard about how the Liberal Studies major is providing the kind of education that students need and how proud they are of the program. There is a general perception on campus that this is a high quality program.

Off-campus locally, regionally, and nationally. We did not have the time to meet with many people from off-campus, but during our meeting with Liberal Studies majors who are currently in the credential year and doing student teaching at area schools, we got the definite impression that these students are well-received by the public schools and that the Liberal Studies majors produced by Channel Islands are well prepared in subject matter content.

In subsequent reviews and perhaps annually, it would be advisable for the institution and the Liberal Studies program to establish a systematic approach to obtaining comments, input, and advice from the schools and the community through regular meetings, focus groups, satisfaction surveys, and representative advisory boards.

Articulation and Relations with Community Colleges. Although the campus and the Liberal Studies program have good relationships with the nearby community colleges and has developed formal articulation agreements, there is still a good deal of work to be done. For example, the on-line Project Assist data has not been updated since 2006-07, and in a number of lower-division categories of the Liberal Studies major, the community colleges do not have an equivalent course. The courses required by the Channel Island GE and Liberal Studies program are different enough from the content and pattern at other state universities in the region that community college students might transfer to, that the community colleges really have to offer more generic courses that are widely accepted elsewhere. Consideration should be given to either revising or replacing these lower-division Liberal Studies major courses or working with the community colleges to assist them to develop parallel course content that can be easily transferred into the Liberal Studies major. (See your articulation agreement sheets for the categories for which there is no match at the community colleges.)

While the campus has worked hard to develop articulation agreements, those agreements could be made easier to understand. A single page matrix of classes and their articulated class equivalencies should be posted on the Liberal Studies website and be available for distribution through advisors and in the program office. This would make this process more transparent for students.

Efforts to Publicize program and inform campus of accomplishments. Efforts to publicize program and inform the campus of its nature, content and accomplishments are underway, but more could be done to promote the program in the region in order to rebuild the program to the level of enrollment before the recent drop in teacher education preparation and credential programs state-wide. The Liberal Studies major has a lot to be proud of and needs to

keep the campus and the region informed. The program could grow back to its former size with better promotion, more advertising, better articulation and interaction with community colleges, and heightened student awareness of the potential of the liberal studies major as preparation for teacher education and as interdisciplinary study that is pre-professional. Posters of the Liberal Studies Program and other campus programs were very visible and visually effective throughout the campus.

University-wide Contributions to:

General Education. It is obvious the Liberal Studies major is intertwined with the General Education breadth requirements, especially at the lower-division. Some GE courses were designed with Liberal Studies majors in mind, and Liberal Studies majors make up a high percentage of the overall enrollment in most GE courses. Many departments benefit from the large size of the Liberal Studies major as a basis for their FTES and staffing. With the recent rapid decline in the number of Liberal Studies majors as a percentage of total campus enrollment, it would be easy for some academic departments to forget their vital service role in providing the core knowledge needed by Liberal Studies majors.

Interdisciplinary Programs. Although the campus has a strong interdisciplinary thrust, the Liberal Studies major is one of the primary degree programs that is cross-disciplinary and which has the kind of breadth of coverage demanded by state standards for the teaching profession. The Center for Interdisciplinary Studies exists as focal point for faculty and institutional discussion of interdisciplinary issues and to encourage cross-pollination of disciplines. There is some discussion of moving the current non-teaching track of the Liberal Studies major under this wing and developing other interdisciplinary and non-departmentalized majors.

We would encourage further exploration of the development of a BA Special Major that exists at almost all other CSU campus. Implementing such an interdisciplinary, self-designed major would not have to go on the campus' Academic Plan. (All other CSU were simply given blanket permission to have a BA and MA special major because there is little cost because degree plans are made up of a mixture of existing courses from many departments). These Special majors usually require someone or a committee to assist students to develop a proposal for an individualized, interdisciplinary combination of courses from two or more disciplines with the help of two or three faculty member from the appropriate departments.

Special majors are often used to experiment with the feasibility and needs for a new degree program and become in the incubator for innovation new curricula. Currently, common majors in area studies, women's studies, ethnic studies, environmental studies, etc. frequently were started under the umbrella of a Special major until they were large enough to sustain themselves. Indeed, having a history of three to five students declaring a special major in some emerging field is often the very best kind of evidence of student demand and societal need for an formal and ongoing major in that interdisciplinary field. As stated previously, given the amount of assigned time provided for the Liberal Studies Director, making the encouragement and advising and guiding new interdisciplinary majors is almost an impossible task, though the current

hardworking Director indicates that the non-teaching track, which has some features of a self-forming interdisciplinary major, is taking an increasingly large percentage of his time.

