

Institutional Effectiveness Report
Academic Year 2014-2015
For BA/Liberal Arts Program

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Liberal Arts Program Mission, Student Learning Outcomes, and Goals

Students may pursue the English degree through the Liberal Arts Program, the Professional Writing Program, or the Teacher Certification Option. The Liberal Arts Program introduces students to their literary and linguistic heritage and acquaints them with a variety of genres, periods, themes, critical approaches, and individual writers ranging from ancient to modern. Courses in creative and expository writing, composition theory, the history of the language, modern theories of grammar, film studies, and literary criticism are also offered. Students may also earn either a minor or a collateral in English. Three writing minors are offered including creative writing, professional writing, and writing and language.

I. Student Learning Outcomes:

Skills Outcomes

- A. Ability to Read Texts Critically. The student will demonstrate an ability to understand literary texts in original and personal ways and be able to discuss literary works beyond a simple reporting of what professional critics have already said. Ideally the student will demonstrate understanding of aesthetic and thematic implications of literary works and be able to make defensible critical judgments about them.
- B. Ability to Synthesize External Sources in Documented Writing. The student will demonstrate the ability to use conventions of documentation and integrate borrowed ideas and quotations gracefully into the student's own writing.

Knowledge Outcome

- A. Ability to Interpret Text Contextually. The student will develop a sufficient knowledge of literary history and tradition to demonstrate an awareness of the social, artistic, and intellectual climate in which literary works have been written and read. The student will understand the impact of context on the creation and/or reception of literary texts.

Attitude Outcome

- A. Ability to Demonstrate with Insight that Literary Texts Communicate Perspectives of Cultural and Historical Significance. The student will demonstrate an awareness of how literary texts both shape and are shaped by the cultures around them. The student's writing will communicate an awareness that literature serves a purpose beyond the purely aesthetic and helps define cultural and personal identities.

II. Liberal Arts Program Goals

- A) Provide students with an engaging, challenging and rewarding academic experience.

Student Learning Outcomes Alignment in Curriculum

Students receive instruction and complete assignments related to each SLO in all of the major courses. The design of the curriculum assures that students have a broad exposure to various types of literature reflective of different time periods and cultures. Through this exposure, and through a wide variety of writing and interpretive activities, students will develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes that are foundational to the program.

Score Point Indicators for Student Learning Outcomes

Skills Outcome A. Ability to Read Texts Critically.

The paper should demonstrate that the student understands the literary text(s) being *discussed in an original and personal way, that is, the student should take the discussion of the literary work beyond a simple reporting of what professional critics have said about it. Ideally, the student should demonstrate understanding of the aesthetic and the thematic implications of the work(s) and the ability to make defensible critical judgments about them.*

Score 4: Sophisticated and original argument; balances that argument with source material; expands on--rather than repeats--source material.

Score 3: Perhaps too much survey of critical material, or a synthesis of pre-existing/pre-fabricated ideas/principles. Somewhat divergent from primary text; overemphasizes critical material to the detriment of primary text.

Score 2: Relies too heavily on plot summary; disappears to frequently (or too far) behind source material; argument itself more obvious than original.

Score 1: Primary plot summary; argument proceeds mechanically/predictably; argument even more obvious than original.

Skills Outcome B. Ability to Synthesize External Sources in Documented Writing.

The paper should demonstrate the ability to use conventions of documentation, the ability to integrated borrowed ideas and quotes gracefully into the student's own text, and the ability to integrate ideas gleaned from external sources into the student's original thinking about the subject. [A paper which appears to simply "cut and paste" ideas from external sources will score lower than a paper that uses such sources to stimulate and reinforce the student's original analysis.]

Score 4: No errors in MLA format; proper mixture of quote/paraphrase, smooth attribution and lead-ins; connections between differing sources; clear differentiation between external source ideas and writer's ideas.

Score 3: No errors in MLA format; at least some attempt at attribution in citation introduction; solid support for thesis.

Score 2: Some minor errors in MLA format; insertion of cited material not always smooth or appropriate.

Score 1: Errors in MLA format; insufficient quantity or quality of support material, abrupt or awkward insertion of cited material.

Knowledge Outcome A. Ability to Interpret Text Contextually

The paper should demonstrate an awareness of the social, artistic, and intellectual climate of the environment in which the literature was written and/or the environment in which it is read. The paper should contain evidence that the student understands the impact of context on the creation and/or the reception of the text(s)

Score 4: The context is clearly delineated and fully integrated into the thesis.

