

## Department of English 2018 Assessment

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PROGRAM IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION ASSESSMENT  
Re: ENGL 1013: Composition I  
ENGL 1023: Composition II

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Prepared for the Dean of the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences  
University of Arkansas

### **Executive Summary**

This program assessment report confirms the current effectiveness of the following courses under the purview of the Program in Rhetoric and Composition (PRC): ENGL 1013: Composition I, and ENGL 1023: Composition II. The conclusion may be drawn from the data generated from 817 students enrolled in 114 sections of ENGL 1013 and 1023 that the PRC is successfully meeting the stated objectives of the courses assessed herein (with those objectives namely being that students learn to draft, edit, and revise extended prose arguments in the form of researched essays to demonstrate sound argumentation, development of ideas, clear organization, accurate analysis, awareness of writing conventions, and mastery of standard linguistic forms). The most striking successes are in regard to student engagement and rhetorical awareness, with clear achievements were made with regard to fundamental writing skills as well.

The assessment described herein is based on data generated from sections of the above courses which were taught in the Department of English during the spring semester of 2018.

The report describes the methods used in the PRC's most recent assessment, discusses the ramifications of the results of the assessment, and offers suggestions to improve teaching and assessment strategies.

## **Introduction**

The Program in Rhetoric and Composition (PRC) submits the following report in fulfillment of the self-assessment mandated by Fulbright College. This report is based on data generated from 817 students enrolled in 114 sections of ENGL 1013 and 1023. These sections were taught in the Department of English during the spring 2018 semester. The data indicate success in meeting course goals and learning objectives across both courses (with those goals broadly being the drafting, editing, and revising of extended prose arguments in the form of researched essays to demonstrate sound argumentation, development of ideas, clear organization, accurate analysis, awareness of writing conventions, and mastery of standard linguistic forms). The following report will describe the methods used for this assessment, discuss the ramifications of the results of the assessment, and offer suggestions to improve teaching and assessment strategies.

### *ENGL 1013 Assessment*

The following section details the methods, results, and discussion of the PRC's assessment of ENGL 1013: Composition I, during the spring 2018 semester. We chose to assess the course this spring rather than during the fall, when more students would be enrolled in ENGL 1013, because this spring was the first semester—after two years of rigorous testing and revision—in which all sections of ENGL 1013 have featured the new curriculum focusing on primary research methods and discourse analysis.

## **Course Design**

Within the new course design for ENGL 1013, students practice fundamental writing skills by drafting and revising a series of essays that develop from both primary and secondary research and culminate in detailed ethnographic accounts of local communities. Students first conduct preliminary research in order to choose the communities they will be researching and writing about for the semester. The first assignment requires students select a single community to research after considering a few of them; the assignment then requires that they state a purpose for writing, explain the research they have conducted, and describe what seem to be the most important aspects—according to preliminary research—of the chosen community (targeted skill: summarizing). The second assignment requires each student to interview community members and gather information through questionnaires and surveys concerning an element of community folklore, and then to draft a paper explaining the importance of that folklore to the community as a whole (targeted skills: summarizing and analyzing). The third assignment requires each student to conduct secondary research about the chosen community and to synthesize that research with the student's observations in order to produce a detailed ethnographic account of the community (targeted skills: summarizing, analyzing, synthesizing, critiquing, and arguing); the final assignment requires each student to gather his or her fieldnotes and previous drafts into a portfolio and to draft a brief memo that reflects on (1) the dual role of participant-observer, leading to an explanation of how each role revealed different aspects of the community the student chose to explore (targeted skill: argumentation) and (2) how those roles influenced them in presenting information in written form, either to elicit information from or to convey it to an imagined audience (targeted skill: meta-writing awareness). After drafting this memo, each student then engages in substantial guided revision of the ethnographic account. During this final stage, instructors work with students to help them adapt their papers into a different form (e.g., a blog or magazine article). The final assignment helps students to begin to learn that different writing tasks carry different expectations and therefore require differing strategies, concepts with which students will engage more rigorously in ENGL 1023: Composition II.

This course also introduces students to means of generating primary data such as interviews, surveys, and questionnaires, which will serve them well as they transition into Composition II and complete assignments which require primary research. The very nature of the course therefore fundamentally engages students with the processes and methods of inquiry in the context of experiential, community-based learning.

### **Methods**

Students enrolled in the 26 sections of ENGL 1013 offered during the spring 2018 semester were administered an exit survey upon completing the course. These students were given time during the final week of classes during the spring 2018 semester to answer a twelve-item exit survey (see Appendix A) in which they were asked to rate their agreement, on a five-point likert scale, that the course successfully fulfilled its stated learning objectives. Across all 26 sections, 285 of the 454 enrolled students, or 62%, completed the exit survey. This survey was distributed through Google Forms to ensure anonymity and ease of access.

The instructors of these 26 sections, all graduate teaching assistants in the department of English, were also administered an exit survey upon completing the course (see Appendix B). This survey asked instructors to rate their agreement, on a five-point likert scale, that their students had successfully achieved the course's stated learning objectives. This survey was also distributed through Google Forms to ensure anonymity and ease of access. All fourteen of the instructors teaching ENGL 1013 during the spring 2018 semester responded to the survey.

### **Results**

The data yielded by the above methods strongly suggest that ENGL 1013 is achieving its goals to the satisfaction of the students enrolled therein. The specific goal of this course is to teach students how to draft, revise, and edit researched essays to demonstrate sound argumentation, development of ideas, clear organization, accurate analysis, awareness of writing conventions, and mastery of standard linguistic forms, and to do so based on primary and secondary research conducted upon specific communities. In accordance with the stated purpose of the course, students learn, among other things, how to:

- analyze rhetorical situations;
- identify authoritative sources;
- identify persuasive appeals in written and visual texts;
- paraphrase and summarize accurately the ideas of others;
- develop a thesis and construct a convincing written argument for a specific audience;
- devise primary research materials and engage in primary research;
- use electronic resources to support field and library research;
- synthesize several sources using an established style for internal documentation and works cited;
- analyze and revise their own writing and the writing of others; and
- practice academic integrity and ethical communicative aims.

Of the 285 students surveyed (62% of the 454 students enrolled at the beginning of spring 2018), an overwhelming percentage responded positively to what they learned in the course. On average, 89% agreed or strongly agreed that the course was a success according to the specific goals listed above. On average 47% "strongly agreed" and 42% "agreed."

The strongest areas of the course, according to students' responses, regard student engagement with their projects and the teaching of the fundamental skills of summary, synthesis, analysis, and critique. Specifically, students felt highly engaged with their projects (on average, 92% agreed or strongly agreed) and were pleased with their instruction in the fundamental skills of academic writing (on average, 85% agreed or strongly agreed). Across all items, more than 70% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the course successfully meets its learning objectives.

The instructors' responses to the items on the exit survey largely support the students' assessment of the course's success. On average, 79% agreed or strongly agreed that the course successfully taught the specific fundamental skills listed above. On average 30.35% strongly agreed and 48.2% agreed.

The strongest areas of the course, according to instructors' responses, also regard student engagement with their projects and the teaching of the fundamental skills of summary, synthesis, analysis, and critique. Specifically, instructors felt that their students were highly engaged with their projects (on average, 79% agreed or strongly agreed) and successfully learned the fundamental skills taught in the course (on average, 79% agreed or strongly agreed).

