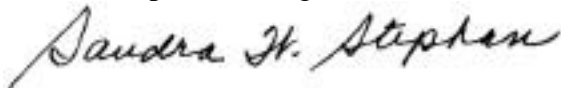


**Saint Cloud State University  
Department of English  
External Review Report**

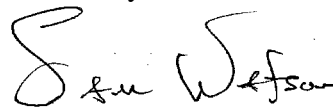
**May 2, 2003**

Campus Visit  
April 10-11, 2003

Sandra W. Stephan, Youngstown State University

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra W. Stephan".

Sam Watson, University of North Carolina, Charlotte

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam Watson".

Thomas A. Upton, Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas A. Upton".

## Introduction

Colleagues in English at SCSU, we commend you!

Preparing a Self-Study always comes "on top of" the regular faculty commitments of teaching, scholarship, and citizenship; it is never an easy task. While the burdens are bound to have fallen disproportionately on some shoulders (in this case, Suellen Rundquist, Judy Dorn, and Bob Inkster), a successful self-study process needs to involve all members of a program. Yours clearly does just that; it is a pleasure to read the thoughtful reflections representing the various dimensions of your program, notably including the student reflections contained in your self-study.

While you are facing terrible budgetary constraints, your self-study is not a "numbers only" document; far from it. Beginning with your Department's Mission Statement and running throughout the document, we see a clear, informed, and thoroughly humane vision of what an English Department can and should be; you certainly are to be commended for your vision, for your articulation of it in this document, for your embodiment of it in your programs, for your personal and joint commitments to the important vision which you share.

Reading your self-study led us to look forward to our April 10-11 visit to your university. While we were with you, we saw the fine qualities of your self-study borne out in person. For your hospitality to us, your openness with us, your frankness in discussing problems and potentials, you have our thanks and our commendation. In a private and frank meeting with a large number of your students, they were enthusiastic and quick to point out the accommodations you are willing to make to their needs, the accessibility and support they find from members of the English faculty. Their attitude is a strong commendation to you, and it is certainly consistent with the experience we have enjoyed on your campus.

"English" is more than a department, an isolated subject, an academic discipline. It is also the language we all share, and for better or worse it affects the quality of our personal and civic lives. Those reasons help account for your faculty's heavy involvements, over the years, in institutional commitments far beyond the department. For these reasons we are also happy to see the active involvements of your students in the wider communities of the university and beyond.

Given the very nature of its subject, if an English Department is serious about its commitments it finds itself pulled in many different and potentially competing directions. So it is with your department. You carry loads that are very heavy; some "burn-out" may already be a problem for you; it almost certainly would be a problem -- and so would the retention of fine faculty -- if those loads were further increased.

Your program seems to be quite effective in making accessible to students the best that "English" can represent. Most certainly, it is an admirably cost-effective program. It seems to us that as a department you are doing notably commendable work in the tough task of allocating scarce resources and balancing course offerings -- courses for freshmen, for upper-level English studies, for graduate

studies, for TESL -- such that your program's integrity is not sacrificed to a function (for your entering freshmen) which is foundational but which some can dismiss as "merely service," and such that vital synergies are maintained across your programs.

### **English 191**

We especially commend the fact that nearly all English faculty regularly teach in your ENGL 191 program. That helps assure departmental ownership of the freshman program, and it provides an effective "recruiting ground" for prospective English majors. You assure us that you will continue with this commitment, and we applaud you for it!

At the same time, we worry that the student enrollment in these sections is so high: your current number of 25 students per section is already 25% beyond the maximum of 20 recommended by pertinent professional organizations (MLA, NCTE). There is talk of further increasing that ceiling, to 28 students. That must not be allowed to happen.

In the ENGL 191 program, we commend the department's commitment to a "diversity in teaching styles and approaches -- a diversity undergirded by unity of purpose" (ENGLISH 191, April 1998). Both the unity and the diversity are vital, in a foundational program such as this one. We also applaud the department's implementation of a carefully designed and conducted naturalistic study of the program's effectiveness (Self-Study, English 191 Assessment Report).

