

# Department Mission and Values Statement

## Mission

The English Department of California State University, Northridge is a community of teachers, scholars, writers, and support staff whose primary mission is to promote learning in literature, creative writing, composition, and linguistics, to help students acquire knowledge, develop skills, and realize their own intellectual and creative goals. In pursuit of our mission, the department is also committed to promoting faculty development in such areas as research, publication, creative work, and other professional activities for the advancement of knowledge and pedagogy.

## Values

1. A commitment to teaching the knowledge and skills for critical reading, writing, and thinking

We teach the conventions, terminology, and practice(s) of the discipline at the university level. We teach the historical and intellectual backgrounds for the study of literature, creative writing, composition, and linguistics. We encourage students to use this knowledge to develop and extend the discipline through their own creative and intellectual endeavors. We teach the value of language and literature within a broader social context.

2. A commitment to preparing students to be informed and responsible participants in a democratic society

We encourage students to develop a commitment to cultural and other forms of diversity in and beyond the classroom through an engagement with various literatures, theories, and creative works. We teach respect for all people(s) while recognizing both the differences and commonalities that contribute to a diverse, democratic society. In addition, we encourage students to participate in service learning, to seek community involvement, and to pursue other forms of non-traditional education.

3. A commitment to fostering life-long learning among students as they pursue personal and professional goals

We believe that studies in language, literature, and writing establish a strong foundation for a life of intellectual curiosity, creative activity, and personal development. Therefore, we seek to make students aware of the ways in which reading and writing, like language itself, can be experienced as open-ended and ever-developing activities that significantly enrich personal experience and can contribute to professional advancement. We aim to provide students with the literacy skills and critical capacities to frame guiding questions that will sustain reading and writing throughout their lives.

4. A commitment to fostering professional development among colleagues

We believe effective teachers continue to learn and also to share their knowledge through publication and other professional activity. Through our activities, we expand our own knowledge, disseminate our ideas to contribute to ongoing professional conversations, deepen our understanding of pedagogy, and update our teaching skills.

5. A commitment to sharing knowledge beyond the university classroom in a variety of venues

As active professionals and public intellectuals, we seek to share and develop knowledge by disseminating our work in a variety of public forums. We seek to foster connections among students, faculty, and various cultural, academic, and community-based organizations for mutual enrichment through service, shared knowledge, and creative activity.

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