### **Discussion**

Given the above results, the PRC concludes that the new iteration of ENGL 1013 achieves its stated course goals to the satisfaction of the student population served by the course and of those instructors tasked with delivering it. The responses to the instructors' exit survey aligned well with the responses to the students' exit survey, demonstrating that both instructors and students feel the course is a success. This enthusiasm on the part of students and instructors indicates a successful new course design which greatly increases student engagement while continuing rigorously to foster fundamental writing and researching skills and a spirit of inquiry.

#### *ENGL 1023 Assessment*

The following section details the methods, results, and discussion of the PRC's assessment of ENGL 1023: Composition II, during the spring 2018 semester.

### **Methods**

Students enrolled in the 88 sections of ENGL 1023 offered during the spring 2018 semester were administered an exit survey upon completing the course. These students were given time during the final week of classes during the spring 2018 semester to answer a fifteen-item exit survey (SEE APPENDIX C) in which they were asked to rate their agreement, on a five-point likert scale, that the course successfully fulfilled its stated learning objectives. Across all 88 sections, 540 of the 1,480 enrolled students, or 36%, completed the exit survey. This survey was distributed through Google Forms to ensure the students anonymity and ease of access.

The instructors of these 88 sections, graduate teaching assistants and a few full-time and adjunct instructors in the department of English, were also administered an exit survey upon completing the course (SEE APPENDIX D). This survey asked instructors to rate their agreement, on a five-point likert scale, that their students had successfully achieved the course's stated learning objectives. This survey was also distributed through Google Forms to ensure the students anonymity and ease of access. Of the 38 instructors teaching ENGL 1023 during the spring 2018 semester, 30 responded to the survey.

## Results

The data yielded by the above methods strongly suggest that ENGL 1023 is achieving its goals to the satisfaction of the students enrolled. The specific goal of this course is to continue to teach students the research and writing strategies and processes emphasized in Composition I but doing so through the analysis of the discursive and writing practices in their chosen fields of study. Students reflect on writing as a communicative practice and write critical essays that demonstrate sound argumentation, development of ideas, clear organization, effective analysis, awareness of writing conventions, and mastery of standard linguistic forms. In accordance with the stated purpose of the course, students learn, among other things, how to:

- analyze rhetorical situations;
- identify authoritative sources in their discipline;
- identify persuasive appeals in written and visual texts;
- evaluate and experiment with a variety of rhetorical strategies and genres;
- recognize the demands that particular audiences place on written communication;
- use electronic resources to support library research;
- synthesize a variety of sources in the development of critical essays;
- generate a set of principles that will guide their sense of effective writing practices; and
- practice academic integrity and ethical communicative aims.

Of the 540 students surveyed (36% of the 1,480 students enrolled at the beginning of spring 2018), an overwhelming percentage responded positively to what they learned in the course. On average, 79% agreed or strongly agreed that the course was a success according to the specific goals listed above. On average 43.3% strongly agreed and 35.7% agreed.

The strongest areas of the course, according to students' responses, regard increased ability to practice academic integrity and ethical communicative aims (85.4% agreed or strongly agreed), to recognize the demands of an audience (83.6% agreed or strongly agreed), and to analyze rhetorical situations (on average, 80.4% agreed or strongly agreed). Across all items, more than 79% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the course successfully meets its learning objectives.

The instructors' responses to the items on the exit survey largely support the students' assessment of the course's success. On average, 54% agreed or strongly agreed that the course successfully taught the specific fundamental skills listed above. An additional 34% were neutral, and very few disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The strongest areas of the course, according to instructors' responses, also regard students' increased ability to practice academic integrity and ethical communicative aims (60% agreed or strongly agreed), to recognize the demands of an audience (73.3% agreed or strongly agreed), and to analyze rhetorical situations (on average, 66.7% agreed or strongly agreed). The instructors also identified an additional strength in their students: 70% agreed or strongly agreed that their students learned to evaluate and experiment with a variety of rhetorical strategies and genres.

While the students' response to the exit survey did not indicate any particular weaknesses in the course, instructors' responses indicated a perceived weakness in learning to use electronic resources to support library research (only 26.6% agreed or strongly agreed) and to identify authoritative sources in their disciplines (only 50% strongly agreed or agreed)

## Discussion

Given the above results, the PRC concludes that ENGL 1023 achieves its stated course goals to the satisfaction of the student population served by the course and of those instructors tasked with delivering it. The responses to the instructors' exit survey aligned relatively well with the responses to the students' exit survey, demonstrating that both instructors and students feel the course is a success.

Given that the results of the Instructor Exit Survey indicate weaknesses in skills with library research and in students' abilities to identify authoritative sources in their academic fields, the PRC recommends the following measures with regard to ENGL 1023:

1. That TA training feature an increased emphasis on discipline-specific sources. This emphasis could most effectively be implemented during the final assignment's data gathering phase, in which students are prompted to locate a variety of sources within their academic majors or disciplines.
2. That the PRC work with English subject librarians to develop further training for students with regard to using library resources to supplement their primary research. The PRC has already laid the groundwork for this training. English and Communications Subject Librarian Michelle Gibeault routinely visits first-year composition courses in order to introduce students to library resources and basic methods of data gathering. In addition, several English teaching assistants have worked for Ms. Gibeault to develop detailed guides to the assignments in ENGL 1023. These guides are hosted on the Mullins Library website. The first step will be to work with new and returning instructors to ensure that they are aware of these resources and are actively encouraging their students to make use of them. Should students still demonstrate weaknesses in using library resources after the PRC has instituted the above methods, further steps will be taken.

## Future Assessment

As the new ENGL 1013 course design matures over the next several semesters, the PRC will devote time to planning for further assessment. Specifically, the PRC will seek confirmation of improved student writing through evaluation of student materials. While the PRC will continue to employ the intervention and exit survey models on a rotating basis, it will also lay the groundwork for a new and potentially more informative model of assessment, as described below.

Among the upcoming methods by which the PRC will assess the effectiveness of its courses is a plan to evaluate the writing which students produce for their upper-division coursework and particularly for those courses in their majors. In order to gather data for this assessment, PRC personnel intend to gain permission to gather random samples of student writing from instructors of courses at the 2000-level and above who include rigorous researched writing assignments in their courses. These instructors will allow PRC personnel to access their Blackboard courses and to sample randomly from the student writing submitted there. Information from the Office of Institutional Research will allow the PRC to determine how many of its writing courses each sample student has taken, and to compare each student's performance in those courses to their performance on writing assignments within their own majors. In order to assure that writing skills—rather than content knowledge—are being assessed, the PRC will devise a rubric by which to assess student writing. The goal will be then to measure students' performance on their course assignments in relation to their enrollment and performance in PRC writing courses and to determine a) which writing skills students are transferring to other courses, and b) what changes, if any, can be made to PRC curriculum or teaching methods to better facilitate transfer of fundamental writing skills



APPENDIX A: ENGL 1013: COMPOSITION I STUDENT EXIT SURVEY

Rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where a 5 means you strongly agree with the statement while a 1 means you strongly disagree with the statement.

