

**Master of Arts in English
Weber State University
Program Review**

Review Dates: September 11 & 14, 2020

Review Team:

External Reviewer:

Dr. Tyson Hausdoerffer, Director of Graduate Program in Creative Writing, Western Colorado University

Internal Reviewers:

Dr. Valerie Herzog, Prof. and Chair of Athletic Training and Director of Graduate Studies, Weber State University

Dr. Electra Fielding, Assoc. Prof. of Spanish, Weber State University

Overview:

The original program review was scheduled for the Spring 2020 semester. Due to the pandemic, all parties agreed to postpone the review until the Fall 2020 semester and also agreed to conduct it virtually via Zoom, rather than in person. The Review Team met virtually with the Program Director, the program's Administrative Specialist, the Department Chair, the Dean, a group of faculty, and a group of students/recent alumni over a two-day period. The Review Team's feedback regarding each standard is included below.

Standard A-- Mission Statement:

1. Are outcomes of the program well defined?
2. Are student accomplishments assessed by stakeholders?
3. Is the educational program clearly defined so graduates can meet goals?
4. Does the mission statement align with the college's mission statement?

Strengths:

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course learning outcomes and objectives are the same in both sections. We also recommend that MENG 6010 should better reflect with equal weight all four of the different program concentrations rather than be primarily focused on the Literature concentration.

As was noted in the previous program review, we recommend eliminating the remaining dual-designations courses (5000-level courses) from the MEng program.

Standard C. Student Learning Outcomes & Assessments

- a. Learning outcomes should reflect expected skills and behaviors achieved by graduation
- b. Learning outcomes support goals of program
- c. Learning outcomes linked to curriculum (with matrix)

Assessment

- a. Programs has clearly defined assessment plan
- b. Each learning outcome has a direct measure that is public
- c. Evidence of learning is collected and reported regularly
- d. Program faculty meet regularly to discuss results
- e. Assessment results are being used to improve teaching & learning (i.e., close the loop)

Strengths:

MEng students produce high-quality scholarly products that are presented at regional and national conferences. Several of these products have also been published in reputable outlets. The current MEng team has sought to address problems with learning outcomes by increasing norming sessions and by reviewing how well the learning outcomes's relate to the different tracks.

Areas for Improvement/Growth:

Learning outcomes do not apply equally well to all tracks. Feedback to students based on assessment of Learning Outcomes is delivered too late for it to be of use to the students (although we note that they do receive feedback as a regular part of each course). Student accomplishments are not being used in marketing as rigorously as they perhaps might.

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Standard D. Academic Advising

- a. Clearly defined strategy of advising
- b. Students receive appropriate assistance in planning course of study
- c. Students receive appropriate assistance in planning career

Strengths:

The MEng makes various advising resources available to its students. New students in their first semester meet with Kate Johnson, the MEng Administrative Specialist to declare a track within the program and review the list of required and optional courses. Students are encouraged to meet with the program director, Dr. David Hartwig, for more specific career advising during their second year in the program, although some students seek his advice during their first year. Many students seek advice from faculty in their specialty areas, and the overall impression is that the faculty teaching in MEng take an interest in giving professional advice to their students, if in an informal way.

Areas for Improvement/Growth:

Expanded and more formalized academic advising for MEng Students. Better clarity in advising requirements.

Standard E. Faculty

- a. Faculty size, expertise, professional development are aligned with mission
- b. Programs has core faculty required to maintain quality program
- c. Adjunct faculty are qualified
- d. Program strives to achieve diversity among faculty

While the program has been able to secure more funding recently for scholarships, the enrollment growth will result in additional financial need for graduate students. The Review Team recommends that the college seek out donors who are interested in endowing scholarships for graduate students.

Dr. Hartwig's strong leadership and Kate Johnson's role as administrator and advisor have helped solidify the program and have strengthened enrollment. We recommend that the program implements processes to ensure continuity when transitioning to new leadership and/or administration.

Standard F. Program Support

- a. Number and capabilities of staff adequate to support mission and objective
- b. Administrative support available to assist staff
- c. Facilities, equipment and library capable of supporting program mission

Strengths:

Several individuals noted that Kate Johnson, the MEng Administrative Specialist, is a strength of the program. She has caught up with the backlog due to issues outside of her control. She has also created and managed a well-planned social media marketing campaign that has helped to grow the enrollment of the program. She also participates regularly in other recruiting activities such as graduate fairs. The subject-area librarian has been an asset and has acquired the resources necessary for the success of the program.

Areas for Improvement/Growth:

While the Program Director and Administrative Specialist have been able to make minor edits to the website, they are unable to completely update it to meet the needs of the program and prospective students.

Recommendations:

Rework the MEng website to focus it more on prospective students only and consider creating a Canvas course geared to provide pertinent information for current graduate students. This would essentially function like an internal website and could also be used for announcements.

We also recommend that old versions/iterations of the MEng website be removed from weber.edu (such as https://www.weber.edu/portfolio/engl_mstr_ms.html) to avoid confusion and to improve web searching by current and potential students.

We recommend the creation of a newsletter to share information about student achievements, highlight program events, maybe even introduce new students. This newsletter (or a shorter version of it) could also be shared with MEng alumni. Highlighting alumni achievements to current students would help with retention and also make alumni continue to feel connected to the program, which would make it easier for MENG to collect data on alumni success.

Standard G. Relationships with External Communities

- a. Formal external relationships exist
- b. Role and contribution are clearly defined
- c. External advisory board exists and communicates regularly

Strengths:

The Wasatch Range Writing Project (WRWP) provides a free, intensive 3-week writing workshop

and out of the classroom. We would also like to commend the MEng faculty for their efforts in transitioning to the online format during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Master of Arts in English program at Weber State University has great potential for growth. The inclusion of online teaching, and the recruitment efforts outside of the Ogden/Northern Utah community can be valuable assets in growing the program, in creating a diverse group of students in the classroom, and overall, making it a vibrant learning experience for students. Formalizing the tracks of the program into concentrations and/or graduate certificates will likely attract additional students to the program and improve the satisfaction of their graduates. Increasing the diversity of the faculty will add to the richness of the educational experience and the ability to attract and retain diverse students. The program can further be strengthened through improved academic advising and a revised assessment plan. The creation of an external advisory board will allow the program to stay in tune with the needs of area professionals and receive feedback on various aspects of the