

## PROGRAM REVIEW 2008-2011

**Division:** Social Sciences / Humanities

**Department:** Humanities

**Preparer(s):** Salamander Breiter / chair in consultation with department

### I. Description and Mission of the Program

This program addresses:  Basic Skills  Transfer

- A. This department serves De Anza students by providing GE and Transfer courses in the Humanities. The Humanities engage students in critical analysis of how they know what they know and promote recognition of the rich human plurality of histories, truths and worldviews. A strong multidisciplinary foundation draws connections between and among academic and intellectual domains of the arts and sciences, as well as the philosophies and religions of the world. A multicultural approach encourages broad synthesis of human issues and a discussion of the relationship between an individual and historical, cultural and social milieu. Students are compelled to recognize themselves as active creators of cultural change in a diverse and increasingly global context.
- B. This department's strengths rest in the very multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural approach offered in a rich variety of courses. Humanities courses address human issues with both breadth and depth and engage students in active learning exercises designed to activate students sense of themselves as actors in their own lives, in the communities around them, and in global contexts.
- C. This department's areas for improvement rest in serving greater numbers of students with improved retention and success rates and closing the equity gaps in success and retention between targeted and not targeted student groups.
- D. This department expects students to bring knowledge of themselves as informed participants in local and global change into their lives as students, community members, employees and human beings. Students are encouraged to bring their deep understanding of the diversity human wisdom traditions into action in the transformation of the world around them to be more just, safe and healthy. Humanities courses build basic skills as well as multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary knowledge that serve students in their educational and professional lives. Humanities course are intended for transfer and to be useful to students in their daily lives.

### II. Retention and Growth

- A. Over the past 3 years, the Humanities department has served between 2590 and 2703 students per fiscal year. Retention rates have increased by 2% (varying between 84% and 89%). The Humanities department has worked to increase student access to Humanities courses by broadening class offerings to Fridays and Saturdays and offering more sections of popular courses.

- B. The Humanities department has made significant efforts to increase access and retention rates for all students, and specifically for identified target populations. The Humanities department has broadened their course offerings to include additional distance-learning courses, as well as Friday and Saturday courses with the concept of increased access in mind, especially for non-traditional and working students. Our strategies for retention are linked to strategies for student success and are detailed with the discussion of student equity in section III. In brief, this effort has been centered on staff development, specifically around multicultural content and pedagogy. The Humanities department has also had the opportunity to hire adjunct instructors who are student-centered, innovative in their classroom approach, and more representative of the student populations at De Anza.

These efforts have been met with mixed results.

Overall, Humanities enrollments remained fairly steady (2590 – 2657 students) and general retention rates have increased by 2% (from 87% to 89%, with 84% during 2006-2007).

In not targeted student populations, enrollments increased 4% (from 75% to 79%) and retention rates increased by 3% (from 87% to 90%).

In targeted student populations, enrollment decreased 4 % (from 25% to 21%) and retention rates declined by 2% (from 85% to 83%, with 77% in 2006-2007).

More Specifically:

With African Ancestry student populations, enrollment declined 2% (from 5% to 3%) and retention rates increased by 5% (from 79% - 84%, with 70% during 2006-2007).

With Latino/a student populations, enrollment remained steady at 12% and retention rates declined by 4% (from 86% - 82%, with 79% during 2006-2007).

With Filipino/a student populations, enrollment declined by 2% (from 8% to 6%) and retention declined by 2% (from 86% to 84%, with 78% during 2006-2007).

In conclusion, general enrollment in the Humanities department has remained steady. Enrollment by not targeted student populations has increased while enrollment by targeted student populations has decreased. Retention rates have followed a similar pattern. An increased effort by the Humanities department to ensure that the learning environment and content of Humanities courses is multi-cultural has not closed the equity gap in regards to access, growth, and retention.

- C. Humanities courses must address both basic skills needs of our students as well as the content specific knowledge expected of our students for articulation. Specifically, students need basic skills in English reading and writing in order to develop and communicate their understanding of the content of our courses and also to succeed in their academic, transfer and career goals. Differential preparedness strongly impacts success and retention rates of our targeted groups, and is therefore central to any discussion of closing the equity gap. The Humanities department must reassess how we are meeting the basic skills needs of our students. Current early assessment and intervention techniques, individualized attention, and detailed feedback on assignments does not appear to be enough.

### III. Student Equity

- A. The Humanities department has made significant efforts to increase success rates for all students, and specifically for identified target populations. The Humanities faculty has renewed their commitment to staff development and has been committed to training in multicultural pedagogies and content. As part of this effort, the Humanities department has actively participated the Social Sciences / Humanities division C.A.R. project, which is an ongoing staff development exercise focused on how faculty expectation of students and conceptions of intelligence affect students perceptions of themselves as learners. Central to the C.A.R. project is the implementation of multicultural philosophy and community building into classroom practice. The Humanities department has also had the opportunity to hire adjunct instructors who are student-centered, innovative in their classroom approach, and more representative of the student populations at De Anza. Humanities Faculty have brought their commitment to student-centered learning and student equity into many of De Anza's shared governance committees, including Curriculum Committee, Senate, and the Strategic Planning Initiatives.

These efforts have been met with an increase in the student equity gap.

General success rates in the Humanities department have increased by 4% (from 75% to 79%) in the past 3 years. In not targeted student populations, success rates increased by 5% (from 77% to 82%). In targeted student populations, success rates declined by 2% (from 69% to 67%, with 63% in 2006-2007). More specifically, with African Ancestry student populations, success rates increased by 7% (from 59% to 66%). With Latino/a student populations, success rates declined by 6% (from 71% to 65%). With Filipino/a student populations, success rates remained fairly steady (averaging at 71%).

In conclusion, these numbers indicate that the equity gap between targeted and not targeted student groups is growing. The increased effort by the Humanities department to ensure that the learning environment and content of Humanities courses is multi-cultural has not closed the equity gap with regards to success.

- B. The Humanities department is committed to student equity. It is difficult to discern whether efforts in multicultural staff development have had a positive impact on the success of our students. Perhaps the Humanities department's efforts at engaging multicultural content, utilizing multicultural pedagogical techniques, and honoring multiple-intelligences and learning styles must be complemented with a sincere evaluation of how our expectations and attitudes affect our students. Cultural competency training would assist in this effort. It must also be noted that information regarding growing outside economic constraints on targeted student populations would assist in evaluation of the role high expectations could play in the classroom. It is possible that the Humanities department must reassess the relationship between basic skills and content while maintaining high standards and high expectations in the classroom. Differential preparedness between student populations presents a challenge that we must develop skills to meet. It seems clear that Humanities courses must assist students in building the basic skills they need for success in our classrooms and beyond. We must also make more effective use of student support services and community building departments. It may be significant to note that the increase in African Ancestry student retention and success may be related to the hire of a full-time African Ancestry faculty member. If this is the case, then the Humanities department should consider the importance of hiring

faculty that represent our student populations. Most importantly, the Humanities department is interested in engaging the campus in a conversation about student success.

- C. The most significant challenge facing Humanities department with regards to student equity rests in discovering the recipe of efforts that meet student needs. It is also important to recognize that the Humanities department is comprised primarily of adjunct instructors, who have increasing demands on their time and energy and are not as readily available for training and discussion.

IV. **Budget Limitations**

- A. The Humanities department relies on the ability to offer diverse course offerings from diverse faculty to meet the needs of students with a wide variety of learning needs and schedule constraints. The stronger our funding, the more courses we have to offer to the students who need them to develop the academic and life skills and the transfer units they need for success in their lives
- B. The Humanities department offers rich multicultural and multidisciplinary curriculum that is essential to a Generally Educated human being. Our courses address creativity, aesthetics, religion and spirituality, wisdom traditions, communications, media analysis, economic analysis, cultural studies, examination of oral tradition, historical inquiry, and opportunities of civic engagement and activism not found elsewhere on campus. Our courses offer students unique opportunities to develop a rich understanding of themselves in global contexts as they meet their GE and transfer goals. Our courses connect the broad complexities of their other courses into a meaningful and comprehensive whole.

V. **Additional Comments:**

- **Strategic Planning Initiatives (Community Collaborations, Cultural Competency, Outreach, and Individualized Attention for Retention):**

The chair of the Humanities department participated directly in the strategic planning process (Cultural Competency) and many of the Humanities faculty have participated in the ongoing campus discussion (specifically in Senate and Curriculum Committee) about the impacts and outcomes of this process. In addition, the Humanities faculty have taken advantage of many of the beneficial departments that have resulted, such as early alert, support tutorials, civic engagement opportunities and staff development opportunities. The department and division have also initiated many of their own projects, such as department/division websites and the C.A.R. project mentioned above.