Comparative Humanities and Humanities

Presentation to EKU Faculty Senate and the Council on Academic Affairs

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Nature of Higher Education

• Liberal, not instrumental

• Broad preparation for life, not just narrow job training
  • Confucius
  • MLK, Jr.
  • Michael Roth

• Are we at risk of overreacting to a fluid and temporary situation?
STEM, Performance-based Funding, and Liberal Education

- Enhanced focus on STEM and turn to performance-based funding are dubious and of uncertain value

- According to the US Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the US Census Bureau, 3/4 of undergraduates do not work in their major fields

- “In 2014, the [Census] Bureau reported that 74 percent of those who have a bachelor’s degree in a STEM major are not employed in STEM occupations.”

- An alarming discrepancy between these statistics and the current emphasis on job training and performance models of educational success

- STEM researchers and employers want graduates with liberal education backgrounds

- Liberal education and social capital
Structure of Comparative Humanities and its role at EKU

- Efficient, flexible, collaborative by design
- 36 hours in Major – all upper division
- Only 15 hours required from HUM: 12 Hours of HUM Core Courses + HUM 499 Thesis. (Up to 27 hours of HUM is possible.)
- 21 hours often come from other departments: 12 hours Area II Focus + 9 hours free electives
- Serving single majors, co-majors, and esp. students who cannot major in their desired areas (e.g., WGS, ARH, THE, REL, AFA)
- Student co-majors and minors include: WGS, ARH, PHIL & REL, ENG, FRE, HIST, SPA, ANT, CJS, PHE, and PSYCH
- Success story: In 2015, 2 of the 3 Dean of Arts and Sciences Award of Merit recipients were Comparative Humanities co-majors.
- Recent graduates are in law school; in or have completed graduate school in Humanities, English, History, Counselling, Fine Arts, Personnel Services; plus a variety of service and managerial positions
Facts and Evaluations

• We are profitable

• In a tie for the 4\textsuperscript{th} highest outcomes out of all 47 programs reviewed (p. 6 of Report; p. 17 of Senate agenda)

• HUM 499 is unpaid overload

• Graphs and charts are of varying relevance, depending on inclusion of first, second and/or third majors

• Currently, 16 active majors

• No negative trend is discoverable; rather, steady enrollment, in spite of 2 arbitrary suspensions (in 2009 and 2012)

• CPE Program Review in 2013-14: Unanimously approved by CAS without modification

• Evaluative criteria problematically applied
  • Relatively low enrollment – upper-division only
  • “a significant number of courses in general education” – by design (and history)
  • Viability should be determined re: full function of our unit, not just the major
  • “significant use of part-time faculty for humanities courses in general education” – a result of administrative neglect
Evaluation: more positive points

- Reorganized Gen Ed Role
- Courses offered via cross-listing with Honors
- Interdisciplinarity and collaborative: about 65% of courses from other CLASS departments
- Professors teach in Honors
- Comparative Humanities is as new as Global Studies, but this is not mentioned to our benefit as it is theirs, in spite of generally equivalent levels of success
The Full Picture – Executive Summary

- Restructuring, HON cross-listing, and E-Campus involvement has been completely and clearly successful

- Only 4 upper-division courses need to be offered per year = 50% of one faculty teaching load (not counting unpaid work in HUM 499)

- HUM Gen Ed numbers provide solid base of support: in Fall 2016: 10 sections with 349/350 students = 99.7% capacity in all Gen Ed courses

- HUM core courses are being cross-listed with HON = guarantee of full capacity

- HUM 360 in Gen Ed Element 6 = guarantee of full capacity

- The AVG enrollment in all HUM 300+ courses taught from Fall 2014 through Fall 2016, as of August 17, 2016, was 22.5 students per class.
Maintaining, Improving, Investing

- Continued cross-listing with HON

- More active, reliable and informed advising from university advising as well as collaborating departments – 14 courses of free electives in most potential co-majors in CLASS

- Interdisciplinary credentialing for both HUM Gen Ed and major courses = a ‘win-win-win’ situation: for Humanities students, for faculty development, and for home departments

- Minor modifications to curriculum? E.g., HUM 300 (currently Gen Ed only) could be added as a HUM core option

- Gen Ed as continued base of support for new positions in Humanities = 2 new positions

- This would still allow for a reduction of total course offerings and use of adjunct faculty
Contact and References

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