1. I feel I have adequately been introduced to the fundamental skills of effective writing:

1a. Summary: the skill of accurately identifying and reporting the most important elements of a text or observation

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

1b. Analysis: the skill of understanding and reporting how the individual elements of a text or observation fit together into a whole

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

1c. Synthesis: the skill of understanding and reporting the unifying ideas and elements among multiple sources and/or experiences

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

1d. Critique: the skill of evaluating the effectiveness of a rhetorical act in achieving its goals

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. I appreciated having the freedom to choose my own research topic and to have some input in the methods of investigation I used to research that topic.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. I was engaged with and invested in the work of the course.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. I was engaged with and invested in my ethnographic project.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. The selected textbooks were useful for preparing me to write my major assignments:

5a. FieldWorking

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5b. The St. Martin's Handbook

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

6. The selected textbooks provided useful examples of ethnographic writing that helped me to draft my own papers:

6a. FieldWorking

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. The selected readings from Keith Grant-Davie's "Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents" provided an understanding of rhetoric that was beneficial to writing my major papers:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

8. Overall, I am glad to have taken this version of Composition I, as opposed to the standard version in which the assignments would require me to read and write about texts written by professional writers.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

9. Overall, I think that this course was well-designed.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

10. I would recommend adopting this course design as the official Composition I, to be taught to all incoming freshmen at the University of Arkansas.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

11. Would you suggest any changes to the course? If so, write them in the space below.

12. Please write any additional feedback in the space below.

APPENDIX B: ENGL 1013: COMPOSITION I INSTRUCTOR EXIT SURVEY

Rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where a 5 means you strongly agree with the statement while a 1 means you strongly disagree with the statement.

1. I feel that this course adequately introduces students to the fundamental skills of effective writing:

1a. Summary: the skill of accurately identifying and reporting the most important elements of a text or observation

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

1b. Analysis: the skill of understanding and reporting how the individual elements of a text or observation fit together into a whole

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

1c. Synthesis: the skill of understanding and reporting the unifying ideas and elements among multiple sources and/or experiences

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

1d. Critique: the skill of evaluating the effectiveness of a rhetorical act in achieving its goals

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. I feel that students appreciated having the freedom to choose their own research topics and to have some input in the methods of investigation used to research those topics.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. I feel that my students were engaged with and invested in the work of the course.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. I feel that my students were engaged with and invested in their ethnographic projects.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. The selected textbooks were useful for preparing students to write their major assignments:

5a. FieldWorking

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5b. The St. Martin's Handbook

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

6. The selected textbooks provided useful examples of ethnographic writing that helped students to draft their own papers:

6a. FieldWorking

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. The selected readings from Keith Grant-Davie's "Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents" provided an understanding of rhetoric that benefited the students in writing their major papers:

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

8. Overall, I think that this course was well-designed.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

9. I think that incoming and returning graduate teaching assistants will be capable of teaching this course.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

10. Overall, I think this course is will serve well as the official form of Composition I, to be taught to all incoming freshmen at the University of Arkansas.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

11. Would you suggest any changes to the course? If so, write them in the space below.

12. Please write any additional feedback in the space below.

APPENDIX C: ENGL 1023: COMPOSITION II STUDENT EXIT SURVEY

Rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where a 5 means you strongly agree with the statement while a 1 means you strongly disagree with the statement.

1. I feel I have adequately been taught how to analyze rhetorical situations.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. I feel I have adequately been taught how to identify authoritative sources in my discipline.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. I feel I have adequately been taught how to identify persuasive appeals in written and visual texts.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. I feel I have adequately been taught how to evaluate and experiment with a variety of rhetorical strategies and genres.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. I feel I have adequately been taught how to recognize the demands that particular audiences place on written communication.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

6. I feel I have adequately been taught how to use electronic resources to support library research.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. I feel I have adequately been taught how to synthesize a variety of sources in the development of critical essays.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

8. I feel I have adequately been taught how to generate a set of principles that will guide my sense of effective writing practices.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

9. I feel I have adequately been taught how to practice academic integrity and ethical communicative aims.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

10. I was engaged with and invested in the work of the course.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

11. The selected textbooks were useful for preparing me to write my major assignments:

11a. Writing About Writing

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

11b. The St. Martin's Handbook

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

12. Overall, I think that this course was well-designed.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

13. Overall, my instructor seemed well-prepared to teach this course.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

14. Would you suggest any changes to the course? If so, write them in the space below.

15. Please write any additional feedback in the space below.

APPENDIX D: ENGL 1023: COMPOSITION II INSTRUCTOR EXIT SURVEY

Rate your agreement with the following statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where a 5 means you strongly agree with the statement while a 1 means you strongly disagree with the statement.

1. I feel that this course has adequately taught students how to analyze rhetorical situations.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. I feel that this course has adequately taught students how to identify authoritative sources in their disciplines.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. I feel that this course has adequately taught students how to identify persuasive appeals in written and visual texts.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. I feel that this course has adequately taught students how to evaluate and experiment with a variety of rhetorical strategies and genres.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. I feel that this course has adequately taught students how to recognize the demands that particular audiences place on written communication.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

6. I feel that this course has adequately taught students how to use electronic resources to support library research.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. I feel that this course has adequately taught students how to synthesize a variety of sources in the development of critical essays.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

8. I feel that this course has adequately taught students how to generate a set of principles that will guide their sense of effective writing practices.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

9. I feel that this course has adequately taught students how to practice academic integrity and ethical communicative aims.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

10. I feel that my students were generally engaged with and invested in the work of the course.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

11. The selected textbooks were useful for preparing my students to write their major assignments:

7a. Writing About Writing

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7b. The St. Martin's Handbook

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

12. Overall, I think that this course is well-designed.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

13. Overall, I felt well-prepared to teach this course.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

14. Would you suggest any changes to the course? If so, write them in the space below.

15. Please write any additional feedback in the space below.



## **WLIT 1113 and 1123**

Our Director of Composition did not realize that we now have to assess all core courses every year; he thought the rule applied only to core courses required of all students, as opposed to those that are on slates of possible courses to satisfy a given requirement. Thus he did not know he needed to assess WLIT 1113 and 1123 again this year. As you can see from his report above on Composition I and II, he is customarily highly organized, and he knows a great deal about assessment methodologies, so this oversight was the result of confusion induced by the mushrooming of regulations in the past few years. He is now wondering, along with the rest of us, how his office can possibly handle this much assessment every year.

His office will endeavor to find the resources to assess the hundreds more students represented by WLIT 1113 and 1123 next year, along with the thousands of students in ENGL 1013 and 1023—not to mention the eight additional courses he must assess periodically for other purposes.

We are not convinced that diverting this many resources to assessment is in our students' best interests. The time devoted to assessment could instead be devoted to new curriculum development, TA training, community outreach, participation in programs for at-risk students, and so on.

Dorothy Stephens  
Chair, English

## Creative Writing I (ENGL 2023) Assessment 2017-2018

### *Procedures*

#### WHAT UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION OUTCOMES GUIDE STUDENT LEARNING IN COURSES THAT CARRY ARTS AND HUMANITIES CREDIT?

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of three hours of fine arts and three hours of humanities courses, students will understand and articulate

- Basic structures, themes, and principles of the discipline being introduced;
- Important philosophical, religious, and ethical ideas inherent in the discipline being introduced and inscribed by writers, artists, and thinkers;
- The processes by which artistic and humanistic values and aesthetics are formed and challenged over time;
- Connections among cultural achievements of various groups of people of different ethnicities, religious backgrounds, racial origins, and sexual identities.