As that assessment shows, the ENGL 191 is not currently achieving its ambitious and important goals as well as you would like it to. Part of the problem may already be a sense of faculty "burn out" occasioned by heavy student enrollment, coupled with assigning new TA's to those sections without adequate preparation and support. With both those possible problems in mind, we urge the sorts of scheduled but informal discussions of current teaching practices that can capitalize on the diversity across your faculty and that can promote renewals of energy, for beginning teachers and seasoned professionals alike. We have heard some talk of SCSU's embarking on programs of "freshman learning communities" that would have considerable percentages of your entering students working in cohorts across traditionally-defined course lines. We would hope that the work of ENGL 191 could be "folded into" the work of such cohorts, thus relieving some of the pressure for slots in ENGL 191 as a "stand alone" course.

The most obvious means of meeting the needs of the increasing number of incoming freshman and thus alleviating the pressure on the English faculty to staff 191 would be to hire adjunct faculty. Obviously this is not possible within the constraints of the faculty union agreement. Another suggestion might be to develop a more attractive exemption system. Though one exists now, apparently students do not take advantage of it at rates adequate to have any positive impact on the enrollment needs.

English faculty can meet some enrollment needs by increasing the class size of their general education literature classes. These classes do not require the intensive teacher-student interaction necessary in

writing classes but will still serve entering students by providing classes that meet general education requirements and expose them to language issues as well.

## **General Education**

The English department is committed to general education and offers six courses that meet the University General Education requirements, three of which also meet the University diversity requirement. The courses are offered regularly and serve a large number of SCSU students (Self-Study, 1). Currently the faculty is challenged with the task of bringing the existing general education courses into line with the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MTC). The issues seem to surround the fact that the SCSU courses are more broadly conceived and meet more than one SCSU criterion, whereas the MTC is based on a single criterion per course. Faculty have expressed some concern that meeting the demands of the Minnesota Transfer Curriculum may require extensive revision, particularly in the case of the rich diversity courses currently in place. In particular, the faculty are concerned that their courses have been carefully designed to meet multiple competency goals, whereas the MTC is more concerned with content. The English department, in accord with the SCSU general education philosophy, is more focused on interdisciplinary goals and on the development of researching skills. The self-study includes an excellent review of the issues the department faces in meeting this new challenge. Although some revision must take place in order to meet the mandates of the MTC, many will be slight, including minimally revised course descriptions that make explicit the ways in which SCSU courses meet MTC goals. Some others may have to be revised in greater depth. The diversity courses are not only well conceived but popular, and these appear to be the most vulnerable in the MTC program. We recommend that the department not lose its focus on the broader and more interdisciplinary goals that currently serve as the foundations of the courses, while revising to meet MTC goals. The SCSU and English department criteria are more informed and pedagogically sound, but in most cases, can also incorporate the more narrow requirements of the MTC. The self-study notes that the MTC program may provide more “opportunities for easier and more effective assessment reporting.” This could be of great advantage to the department in gathering assessment information, evaluating the effectiveness of programs, and working toward continuous improvement.

## **English Majors**

In its Mission Statement, the department declares its commitment to teaching English studies in the “richest sense” including the “heritage of literature written in English, the philosophy and practice of rhetoric and composition, creative writing, English education, linguistics, and teaching English as a second language.” In keeping with that commitment, the English major at SCSU offers students a wide variety of excellent choices in determining their course of study and in preparing for the broad spectrum of professions toward which the study of English can lead. In addition, the maintenance of reasonable class sizes allows students to have ready access to professors and to participate in discussions not possible in large lecture classes. The department has developed a logical and effective progression of courses for all majors, beginning with the 300-level course, Introduction to English Studies, and culminating with 490, the capstone experience. This sequence allows the department to collect valuable assessment data. Currently, students in the senior course compile a portfolio of their

work, which demonstrates their integration of the skills, concepts, and knowledge they have gleaned throughout their course of study; they also complete an online survey evaluating their experiences in the program. Student comments are collected and published, providing the department with critical information on the student's views of their progress and their programs. One problem that was mentioned in our interview with students is the difficulty many experience in getting into the gateway course, English 300, without which they cannot enroll in any of the 400-level courses for the major. This problem has also been noted in the self-study (Future Directions, 48). In our interview with students, some agreed that they would like to have the opportunity to study grammar and to focus more on poetry (the latter issue is recognized as a curricular priority in the self-study (Future Directions, 48)). Students all agreed that the programs are strong, the faculty extremely accessible, and advising excellent.

