Part I: Liberal Studies Program

(Part II: Credential Program begins on p. 9)

Background

As explained much more fully in our Assessment Plan and in our September 2005 special update, the Liberal Studies program is in transition. The January 2004 Assessment Plan emphasized departmental reflection on the student portfolio—completed in most cases during the student’s third year of study. Spring 2006 (this current semester) brings to us as Juniors the first cohort of students to enter the revised (September 2003) program. This is the first semester, accordingly, when the Liberal Studies capstone, ED 109, has been offered. Portfolios completed and presented this spring will inform assessment efforts in the future. These portfolios will include samples of student work completed throughout the Liberal Studies program. This initial report relies on other sources of data.

Liberal Studies Goal A

All students will demonstrate adequate command of the academic content defined by the State of California as essential for future elementary teachers.

At least 3 important sources of data have been used to assess program quality with respect to Goal A.

(1) the CSET-Multiple Subject examination results. The Department discussed this data at our January 2006 meeting.

(2) Survey results from first-year graduates of the Westmont Credential Program (Liberal Studies students typically enter the Credential Program upon completion of their LS program). Survey includes a list of required Liberal Studies courses. Students are asked to rate each course on a four-point or (beginning with graduates returning surveys at the end of the 2003-04 academic year) five-point scale. The Department discussed this data at our October 2005 meeting, in addition to a number of related but less formal conversations.
(3) Senior Interviews, administered to selected seniors beginning in May 2004. Department discussed our interviews shortly after completing the interviews, in May 2004 and May 2005.

(1) CSET Results

The most obvious measure of performance in this area is the ability to pass the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET)-Multiple Subject. First of all, we expect that 100% of our students will pass this exam, and thus be eligible to enter a Teaching Credential Program, either here or elsewhere. Moreover, based on results received so far, we would like to maintain a composite average for our graduates of 3.00 or higher in each of the seven major subject domains.

Our Liberal Studies program was revised in 2002-03 to align with the state of California’s Content Standards for Elementary Subject Matter. This is the same set of Content Standards that the CSET-Multiple Subject is aligned to.

In theory then, our students should do fairly well on the exam. Anecdotally, however, we have heard from reliable sources of at least one California colleges where approximately half the students did not pass the CSET-Multiple Subject, on the first attempt, in the first year it was required. Typical pass rates for all California students reported on our institutional CSET reports indicate that 25-37% of students do not pass in any given administration.

The CSET-Multiple Subject was first required for admission into Westmont’s Credential Program in the 2004-05 school year. Since students in the past were only required to submit to us (and to the state) evidence of PASSING (not component subject-area scores), we still do not have complete evidence of our students’ achievement. Currently, however, students entering our Credential Program are institutionally required to submit this material to us, so we should have more complete evidence in the future. Further, we will invite Liberal Studies graduates NOT entering our Credential program to submit results as well.

2004-05

Total number of Westmont Liberal Studies graduates continuing into the Westmont Elementary program: 10

Total number passing: 10

Total number of results containing subject-break-downs available as of January 06: 3
2005-06

Total number of Westmont Liberal Studies graduates continuing into the Westmont Elementary program: 9

Total number passing: 9

Total number of results containing subject-break-downs available as of January 06: 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>2004-05</th>
<th>2005-06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading/Language/Literature</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History/Social Science</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.75</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Development</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.67</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.67</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual and Performing Arts</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CSET: Westmont student results by subject area** (Maximum score = 4)

**Interpretation:**

Small data sets obviously make it hard to generate meaningful generalizations. Moreover, transfer students and even four-year students may have taken some content courses off campus, which complicates further the task of interpretation.

Nonetheless, as we increase the number of student scores and as we monitor results over time, we may see some emergent patterns that raise questions for further investigation.
One unsurprising result here is that Math is the highest area (2004-06 Composite). Westmont’s math department has worked particularly closely with us in aligning required coursework to the domains covered in the state’s Elementary Subject Matter guidelines.