Score 3: References to the context are clear but are not well developed or integrated into the paper. The contextual elements do not drive the thesis.

Score 2: Paper has superficial or passing reference to the context in which the work was composed and/or received.

Score 1: Paper has no contextual references or has inappropriate references.

Attitude Outcome A. Ability to Demonstrate with Insight that Literary Texts Communicate Perspectives of Cultural and Historical Significance

The paper should demonstrate an awareness that literary texts communicate perspectives of cultural and historical significance.

Score 4: The student is conspicuously able to find significance in a literary text. The student engages with a text's cultural or historical ramifications, with substantial depth and quality of thought. The commentary is pertinent and insightful. Establishing something important to discuss, the student rises well above mechanical response to assignment and obvious matters of fact and plot.

Score 3: The student demonstrates with some skill that a literary text has cultural or historical implications. The writing is not bound to mechanical assignment matters alone, but rises above factual summary to pertinent commentary. The student conveys a fairly original awareness of literature's importance as a cultural production.

Score 2: The student shows basic, somewhat limited ability to see something of importance in literature. Insights into cultural or historical ramifications may be unoriginal, predictable, or rehashed. More attention is focused on satisfying mechanical aspects of assignment than on developing ideas in depth. Literature seems regarded primarily as a classroom exercise.

Score 1: The student has difficulty rising above the level of obvious fact and summary to sense any wider significance in the text. The response to the text is

narrow, perfunctory, or mechanical, as if the discussion occurs only because the assignment made it occur. The writing is assignment-bound in a very limited way, and resists engagement with cultural or historical significance. Literature is rendered trivial.

Benchmarks

The benchmark for each of the Student Learning Outcomes is an average score of 2.5. The benchmark for the Program Goal is a positive response of 80% on each of the items in the questionnaire.

Assessment Activities

Senior Paper Scoring: Papers from 13 graduating seniors were assessed in order to evaluate each of the Student Learning Outcomes.

Exit Interviews: During the fall and spring semesters, 19 students completing English 496 participated in exit interviews and completed questionnaires. The results have been used to evaluate success in achieving the Liberal Arts Program Goals.

Results and Evaluation

Senior Paper Scoring

The chart below shows the results of previous years for “Department Goals.” During the current academic year, these goals have been reconfigured as Student Learning Outcomes.

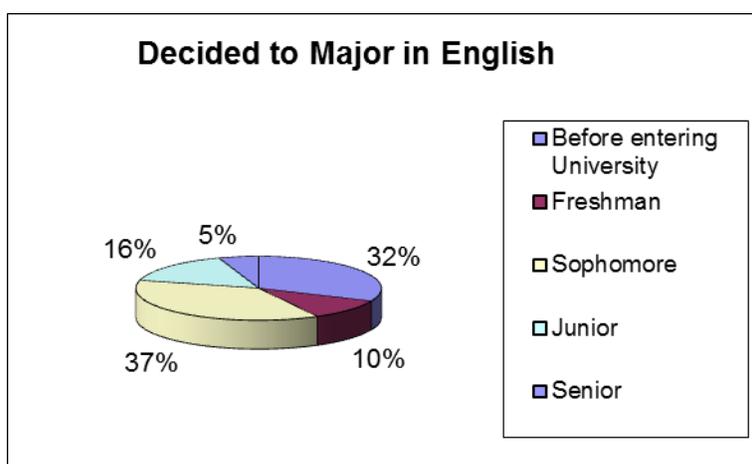
Goal Area	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
A:Read texts critically	2.50	2.80	2.90	3.25	2.70	2.89	3.07	3.14	3.15	2.86	2.97	3.10	2.85
B:Interpret texts contextually	3.13	3.03	3.23	3.21	3.32	3.13	3.23	3.36	3.36	3.36	3.45	3.34	3.09
C:Synthesize external materials in documented writing	2.85	2.77	2.90	2.84	3.60	2.80	2.80	2.71	2.71	2.71	2.81	2.85	2.30
D:Demonstrate knowledge of cultural and historical significance.	2.60	2.66	3.34	3.78	3.60	3.40	3.40	3.36	3.36	3.36	3.31	3.54	2.55

Student Learning Outcome	14-15
Skills A:Read texts critically	2.48
Skills B: Synthesize external	2.56

