# Institutional Effectiveness Report

| Name of Program/Department: | BA/Liberal Arts Program |
|---|---|
| Year | 2019-2020 |
| Name of Preparer: | *Shawn R. Smolen-Morton* |

**Program Mission**

The mission of the Liberal Arts Program is to introduce students to their literary and linguistic heritage and acquaint 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.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

PLO 1.0 Demonstrate knowledge of a variety of critical approaches for studying and appreciating literature.

PLO 2.0 Understand how to research key aspects of literature and the producing cultures.

PLO 3.0 Demonstrate knowledge of American and British literary heritage.

PLO 4.0 Understand how literature is crafted in a variety of genres and across periods.

PLO 5.0 Demonstrate knowledge of individual writers ranging from ancient to modern.

PLO 6.0 Apply knowledge about literature and exercise an array of critical skills using effective communication.

**Executive Summary**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the English Department could not complete its scheduled assessment. Seven student portfolios and seven exit surveys with interviews were collected, but the faculty could not meet in order to calibrate the assessment. Coordination of an electronic assessment via email also proved too difficult.

Based on these experiences, the curriculum committee plans to complete the 2019-2020 assessment during the winter break or with the 2020-2021 assessment in the late spring.

In the first week of December 2020, six professors will meet via Zoom, a secure platform licensed by Francis Marion University, to discuss ongoing issues with assessment and to calibrate the assessment by reading a sample essay. On their own time, each professor will read two portfolios and send the results to the curriculum chair by the first week of January. At that time, the data can be analyzed and the report completed. If this model works, the Department will repeat the process in April for the next assessment cycle.

The Department completed three of the eight Action Items from 2018-2019. First, the Department revised and ratified the Mission Statement. Second, the curriculum committee revised the four questions for the Indirect Assessment (see the Appendix). The curriculum committee decided not to change the SLO target number at this time. The committee could not coordinate workshops for Capstone students, alter the Reflection Essay, begin a discussion of "theory", or continue the discussion of the assessment's relationship to the PRAXIS subject test.


**Student Learning Outcomes**

Skills Outcomes (to be assessed for the entire portfolio except the reflection paper)

        A. Ability to Analyze Texts Critically. The portfolio will demonstrate the student's ability to understand literary texts in original 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 and construct coherent arguments.

B.   Ability to Synthesize External Sources in Documented Writing. The portfolio will demonstrate the student's ability to use conventions of documentation and integrate borrowed ideas and quotations gracefully into the student's own writing.

C.   Ability to Connect Literary Texts to their Contexts.  The portfolio will communicate awareness that literature serves a purpose beyond the purely aesthetic and helps reflect and define cultural and personal identities.

D.   Ability to Apply Theory.   The portfolio will demonstrate the student's ability to apply rhetorical, literary, and/or film theory in a textual analysis.

Knowledge Outcomes (items A, B, and C will be assessed for appropriate papers within the portfolio)

A.   Demonstrate specific knowledge of American Literature.  The student will demonstrate a specific knowledge of a key writer, genre, movement or period in American Literature.

B.   Demonstrate specific knowledge of British Literature. The student will demonstrate a specific knowledge of a key writer, genre, movement or period in British Literature.

C.   Demonstrates a Broad Knowledge of American Literature, British Literature, or International Literature. The student's portfolio covers a range of canonical and non-canonical writers and texts across a broad range of American or British literature.  Note: to be assessed with the portfolio as a whole.

**Method**

Assessment Process

- o Seven students assembled a portfolio of essays from each of the major "blocks" or areas of study in the English Liberal Arts Major. The students significantly revised one of these essays in the Capstone course, ENG 496. At least one essay should have had a significant theoretical component and at least one essay should have been supported by research. Finally, the student composed a reflection essay for the portfolio.
- o The capstone instructor gathered portfolios from the Fall and Spring semesters.
- o An exit Questionnaire asked students to evaluate the English Department courses relative to the skills SLO's.
- o At the end of the Spring semester, seven professors teaching English upper-level courses planned to read and score the portfolios using the Department's Score Point Indicators.
- o Each portfolio was to be assessed by two readers. If the scores differed by more a one full point, then a third reader scores the portfolio for that Student Learning Outcome and all three scores are averaged.
- o Before the assessment period, professors planned to meet and to review procedures and to calibrate the scoring by discussing a sample portfolio.
- o The Covid-19 pandemic interrupted this process, and efforts to circumvent the problem were unsuccessful.