The only area that dips below a 3.00 is the Human Development area for 2005-06. This may well reflect students who’ve taken coursework off-campus, since it is largely a measure of content from a single course, and it’s probably the one course most frequently taken during the summer away from Westmont. We will continue to be particularly attentive to student scores in this subject area.

**Using these results:**

Again, while it’s too soon to take definitive action on the basis of this little data, we will explore whether there is indeed a correlation between student scores in Human Development and where they took the course. We may end up cautioning students about taking the course elsewhere, or at least being more selective about where they take the course, if they do not take the course at Westmont.

(2) *Data relevant to Goal A (mastery of academic content) from surveys of first-year graduates of the Westmont Credential Program*

Traditionally we have looked at completed First-Year Graduate surveys as they have come in, but the overall review of the data has been less formal.

During the Fall of 2005, we summarized numerically the data for the last four academic years, calculating a numerical quality point average for each course. We also studied the tabulated data together.

Given Westmont’s small size, the lack of anonymity on campus, and the fact that in many cases a single professor has taught a particular course, we have chosen not to share publicly the results of this survey. At the same time, this data is being maintained in the department and is available upon relevant request.

**Interpretation and use of results:**

Of the twenty courses listed on the survey, one consistently is rated extremely low. These results closely match data reported by students on the College’s regular course evaluation forms (ie, the University of Illinois system). We believe that we have addressed this issue in large part already through changes in our part-time instructor for
this one course. In any case, based on information available, student dissatisfaction with this particular course is not primarily based on concerns about resulting mastery of academic content.

(3) Senior Interview data

A total of six senior Liberal Studies majors have been interviewed one-on-one by Department of Education faculty, using the College’s Senior Interview assignment (3 during May of 2004; 3 during May of 2005).

Seniors interviewed commented on both their experience in the Credential Program and the Liberal Studies program. As much as possible, we have tried to separate for reporting purposes data from these interviews. Selected concerns relevant to Program Quality in the Liberal Studies Program are as follows:

By design, this data relates to the College’s six Student Learning Outcomes, and in particular, the extent to which selected Liberal Studies majors felt these outcomes had been achieved in their lives. We are well aware of the limitations of this sort of self-reported data. At the same time, we believe this has been a valuable exercise for students themselves, as they prepare and then reflect in one-on-one conversation; and a valuable exercise for ourselves, in thinking concretely and personally about the College’s overall intended outcomes, as these may or may not be embodied in the lives of our graduates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Westmont Standard</th>
<th>Students’ perception of attainment</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian Orientation</td>
<td>Upon entry 5.9 Upon leaving 8.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking</td>
<td>Upon entry 5.8 Upon leaving 8.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Upon entry 4.5 Upon leaving 7.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement</td>
<td>Upon entry 5.8 Upon leaving 9.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written and Oral Communication</td>
<td>Upon entry 5.8 Upon leaving 8.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Technology</td>
<td>Upon entry 4.8 Upon leaving 8.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interpretation of quantitative data:

- Students report apparently substantial growth in all six areas.
- One generalization that emerged from conversations with students, and which the quantitative averages would support, is how much reported growth there is in the area of Diversity. Diversity is the lowest score upon entry, and remains the lowest upon leaving. But perhaps more significantly, it is one of two areas where the greatest reported growth occurs.
  - Student (05) said, “I grew up only 20 minutes from Watts, but I never went there till I went [with fellow Westmont students] during Spring Break in the City.”
  - ED 105 (Cultural Diversity in the Classroom) had an impact for several students (one pointed out need to address other groups, not just Latinos). Also fieldwork in multicultural settings completed as part of Liberal Studies coursework. Potters Clay, Chapel, and Student Life initiatives were also important in effecting changes—not just classes. Students could not separate out academic program from overall life experience in a residential community.
  - Clearly there’s still work to be done. Student (05) says it’s still possible to go through Westmont avoiding really understanding those who are different.

- One standard in which the Liberal Studies program may have a unique problem: attaining competence and confidence in doing academic research (all 3 students raised this, 04). Interviewer notes from ’04: “research probably the weakest part of the major, because major is scattered over many disciplines.” No major significant research paper assigned in Liberal Studies major, according to another student,’04 (did write one major paper in Credential Program). “I still don’t feel 100% confident in the area of research” (04).