#### HOW DOES THE PROGRAM IN CREATIVE WRITING AND TRANSLATION INTEND TO ASSESS STUDENT LEARNING OF THESE OUTCOMES IN ENGL 2023?

The Program in Creative Writing and Translation currently oversees six sections of ENGL 2023, Creative Writing I—an approved core course in fine arts. Each section of the course is capped at 15 students, resulting in a maximum of 90 students enrolled each semester. The sections are led by instructors or teaching assistants, who are trained and supervised by the creative writing program's assistant director. Some of the issues covered during training are: time management to ensure equal coverage of genres; best practices and exercises to teach writing technique; discussion of grading strategies and rubrics; and fulfillment of the primary goals of the course.

The primary goals of ENGL 2023, as outlined in the petition to become a core course, state that students who take the course will:

- be exposed to a broad array of literary works in terms of form, style, and time period;
- develop the ability to read texts closely for content, style, and technique;
- increase their competency in writing stories and poems that are compelling, both technically and aesthetically; and

- exercise their imaginative powers and develop human empathy.

The Program in Creative Writing and Translation sees these primary goals as working toward the learning outcomes for fine arts and humanities core courses.

In order to test the success of ENGL 2023 in promoting the primary goals and learning outcomes, the creative writing program has devised a course assessment survey. The survey will be administered to all ENGL 2023 students by their instructor/TA two to three weeks before the end of each semester. Students will be presented with eight statements and prompted to rate the course according to each statement. Ratings will be recorded on scantron forms (4521) according to a 1 to 5 system, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 5 representing “strongly agree.” Instructors/TAs will deliver their section’s scantrons to the assistant director, who will have all 90 surveys analyzed by the university IT Services office.

The report generated by IT Services will be delivered to the director of the Program in Creative Writing and Translation, who will determine if goals and learning outcomes are being adequately met. Action will be taken only if the surveys indicate that students are not making adequate progress toward one or more learning outcome(s). In that event, the director may institute changes up to and including:

- barring an instructor or TA from teaching the course in future semesters,
- altering training protocols for ENGL 2023 instructors and TAs, and/or
- reviewing the course curriculum to determine if deeper changes need to be made.

## STUDENT SURVEY ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR ENGL 2023

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing “strongly agree” and 1 representing “strongly disagree,” please rate the following statements:

As a result of taking this course (ENGL 2023 – Creative Writing I)

1. I have been exposed to an array of literary works of various forms, styles, and time periods.
2. I have improved my ability to read texts closely for content, style, and technique.
3. I have increased my competency in writing stories and poems.
4. I have exercised my imagination toward development of human empathy.
5. I better understand the basic genres, principles, and techniques of creative writing.
6. I have become more familiar with the ways in which important philosophical, religious, and/or ethical ideas are expressed and explored in creative writing.
7. I have a greater understanding of how prevailing aesthetics in fiction and poetry have been formed and challenged over time.

8. I have been introduced to the stylistic and/or thematic conversation that exists between writers of various ethnicities, religious backgrounds, racial origins, and/or sexual identities.

## Survey Results

*Fall 2017*

Item Statistics Report														
Question		Summary Statistics				Descriptive Statistics				Percentiles				
Item	Sample Size	Excluded	Mean	Variance	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	Skewness	Kurtosis	T Value	Mean Abs. De	Percentile 25%	Median	Percentile 75%	Infer Quart. R
Question1	56	0	4.55	0.80	0.89	0.12	-2.31	5.27	38.17	0.65	4	5.00	5	1
Question2	56	0	4.46	0.54	0.74	0.10	-1.28	1.17	45.29	0.63	4	5.00	5	1
Question3	56	0	4.75	0.30	0.55	0.07	-2.84	10.54	64.90	0.39	5	5.00	5	0
Question4	56	0	4.32	0.59	0.77	0.10	-0.88	0.16	42.26	0.65	4	4.00	5	1
Question5	56	0	4.50	0.51	0.71	0.10	-1.40	1.72	47.20	0.61	4	5.00	5	1
Question6	56	0	3.91	1.10	1.05	0.14	-0.80	0.32	27.89	0.83	3	4.00	5	2
Question7	56	0	3.98	0.89	0.94	0.13	-0.64	0.18	31.58	0.74	3	4.00	5	2
Question8	55	1	4.29	0.80	0.90	0.12	-1.42	2.33	35.52	0.72	4	5.00	5	1
Question9	0	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Question10	0	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Spring 2018*

Question Mean Report					
Question	Low	High	Mean		
Question1	2.00	5.00	4.55	1.00	5.00
Question2	2.00	5.00	4.42	1.00	5.00
Question3	2.00	5.00	4.73	1.00	5.00
Question4	2.00	5.00	4.56	1.00	5.00
Question5	1.00	5.00	4.52	1.00	5.00
Question6	1.00	5.00	3.94	1.00	5.00
Question7	2.00	5.00	4.00	1.00	5.00
Question8	2.00	5.00	4.44	1.00	5.00

## Summary

Overall, the Program in Creative Writing and Translation is heartened and encouraged by the results of our Fall 2017/Spring 2018 Core Course Assessment of Creative Writing I (ENGL 2023). Clearly, this is a popular course that we believe is attracting majors to our department.

Based on the survey results (see above), Creative Writing I is meeting its primary objectives as established by the program at the time we proposed converting the course to a core course satisfying the university's fine arts requirement. At that time we set forth the objectives that students taking the course would be exposed to a broad array of literary works in terms of form, style, and time period; would develop the ability to read texts closely for content, style, and technique; would increase their competency in writing stories and poems that are compelling, both technically and aesthetically; and would exercise their imaginative powers and develop human empathy.

In 2017/2018, students scored the course particularly highly for exposing them to an array of literary works of various forms, styles, and time periods (Question 1), for increasing their competency in writing stories and poems (Question 3), and for exercising their imagination toward development of human empathy (Question 4).

The only area in which we did not score 4 or higher (on a scale of 1 to 5) in either semester was question 6:

*I have become more familiar with the ways in which important philosophical, religious, and/or ethical ideas are expressed and explored in creative writing.*

In Fall 2017, our mean score on this question was 3.91 and in Spring 2018, our mean score was 3.94. These scores, while not low enough to indicate to us an issue of pressing concern, nonetheless highlight an area in need of improvement.

The Creative Writing Program is currently in a period of transition in terms of overseeing and monitoring our sections of Creative Writing I. In Spring 2018, our long-time assistant director left her position to pursue her writing career. Our new assistant director will start work in August of this year. One of her main responsibilities will be to train and oversee the graduate students who are selected to teach our six sections of Creative Writing I each semester. She and I have already discussed ideas for restructuring and increasing the training procedures for creative writing instructors. This fall we will work together, and with our Creative Writing I instructors, to address this area of concern when we revamp our training process.

## ENGL 1213, Introduction to Literature Assessment 2017-18

### I. Assessment Plan

Below is the assessment plan we submitted in 2017.

#### A. Pre-Test Assessment Plan

The teacher of ENGL 1213 will construct a pre-test, to be taken in class toward the beginning of the semester, that will cover one or more works of literature. This need not count toward the grade.

The pre-test may consist of multiple-choice or discursive questions, but the questions must require students to address all four of the items stated as learning goals for the course (with at least one part of each item being addressed):

- Basic structures, themes, and principles of the discipline being introduced
- Important philosophical, religious, and ethical ideas inherent in the discipline being introduced and inscribed by writers, artists, and thinkers
- The processes by which artistic and humanistic values and aesthetics are formed and challenged over time
- Connections among cultural achievements of various groups of people of different ethnicities, religious backgrounds, racial origins, and sexual identities

The teacher will give the English Department the students' answers and a copy of the pre-test to be kept on file and used in writing the year's assessment report.

