



Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Chair, Dept of Liberal Studies : *Nat Hansuvadha* Date: 1/28/2025
Nat Hansuvadha

Associate Dean, college of Education : *REBECCA BUSTAMANTE* Date: 1/28/2025
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Program Review Summary
Memorandum of Understanding
Department of Liberal Studies
College of Education
December 2024

This document serves as a summary of the Program Review findings and a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the consensus reached by the Department of Liberal Studies, the College of Education, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recently conducted program review with a Self-study received in May 2023. Dr. Frederick Nelson (California State University, Fresno) completed the external review on October 11, 2024. This report and MOU is issued in December 2024, and it describes the goals to be achieved and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU to achieve these goals during the next program review cycle. Progress toward goals is to be addressed in an annual report.

The program's previous MOU was signed in 2017, with the following recommendations: 1) Provide an annual update on progress made towards the actions agreed to in the previous MOU to the CED dean, Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Director of Program Review and Assessment; 2) Continue with strong assessment practices. Consider adding a summative assessment to the assessment process; 3) Post the Liberal Studies Program Mission and Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) on the program webpage; 4) Continue to strengthen enrollments by increasing efforts to recruit and graduate students from all backgrounds to the major; 5) Continue to update and revise curriculum by exploring inclusion of new(er) pedagogical themes and learning/teaching models and the development/inclusion of integrative technologies and/or open and/or online educational resources and courses; 6) Continue to seek out internal and external funding resources to support developmental growth; and, 7) Work with the College of Education to develop a plan for hiring future faculty as resources permit. The College and Department have met these goals.

Resources reviewed for the report:

1. Self-study 2023
2. External review 2024
3. MOU 2020
4. Department of Liberal Studies website

**Section 1: Program Overview and Assessment**

The Department of Liberal Studies offers two degree pathways, including the 120-unit Liberal Studies B.A. and the 120-135-unit Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP).

- The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Liberal Studies Degree pathway admits first-time, first-year (FTFY) students into a Pre-Liberal Studies pathway until the major-specific requirements are completed, while transfer students are admitted directly into the major. The B.A. pathway is for students who seek subject matter preparation for elementary teaching as preparation for a post-baccalaureate credential program to be completed separately from the bachelor's degree.
- The Integrated Teacher Education Program (ITEP) is a B.A. in Liberal Studies plus credential program, which is ideal for students intending to seek teaching credentials while getting their bachelor's degree. Students have the options to combine subject matter preparation for elementary teaching with additional coursework leading to a) Education Specialist Credential, b) Multiple Subject Credential, or c) Urban Dual Teaching Credential (combined Education Specialist and Multiple Subject credential). Students can also earn a bilingual authorization in Spanish or Asian language (e.g., Vietnamese, Korean) with any of the teaching credentials above.

The Department is commended for clearly displaying its Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) on the website. However, the department's Vision Statement was adopted from the College of Education's "Equity and Excellence in Education" statement. The external reviewer recommends that the department consider developing a department-specific Mission Statement to reflect its unique purpose and reason for existence, as well as a department-specific Vision Statement to articulate the meaningful future condition it aims to achieve.

Section 2: Delivery of Programs

1. The Student Headcount for this popular program has increased steadily over the review period until the 2020 term (from $n=753$ in Fall 2016 to $n=963$ in Fall 2019), at which time it stabilized at just over 1,000 students ($n=1,024$ in Fall 2020). According to the enrollment data in Fall 2023, more students were enrolled in the B.A. in Liberal Studies program ($n=672$) than the ITEP program ($n=169$). In addition, there were 189 Pre-LST students in Fall 2023.
2. The Department currently has five (5) tenure-track/tenured faculty and ten (10) lecturer faculty. Since the last review, the department has successfully hired four (4) new tenure-track faculty and one full-time lecturer. Faculty from other Departments in the College of Education (e.g., Special Education faculty from the Department of Advanced Studies in Education and Counseling) as well as faculty from other colleges, who also teach courses to Liberal Studies students.

**Section 3: Undergraduate Student Success**

1. Time to Graduation: ITEP students participate in a 4- to 5-year program that combines the B.A. degree with a teaching credential. Students in both the ITEP and B.A. in Liberal Studies consistently complete the program in under 5 years, with a total of 120-135 units. Transfer students complete the program in 2.3-2.7 years with 139-145 units.
2. The six-year graduation rate for the 2016 cohort was approximately 71.4%, dropping to 51.8% for the 2018 cohort. As identified in the self-study, “both the four and six-year graduation rates declined after Fall 2016 with an abysmal drop in Fall 2020 in the early stages of COVID when most students were experiencing multiple crisis in their lives. This outlier negatively impacted graduation rates for both BA and ITEP students”.
3. Transfer Graduation rates: Since Fall 2017, over 80% of Liberal Studies transfer students graduate in four years, except for the Fall 2020 cohort, during the first year of COVID. Since many of these students are ITEP students, two-year graduation rates are not applicable.
4. DEI: First-year persistence is slightly higher for URM (Underrepresented Minority) students compared to non-URM students, with both groups averaging over 90%. In terms of graduation rates, URM and First-Generation students graduated at a higher percentage than non-URM students until the Fall 2020 cohort, when non-URM students began graduating at a higher rate. The proposed reason for this shift is the COVID pandemic, which affected URM students more than non-URM students. In terms of Pell grant eligibility, the most significant difference was seen in Fall 2021, with a 46.2% two-year graduation rate for non-Pell students compared to 22.2% for Pell students. The department notes that recent changes in Pell grant eligibility for ITEP versus non-ITEP students across all CSU campuses likely explain much of the drop in persistence and graduation rates for Pell-eligible students.
5. High-Impact Practices (HIPs): Liberal Studies (LST) students can participate in two(2) study abroad courses that are part of the major. Students can also gain classroom experience embedded within several courses in the required curriculum. The SERVE (Service Experiences for ReVitalizing Education) Program provides an opportunity for undergraduate students considering careers in K-12 education to learn about the realities of urban classrooms and the needs of a diverse K-12 student population.