Response thus far to issues emerging from Senior Interview data:

- We have already made changes (effective Fall 04) in ED 105 (Cultural Diversity) to include groups other than Latinos.

- We need to ponder further the issue of research competence within the major.

Other assessment data relating to overall Liberal Studies program quality, but which is NOT tied directly to either the Department’s or College’s current articulated goals:
Three other issues, apart from course content and relevant to the Liberal Studies program, emerged as “watch items” from the survey (Note that neither this section nor this report as a whole include graduates’ many commendatory statements; this section is simply identifying concerns):

(a) Accommodating and advising students who wish to participate in Westmont’s off-campus programs and still complete the “fast-track” program (Liberal Studies Major + Teaching Credential in 4 years), (one student, 04-05; one student, 01-02)

Partly this is an issue of students wanting to have their cake and eat it too. Students can only fit so many options into their 4 years. In any case, they can always choose the “regular” five-year (four-year Liberal Studies Major + Teacher Credential) program. Nonetheless, this set of concerns is something we want to continue to monitor.

(b) Ability to speak Spanish.

“For students looking to get a California credential, Spanish classes should be required or strongly advised” (one student, ‘04-05).

“‘I had 2 Spanish-only students [in first-year graduate’s first elementary classroom], so that was quite a challenge,” [explaining her response to how well prepared she felt to teach ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse students], (one student, ‘03-04).

Under the new (September 2003) Liberal Studies program, students may elect a concentration in Hispanic Studies, which requires that students have at least 12 units of Spanish, take classes through Spanish 4, and take an upper-division course( in Spanish) on the culture of Latin American or Spain. Since this option within the major first became available, it has been one of the most popular of the nine Content Concentrations. Even students who choose other Content Concentrations are encouraged to take classes in Spanish, as part of their Westmont course of study or off-campus. Students from the Liberal Studies major have been well represented as participants in the new semester-long Spanish-language intensive Westmont-in-Mexico program. Furthermore, every year a number of Liberal Studies students go on to complete student teaching requirements in Costa Rica, where they live with a Spanish-speaking host family.

(c) Initial Advising and support. One student (03-04) who wrote that “during the credential program, everything was excellent,” indicated that she had not felt that way
earlier, as a Liberal Studies student. Two students (02-03) expressed similar sentiments, on how much MORE support, attention, and belonging they felt once they had made it to the Credential Program.

We have worked to meet with students as early as possible in their program, establishing a special lunch hour for prospective Liberal Studies students during Summer Orientation (first tried June of 2003). At the same time, we developed a handbook for students that explains requirements more explicitly. Since the time these particular students entered the program, we have scheduled at least one social event for Liberal Studies majors each semester, as well as a Liberal Studies departmental chapel each year. A picture board and birthday chart for Liberal Studies majors also provide a bit more of a sense of belonging for students who need extra support.

Concluding thoughts (Part I, Liberal Studies Program):

- A bit of meta-assessment:

We have for many years collected systematic data relevant to program quality. We also believe the program has been responsive to the data (ie, we have closed the assessment loop by making pertinent changes).

We are growing in the area of discussing and formally processing the data as a department, and making all of this a routine part of our Departmental culture.

- Where do we go from here?

In addition to continuing to act on the concerns discussed here, our next step with respect to Review of the Liberal Studies major will be to discuss the first cycle of Liberal Studies portfolios in the late spring of 2006.
Part II of II: Teaching Credential (Fifth Year) Program

Introduction

As indicated in both the Department of Education’s Assessment Plan and the September 2005 special update, we have a long tradition of collecting a range of data on students. Such data would include:

1) Master Teacher evaluations of Student Teaching (annually)
2) First Year Graduates Survey, including a new component tied to the State of California’s TPEs (see below) introduced in 2004-05 (annually)
3) Employers of First Year Graduates Survey (annually)
4) Senior Interviews (annually, beginning with May 2004 graduates)
5) Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA) results (annually)
6) Students’ Student Teaching Portfolios, including candidates’ essays reflecting on performance and achievement in each of the State of California’s six evaluative domains, with related artifacts (selected portfolios saved annually)
7) One or more components of the State of California’s Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). This has been administered informally since 2002; a more formal assessment of TPA Task #4, with archived results, will begin Spring of 2006
8) Teacher and principal comments on program quality (both oral and written) from meetings of the Westmont Teacher Education Advisory Board (some gaps, but typically one annual meeting; written comments begin Fall of 2005)

Department archive: All of these sources of data are on file and available through the Department Secretary.