The department currently lists seven options for the major: the B.A. in General English, Literature, Literature and Writing, Creative Writing, Linguistics, Rhetoric and Applied Writing, and the B.S. in English—Communication Arts and Literature. While this seems to offer students many choices, the differences between most of the majors are actually quite minimal, and they share a required core of courses. We recommend that the existing B.A. majors be re-examined and perhaps streamlined to represent more realistically what options are available. All of these majors could exist as “emphases” or “concentrations” or “tracks” within the English major, allowing the faculty to continue to offer the variety of courses they have developed, but reducing the administrative and advising load. The presence of seven majors also encourages students to look for degrees of specialization that, at the undergraduate level, they cannot realistically expect and the department cannot afford.

**Rhetoric and Applied Writing:** This is an excellent course of study for English majors, especially in that students are expected to pair this area of study with a major or minor in another area that would provide them greater breadth and wider experience as professional writers. The program offers seven writing courses as well as an internship. The internship is an excellent opportunity for students to learn what will be expected of them in the world of work and provides them with experience that will be beneficial as they enter the job market. That the quality of these courses is recognized across campus is supported by the fact that many other departments are requiring their majors to enroll in one of the 300 level writing classes. It is noted, however, that many of the courses in the program seem similar in their focus (expository writing, rhetorical writing, rhetoric of style, for example). As a major, or as a concentration, this program could be strengthened by broadening the course offerings to cover more of the skills and knowledge that students who are seeking professional writing employment will need. We recommend consideration of revising this program to reduce duplication and to include courses in grammar, professional and technical editing, document production, special topics and applied topics, and perhaps a senior project that would provide students with a portfolio for their job search. The quality of the faculty currently teaching in this program suggests that there is sufficient expertise for these kinds of areas to be covered, although it is clear that this is a burgeoning field and that additional faculty will strengthen an already growing program.

**The B.S. in English—Communication Arts and Literature:** this is a carefully designed program that meets the educational demands both of the Minnesota Board of Teaching the National Council of

Teachers of English. Adjusting a program of this nature through the quarter-semester conversion followed closely by the revision of the MBOT licensure program, the English education faculty have managed to maintain a quality program that is to be congratulated for achieving accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 2000. The faculty has developed a Programmatic Assessment Plan to gather data and to provide follow-up on majors. A unique feature of the program is that faculty maintain contact with graduates and routinely invite former students to visit the 351 and 451 classes for panel discussions and Q/A sessions on the realities of the profession. One small area of concern is that, although the program is designed to allow for some student choice, the requirements of the MBOT force limits on those choices: both faculty and students have remarked on this constraint. This is, of course, not unique to the SCSU English education program. Kudos for the fine collection of materials you provided in support of this program.

There has been some discussion of reviewing courses to determine whether or not they should be raised from three to four credits. Currently, the first-year writing course, ten of the required British and American literature courses, three diversity/literature courses, the introductory linguistics, writing center practicum, and writing and rhetoric theory courses are 4-credit courses. There certainly seems adequate justification for these courses bearing the fourth credit hour. We would urge caution in considering converting additional courses to the 4-credit level. An increase of credit hours per course raises issues about the integrity of the program; more credits per course will result in fewer courses in the major, thus reducing student options and the possibilities for flexibility within the programs. The credit hours of a course should reflect the amount of student work entailed. Thus it is thoroughly appropriate that some of SCSU's English courses carry three hours and others four. We recommend that the assignment of credit hours remain as currently listed, unless there are instances of three-hour courses in which an appropriate pedagogical rationale can justify such an increase and where it can be demonstrated (for instance by course syllabi and student questionnaires) that the student workload justifies four credit hours.

There is a general concern that faculty are "stretched too thin" between supporting courses within the major and meeting the University requirement for first- year composition and general education requirements. A review of existing program design, evaluating the strengths of the faculty, their research and scholarly agendas, and the shape of the major, may point to a more effective use of faculty resources and more manageable and efficient scheduling.