#### B. Post-Test Assessment Plan

The teacher of ENGL 1213 will construct a post-test, to be taken in class toward the end of the semester, that will cover one or more works of literature. These must not be the same works that appeared on the pre-test, but they may be works that have been assigned reading over the course of the semester, *so long as they have not been discussed in class or identified as assessment works*. This test may count toward the grade.

The post-test may consist of multiple-choice or discursive questions, but the questions must require students to address all four of the items stated as learning goals for the course (with at least one part of each item being addressed):

- Basic structures, themes, and principles of the discipline being introduced
- Important philosophical, religious, and ethical ideas inherent in the discipline being introduced and inscribed by writers, artists, and thinkers
- The processes by which artistic and humanistic values and aesthetics are formed and challenged over time
- Connections among cultural achievements of various groups of people of different ethnicities, religious backgrounds, racial origins, and sexual identities

The teacher will give the students' answers and a copy of the post-test to the English Department to be kept on file.

The teacher will write and submit a brief summary assessment of the students' performance on the post-test as compared to the pre-test.

The teacher will write and submit a brief explanation of how he or she will change his or her teaching of the course in the future in response to the students' performance on the two tests.

## II. Assessment Procedure and Results for 2017-2018

We offered ENGL 1213 twice in the 2017-2018 academic year: Professor Lisa Hinrichsen taught it for Fall Semester 2017, with eighteen students, and Professor Joseph Candido taught it for Spring Semester 2017, with sixteen students.

Unfortunately, our faculty—including the professor who does our course scheduling—are still getting used to the fact that Introduction to Literature is a core course and that all of our core courses must now be assessed every year. I neglected to remind Professor Hinrichsen of the new requirements, with the result that she did not administer a pre- or post-test to her students. She is a superb teacher, so I wish we had that data.

Dr. Candido did administer pre- and post-tests.

### A. Pre-Test

#### 1. Pre-Test Content

Dr. Candido administered the following pre-test at the beginning of Fall Semester:

#### Assessment Pre-Test for ENGL 1213, Introduction to Literature (Spring 2018)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

This pre-test *does not* count toward your grade. It is designed to test you over what you are about to learn in this class this semester. Your performance on the test is not expected to be perfect, but do try to do the best you can. Answer all questions on this test sheet.

**Part I:** Read the following poem carefully and answer the questions on it to the best of your ability:

I have been one acquainted with the night.  
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.  
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.  
I have passed by the watchman on his beat  
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet  
 When far away an interrupted cry  
 Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;  
 And further still at an unearthly height,  
 One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.  
 I have been one acquainted with the night.

1. What is the *sub genre* of the poem? Circle the correct answer.  
 a) terza rima   b) sonnet   c) ballad   d) carpe diem   e) rhyme royal
  
2. What is the guiding *motif* (or *motifs*) of the poem?
  
3. What is the *tone* of the poem?
  
4. Where do we see *anaphora* in the poem?

**Part II:** Read the following poem carefully, and answer the questions about it to the best of your ability.

There's no confusing docs and soldiers in  
 The fitness center here at Walter Reed.  
 Black socks and sneakers, whitecoat pale, knob-kneed,  
 I watch their sets, then nod and move the pin

Six slots back up into the human range.  
 This one is called the military press.  
 It works the deltoids so these Atlases  
 Can shoulder worlds and raise them into change.

I rub a shoulder's twinge, my first set done.  
 A treadmill dials to a whine nearby,  
 A soldier, six feet seven, thumps his run.

I don't know why I stare. A moment's lag,



And then I see the shriveled sleeve that lies  
At half-mast by him, like a grieving flag.

1. Point out one instance of *irony* in the poem.
2. Describe the *persona* of the poem.
3. Describe the *diction* of the poem.
4. What is the *theme* of the poem?

## 2. Pre-Test Results

Of the sixteen students eventually enrolled in the class, fourteen took the pre-test. The numerical results were predictably low, given that students hadn't yet covered the material and were mostly non-majors:

75 out of 100: 1 student

65 out of 100: 2 students

55 out of 100: 11 students

Mean score = 58

## B. Post-Test

### 1. Post-Test Content

Dr. Candido administered the following post-test on Monday, April 7, 2018:



**Part Two: Give the form and rhyme scheme of a Shakespearean sonnet. Be as detailed as you can.**

**Part Three: Read the following passage carefully and answer each question about it as fully as you can.**

Beulah had gone to work for the blind man the summer after my wife had stopped working for him. Pretty soon Beulah and the blind man had themselves a church wedding. It was a little wedding—who'd want to go to such a wedding in the first place?—just the two of them, plus the minister and the minister's wife. But it was a church wedding just the same. It was what Beulah had wanted, he'd said. But even then Beulah must have been carrying the cancer in her glands. After they had been inseparable for eight years—my wife's word *inseparable*—Beulah's health went into rapid decline. She died in a Seattle hospital room, the blind man sitting beside the bed and holding on to her hand. They'd married, lived and worked together, slept together—had sex, sure—and then the blind man had to bury her. All this without his having ever seen what the goddamned woman looked like.

1. What does this passage reveal about the speaker? Be as detailed as possible.
2. Describe the style of the passage in as much detail as you can.
3. What is the tone of the passage?
4. Why do you think that the word *inseparable* is in italics?
5. Identify one motif in the passage and explain its importance.

## **2. Post-Test Results**

Of the sixteen students enrolled in the class, fifteen took the post-test. The numerical results were as follows:

92 out of 100: 2 students

88 out of 100: 1 student  
 85 out of 100: 1 student  
 82 out of 100: 2 students  
 78 out of 100: 1 student  
 75 out of 100: 1 student  
 72 out of 100: 1 student  
 68 out of 100: 1 student  
 65 out of 100: 1 student  
 62 out of 100: 1 student  
 55 out of 100: 3 students

Mean score = 74

### C. Analysis of Results

Although a sample of fifteen students for one year is small for statistical analysis, we can certainly conclude that we are disappointed in the results. A progression from a mean score of 58 on the pre-test to a mean score of 74 on the post-test is significant but not enough. However, given that the teacher was one of our best, known for his popular and erudite lectures on Shakespeare and his excellent rapport with undergraduates, we cannot help wondering whether there are still wrinkles in our assessment process to be ironed out.

ENGL 1213, Introduction to Literature, does not count toward the English B.A. It is designed to heighten non-majors' interest in literature, perhaps also wooing some of them into declaring English as a major. One of its chief aims is to introduce non-majors to ways that literature can help us ask important questions. As our brochure for our undergraduate major says, "Stories help us make sense of ourselves and the world. They enable us to encounter other worlds, to imagine the future, and to empathize with diverse peoples across time and space. Studying English as an undergraduate offers an opportunity to engage imaginatively with what really matters."

We understand that it is important for us to give students tools and structures in every course, yet we do not seem to have devised assessment tests that address the most significant tools and structures in this particular class. It is easy to test students' memorization skills by asking them to repeat the rhyme scheme of a Shakespearean sonnet or to recall the definitions of terms such as "motif" and "epiphany," and those things are important. However, the most important things we want students to learn in this introductory literature class are not the definitions of terms but ways of reading, e.g. the ability to figure out how a metaphor conveys something that literal language does not, the ability to understand why an author might use an unreliable narrator, the ability to set aside one's own assumptions in order to get inside a protagonist's head.