Clearly, then, the major challenge in reporting on program quality is less one of generating data, than of thoroughly processing the data available and scheduling sufficient time to discuss it as a whole department.

In any case, the composite picture emerging from available data speaks emphatically to the quality of our candidates and the strong level of preparation they received in Westmont’s Teaching Credential program.

For this year’s Annual Report, we are reflecting on items above, numbered 1, 2 (in part), 3, and 5 only.
Primary and overriding program goal:

Students completing Westmont’s Teaching Credential Program will demonstrate at a high level the thirteen sets of competencies identified by the state of California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing as essential for the classroom. “High level” in this case would translate into an average score of 4.00 (“Very Good”) on our five point survey scale.

These competencies (what the state identifies as Teaching Performance Expectations, or TPEs) are listed on the Student Teacher Summative Evaluation of Professional Competencies form, used by Master Teachers in the field to evaluate our student teachers.

The thirteen Teaching Performance Expectations were identified by the state in 2001, and have been the basis for much of our evaluation of individual student teachers since then.

Data evaluated for the “2004-05” Annual Report:

(1) In the 2004-05 academic year for the first time, we tabulated numerically evaluations by master teachers of our elementary candidates. Of 11 teacher candidates completing the program, 10 master teacher responses were available at the time of tabulation.

Of the 47 specific elements listed on the form, master teachers scored our candidates at an average of 4.00 or above (Very Good) in 45 areas. Whether in Costa Rica (3), Carpinteria School District (3), or Santa Barbara School District (4), master teachers clearly thought extremely highly of our students.

For specific average scores in each area, please see attached forms.

The two areas where our candidates’ performance was rated, on average, below Very Good, are as follows:

--TPE #1 (e) Visual and Performing Arts

- Plans a variety of activities in art, music, theater, and dance, as school schedule and instructional responsibilities permit.

--TPE #8: Learning about Students

- Gets parents and families involved in learning

In both of these cases, we believe the slightly lower scores are probably less a reflection of program quality or our teacher-candidates’ performance than the nature of student teaching and the nature of contemporary school culture. Most public schools do not allow a great deal of time for the Visual and Performing Arts, and so the score in this
case is probably primarily a function of the school schedule. As to getting parents involved, this is inherently much more difficult to do as a student teacher.

Potentially of more interest and significance than these two slight sub-score dips are the relatively lower scores (that is, relative to other TPEs) in all four elements of TPE #7: Teaching English Language Learners. None of these drops below 4.00, but all four averaged scores in this area are closer to Very Good than Outstanding.

- **Has a theoretical background for identifying and analyzing issues pertinent to English Language Development, as these issues surface in actual individuals.**

- **Actively seeks knowledge about students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including results of students’ previous language assessments and the characteristics of students’ first language. Uses this information in helping students’ progress in English.**

- **Collaborates effectively with other professionals, para-professionals, and families in supporting students’ language development.**

- **Supports students’ acquisition of English and students’ comprehension of academic content through a wide variety of instructional strategies, including visual support, facial expressions, gestures, and other body movements; and the clarity of teacher’s own spoken English.**

Once again, the lower scores in this area may reflect in part something about the topic itself—in this case, the inherent difficulties all teachers face in meeting fully the needs of their English Language Learners.

At the same time, this area was also one of the lowest rankings (3.50, between Average and Very Good) in our recently revised Employer of First Year Graduates Survey for 2004-05 (May 2004 graduates).

