

**Assessment Plan
Department of English
AY 2004-06**

I. Department Mission Statement

The Department of English nurtures excellence in teaching and research. Our teaching complements our research by helping our students participate in the global community and by developing critical thinking, self-expression, and sensitivity to our multicultural intellectual and literary heritage. Our research promotes new knowledge and methods for literary and rhetorical studies.

II. Program Competencies

(1) Students learn about diverse literary heritages and a range of ideological perspectives; (2) Students learn to write intelligent, informed, and persuasive prose; (3) Students learn the problem-solving heuristics of critical reading and interpretation; (4) Students learn to interrogate ideas by maintaining a healthy distance and open-minded disposition toward rival perspectives.

III. Intended Outcomes

- A. Graduating undergraduate majors will be able to read, decode, and interpret texts from a diverse variety of historical and cultural contexts.
- B. Graduating undergraduate English majors will be able to write persuasive arguments about literary and rhetorical texts.
- C. Graduating doctoral students will be able to write sophisticated scholarly arguments informed by current research in the field of English Studies.

- D. Graduating doctoral students will be able to exhibit pedagogical excellence in the teaching of writing to undergraduates.

IV. Action Steps

- A. Every undergraduate course in the Department will emphasize interpretative and critical facility, as demonstrated in discussion, formal presentations, examinations, and/or critical, analytical and research essays.
- Encourage faculty to include a statement on the syllabi of all upper-division English courses that announces the need for students to save all written work for the express purpose of the senior portfolio.
- B. Every undergraduate writing course (WW and W designations in old core; Written Communication and Writing Emphasis courses in the new core) in the department will emphasize explicit instruction throughout the writing process. To improve the quality of undergraduate writing instruction we plan the following:
- Review the writing requirements as presented in each of the syllabi of Writing Workshop (WW) and Writing Emphasis (W) courses offered by the English Department in the Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 terms;
 - Randomly select courses and review writing samples from courses listed above, beginning with the Fall 2002 semester;
 - Gather and, using a rubric, evaluate writing portfolios of graduating English majors;
 - Review SPOTS scores and student comments in courses listed above, beginning with the Fall 2002 semester;
 - Administer an exit survey of graduating English majors designed to aid the Department's understanding of how well students perceive they have met the expressed outcomes;

- Develop a one-credit capstone course for senior English majors (taken in the semester prior to graduation).
- C. Every graduate course in the department—from the opening required course (“The Profession of English”) to the final semester of dissertation guidance—will emphasize professionalization in both teaching and research.
- D. Every doctoral student in the Department will receive careful training in writing pedagogy, both in required course work (“The Profession of English,” the “Teaching Practicum,” and “Theories of Composition”) and associated close mentoring by English Department faculty including, but not limited to, the August Workshops, GI staff meetings, etc.

V. Assessment Measures/Methods

- A. The Department’s standing assessment committee will coordinate the evaluation, support the assessment of student achievement, and recommend both methods and measures for determining results.
- B. The Department’s Undergraduate Committee, coordinated by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, will assess a representative but random sample of writing portfolios (authored by graduating senior majors) from upper-division courses using a rubric designed to measure the accuracy and sophistication of a student’s critical thinking and interpretative skills.
- C. The Department’s Undergraduate Committee, coordinated by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, will assess a representative but random sample of writing (by graduating senior majors) from writing emphasis courses (UCR “W” courses).
- D. The Department’s Undergraduate Committee, coordinated by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, will review syllabi and writing assignments from a representative but random sample of writing-intensive upper-level English courses taught during the 2005–2006 school year.

- E. The Department's Graduate Committee, coordinated by the Director of Graduate Studies, will assess a representative but random sample of graduate students vitae for evidence of their success in professional writing and research (publications, conference presentations, placement, and other forms of external evaluation).
- F. The Department's Graduate Committee, coordinated by the Director of Graduate Studies, will assess a representative but random sample of graduate student teaching portfolios (presented in a form as detailed by the Director of Composition) and SPOT (Student Perception of Teaching) evaluations.

Projected Measures to Determine the Results of Assessment:

- By 11 March 2005, the standing committee, with consultation from the Director of Composition, will develop a rubric for assessing student writing that reflects the department's outcomes.
- By 11 March 2005, the standing committee, with consultation from both the Director of Composition and the Director of Undergraduate Studies, will develop guidelines clarifying the types of student writing that will makeup the portfolio for assessment.
- At the April 2005 department meeting the department will review the methods and measures proposed by the standing committee with the intent of arriving at agreement on ways of assessing results.

Submitted: