

Action Recommendations and Updates
for the
Department of English
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Recommendation 1: Recruitment

In our Review, the first of our recommendations was to request funds for recruitment. Word of mouth" is all-well-and-good, but we could have yet more majors and enjoy still greater success were the University willing to make funding available to us. This money might be used to create a CD ROM to be passed along to our grads-- who, in turn, might work as our recruiters for new majors.

Update (November 2007): We still have no budget for any recruitment, although Professor Werner on occasion, about once a year, will invite former students to campus and urge them to get their own students to come to ULV.

Update (August 2008): While we still have no budget for recruitment, the English Department has taken matters in hand. We have worked with ULV Relations and Alumni Services to gather addresses and emails of all past students. We have set up a ULV English Myspace Page and sent out a one-page newsletter to past grads informing them of our recent activities and inviting them to stay in touch. Since many of our grads are now teachers, our hope to build our own network of former students who will act as recruiters for us. It looks like this idea will pay off: We are now visiting local high schools—about 5 or 6 a year, on the invitation of former Majors.

Recommendation 2: Exploring the Viability of an online M.A. Program or a California Studies Program

More than 60% of our grads want to keep in touch with us, and more than 10% of our recent grads have asked us directly why we don't have an M.A. Program. Clearly, given the option, our grads would prefer to continue their education with us.

Update (November 2007): We still have no budget to look into this possibility, though we have recently contacted Franz Potter, who runs the online M.A. at National University, and have scheduled a meeting in May. Further Professors Werner and Scambray have expressed interest in taking ULV's training for online teaching.

Update (August 2008): Professor Scambray has taught one class online; Professor Werner has expressed some interest in doing the same. While the idea is not yet dead, at present we are simply too small (five full-time members) to take on the added work of an M.A. program.

Recommendation 3: Teaching Strategies

Although the Department does a good job of offering students varying kinds of learning, the fact of the matter is that the Survey courses have no long paper requirements. The midterm and final, both in class, prepare the student for the rigorous of our Senior Exam, but no class works as a bridge for the long paper requirements of the Shakespeare class (Eng 340).

Update (November 2007): The English faculty continues to discuss and refine the role of the long research paper in our students' course of study and its relevance, given today's educational environment.

Update (August 2008): The long paper is getting longer, at least in English 340 (20 pages, plus Works Cited); Professors Werner and Scambray now require a paper of over 12 pages.

Recommendation 4: Senior Exam (English 499)

Our senior exam has gone through a variety of metamorphoses, which has caused some confusion. We should have a moratorium on changing the Senior Exam for at least five years. We might reinforce the importance of literary terms in all our courses, especially in the upper division courses students generally take just prior to the Senior Exam.

Update (March 2007): The Department is now offering an eight-week long group tutorial on how to prepare for the Senior Exam. We have also set up a BB site, allowing students to aid each other in their preparation. The tutorial is led by a member of the English Department, who encourages students to consider past examination as a model and to prepare by (1) intensive study of the texts in question; (B) related critical materials; (C) comparison and contrast of the given works with other meaningfully related works; (D) discussion with other class members, and (E) conferences with other senior members of the department.

Update (August 2008): The tutorials are a great success; students are more prepared and express great thanks for these free prep meetings.