Honors Program. None exists at present, but there is good potential for developing special status and organizations and activities for outstanding students. Developing scholarships to attract students in the top 10% of their high school class and ensuring that faculty throughout the campus know that Liberal Studies and teacher education programs need the best and brightest to make up the majority of their graduates should be a goal of the program. A number of CSU's have developed Presidential Scholars programs for high ability and ambitious students. Often these "fast track" students have Advanced Placement credits, priority registration, take heavier unit loads, and graduate more quickly. Getting them involved in leadership and service opportunities on campus is usually a key component of these types of programs either at the university or the department level. The CSU draws a wide range of abilities and backgrounds in its student body. High achieving students frequently need more challenge, more activities, more engagement if they are to be retained—these students have the potential to easily transfer to more selective private universities or to the UC system and frequently use the CSU as a high-level community college transfer program prior to moving on.

Teacher Education. The Liberal Studies major program is highly involved with the School of Education's teacher training programs and prepares student for the Multiple Subject credential. Being housed in the same building and in the same academic unit further strengthens this relationship. The newly implement Accelerated program will further integrate and blend the subject matter content (what to teach) with pedagogy (how to teach.) As previously stated the credential advisors need to regularly meet at scheduled times to discuss changes in state requirements and supplemental and subject matter authorizations.

Extended Learning. As noted elsewhere, the development of a summer session, even if run through extension as a self-supported, fee-based program would assist many Liberal Studies students to reach their goals in a more timely fashion. The ability to graduate in May or August is critical for job placement—there are few K-8 jobs available in January. Offering credit courses in the Liberal Studies major at off-campus sites through extension has proven to be a good recruitment strategy for some programs. These "teaser" offerings would provide prospective students with a good first contact and impression of the CSU campus. It is clear that the off-campus operations of private institutions are flourishing in your area. People are willing to pay for access, convenience, and high quality personalized education. In this case, one can reverse a variation on Gresham's Law: Good programs will drive out bad ones—if they are cheaper and more attractive.

Future Direction of the Department/Program:

Trends noted in this review:

1. The program underwent a significant decline in the number of majors enrolled. This is similar to the enrollment drop at other CSU campus in the last five years and is to be expected as other competing programs were implemented.

2. There has a high degree of turnover in the leadership and governance structure for the program.
3. The campus has a strong focus on interdisciplinary work, but as it grows there will be more pressure to focus on specialized study and the work of individual program and departments. This trend will especially need to be monitored with programs, such as Liberal Studies, which are interdisciplinary by nature.
4. During the first few years of its existence, the institution has been highly focused on building the curriculum and the institution and on gaining regional accreditation. This took tremendous effort and commitment of the initial faculty. This work takes its toll on even the most ambitious faculty and they are eager to get back to their disciplinary interests. One administrator noted that Service commitment has been deemphasized recently. Although the primary function of faculty will remain teaching and instructional improvement, the peer review process may over time build powerful incentives for faculty members to focus on individual disciplinary research at the expense of university and community service. Liberal Studies program will continue to demand a high level of faculty involvement and service to the major.
5. The program review process is still rudimentary. There is a need to focus more on the process, the criteria to be used, and the level of analysis to be applied. There needs to be a separate focus on both the health and effectiveness of the curriculum and the operational and support issues of the program.
6. The Assessment of student learning is still under development. There is a current need to strategically make the proper choice of assessment tools and measurements—which can only be done after the program objectives have been refined.
7. Data collection has been inconsistent due to rapid change in key staff and the necessity of focusing efforts on institutional-level matters. Concurrent with the development of assessment techniques, there needs to be a continuity of assessment data in a longitudinal manner. There also seems to be a need to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data. The availability of highly skilled new Institutional Research staff combined with a strong interest and expertise of key administrators and faculty leading instruction improvement will definitely assist this effort. The role of the Program and Planning Review committee in analysis of the assessment data from individual majors and the development of plans for responses to the findings of annual and Five-year reviews still need to be solidified.

New programs and/or curriculum changes planned. The Liberal Studies Program currently offers two options (Teaching and Learning and Concentrated Studies) but has plans to offer an Accelerate Program Option for the Fall 2008. This Accelerate Program Option will offer students the ability to complete a baccalaureate degree in Liberal Studies and the multiple subject credential concurrently. In addition to this new Accelerate Program Option program, the University Center for Integrative Studies (CIS) and the Liberal Studies Program have begun discussions about a possible collaboration to create a defined Interdisciplinary Studies Option in

2010. The new program and discussions of another new program option demonstrate a willingness of the Liberal Studies Program and Liberal Studies Personnel to explore new ideas, trends and directions for this program.

Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses and resource needs.

Most important findings and conclusions of the self-study report and program review process:

The Liberal Studies major at CSU Channel Islands campus is generally healthy and academically strong. The program provides excellent breadth of knowledge and prepares graduates for the very stringent and specific California Subject Matter Examination for Teacher of Multiple Subjects. Those who pass this exam are eligible to enter a credential program that provides the pedagogical knowledge and skills to be effective K-8 general classroom teachers.