The catch is that very few students—even quite intelligent ones—can become skilled in just one semester at reading poems and stories *cold*. Being able to read a new poem or story *cold* is an advanced skill, just as sight-reading music is an advanced skill. Yet our colleague who knew the most about assessment told us we were not supposed to assess

students using texts that have been covered in class discussions. Can this be correct? This seems analogous to requiring the Department of Music to assess beginning piano students on the basis of sight-reading rather than on the basis of their ability to play a learned piece of music with their own expression and tone.

#### **D. Changes Planned on the Basis of the Assessment and Analysis**

1. Because this data reflects only one semester, we will hold off making sweeping changes until we have enough data for future semesters to determine whether the present results are an anomaly.
2. We will ask those who teach the class this coming year whether they believe it would be pedagogically sound to teach to the test, by devoting more class time to drilling students in terminology and methodology.
3. We will ask those who teach the class this coming year whether they can think of new pedagogical methods would make the non-major students in this class better readers of literature.
4. We will ask those who teach the class this coming year whether they can think of ways to test our students' competency in literature that are better than those represented by our current pre- and post-test examples, while yet staying within the original pre- and post-test guidelines.
5. We will consult with ADHE to find out whether it is allowable to test students narratively over works they have discussed as a class, under the teacher's guidance, thus bringing the post-test for this class more in line with testing beginning piano students' ability to play a learned piece of music with their own expression and tone than with testing beginning piano students in sight-reading. If ADHE allows such a test, we could then make the post test part of the students' regular course grade, which would also keep to a manageable level the amount of grading done by the teacher.

## Academic Assessment Report

B.A. Program in English, 2018

### *Academic Program Assessment Plan*

The English Department Assessment Committee (Instructor Karen Madison), with faculty approval, assessed our Spring 2018 graduates' proficiency in English studies with an internally created senior assessment exam. The committee has correlated the results with each individual graduating student's English studies grade point average (GPA).

#### History

In 2016, the Committee (Karen Lentz Madison and Raina Smith Lyons) conducted research into a variety of assessment methods used by our peer institutions with the goal of either adding a new component to our assessment in the form of a less expensive test than ETS standardized testing or pursuing a consequential method, differing from our previous assessments. (See Appendix A: Previous Protocol.) The Committee sought evaluation methods that would accurately assess the competency of our graduating English majors, including surveying the assessment programs of our peer institutions. It found that few surveyed institutions actually had assessment programs in place and that none were as comprehensive in their methods as the Department desired.

The research presented three different options:

1. Administering the standardized ETS subject test and correlating it with qualitative Data.
2. Collecting portfolios of students' work from the beginning and end of their U of A undergraduate careers, which would be evaluated and compared.
3. Creating a self-administered, department-created Proficiency in English Studies (PIES) Exam to correlate the PIES score with other student data, such as GPA and number of semesters to graduation.

The Assessment Committee recommended to our faculty the third assessment option listed above. As we were tasked with creating a self-study assessment, the Committee asked for and received the English Department faculty's approval in October 2016 with an agreement that members would contribute a pool of questions to use in the creation of the exam.

The Committee designed the PIES exam as a tool to measure the successful accomplishment of our program and student learning goals:

#### Program Goals

1. Students in the English B.A. program should acquire both general and specialized knowledge in their field, as well as develop academic skills in preparation for careers in academia, education, and a number of ALTAC careers.

2. B.A. students should also gain professionalization skills and knowledge in preparation for going on the job market or applying to graduate programs.
3. B.A. students should be able to complete their degrees in a timely fashion.

#### Student Learning Outcomes

1. B.A. students should demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of literary works in the English language, from the Medieval Period to the present. This knowledge should include a basic understanding of broad concepts such as genres, periods, and movements as well as a familiarity with a variety of individual texts that exemplify these concepts.
2. B.A. students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of and an appreciation for diversity, specifically as it relates to a wide range of English-speaking cultures.
3. B.A. students should possess skills for the appreciation and critical reading of literary texts, including a general knowledge of techniques of literary analysis and criticism, and be able to use these techniques to write intelligently about literature.
4. B.A. students should be able to analyze, create, and defend complex arguments in correct and rhetorically effective written English.
5. B.A. students majoring only in English should be able to complete their degrees in 4 years; B.A. students with additional majors should be able to complete their degrees in 4 to 5 years, depending upon number and type of additional majors.
6. Graduating B.A. students should be able to secure employment, or to pursue additional education, that will aid them in developing professional careers.

### *Assessment of Student Learning*

#### Methods

Direct Assessment Method:

Ratings of student skills by field experience supervisors

Our Proficiency in English Studies exam questions were created by our faculty (field experience supervisors) and evaluated to their standards. The exam was administered and proctored via Blackboard by the Assessment Committee. (See Appendix B: Assessment Instructions.)

Most faculty members developed fifteen discipline/area questions each that stemmed from our required survey courses and Introduction to Shakespeare course. Five of these questions were general knowledge. Five were advanced level of knowledge from the courses. Five were diversity related within those courses. These questions became a set of questions to be used in the randomly generated PIES exam administered through the self-grading Blackboard tool, Respondus Monitor on an English Department Advising Blackboard course link. (See Appendix C: Sample Questions.)

Each student signed into his/her University Blackboard account to access the course in order to take the exam and to answer a set of thirty questions delivered individually (rather than as a

full page of questions) and randomly to insure independent attempts. The Committee also required each student to use the Respondus Monitor, which recorded the entire testing procedure, to preclude access to internet, notes, and/or study partners to ensure untainted results.