## **Graduate Program**

The graduate program at SCSU contributes significantly to the department, the University, and the community, energizing faculty and invigorating their scholarly work, contributing to the first-year composition program and writing center, and providing excellent advanced education for college and high school English and ESL teachers. The English graduate program provides several options for students wishing to pursue a variety of careers, including continuing on to the Ph.D., teaching in community colleges and secondary schools, general cultural enrichment, and teaching English as a Second Language (M.A. TESL is discussed below). Each of the programs concludes with a

“culminating experience” in which students may choose one of several final projects that demonstrate their writing and thinking abilities. These projects afford yet another opportunity for program assessment. Consideration for the working life of students has prompted the English education faculty to offer courses for teachers in the evenings and workshops in the summer. A major strength of the program is the multiple opportunities it provides for graduate assistantships in teaching in the first-year composition program, the College ESL program, the Intensive English Center, and/or tutoring in the Write Place. According to the self-study, teaching assistants now teach 30 sections of first-year composition or ESL per year. In addition, the TA offers students outstanding teaching credentials when they seek employment after graduation. Students are also offered internships in which they teach at technical and community colleges in the area or work in businesses. These internships have been highly rated by alumni. The department is currently reviewing some other ways to provide TA/GA experiences to better serve the needs of some students, according to the self-study, such as administrative GAs for students planning to teach in community colleges and research or editorial GAs for those pursuing Ph.D.s or professional writing positions (Graduate Programs, 7). The assistants who teach in the writing program are mentored by the Composition Director, who oversees their orientation and training as well as observing and mentoring them throughout their teaching experience. This is a massive responsibility especially when we see that at this time the Composition Director is overseeing 24 teaching assistants in addition to running the first-year writing program.

Some concern has been expressed, both by faculty and by students, regarding the fact that not all of the teaching assistants are fully prepared to step into the classroom when they are assigned teaching positions. This concern has also been expressed by the Director of Composition, who is clearly committed to the integrity of the program, along with concerns that other unqualified instructors have been sometimes introduced into the program in order to meet the pressures of increased enrollment. We would recommend that an additional composition theory/pedagogy course be instituted at the graduate level to enhance the strength of the program, as indicated in the NCTE “Guidelines for the Education of Two-Year College Teachers,” cited in the self-study (Graduate Programs, 6-7).

We were impressed with the efforts to provide instruction (especially in ESL) through ITV classes that allow students in remote areas to have access to the outstanding program available at SCSU. This serves an important need. With increased technological capabilities, more instruction of this kind could be provided.

The self-study indicates that the department needs to be gathering more data from graduates of the master’s degree programs. It is imperative to collect this information in order to positively position the department for requesting faculty lines and University resources and for effective and reflective program review as well as for marketing. The proposed survey is a good start to such an initiative.

Graduate student representation on the Graduate Steering Committee allows students to observe and participate in the departmental decision-making process and serves as a conduit of communication between graduate students and faculty. You are to be commended for providing travel and conference registration funding, no matter how small a sum, for the support of graduate students engaging in

professional activities.

According to faculty and to the self-study, the stipends and tuition remission issues remain of concern. It is clear that the Graduate Dean is making inroads on the stipend. You are close to competitive in that respect, especially with the potential of a \$500 increase. A full tuition remission would certainly place you in a much more competitive position for recruiting graduate assistants.

In all, the graduate program is dynamic and varied, meeting the educational and intellectual needs of a diverse population of students. The faculty is interested and engaged and the program rigorous. The self-study suggests that marketing is becoming an important area of focus as your demographics faces a decline in the near future. A carefully wrought marketing plan would be useful in attracting new graduate students to the program. This is essential, as the department (and the University) depends upon the recruitment of strong graduate students to support the first-year writing program, and as the department provides the state (and beyond) with well-trained, highly qualified college-level teachers. You have a strong product and an attractive campus. Your many opportunities for internships, GAs, and TAs are a selling point.

### **TESL Programs**

The first reaction that one has when looking at the TESL/ESL Programs at SCSU is “Wow!” The SCSU English Department has put together a package of programs -- running from intensive ESL classes for beginning-level language learners, to teacher-training courses for K-12 educators, to an MA program for those wishing to advance their professional training – that one would expect to see at a university twice its size and located on one of the coasts. SCSU, and the English Department faculty, can and should be very proud of what is being accomplished in all of these programs. One of the biggest benefits is how well these programs work together to support each other. Comments on individual programs are discussed in turn below.