1. The program is in transition in terms of curriculum, enrollment trends, administrative structure, and operational support.
2. The institution is committed to ensuring the excellence and reputation.
3. The use of the Liberal Studies program to assist the development of interdisciplinary and individualized degree programs has worked successfully to this point, but probably is not the best way to try out incipient degree programs.

Strengths noted:

1. There is strong commitment from the faculty administration to a shared vision for the program and the institution.
2. Students point to faculty availability as well commitment and a personal touch.
3. There is strong leadership at all levels of the program administration and oversight.
4. There is a willingness on all levels to grow and develop, combined with an eagerness to improve.
5. There has been an impressive ground up effort to build the program and the university is relatively short period of time.
7. The amount of application of subject matter content and field experience is very high and a valuable component of the program.
8. Students felt prepared for the CSET which reflect strong academic preparation.
9. Students are proud to be Liberal Studies majors and were committed to being professionals in the field of education and teaching.

Areas where improvement is needed:

1. The significant recent drop in the number of majors is significant and troubling. This makes planning, operational support, and program development difficult. (The percentage of decline in the number of majors is on a par with the experience of other CSU campuses, however, and is not a cause for undue alarm and panic. There are societal and pragmatic and policy changes which have caused this decline.)
2. Assessment efforts have been uneven though the structure for effective assessment is in place. A major barrier to effective assessment efforts has been that assessment measures have been fluid and data measures have changed from year to year. It is advised that a common strategic measure is decided on campus wide and that a long term collection measure is used. This will provide longitudinal data from which to perform meaningful program assessment.
3. A regular meeting time should be established for assessment and Institutional research personnel to interact and work with faculty (possibly this could be with the campus assessment group PARC).
4. The emphasis area, which is currently nine units in the Teaching and Learning Option, may want to have one class overlap from core which would make the concentrations 12 units instead of nine units. This would provide an easier identification of supplemental authorizations.
5. Early student advising of credential options including supplemental and subject matter authorization credential options are needed. This could be facilitated by planned training of academic advisors by credential analyst personnel.
6. Early publication of a tentative schedule will allow student aid in planning. The university may consider switching to a schedule that is only on-line. This will allow for less cost and more flexibility in scheduling.
7. Eventually consider moving the Concentrated Option to special majors and out of the Liberal Studies Program.
8. The team advises caution in moving into the Accelerated Program Option when statewide Liberal Studies Programs have found them difficult to support financially.
9. Consider the recommendations listed previously in reducing the load for Director of Liberal Studies especially in light of the frequency of change of personnel for the position.
10. Membership in LSPC is missing some key subject matter representation and should be expanded to include full representation for all areas of study.

11. The Liberal Studies website should be redesigned to provide more useful links to students.
12. The Liberal Studies director should be included on the statewide Liberal Studies director's listserv and resources should be allocated to attend the statewide liberal studies meetings twice each academic year.

Recommended Changes and Actions Needed

1. A more detailed and comprehensive program review self-study document format should be developed.
2. After revision and expansion of the program's assessment plan to provide more measurement of the outcomes of each of the program's revised objectives for each of the content areas of program, the results of annual assessments of student learning outcomes and other data collected should be reviewed regularly by the Program Board and the university assessment and planning body. The findings of these assessments should be used for program revision and improvement of instruction.
3. The program and the campus should work to improve course by course articulation of GE and Liberal Studies major courses with the community college and assure compliance with the CSU system's Lower Division Transfer Plan (LDTP) for Liberal Studies in order to increase enrollment, improve graduation rates, and ensure student satisfaction with the program.
4. The Liberal Study curriculum should be reexamined for conformity with the system LDTP and the CSU system's GE Breadth requirements as laid out in the new June 2008 revised Executive Order 1033 which clarifies and supersedes the previous Executive Order 595.
5. Annual surveys of student satisfaction and perceptions of program effectiveness should be done for currently enrolled Liberal Studies majors, graduating seniors, and alumni who graduated five years previously.
6. Additional Assigned time for program coordination and development should be provided to the director.
7. A summer session should be implemented as soon as feasible.

Summary and Conclusion:

As indicated at the outset of this report, the Liberal Studies major at CSU Channel Islands is a strong program, though a relatively young one with excellent potential for further growth and development. There are always things that can be improved with any academic degree program or department. We have attempted to give suggestions for improvement, alternative ways of reaching your objectives, and area that might be emphasized and/or changed, but overall we were

very pleased to find such a healthy and vibrant program, and faculty and students who are excited about the curriculum, the instruction, and goals of the program and institution.

We hope that our report is helpful and clearly outlines our findings. We appreciate the opportunity to visit your campus and to participate in this important first periodic program review; and we wish you all success in the future development of the Liberal Studies major.