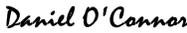




Memorandum of Understanding

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Program Director:  Date: 3/13/2026
Kathryn Chew

Interim Dean, College of Liberal Arts:  Date: 3/19/2026
Daniel O'Connor

Vice Provost Academic Programs:  Date: 3/19/2026
Pei-Fang Hung



Program Review Summary
Memorandum of Understanding
Comparative World Literature (CWL) Program
College of Liberal Arts
February 2026

This document serves as a summary of the Program Review findings and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the consensus reached by the Comparative World Literature (CWL) Program, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Division of Academic Affairs, based on the recently conducted program review. Dr. Wesling (primary) and Dr. Demetriou (secondary) completed the external review April 10 and 11, 2025. This report and MOU describes the goals to be achieved and the actions to be undertaken by all parties to this MOU to achieve these goals, during the next program review cycle. Progress toward goals is to be addressed in an annual report.

The Comparative World Literature (CWL) program offers a BA in Comparative World Literature. The major has three emphases: World Literature in Translation (36 units), Cultural Studies (33 units), and Language and Literature (42 units). These emphases serve students seeking a more traditional comparative literature focus as well as those interested in a more technologically oriented approach to literary studies. The program also offers a minor in Comparative World Literature (15 units) and a minor in Health Humanities (15 units).

The CWL program has made progress in all areas as recommended in the MOU from 2019 (for a 2017 review). The MOU specified the following needs: 1) provide an annual progress report on the Department's assessment efforts to the CLA dean, the Vice Provost for Academic Programs, and the Director of Program Review and Assessment; 2) formulate and communicate a strong mission and create measurable PLOs for the program; 3) develop connections to other programs to offer dual majors and interdisciplinary minors; 4) evaluate offerings to ensure a cohesive degree experience for students and consider the feasibility of offering courses in Asian and African World Literatures, and Literary Theory; 5) consider a cohort model for the BA program, particularly the Upper Division courses; and, 6) establish a tenure-track hiring plan based on the needs of the undergraduate students that the Program serves.

Resources reviewed for the report:

1. Self-study July 2024
2. External review April 2025
3. Previous MOU 2019



4. Department website

Strengths were identified in the reports

1. **Mission Statements:** The department has mission statements and program goals that are clearly posted on the website and are appropriate to the professional context.
2. **Curriculum:** The program has followed through on recommendations from the last MOU and has implemented several changes, including the addition of a capstone course (CWL 480), an interdisciplinary minor in Health Humanities, a lower-division course on literary theory, and more culturally inclusive courses. The program has also added “clusters” to its website to help students who enjoy a particular course find related offerings. Additionally, GE certification has been added to many courses that were previously limited to majors in order to improve class fill rates. The program has made changes to improve articulation for CWL 342 and CWL 242 and has renamed some courses to make them more attractive to students. Strategic planning for the future focuses on developing more innovative and practical courses to attract students and better prepare them for future careers. Many of these courses will be interdisciplinary and/or technology-focused.
3. **Assessment:** CWL completed annual assessment reports from 2019-2023 (excluding the 2021 pandemic year) in accordance with its assessment plan. Faculty discussed the assessment results and took actions to close the loop. The program plans to revise its assessment plan to require annual assessment of the two currently required courses, CWL 365 and CWL 480, as well as other upper-division CWL courses, such as CWL 305, CWL 315, CWL 324, CWL 405, and CWL 412.
4. **High Impact Practices (HIPs):** CWL faculty participate in a variety of HIP opportunities, such as teaching University Honors courses, teaching in ATLAS and Beach XP learning communities, supporting student research, and offering study abroad programs (most recently in Florence, Italy). CWL’s annual Comparative Literature Conference provides students from CWL 480, as well as alumni, the opportunity to present their research to an international scholarly community. The program’s journal, *Genre*, and the campus-wide book club, along with CWL 480, help foster a strong CWL community.

Concerns were noted in the reports

1. **FTES and Headcount:** The program has experienced a significant decline in both major and non-major FTES from fall 2016 to fall 2024. Major FTES dropped from 31.5 to 6.2, while non-major FTES declined from 558.9 to 172.4. Similarly, headcount for pre-majors/majors decreased from 45 to 24.

The program notes that a majority of CWL majors are “discovery” majors, and cohorts of first-time, first-year (FTFY) students typically include fewer than 11 students. As indicated by the data, 21 students changed majors into CWL after matriculation, while



13 students have dropped or transferred out of the CWL major since 2018. As a result, there was a net gain of only eight students over the six-year period. Increased persistence among FTFY students within the major could help bolster overall major headcount.

2. **Graduation Rates and Time to Graduation:** From fall 2017 to spring 2023, the program conferred an average of 11 degrees per year. The CSU Chancellor's Office requires programs to graduate at least 10 students per year. The program's steady decline in major enrollments (most recently at 6.2 FTES) therefore places it at risk of not meeting this minimum benchmark.

The department tracked student outcomes internally, with the following results: of the 62 CWL graduates since spring 2018, 44 were four-year students and 18 were transfer students. Of the 44 four-year students, 16 graduated in four years, four in 4.5 years, 11 in five years, six in 5.5 years, and four in six years. There were three outliers, with times to degree of 8.5, 10.5, and 11 years. Among transfer students, one graduated in one year, one in 1.5 years, eight in two years, four in 2.5 years, three in three years, and one in 3.5 years.