A. The Assessment Procedure for Skills is based on the portfolio as a whole for direct assessment. The Questionnaire gathers indirect data (Appendix part 2).

Skills Outcome A. Ability to Analyze Texts Critically.

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

Skills Outcome C. Ability to Connect Literary Texts to their Contexts.

Skills Outcome D. Ability to Apply Theory.

The reader rates the overall portfolio with one of four scores:

Score 4: Excels.                                   Score 2: Partially satisfies the SLO.

Score 3: Satisfies the SLO.                         Score 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO.

B.  The Assessment Procedure for Knowledge is based one appropriate paper for direct assessment.  The Questionnaire did not ask about the new SLO's.

    Knowledge Outcome A. Ability to Demonstrate Specific Knowledge of American
        Literature.
    Knowledge Outcome B. Ability to Demonstrate Specific Knowledge of British
        Literature.
    Knowledge Outcome C. Demonstrates a Broad Knowledge of American, British,
        or International Literature.

Based on at least one essay in the portfolio, the reader assigns one of these scores:

Score 4: Excels.                          Score 2: Partially satisfies the SLO.

Score 3: Satisfies the SLO.               Score 1: Fails to satisfy the SLO.

## Student Learning Outcomes in the English Liberal Arts Major and Alignment with General Education Goals

Goal 1.  The ability to write and speak English clearly, logically, creatively, and effectively.

- Partially and indirectly addressed by the essays written for the portfolios.

Goal 2. The ability to read and listen with understanding and comprehension.

- Partially and indirectly addressed by the essays written for the portfolios.

Goal 3.  The ability to use technology to locate, organize, document, present, and analyze

information and ideas.

- Addressed by the research essays for the portfolios.

*The portfolio essays were written for upper level division literature courses.  Those courses are not designed to directly and immediately align with the General Education Goals.

## Method: Baseline, Benchmark, and Target
Baseline: N/A.  The Department has no baseline because this assessment model and its

Student Learning Outcomes were implemented for the first time this year.

Benchmark: 2.5.  The Department is using the benchmark from the previous assessment

model because it works on the same numerical scale.

Target: N/A. The Department will set a Target based on the analysis and discussion of this first year's results.


**Assessment Results: Discussion**

   The Department has not yet produced results. Given that we have the portfolios, surveys, and interviews, this task should be completed in the next 8 months.


**Action Items**

**A. Actions planned for 2020-2021 to address the 2019-2020 IE Report**

1. Complete the 2019-2020 assessment and present those results to the Deparmtnet in Spring 2021.
2. Complete the 2020-2021 assessment on the regular schedule.


**B. Actions planned for 2019-2020 to address the 2018-2019 IE Report**

[The Department's curriculum committee will revise these Action Items and present them to the Department as a whole in early Fall 2019. The Department will then adopt Action Items and begin to implement them.]

1. Draft a Mission Statement for the English Liberal Arts major. COMPLETED.
2. Set the Baseline from the new data.
3. Review the SLO's target (2.5), adopted from the previous assessment model.
4. Continue the required workshops on resource use and synthesis.
5. Revise or expand the Reflection Essay to address SLO's like theory.
6. Define "theory" more explicitly for students and faculty.
7. Consider this assessment in relationship to the PRAXIS subject test.
8. Revise the indirect assessment questions to reflect the revised SLO's and set targets, to include an indirect assessment of the new SLO's. The current indirect assessment is not producing useful information. COMPLETED.

**VII. Appendix**

The indirect assessment questions were revised with stronger verbs adopted from Bloom's Taxonomy. The numbers reflect the position of these questions in a longer questionnaire.

17. I feel confident that I can interpret and analyze literary texts more closely and critically.

18. I feel confident that I can find and evaluate sources to support my arguments about literary texts.

19. I feel confident that I can explain how a text connects to its historical and cultural context.

20. I feel confident that I can explain how literature serves a purpose beyond the purely aesthetic and helps define cultural and personal identities.