



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: John Petraitis, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Cc: David Bowie, Professor; Chair, Department of English  
Jackie Cason, Professor  
Jared Griffin, Associate Professor  
Trish Jenkins, Associate Professor  
Emily Madsen, Assistant Professor

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

**Program/s in this review:** English MA

**Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable):** None

**Campuses where the program is delivered:** Anchorage

**Members of the program review committee:**

David Bowie, Professor and Department Chair  
Jackie Cason, Professor  
Jared Griffin, Associate Professor  
Trish Jenkins, Associate Professor  
Emily Madsen, Assistant Professor

**Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role**

UAA's mission is to discover and disseminate knowledge through teaching, research, engagement and creative expression. UAA is committed to serving the higher education needs of the state, its communities and its diverse peoples. It is also committed to instruction at multiple academic levels, success of all students regardless of their higher education goals, and service to the diverse peoples and communities of the state. UAA's core themes are (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity, (3) Student Success, (4) UAA Community, and (5) Public Square. UAA values international and intercultural education, diversity of experiences and perspectives, and the diversity of our unique location in Southcentral Alaska that comes from the Alaska Native peoples of this area.

The College of Arts and Sciences contributes to UAA's mission with a suite of programs that provide, among other things,

1. general education courses for undergraduates in CAS and other Colleges,
2. opportunities for undergraduates to pursue majors in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the arts, and
3. opportunities for faculty and students to pursue research and creative activities in CAS's academic disciplines,
4. graduate programs for advanced studies.

Given decreased enrollments across UAA and significant budget cuts to CAS, the challenge is to serve UAA's and CAS's missions with only 75% of the funds it had in 2018-2019. CAS's shrinking budget is especially challenging for programs that rely on state financial appropriations through CAS because the programs have a gap between (a) the total costs of everything the program does and needs, and (b) the tuition CAS receives to cover those costs. This describes most programs in CAS: most rely on state appropriates and CAS has 30% less than it had two years ago.

The MA in English contributes to CAS's and UAA's mission by providing students with graduate studies in English, and providing both students and faculty the opportunity to conduct research and creative activities in applying the English language in various domains.

### **Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity**

In Fall of 2018, the delivery of all Tier I WRTG courses at UAA officially transferred from the English Department to the Department of Writing in UAA's Community and Technical College. Prior to this transfer, Tier I WRTG courses were taught by English MA students. After that transfer, the MA program in English suffered. Demand for the program decreased: in 2013 and 2014 the program had more than 20 students, but by 2018 and 2019 it fell to 13 or less, putting it near the bottom of CAS's 11 master's programs, and giving it only half the median number of students in CAS's graduate programs. Following the transfer, there have been steep declines in student credit hours, credits hour per faculty, and class sizes which averaged only 3.7 in 2019, and average of 4.7 awards per year is near the bottom of CAS's graduate programs. With fewer students in the program, the tuition they pay only covered 50% of the cost of teaching the courses in 2019.

### **Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success**

In recent years the program was revised to rely less on stand-alone graduate courses with fixed topics, to stacked courses with both advanced undergraduates and graduate students, and with more flexible topics that provide wider options for graduate students and fewer bottlenecks in the curriculum. Graduate students benefit from internships that connect their applied skills with local employers.

### **Program Duplication / Distinctiveness**

UAF offers an MA in English with a focus on literature, while UAA's MA has a broader focus. Combined, the two MA programs in English produce about seven awards per year with five from UAA and two from UAF.

### **Commendations and Recommendations**

The program is commended for efforts to adapt to the transfer of Tier I WRTG courses to CTC, a move that eliminated the opportunity for English MA students to be instructors of record. The faculty should also be commended for the hard work they put into their expedited program review submission.

### **Decision**

Deletion. Historically, the English Department covered its costs with all the students it taught in its Tier 1 WRTG courses, BA courses and MA courses. This is no longer the case. When all costs for the English Department are considered now for everything the faculty do (namely, teaching, research, and service) the Department has a gap between the tuition students provide and the costs to run both the BA and MA

program. Deleting the MA program will affect relatively few students and will help with the long term sustainability of the BA program. With this deletion the number of full-time faculty should eventually be reduced to by three positions. Program deletion requires approval by BOR and NWCCU.