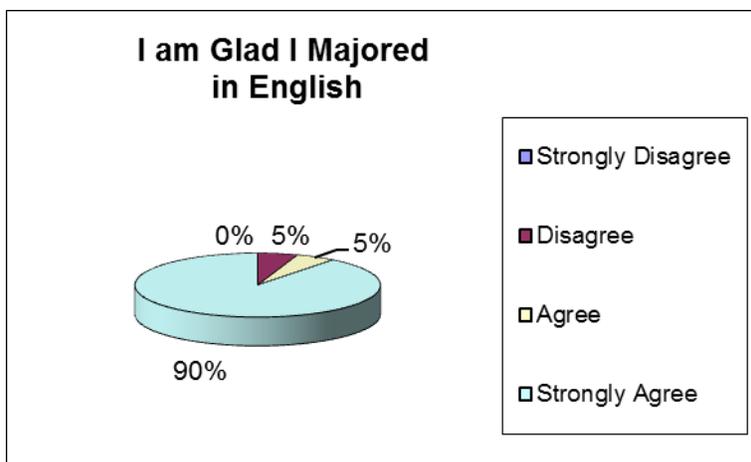
materials in documented writing	
Knowledge A: Interpret texts contextually	2.84
Attitude A: Demonstrate knowledge of cultural and historical significance.	2.53

Exit Interviews

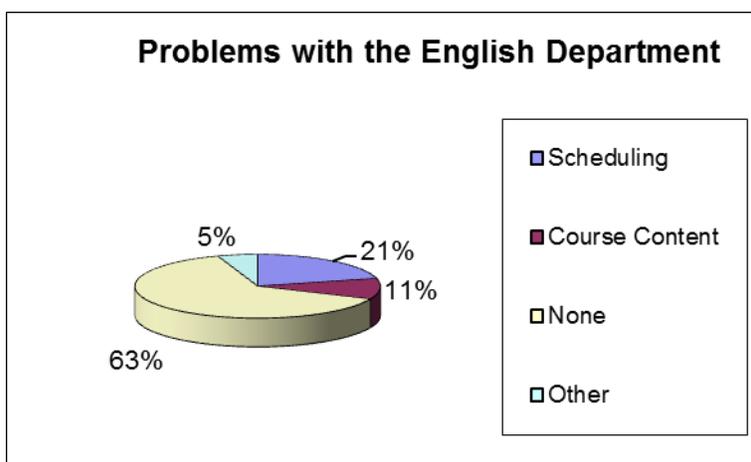
Nineteen graduating seniors completed exit interviews. Each student responded to a questionnaire and scheduled a meeting with either the 496 instructor or the Department chair to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the program. As in past years, the results of the interviews demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with the work of the English faculty.



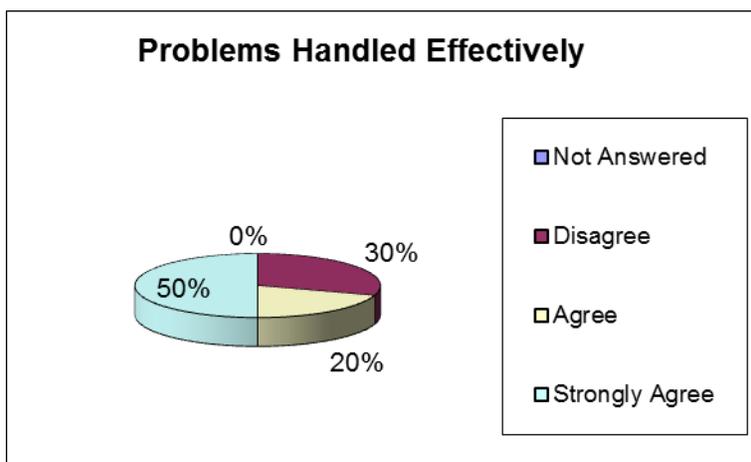
32% of the students indicated that they decided to major in English before entering the university. The majority of the remaining students (47%) decided to major in English during the freshman and sophomore years while completing general education requirements and, in many cases, after they had started to work within other majors (21%). When asked why they chose English, most students indicated a desire to learn more about literature, reading, and writing. Several of the students who chose the major after the freshman year expressed an initial interest in teaching. Several students majored in English for a career in business or law.



