

Single Plan for Student Achievement
English Department
2009-2015

Self-identified English Department “Areas for Growth” follow school goals where appropriate; some are listed under more than one school goal.

Goal A: Diversity and choice

To acknowledge and honor the diversity of the Gunn community and provide students with effective choices.

English Department Areas for Growth:

1. Continue to improve the transition from 8th to 9th and from high school to college. (All ESLRs and content standards)

2. Help students continue to make personal connections to the literature without compromising academic and intellectual rigor. (Standards: Reading 2,3; Writing 1,2;)

A1. Explore introduction of new courses and programs based on student needs.

- Continue to offer a range of English “elective” courses based upon teacher expertise and student interest.
- Examine the content in required English courses, including assignments and literary works.
- Continue to offer opportunities of accelerated study, including advanced, honors and AP courses.
- Continue to offer semester-long courses to facilitate smooth transitions between levels and provide students a broader experience.
- Continue to offer and support the “inter-disciplinary” courses “Shakespeare in Performance,” “Dramatic Literature in Performance” and “American Studies.”
- Implement the new “inter-disciplinary” course, “California Studies.”

A2. Provide support for students to be successful in existing and new programs.

- Examine ways to support the needs of ELL students, Special Ed students and students who typically do not perform well at Gunn.
- Examine the effectiveness of the Pathways to College program.
- Continue to offer smaller classes for freshmen and sophomores.

A3. Involve and educate parents of students needing support.

- Continue to communicate with parents through emails and phone calls.
- Make available information about program, courses, curricula.

Goal B: Instructional practices

To maintain and encourage instructional practices that ensure student success.

English Department Areas for Growth:

1. Continue to motivate non-reading students. (Standard: Reading 1,2,3)
2. Continue to teach the use of best evidence. (Writing, 1,2; WOC 1)

3. Help students continue to make personal connections to the literature without compromising academic and intellectual rigor. (Reading 2,3; Writing 1,2;)
4. Continue to articulate skills we are teaching and testing, from lower- to higher-order thinking. (All standards)
5. Continue to examine standards for teaching and assessing skills in and mastery of mechanics. (Writing 1,2,3; WOC 1)

B1. Encourage teacher collaboration and sharing of best practices.

- Continue such sharing through “Limelight Lessons” at department meetings.
- Continue using department and collaboration time to gauge “inter-rater reliability” and grading standards.
- Continue providing thoughtful, detailed commentary on representative student work.
- Improve and promote a common work space (such as L-31 once provided) to facilitate such collaboration during teacher prep time.
- Teachers will continue to teach a range of courses, including diverse age and ability levels.

B2: Increase variety of instructional techniques.

- Continue using project-based learning (e.g., essays, multi-media presentations, speeches).
- Examine the use of directed and discovery learning and strive for an appropriate balance.

Goal C: Community and communication

To maintain a sense of community by streamlining communications, facilitating transitions, and reaching out to those not yet connected.

English Department Area for Growth:

1. Continue to improve the transition from 8th to 9th and from high school to college. (All ESLRs and content standards)
2. Help students continue to make personal connections to the literature without compromising academic and intellectual rigor. (Reading 2,3; Writing 1,2;)
3. Continue to articulate skills we are teaching and testing, from lower- to higher-order thinking. (All standards)

C1: Streamline communication with students, parents, faculty and community

- Ensure information about programs, courses and curricula (including information about scope and sequence) are available.

C2: Improve transitions from middle to high school, between grades in high school, and post high school.

- Continue to work with middle school teachers to ensure proper placement of incoming 9th grade students.
- Continue to promote collaboration and articulation among teachers of the same courses to ensure course consistency while protecting teacher autonomy.

- Teachers should continue to teach courses of different levels (age and ability) to sustain awareness of our entire program and the full range of student ability and development.

C3: Maintain a sense of community and connections for students, teachers and parents as Gunn grows.

- Continue offering small (twenty-to-one) courses for freshmen and sophomores.
- Teachers continue to teach a variety of classes to allow students to “connect” to an adult by taking more than one of his or her classes.
- Teachers continue to be available for students during prep and tutorial times.

Goal D: Excellence with growth

To maintain academic excellence and a sense of community during a period of growth.

D1: Work with DLM architects and DO to develop a site plan using bond money that will better meet Gunn’s needs.

- Give input to the architects regarding needs for more classrooms, an office large enough to accommodate all teachers, areas for private meetings, and more storage space.

D2: As we continue to grow, we will maintain a sense of community and connectedness.

- Regain a common office.
- Put all English classrooms back in closer proximity to each other and the English office.

D3: Attract, retain and develop highly qualified staff to main academic excellence and support new and existing programs.

- Encourage and provide opportunities for staff members to develop themselves as teachers and learners.
- Celebrate accomplishments of department members.

Goal E: Student performance and assessment

To use data to inform instruction and improve student performance.

E1: Use data more effectively.

- Explore ways to examine test results (e.g., ERB, AP, CAHSEE) and their implications.
- Explore ways to address such implications in classes.
- Explore ways to communicate test results and implications, including the limitations of such results (e.g., be wary of relying too much on a single score)

E2: Provide multiple pathways for students to demonstrate content mastery in all subjects and to reflect on their growth and progress as learners.

- Continue to facilitate opportunities for self-reflection.
- Continue to offer the opportunity for accelerated studies (“advanced,” honors, AP).
- Continue to encourage student choice, both within and among classes.