#### Intensive English Center

The success of the IEC program must be particularly pleasing to SCSU. While a small program, it provides a wide range of important services to the Department and to the University. First, it is an important source of new international students to the campus. According to the self-review report, 90% of the students who have entered the IEC since 1997 have continued on to start SCSU degree programs. Second, it provides a very important venue for TESOL MA students to gain practical experience in teaching ESL. Third, it provides important funding for Graduate Assistant appointments, including tuition remission, to help financially support students in the MA program.

The program has three areas where it would be good for long-term development to occur, but this may prove difficult to accomplish for various reasons. The first area where the IEC could benefit is in the addition of a full-time MA-level instructor who could help provide long-term stability as well as instructional and administrative support to the IEC Director. Currently, the IEC Director is solely responsible for the administration and instruction of the IEC, including marketing, recruiting, advising, curriculum development, and serving as mentor for the GAs. An MA person would be an ideal addition to help provide this support. In fact, this person could split duties between the IEC and

the College ESL, providing support for both programs. Unfortunately, it seems that union restraints do not currently allow the hiring of a non-tenure track MA person to be considered.

A second area for long-term development is to continue to look for ways to increase enrollments. While the IEC has been able to be completely self-supporting, increases in expenses for GAs (to cover greater percentage of tuition remission) and the need for additional resources (see below) will require higher enrollments in order to offset these costs. Clearly, this will be a challenge with the world situation as it currently is, and the fact that IECs all across the U.S. are currently experiencing reduced enrollments. The School and/or University is encouraged to consider providing at least some short-term financial assistance for a well-developed recruitment plan, especially since such a large percentage of IEC students continue on as full-time degree-seeking students, which is clearly a benefit to the whole campus. For example, recruitment might be facilitated by working closely with various departments that may have overseas connections, like business or the sciences, to bring in students who would then enter into their programs.

Third, an issue raised by some of the GAs and students in the IEC during discussions with them was that there was a lack of what can be generalized as “resources” for them. Concerns were raised about things like a lack of good audio-visual equipment (even things like reliable and good tape players) and tapes/videotapes to use in their classes, as well as a lack of books and other materials for them to draw on for teaching ideas and for their research for their classes and theses. The IEC is encouraged to work jointly with the College ESL program, the English Department, and the School to look for ways to develop a more significant “teacher’s resource center” that GAs can access to help them in support of their instruction. It would be beneficial if at least some of the stations in the lab could be outfitted with headphones and microphones, as well as appropriate language software like ELLIS, that would allow IEC students to work on their oral/aural and pronunciation language skills outside of class in a lab setting. Having a “language lab” where students could check out materials to work on outside of class would benefit the program greatly. These types of improvements are an additional cost, but large sums would not be required and gradual additions over time would spread the expense out.

While the focus here has been on three areas where the program would benefit in having developed, this is a nice program that is well conceived and run. There are no significant “shortcomings” that raise any red flags of concern.

### College ESL Program

The College ESL Program, like the IEC, provides many important contributions to the English Department and to SCSU. One of its most important roles is providing a sheltered transition for all new international students to life in an American university. The requirement that all new international students must take either ESL 150 (Cultural Orientation) or ESL 151 (Administrative Orientation) during their first semester on campus is an excellent idea, and one that many universities do not do. Difficulties adjusting to the culture as well as to the academic expectations are significant reasons why international students drop out of school and return to their homes. These classes provide an important support for international students during their transition to SCSU, and the positive evaluations that come from these courses attest to their value. The CEP also plays the crucial role of

ensuring that international students have the prerequisite language skills needed to succeed academically at SCSU, which it accomplishes with its placement-testing program. The CEP also provides another excellent venue for TESOL GAs to gain experience during the program. A major strength of the CEP is that all of its courses count toward graduation credit for the undergraduate students, just as foreign language courses do for the native speakers of English. This is an important arrangement, as many schools do not allow ESL courses to carry graduation credit, thus giving the impression that learning English as a second language is somehow less valuable than learning, say, French as a second language.