Section 4: Graduate Student Success

The Liberal Studies Department offers only Undergraduate degree programs.

Section 5: Facilities, Resources, University Environment

1. LST has consistently hired two LST peer mentors each academic year. These are undergraduate students in the major who liaise between students and academic advisors. They assist with SOAR sessions throughout the year, meet with students in the



Student Success and Advising Center (SSAC) to help students locate department or university resources. Peer mentors also assist with outreach and recruitment events. This year, the department also hired two Beach XP peer mentors.

2. The College of Education is renovating the former TPAC space (EED-67) into a Student Engagement Center where undergraduate students can study, network, and engage with peers associated with college student organizations.
3. Liberal Studies has three full-time advisors/program coordinators who proactively and regularly communicate with UCUA advisors, Financial Aid Office, and the University Honors Program.

Section 6: Strategic Program Planning

1. The College of Education is actively working to close the gap in the disproportionate numbers of underrepresented students of color entering the teaching pipeline.
 - a. The College has established the Future Black Educators (FBE) monthly Saturday Community of Practice to foster a sense of belonging, provide support, and improve retention of Black teacher candidates in Liberal Studies and post-baccalaureate programs. In collaboration with Long Beach Unified School District, the FBE Network also offers afterschool programming to local secondary schools and scholarships to help reduce financial barriers for students.
 - b. To further increase the number of future Hispanic/Latinx teachers, the College of Education developed "Caminantes for Education" as a resource for Latinx students interested in entering the field of education. This organization provides a space for students to come together, build community, develop academic strengths, and expand their professional networks.
 - c. To foster a sense of belonging in Liberal Studies, the Liberal Studies Student Association (LSSA) and the Liberal Studies Peer Mentors plan four events per semester that include resource sharing, social connections and activities, and free snacks and refreshments.
2. Liberal Studies is offering innovative programming through recent grants awarded by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC).
 - a. Two ITEP grants, awarded in Spring 2023, now enable Liberal Studies students to pursue an ITEP Education Specialist Credential Program (ESCP) pathway in just 120 units and four years, with scholarships.
 - b. An additional planning grant awarded through CTC will provide a similar structure for Liberal Studies students to pursue an ITEP PK-3 teaching credential in 120 units and four years with scholarships.
 - c. In partnership with Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), Liberal Studies recently applied for a teacher residency planning grant to enhance their Urban Dual Credential Program (UDCP). They are also pursuing an implementation and



expansion grant with LBUSD, which would provide awards of up to \$40,000 per teacher candidate in UDCP.

3. Liberal Studies will reduce the number of service-learning hours in EDEL 200 from 45 to 25 hours and is drafting a program and course proposal to be submitted in Fall 2024. This reduction will help students complete their clinical practice hours more efficiently and address transportation barriers and school access issues that often affect students who attend school full-time while working part-time.
4. Since the period under review, Liberal Studies now offer a Minor in *Equity and Education Studies*, for non-Liberal Studies students interested in becoming teachers or entering education-related fields. It takes a critical approach to education and provides students with the tools to analyze the relationship between education and society and begin to effect social and educational justice.
5. Since Spring 2021, the Department of Liberal Studies has offered a dual enrollment course (LST 100), through the CSULB Young Scholars Program, to high school students at Paramount Unified School District (PUSD). The CSU Center for Closing the Opportunity Gap (CCOG) has been a financial sponsor for the LST program.

Recommendations

It is therefore agreed that the Department of Liberal Studies will collaborate with the College of Education and Division of Academic Affairs to:

1. Continue to implement the program's comprehensive assessment plan in order to complete annual assessments using direct and indirect methods and report on closing the loop activities to illustrate that continuous learning outcome data are used to inform decision making. Provide an annual update (due June 1) on progress made towards MOU actions to the CED dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Coordinators for Program Review and Assessment. Your review cycle will be from 2023-2030. A comprehensive self-study will be due June 2030 for a 2030-2031 Academic Year review process.
2. Engage in strategic planning to develop a department-specific Mission Statement that expresses the Liberal Studies department's unique purpose, and a Vision Statement that articulates the meaningful future condition it aims to achieve.
3. Assess the program curriculum for potential updates and revisions.
4. Include and analyze Exit Survey data in the annual Assessment Report. This assessment strategy could provide meaningful context for the quantitative data from the PLOs and course signature assignments.
5. Establish an Advisory Board composed of partner educators from community colleges and school districts, current students, alumni, and other engaged community partners.



This entity could offer a broader set of perspectives on the unique concerns of the Department.

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Department Chair for Liberal Studies: Nat Hansuvadha

Associate Dean for the College of Education: Rebecca Bustamante

Dean for the College of Education: Anna Ortiz

Interim Vice Provost for Academic Programs: Pei-Fang Hung

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