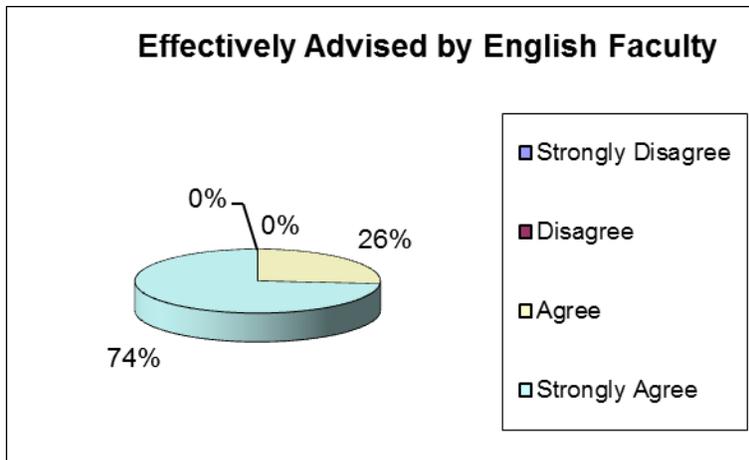
90% of the graduating seniors indicated that they were satisfied with the decision to major in English.



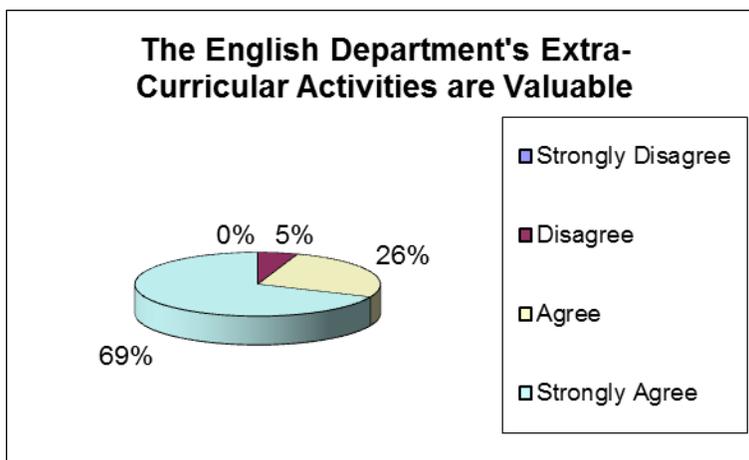
A majority (63 %) of the students reported having no problems with the operation of the English program. Four students reported scheduling problems.



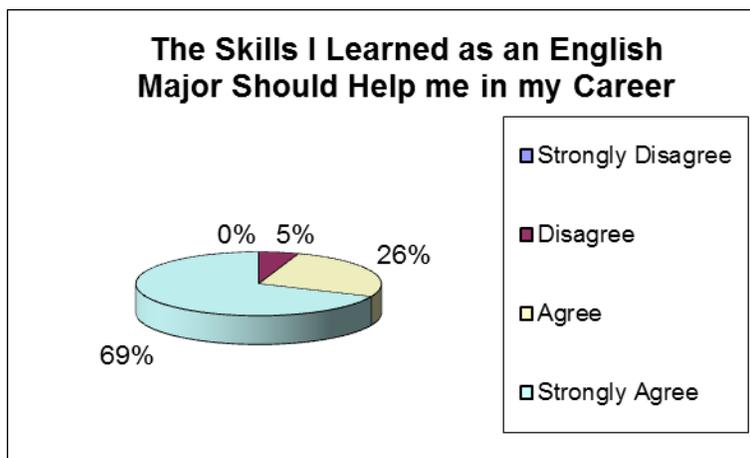
The majority of students reported that problems were effectively addressed by the Department.



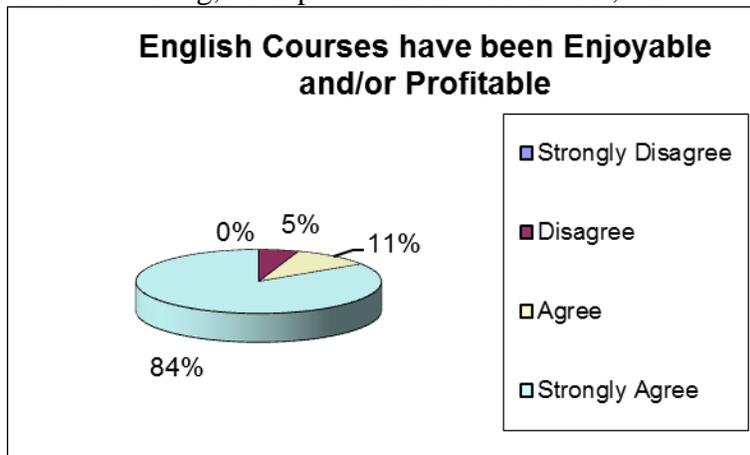
All of the surveyed students indicated that the department has provided effective advising.



95% of those students who participated in extra-curricular activities found those activities to be valuable. Students called specific attention to the Pee Dee Fiction and Poetry Festival, the Writing Center, the Snow Island Review, and Sigma Tau Delta.



