Program Assessment

Department of English

Student Learning Objectives

• Attentive reading: Learn to read literature and other expressive forms with concentration, not only to grasp content but also to appreciate the patterns and effects of style, structure, and genre. Learn to read criticism and theory patiently and astutely.

• Imaginative analytical and persuasive writing: Conceive, draft, revise, and polish, with guidance from peers and professors, essays that 1) offer well-organized, significant, multi-dimensional analyses of texts, 2) manifest a voice and sense of style, and 3) show mastery of standard grammar and punctuation.

• Proficient writing in other genres: Compose creative fiction, poetry, or nonfiction prose; produce lucid and accurate technical writing; or write efficient business or professional communication. Learn various forms of expression and the various purposes, and rhetorical situations, of the exchange of ideas of information.

• Articulate speaking and discussion: Participate in small, spirited classes that 1) develop reading, speaking, and listening skills, 2) heighten one’s awareness of one’s own and others’ positions, and 3) improve one’s ability to do productive work with others.

• Initiative in research and technology: Develop discernment and imagination in library research, both technological and traditional, and become creative users of computerized forms of communication.

• Knowledge of literary history, criticism, and theory: Become familiar with literature in English from the beginnings to the present, including not only British and American literature but also literatures in English from around the globe, and including both well-established and newer authors and traditions. Become aware of some key texts, terms, or debates in criticism/theory.

• Self-conception as readers and writers in a social world: Graduate from the major with a sense of oneself as a literate and verbally skilled citizen who sees culture historically and dynamically and who therefore can participate thoughtfully in writing, interpreting, or teaching its texts, whether these are literary, legal, managerial, political, technical or scholarly, whether for government, nonprofit organizations, businesses, or schools.

Assessment tools

• Indirect methods: survey of seniors; survey of faculty on student strengths/weaknesses; regular meetings between instructors of ENG 200 and 300. We will retain these assessment tools, and add a focus on the Integrative Experience courses, asking students to reflect on their experiences as English majors and identify strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Highlighted recent activities

• Spring 2009: Department-wide meeting held to consider stated goals and objectives, conduct survey of faculty on student strengths and weaknesses. Results will be used to address weaknesses and build on strengths; revisit goals and objectives for possible revision; consider ways to make the major more cohesive and courses interconnected.

• Based on senior-survey results identifying a need for more focused advising, we upgraded the position of Chief Undergraduate Advisor from half-time to full-time in 2012.

• Based on results from the 2010 faculty survey, discussions by the Undergraduate Studies Committee, and department-wide discussions at meetings and a retreat in fall 2011, we changed the requirements for the major to include more lower-level survey courses, with the aim of having students engage with broad literary period, genres, and themes before more narrowly focused ones. These changes will begin in fall 2013, and we will evaluate them on an ongoing basis.