The CEP also has three areas where further development might be considered. The first area is with placement testing. The choice of the ACT/ESL/COMPASS as the testing instrument is an excellent one, as this is a very good testing instrument. What should be looked at more closely are the cutoffs used to “pass” students out of the College ESL Program. The current score of “80” used for both the reading and listening sections on first look appears rather low. On the reading section, a score of 80 places students into the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile – according to the ACT ESL Composite Report – and falls at the cutoff between “Proficiency Level 2” and “Proficiency Level 3” in the ACT’s five-level (0-4) proficiency description. According to the ACT Proficiency Descriptors, it isn’t until “Proficiency Level 4” (a score of 92 or above) that students have the academic language skills they need to consistently succeed in a college setting. For the listening test, a score of 80 places into the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile, but is also still in “Proficiency Level 2.” [Note: an ACT/ESL score of 90 is probably closer to a Michigan Test score of 80.] While apparently there have not been significant complaints about the language ability of students who pass out of ESL based on the test, further research should be done on this. Of greatest concern is the reading ability of students who may well not be prepared to tackle the challenging material that is required of them.

A second area that might benefit from further examination is the curriculum for the ESL 202 course. Echoing the concern raised above about the reading abilities of the ESL students as determined by the placement test, the ESL 202 curriculum should be reviewed to ensure that appropriate focus is placed on helping students develop their academic reading skills. This course seems to have an emphasis (justifiably so) on writing skills, possibly at the expense of reading, and the reading text that is used does not seem to push for the level of reading comprehension and fluency that ESL students will need to have to be successful in academic courses like Intro to Sociology or World History.

Third, with increasing numbers of immigrant students coming to SCSU, the good initial efforts to meet the needs of these students who frequently have different language, academic, and social needs than international students should be further expanded. Most important, further collaboration between admissions, advising, financial aid, the learning center, and the CEP should be promoted in order to make sure the campus is providing coordinated support. Establishing a joint task force that meets regularly to plan programs and support is highly recommended. Some mechanism for evaluating the language needs of these students – who currently are not evaluated – should be established if possible. An article by T. Upton describing a similar program developed at UW-Eau Claire will be sent separately to provide an example of what could be accomplished at SCSU when resources are pooled.

Echoing what was noted under the IEC section, the addition of an MA person [once the new CEP Director comes on board] to help with the administration and curricular needs of the CEP (as well as the IEC) would be a significant help to the stability and quality of the program. Regrettably, the same union constraints seem to come into play, however. Also echoing what was noted in the IEC section is the need for additional resources for instructors of ESL 101 and 201. GAs noted the lack of OHPs, Powerpoint stations, working tape players, and other technology/software to help with the development of oral/aural language skills – as well as generally “poor classroom facilities.” Hopefully, many of these concerns will be addressed when the English Department moves to its new building.

### TESL Graduate Program

The Graduate TESL Program is, in a nutshell, very strong. The eight faculty members who teach in the TESL MA offer a very wide and interesting selection of courses. The incredible balance, almost 50-50, between native speakers of English and international students is every other school’s dream. And the many opportunities available for students to get GA appointments – giving them both practical experience and financial assistance – is worthy of special commendation. This is a strong program with a reputation of turning out strong graduates.

Three issues worth attention came up during the review. First, both the self-review and student comments noted a significant lack of “extra-text” teaching resources and materials as well as a serious lack of library resources to support the on-going research needs of the graduate students engaged in writing MA theses and class papers. The development of an ESL Resource Library – probably as part of the SCSU library – would be a highly effective resource. If one-time funds could be found to fund the initial purchase of a wide-range of applied linguistic, teacher-training, and ESL books that could be kept in a central location, the collection could probably then be updated through the regular library acquisition process. A graduate program of this size needs to have adequate resources to support the research and teaching efforts of its students.

While the course offerings for the TESL MA are very impressive, the MA Program may want to consider developing more specified “tracks” for students who have a K-12 focus and those who do not. While it appears that there are certain courses that K-12 folks more typically take and certain courses that non-K-12 folks typically take, this is not clear in the materials. For example, it seems possible someone planning to teach in the K-12 setting could get the MA without ever taking the education courses ED557 or ED558. There is no reason why these tracks couldn’t have significant overlap, but making sure students going into K-12 get certain experiences seems critical. One critique from students was that the K-12 ESL coursework is not “practice-based,” but more “theory-based.” As the K-12 focus seems to be an interest for a growing percentage, and possibly soon a majority, of the MA students, ensuring a quality program that addresses specific K-12 concerns is important. Additionally, a concern raised by a faculty member about the current MA structure is that students can finish the MA without having a good grounding in the structure of the English language if they avoid certain classes. In short, now that there is a strong and significant nucleus of faculty who contribute to the MA Program, this may be an opportune time to rethink the objectives and requirements of the TESL MA.