According to IR&A data, the average time to degree for FTFY students ranges from 4.6 to 7.4 years, with an average of 5.8 years. The average number of units completed ranges from 125 to 138, with a mean of 130.1 units. For transfer students, the average time to degree ranges from 1.9 to 5.0 years, with an average of 3.0 years. The average number of units completed ranges from 122 to 156.9, with a mean of 142.5 units.

3. **DFW rates:** Three CWL courses have consistently recorded high DFW rates, including 1) CWL 205 Digital Literature and Narrative, 2) CWL 213 Comics and Graphic Narratives, and 3) CWL 220 The Imagination at Play. Possible contributing factors include limited internet access, mismatches between student expectations and course demands, and teaching methods. The CWL Program Director has addressed instructional practices for one faculty member who was flagged for multiple high-DFW courses, resulting in improved outcomes. The program has opportunities to expand internet access for students in need and to more clearly communicate the workload and expectations of CWL 205, 213, and 220 to improve student preparedness and success.
4. **Facilities and Resources:** CWL shares office space with the Classics program. As CWL faculty numbers have grown, securing adequate office space has become increasingly challenging. The program is seeking additional space for lecturers. Furthermore, as the digital humanities curriculum continues to expand, CWL will require more dedicated space for digital project work for both faculty and students. The CWL librarian is also seeking space to store and manage these digital projects.

Opportunities for Development were noted in the reports



1. **Faculty:** The program recently hired two tenure-track specialists: Dr. Crystal Lie (Health Humanities and Disability Studies), who teaches in the Health Humanities minor, and Dr. Viola Lasmana (Digital Humanities and Critical Race Theory), who will help build digital humanities programs at CSULB.

It is noted that CWL Director Dr. Kathryn Chew is not counted as CWL faculty, as her tenure home is jointly in Classics and Religious Studies. As of fall 2024, the CWL program has four tenure-line faculty and 11 lecturer FTEF (including six full-time three-year lecturers, three part-time three-year lecturers, and several one-year lecturers), for a total of 15 faculty members equating to 11.4 FTEF. Consequently, CWL has the lowest tenure density in the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) at 27%, compared to the CLA average of 52.5%.

CWL faculty pride themselves on exemplifying the teacher-scholar model and fostering strong faculty–student relationships. All CWL faculty receive outstanding SPOT evaluations, and the tenure-line faculty are productive scholars.

2. **Marketing:** As a discovery major, CWL Director Dr. Chew has pursued multiple strategies to raise the program’s visibility and increase major enrollments. She has participated in CLA-sponsored events, including the annual community college/high school counselors conference, Day at the Beach for admitted students who have not yet enrolled, and CLA Day each semester, during which departments staff tables on the central green to promote their programs.

Faculty have also cultivated a social media presence (e.g., Instagram and Meta/Facebook), supported the student-run Comparative Literature Club (CLC), which sponsors events and hosts a book club, and plan to employ a student as a social media intern through CWL 492 or CWL 499. In addition, offering workshops on post-graduation career pathways and facilitating connections among current students, prospective students, and alumni would further support recruitment and retention

Recommendations:

It is therefore agreed that the Comparative World Literature (CWL) program will collaborate with the College of Liberal Arts and Division of Academic Affairs to:

1. Continue to implement the program’s comprehensive assessment plan by completing annual assessments using both direct and indirect methods, and by reporting on “closing the loop” activities to demonstrate that learning outcome data are used to inform decision-making. The program will provide an annual update (due September 1) on progress toward MOU action items to the CLA Dean, the Coordinator of Program Review and Assessment, and the Vice Provost for Academic Programs. The next review cycle will span 2024–2031, with a comprehensive self-study due in June 2031 for the 2031–2032 academic year review process.



2. Assess major FTES and headcount to determine whether the department can reasonably grow major enrollments within the next two to three years to consistently meet CSU Chancellor's Office requirements for degree conferral. If current trends do not support such growth, consider alternative infrastructure models that could better support the program's needs. As the CWL and Classics merger progresses, the curriculum and degrees offered should reflect the new infrastructure. (*Concern 1 and Opportunity 2*)
3. Assess graduation rates, including four-year rates for first-time, first-year (FTFY) students and two-year rates for transfer students, and implement strategies to improve FTFY student retention and increase graduation rates to meet or exceed university benchmarks. (*Concern 2*)
4. Strategically assess faculty composition and instructional capacity, including tenure-line density, and consider a range of staffing models that support program sustainability and student success, as resources permit. (*Opportunity 1*)
5. Continue to monitor DFW rates and implement targeted interventions as needed to improve student success. (*Concern 3*)
6. Develop a plan to enhance facilities for faculty offices and digital humanities work, as resources permit. (*Concern 4 and Opportunity 1*)

This MOU has been read and approved by:

Program Director for Comparative World Literature (CWL): Kathryn Chew

Interim Dean for the College of Liberal Arts: Daniel O'Connor

Vice Provost for Academic Programs: Pei-Fang Hung

*DocuSign signature page on file.