Accordingly, this is an area we want to pay particular attention to, continuing to (1) monitor the one course (ENG 106) taken by students in the Liberal Studies program that is explicitly designed to prepare students in this critical area; and (2) be even more intentional in our Credential Program courses to build in as much discussion and practice as possible for our candidates in addressing English Language Learner needs.

**Assessment Data items (2) and (3): Follow-up surveys**

Two additional sets of data recently tabulated and also organized more or less around the 13 Commission on Teacher Credentialing TPEs speak to the quality of our candidates’ preparation.
Both of these sets of data are disappointingly small.

We received back only four Employers of First Year Graduates forms for this class, and only six First Year Graduate Program Evaluation forms. There were nineteen graduates in this particular class, although not all chose to pursue employment in the field of education.

Accordingly, as a procedural goal, we are currently exploring ways to convey more explicitly both to employers and to our graduates the value of this information, and boost thereby our rate of returns for future surveys.

(2) In the 2004-05 Survey of First Year Teachers, graduates (May 2004) were for the first time asked to evaluate their experience and level of preparation using the 13 state TPEs (see attached form).

In ten major areas and all the core subjects listed in TPA 1 (subject-specific instruction), candidates reported an average level of preparation of 4.00 (Very Good) or above.

In two major areas and in the two starred sub-points under TPE #1, graduates indicated an average level of preparedness below 4.00.

- **TPE 4: Making Content Accessible** *(To what extent was I prepared to make information and skills clear and meaningful to students?)*

- **TPE 13: Professional Growth** *(To what extent was I given strategies and/or resources for continuing to grow professionally after completing the program?)*

- **TPE 1A: Subject-Specific Instruction** *(To what extent was I prepared to teach effectively one or more of the following?)*
  - Reading/Language Arts/English
  - Math
  - Science
  - History/Social Science
  - Creative/Performing arts *
  - Physical education *

Even as we celebrate graduates’ overall perceptions of their level of preparation, we need to ponder what the relative dips in these areas might mean.

TPE 4: This may reflect the inherent difficulty of the task. To some extent, making material meaningful to a particular student or particular class is something that an individual teacher must do on one’s own. It’s not clear what specifically the program should be doing more of in this area.
TPE 13: If future surveys support this initial data, we may need to be more intentional about giving students strategies for life-long professional growth, doing even more to introduce them to relevant professional associations and professional publications.

TPE 1: Creative/Performing Arts and Physical Education. These are areas where graduates receive most of their preparation in their Liberal Studies major, prior to formal entry into the Credential Program. A lower score in this area may be a function of the time that has elapsed since students took these courses, or may reflect limited opportunity (or need) to teach these subjects during Student Teaching and during the first year of full-time employment. We may need to develop additional strategies for candidates to integrate their preparation in these areas into methods courses in other subjects, or to find ways to help candidates review more systematically the preparation in these areas they received years ago.

(3) Employers of First Year Graduates survey of 2004-05 (May 2004 graduates)

Overall, the four responses support other data in validating the quality of Westmont’s teacher candidates across a broad range of competencies and dispositions (see blank form). Principal comments on this set of responses are as much a function of individuals’ personalities as a reflection on the program. In any case, no one area emerges from this data as cause for concern.

(5) Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA) test results. As in the past, 100% of our teacher candidates passed the RICA. In all four domains of the exam, candidates averaged between a 3 and a 4 (4 point scale).

Concluding thoughts and next steps in the review cycle:

Department is working toward a regular annual cycle of program review, where faculty can process tabulated results together. Eventually, much of this group processing we hope to do in May and September.

As noted above, we are working to improve our return rates on the two major surveys (2) and (3) discussed above.

We have discussed on several occasions the relationship of professional outcomes articulated by the state, and the College’s Student Learning Outcomes. This semester we will continue this discussion, and at the very least, be prepared in the next annual report to show visually where these two sets of outcomes do and do not overlap.
Attachments:

Student Teacher Summative Evaluation of Professional Competencies form, with average scores of elementary candidates

First Year Graduates Program Evaluation (TPEs) survey form

Employers of First Year Graduates survey form