A final area of concern echoes earlier concerns about the potential for faculty burn-out. While it may not be typical and possibly only a short-term issue, it seems that at least some of the junior faculty have been asked to teach “double-enrolled” courses for the MA TESL Program. While this is a concern for any faculty member, placing this additional burden on junior faculty can have major implications on their ability to be adequately prepared for the tenure decision. Faculty work-load is an important issue for SCSU, but extra caution should be taken to ensure that junior faculty are ready for tenure and don’t decide they want to pursue “greener pastures.” It is also unfortunate that a tenure-line to hire a new faculty in K-12 ESL had to be suspended due to budget constraints. If and when it becomes financially feasible to proceed, the addition of this position will be important to the department because of the growing shift in focus towards K-12 ESL that both graduate and undergraduate majors have shown. As there is no one in the department certified with experience in K-12 ESL, it will become increasingly important for someone with these qualifications to join the TESL Program.

#### TESL Undergraduate Program

Due to time constraints, there was no opportunity to discuss this program structure. This appears to be a fairly young program that is only now seeing significant numbers of students. Based on the self-study report, the TESL Undergraduate Program, which focuses on K-12 ESL License, seems well-conceived and run. With the growing demands for K-12 ESL teachers in Minnesota, this will likely prove to be an important component of the TESL array. As noted above, as demand in this area increases, it will become more important for a faculty member trained in K-12 ESL education to be added to the faculty. Since a track record has not been established yet, special attention should be given to this program to be sure that students are in fact adequately prepared for the professional positions they will be seeking upon graduation.

#### Summary Statement

In sum, the array of TESL Programs at SCSU makes a very strong and important contribution to the academic life of SCSU. The Directors of each of the programs provide excellent leadership and guidance; the School and the Department provide each of the programs with good support. One further comment should be made on the impressive synergy these programs have. Clearly the strength of the TESL programs is due in large part to how they have been designed to support and interact with each other. While the concern expressed by some in the department that parts of the array might possibly be split off from English appears to be unfounded, it is clear that any such action would be very detrimental to the overall success of the array. Reflective of the overall strength and quality of the TESL Programs is the response that both graduate and undergraduate students (some of whom came through the IEC) gave when asked, “Knowing what you know now, are you glad you came to SCSU?”: a surprisingly quick and even enthusiastic “YES!” given in chorus.

## **Write Place**

An active, well-administered, theoretically grounded writing center is critical to both student success and student retention across the entire institution. The Write Place at SCSU is just such a center. Clearly, the Write Place has a long history of serving students of all majors and at all levels. Located in a large well-lighted room adjacent to the English department, the Write Place is in an excellent spot to attract students from all disciplines who are looking for assistance in developing their writing, reading, and thinking skills. This location is representative of the position of the Write Place in regard to the department and its programming. Both undergraduate and graduate tutors, who have been rigorously trained through a strong and effective tutor training program (including a strong theoretical grounding as well as applied learning – Writing Center Practicum 352, 452/552), staff the writing center. The excellent self-study report on The Write Place gives a wealth of information on its success in serving students across campus. Tutors and the Director provided over 50 presentations and workshops in the last year and had already exceeded that number in the fall of this year alone. The Director is to be applauded for her energy and enthusiasm as well as her commitment to the work of the writing center. She is dedicated to the success of the program and committed to excellence.

As with the department in general, the Write Place is suffering from budgetary woes. Its situation is, however, more critical. The budget as it now stands, allows for three graduate assistant and as many undergraduate tutors as \$4800 at \$7.50 per hour can support—only 320 hours. A supplies budget of \$230 cannot possibly provide the materials needed for an effective writing center. (The English department has taken on the burden of providing copies from its own strained budget) This is grossly inadequate for the Write Place to serve the number of students who need the writing center services; in the past semester, in one month, over 200 students were turned away because of lack of tutorial staff. Other effects of budgetary limitations are clearly articulated in the report. The Director has put a great deal of thought into possible solutions to the immediate need to increase the tutorial staff and funding. Since the Write Place serves SCSU students across the disciplines, we recommend that Academic Affairs and Student Affairs provide increased support for the center as outlined in the self-study (20-21). The effectiveness of strong writing centers in retaining students and improving students' success had been documented. The Write Place is doing an outstanding job with less than adequate resources. It can be immensely more effective if it is appropriately supported.