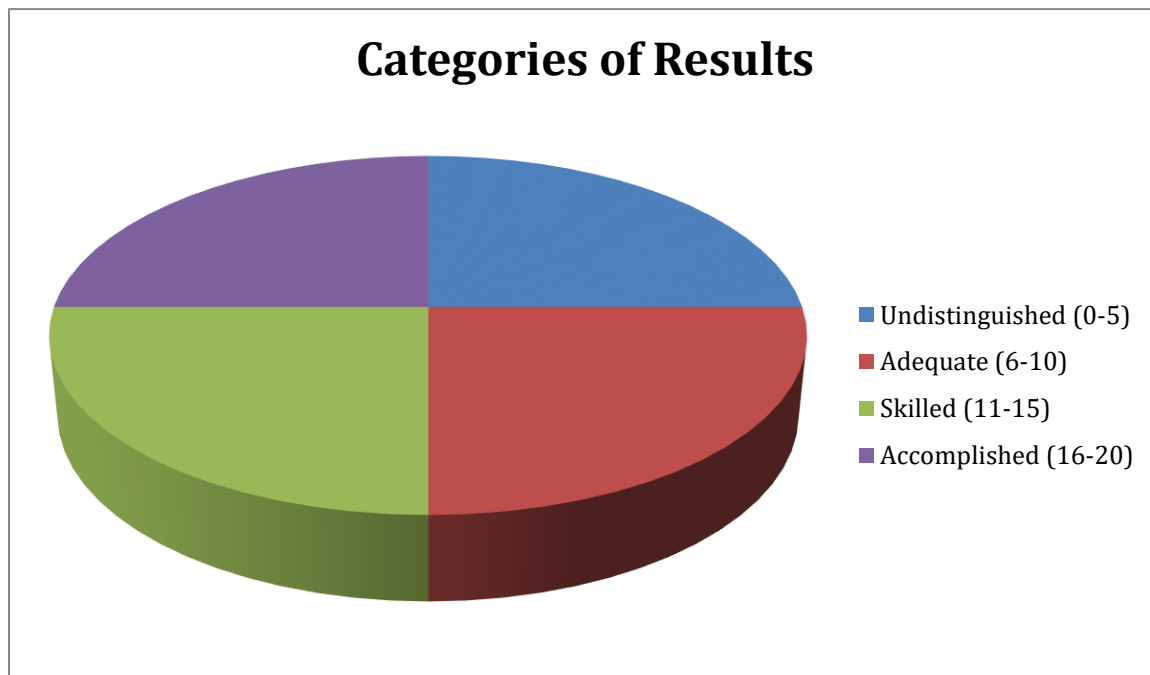
### Indirect Assessment Methods

Each individual student's score on the PIES Exam was correlated with additional, qualitative data about the student. These external measures were

- Students' GPAs in major
- Number of semesters to graduation and graduation rates.

The results generated reveal graduates to be accomplished, skilled, adequate, and undistinguished.

- Accomplished: 16-20 correct
- Skilled: 11-15 correct
- Adequate: 6-10 correct
- Undistinguished: 0-5 correct



Fifty-two students took the exam out of the sixty students who applied for graduation (eighty-eight percent of graduating seniors participating). Of the sixty applicants, one walked last December and was not part of the cohort. Seven others did not take the exam or correspond about the test. According to Institutional Research, the percentage reveals a "respectable"



confidence level in outcome. (See Appendix D. Testing Sample Statement.)

### *Timelines for Data Collection and Analysis*

#### Fall 2016:

- October: The Committee met with the English Department faculty members to request their approval of and collaboration in the creation of the PIES exam.
- October/December: The Committee began working with Blackboard support to create the course template for English Department Advising.

#### Spring 2017:

- January/February: The Committee sorted and coded the questions and developed the exam.
- February/March: The exam was uploaded into the Respondus Monitor program, along with a separate, three-question Excellence in Teaching faculty committee survey for its own use. (See Appendix E: Teaching Excellence Survey.)
- March: As soon as students declared an intention to graduate, the Committee added its information to the Blackboard course. The Committee worked with the Dean's Office to insure that the timed assessment exam is now registered as a requirement for graduation on students' degree audits, as is the Senior Writing Assessment requirement.
- April: The deadline for taking the PIES exam was April 15, and after that date, the students' test data was compared with departmental GPAs. Only students who graduated in Spring 2017 took the exam.
- May: The Committee prepared a report of its findings and evaluated its assessment method and sent the Chair of The Teaching Excellence Committee the results of the survey. It also created a class on Blackboard for 2018 graduates and uploaded the newly created 2018 exam.

#### Spring 2018

- March: As soon as students declared an intention to graduate, the Committee added its information to the 2018 Blackboard course. The Committee contacted the Fulbright English advisor to update the fulfilled requirement for graduation on individual degree audits after students completed the exam. Also, the advisor was added to the Blackboard class for access to the verifications of completion.
- April: The deadline for taking the PIES exam was April 30, and after that date, the students' test data was compared with departmental GPAs. Only students who graduated in Spring 2018 took the exam.

## Use of Results

The most important information to share about the results for both the 2017 and the 2018 testing is two-fold:

The Committee will examine ways in which the Dept. of English might better serve our students, and it will utilize the results of both assessments as a tool for a departmental revision process, once the strengths and weaknesses of this assessment protocol are evident. The results of the assessment will affect decisions on curriculum and instruction by revealing areas our students are not acquiring the knowledge our faculty deem necessary for well-rounded English major graduates.

This assessment is part of an over-all plan and, as such, is in the second year of a three-year study. It is unrealistically harsh or optimistic to base the state of the department on one test for one year's group of students.

Therefore, PIES data will be collected for three years to insure uniform accuracy of results and conclusions. Since this is the second year of this particular exit exam, the Committee can report only the limited data corresponding with the 2018 PIES outcomes that relate to program goals and student learning outcomes, as it did with the 2017 outcomes.

### Program Goals

At present, the data confirm that many of our students are meeting our expectations regarding program goals. However, a substantial number of our students are not. Overall, the data reveal a full range of results with room for improvement.

The Committee has ascertained the percentage of students in the English B.A. program 1.) who have acquired both general and specialized knowledge in their field and 2.) who have developed academic skills in preparation for careers in academia, education, and a number of ALT-AC careers.

Accomplished	18
Skilled	9
Adequate	11
Undistinguished	14

When we correlate the overall scores with the students' GPAs in Major, we find unexpected results. Some of our highest GPA students scored poorly, while some of our lowest did comparatively well. The majority of our students falls into the 3.0 range, and a third of these students scored in the undistinguished range, **although this percentage is an improvement** from one-half in 2017.

Accomplished	4
Skilled	2
Adequate	2
Undistinguished	0

Accomplished	12
Skilled	6
Adequate	9
Undistinguished	13

Accomplished	2
Skilled	1
Adequate	0
Undistinguished	1

Accomplished	0
Skilled	0
Adequate	0
Undistinguished	0

The Committee will continue to correlate qualitative data, such as GPA within major (which indicates not only knowledge but also classroom participation, quality of writing, and research ability across all of the students' English courses). Eventually, it will examine the results of three years of testing.

After three years of testing, the Department will endeavor to identify which students do poorly on the exam because of their lack of engagement in the curriculum and/or with the exam itself. (See Appendix F. Student Correspondence.) Conversely, the Committee hopes to identify gaps in the knowledge of otherwise exemplary students. Once it has identified these gaps in knowledge, it can address ways in which our curriculum might better meet the students' needs.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Although, three years of data will be collected to insure the integrity of the assessment tool, the immediate results of the exit exam were achieved by this method:

Each individual student's score on both the 2017 and 2018 PIES Exam was correlated with additional, qualitative data about the student, to provide a more comprehensive profile of the student, and to offset aberrations in test scores. These external measures were

- Students' GPAs in major
- Number of semesters to graduation and graduation rates
- Margin of error: Students answered 30 questions and were allowed to miss 10 questions to achieve a perfect 20/20 score. (If a student scored 16/30, results were 16/20). (See Appendix G: Offset Margin.)

The numbers collected reflect *three* of the six Assessment of Student Learning Criteria:

1. B.A. students should demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of literary works in the English language, from the Medieval Period to the present. This knowledge should include a basic understanding of broad concepts such as genres, periods, and movements as well as a familiarity with a variety of individual texts that exemplify these concepts.
2. B.A. students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of and an appreciation for diversity, specifically as it relates to a wide range of English-speaking cultures.
3. B.A. students should possess skills for the appreciation and critical reading of literary texts, including a general knowledge of techniques of literary analysis and criticism, and be able to use these techniques to write intelligently about literature.