All but one of the graduating seniors reported that the English major provided skills that should help with future careers. 95% of the students noted specific improvements in critical listening, inter-personal communication, textual analysis, rhetoric, and research.



95% of the graduating seniors found the English courses they had completed to be enjoyable and profitable. Students singled out more than 20 specific courses, and several students wrote that all of their courses were the “most enjoyable.” The one student who disagreed explained that the courses required too much work and the professors offered too little encouragement.

Assessment Results

The assessment data demonstrate that the program met each of its benchmarks, except SLO, Skill A, which fell slightly below (.02) the benchmark. This decline represents a drop from previous years.

Issues of Concern and Planned Improvements for Current Year

Issues of Concern, 2014-2015

- Low scores on SLO, Skills A.
- Concern that current SLOs, which are based on older program goals, may not align with and assess revised English curriculum.
- Reported problems with course scheduling and departmental response to student programs.
- SLOs are measured only with direct assessment procedures, rather than through a combination of direct and indirect procedures.

Planned Actions for Academic Year 2015-16

- Review course syllabi to make certain course content and assignments provide appropriate emphasis on interpretive skills. Coordinate faculty workshops as necessary.
- Continue working on revised SLO and comprehensive assessment procedures to match revised curriculum and meet SACSCOC expectations.

- Develop on-line survey instrument to gather specific information on scheduling concerns and develop an action plan for more effective departmental response to student problems.
- Revise questionnaire and exit interview questions to provide indirect assessment of SLOs.

Issues of Concern and Improvements for Recent Years.

Issues of Concern, 2005-2006

- Staffing shortages caused by retiring faculty.
- Imbalance between temporary and permanent faculty
- Incomplete course offering for Professional Writing Major
- Outdated office and lab computers.
- Cumbersome hiring procedures for tenure-eligible faculty
- Inadequate extra-curricular activities related to creative writing

Actions Taken, 2005-2006

- Hired replacements for retiring senior faculty members.
- Assessed the balance of temporary and permanent faculty.
- Developed additional courses to support professional writing program.
- Continued to upgrade office and instructional computers.
- Revised hiring procedures for tenure-track faculty.
- Developed a “Fiction Festival” for the university and surrounding community.

Issues of Concern, 2006-2007

- Staffing shortages caused by retiring faculty
- Low enrollment in Teacher-Certification Option
- Inadequate classroom technology
- Limited exchange opportunities for English majors

Actions Taken, 2006-2007

- Hired qualified replacements for vacant and soon-to-be vacant positions
- Worked with School of Education to determine future of secondary certification program
- Developed successful proposal to eliminate minor requirement in secondary certification program
- Continued to invest in technological upgrades.
- Investigated the feasibility of an exchange program with an Irish university

Issues of Concern, 2007-2008

- Limited service learning opportunities for students studying English
- Limited QEP initiatives for English majors
- Limited course offerings for Professional Writing Program
- Outdated general education literature courses

Actions Taken, 2007-2008

- Increased service learning opportunities within both general education and upper-division literature courses
- Developed successful proposals for QEP funding, which allowed students to enhance learning through out-of-classroom experience and travel
- Developed new courses for Professional Writing Program
- Formed Committee to revise general education literature courses

Issues of Concern, 2008-2009

- Decrease in enrollment in upper-division courses
- Lower performance on Goal C than other goals
- Inadequate classroom and office technology

Issue of Concern 2009-2010

- Inadequate office computers
- Imbalance between contingent and permanent faculty

Actions Taken, 2009-2010

- Developed strategy to increase permanent faculty through conversion process
- Applied for Stimulus money to replace obsolete office computers.

Issues of Concern 2010-2011

- Continuing imbalance between contingent and permanent faculty

Actions Taken, 2010-2011

- Conversion of temporary lines to tenure-track lines.

Issues of Concern, 2011-2012

- Continuing imbalance between contingent and permanent faculty

Actions Taken, 2011-2012

- Conversion of two additional lines to tenure-track.

Issues of Concern, 2012-13

- Continuing imbalance between contingent and permanent faculty
- General dissatisfaction with liberal arts curriculum

Actions Taken, 2012-12

- Conversion of one additional line to tenure-track
- Substantial revision of undergraduate curriculum

Issues of Concern, 2013-2014

- Implementation of new curriculum
- Replacing retiring faculty with qualified new faculty

Actions Taken, 2013-14

- Preparation of new advising materials
- Successfully conducting search for tenure-track faculty member.