There was some discussion and much concern regarding the Write Place being reorganized and incorporated into a "Learning Center" with various other student tutorial services. We have been assured that this is not in the plan, but we do want to go on record as saying that we recommend against such a move. The Write Place is integral to the department and its proximity to both the department and to the IEC is critical. Also, the mission of the Write Place is to serve students at all levels, with an emphasis on working with students as they progress through their programs. A move such as this could reduce the mission to remediation alone.

## Summary

We hope that our overall strongly positive impressions of the SCSU English Department faculty and programs come across clearly in this report. As stated earlier, it is clear that the SCSU Department of English is proud of its accomplishments – as it should be – and that it clearly has a vision for potential areas of development. We hope that our review and comments, which are summarized below, help provide additional clarity and priority for those potential areas of development:

### English Department – General

- \*Be judicious in increasing course credit hours, to maintain integrity of programs and to prevent losing flexibility within programs.
- \*Revisit general education classes for the purpose of meeting MTC requirements, looking at creative solutions to the issues that will allow SCSU classes to retain their integrity and still meet the more narrow demands of the MTC without compromising the department's values.
- \*Be very cautious about increasing course load expectations and course enrollment maximums to meet budget constraints, as faculty are very close to “burn-out.”

### English 191

- \*Hold enrollment in sections of ENG 191 to no more than 25 students.
- \*Develop a more attractive “exemption” system for students who already have “comparable” experiences or skills in order to reduce demand on ENG 191.
- \*Look at ways to meet the Eng 191 requirement within the new “freshman learning communities.”
- \*Consider meeting some enrollment needs by increasing slightly the class sizes of general education literature classes.

### English Majors

- \*Expand sections of enrollments in ENG 300 (the major gateway course), or seek alternative gateway options, as this seems to be a “bottleneck” for students wanting to pursue the major.
- \*Redesign the current majors to include “emphases” or “tracks” within an English major.
- \*Consider expanding the focus on poetry and possibly grammar within the major to address student interest.
- \*Revise the curriculum in Rhetoric and Applied Writing to reduce course duplication and include more courses in grammar and technical writing topics.

### Graduate Program

- \*Include an additional composition theory/pedagogy course to enhance the strength of the program.
- \*Collect better data from MA graduates to better argue departmental need and shape future growth.
- \*Seek to provide full tuition-remission to GAs and TAs and raise stipends to more competitive levels
- \*Develop a marketing plan to attract new students to the program.

TESL Programs

\*Do not consider splitting off the IEC. The strength of the TESL Programs comes from their synergy. They should remain integrated and interdependent.

Intensive English Center

- \*Try to further develop relationships with other departments to pursue additional contacts abroad that might help bring new students to campus.
- \*Look at developing, with the College ESL Program and Department, a teacher's resource center to better support ESL instructors in lesson planning.
- \*Look at ways to develop a language lab where students can work on aural/oral skills outside of class.
- \*Look for a way to provide administrative and instructional support to the Director, ideally by the hire of an MA would could work in both the IEC and CEP

College ESL Program

- \*Review placement test rubrics to be sure that students are being appropriately placed and passed out of the program.
- \*Revisit the ESL 202 curriculum to be sure that advanced academic reading skills are being appropriately addressed.
- \*Continue and expand efforts to develop courses/support system to meet the unique needs of the growing number of immigrant students.
- \*Look at developing, with the IEC and School, a teacher's resource center to better support ESL instructors in lesson planning.

TESL Graduate Program

- \*Work with the School and the Library to significantly expand the holdings of applied linguistic, teacher training, and ESL textbooks available for students to access for papers and theses.
- \*Develop a specific track in the MA for students seeking K-12 certification that ensures they take courses that address specific K-12 focused issues.
- \*Hire in the not too distant future a K-12 ESL-experienced faculty to take the lead in this growing area in the Department.

TESL Undergraduate Program

- \*Ditto: Hire in the not too distant future a K-12 ESL-experienced faculty to take the lead in this growing area in the Department.

Write Place

- \*Seek additional financial support from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to provide increased financial support to: (1) increase graduate assistant positions, (2) increase the number of undergraduate tutors, and (3) increase the supplies and photocopy budget to a reasonable level.
- \*Do not remove administration or location of the Write Place from the English Department.