The *fourth* Assessment of Student Learning Criteria is evidenced in the Major GPA with the grades assigned as qualifying the graduate to satisfy his Senior Writing Requirement as found in the catalogue:

**Writing Requirement:** All upper-division English courses require a research or an analytical paper except ENGL 4003 and the courses in creative writing (ENGL 3013, ENGL 4013, ENGL 4023, ENGL 4073). For this reason, all students who fulfill the requirements for a major in English thereby fulfill the Fulbright College writing requirement. In addition, 4000-level courses (except for those noted above) require more intensive research by, and more active participation from, students than 3000-level courses do and require each student to complete a paper that can be included as a writing sample with applications to graduate programs or professional schools.

4. B.A. students should be able to analyze, create, and defend complex arguments in correct and rhetorically effective written English.

## *Future Tasks*

### Immediate Timeline

2019 PIES Assessment Exam

#### Spring 2018:

- May 2018: Create 2019 PIES exam from the faculty question pool and upload it to the 2019 Blackboard class, Proficiency In English Assessment.

#### Spring 2019:

- March: Load the declared graduating seniors' IDs, user names, major GPAs and GPAs onto the Blackboard "course." Notify students that the assessment exam is available.
- March/April: Evaluate the results of the 2019 PIES exam.
- April/May: Draft the 2019 Assessment Report. Create the 2020 PIES exam from the faculty question pool for potential use in March 2020.

### Future Timeline

2020 PIES Evaluation and Assessment Exam

#### Spring-Fall 2019:

- May 2019: Begin to reevaluate the PIES Exam as a diagnostic for Departmental purposes.

#### Fall 2019:

- September-October: Evaluate all three years of data (2017-9), taking into consideration comparisons of the percentages of the four student rating categories, the five question categories, and the particular questions missed.
- October-November: Determine the correspondence between the data and the Departmental Goals and Student Assessment Outcomes.

- November: Reevaluate the PIES Exam as a diagnostic for Departmental purposes, taking into consideration Committee suggestions for outcomes improvement.
- December: Draft the Proficiency in English Studies Assessment Report.  
Discuss evaluation of PIES protocol with faculty.

#### Spring 2020:

- January-February: Upload 2020 exam (prepared in May 2019) to Blackboard with adaptations per Committee suggestions or create a new diagnostic protocol.
- March: Load the declared graduating seniors' IDs and user names onto the Blackboard "course." Notify students that the assessment exam is available.
- April: Evaluate the results of the PIES exam.
- April/May: Prepare the 2020 Departmental Assessment Report.

#### 2021 PIES Assessment

- July 2020/March 2021: Create and administer a survey for assessing the one remaining Program Goal (relating to retention) and the two Student Learning Outcomes (relating to retention, graduation, and employment).

##### *Program Goals:*

- 3.) B.A. students should be able to complete their degrees in a timely fashion.

##### *Student Learning Outcomes:*

- 5.) B.A. students majoring only in English should be able to complete their degrees in 4 years; B.A. students with additional majors should be able to complete their degrees in 4 to 5 years, depending upon number and type of additional majors.
- 6.) Graduating B.A. students should be able to secure employment, or to pursue additional education, that will aid them in developing professional careers.

- March 2021: Gather declared graduating seniors' IDs and user names. Load the data onto the Blackboard "course." Notify students that the assessment survey is available.
- March/April: Evaluate the results of the survey.
- April/May: Draft the 2021 Assessment Report.
- May: Determine the necessity of repeating the PIES assessment exam, utilizing the results reported in the 2019 PIES assessment report to determine the need to update the current faculty pool of questions and/or update or adapt assessment methods.

Determine employment statistics three years after graduation to correspond with the scores of the PIES exam and student learning outcome goals 5 and 6.

#### Suggestions for Score Improvement and Remediation of Concerns

At this point, the Committee recognizes that our graduates do have a wide range of scores in our designated categories (proficient, accomplished, adequate, and challenged). Although not everyone is proficient, the Committee believes that the number of students who score inside the preferred ranges (proficient and accomplished) can be increased with two strategies:

### Improving Scores

- Add more nineteenth-century British literature questions because our majors heavily enroll in these courses, and the original exam pool has a low percentage of representative questions.
- Cross reference the missed questions represented within each of the four student categories in the third year of testing, as a means of clearly understanding our numbers.
- Evaluate the number of students who missed a question that came from a particular course (especially the surveys) that s/he did not take.
- Consider posting the grades to the transcript (as stated in the Catalogue of Studies) so that students are not tempted to discount the importance of the exam. (See Appendix H: Suggested Catalogue Emendations.)

### Improving Response

Although we have an 88 percent rate of response with our exam in 2018 and a 93 percent in 2017, we will encourage early student acceptance of and engagement in the following manner:

- Inform advisees, via our Fulbright College advisor, Sarah Hayes Langley, of the requirement.
- Recruit our Sigma Tau Delta president as an Assessment Committee member to inform STD members of the departmental requirement and to promote positive interactions in regard to it.
- Establish a drawing to be held the day after exam deadline to encourage timely responses (\$50 gift certificates or comparable prizes).
- Post Facebook announcements and positive commentary by our faculty about the exam.
- Explain in our exam subject classes (surveys and Shakespeare) that the assessment is part of students' degree audit (along with our senior writing requirement).
- Remind our English majors in the fall semester of the up-coming exam to ensure their familiarity with the department's catalogue requirements.
- Consider updating the assessment requirement as listed in the catalogue in order to mitigate discontent/dissatisfaction and its attendant issues arising from semesters when there is no necessity to administer the exam. (See Appendix H: Suggested Catalogue Emendations.)

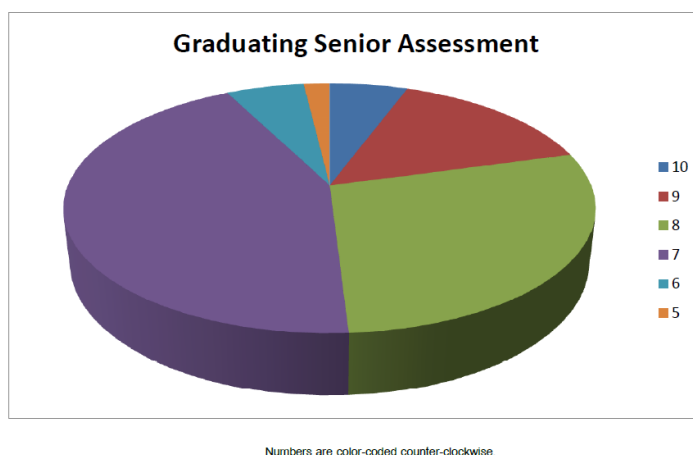
## Appendix A: Previous Protocol

### Department of English B.A. Senior Assessment Report 2015

English Department faculty rated the analytical and writing competencies of our graduating seniors, each of whom was asked to designate a course and teacher for evaluative purposes. A uniform rubric was used by the evaluators:

- 10-9 Extraordinary
- 8-7 Superior
- 6-5 Competent
- 4-3 Adequate
- 2-1 Mediocre

Of seventy-nine graduating seniors, we received fifty-six responses. Faculty gave eleven of these students Extraordinary status. Three of those students were rated as the strongest graduating seniors in the two evaluative categories (analytical skills and writing skills). Faculty rated thirty-eight students as having Superior skills in the two categories, with fifteen students given 8's and twenty-three given 7's. Faculty found four of the 56 graduates to be in the Competent range. Three of those were given 6's. Four graduates were assigned 4's, placing them in the Adequate range. No students were assigned below a 4.



*Lane, Lyons, Madison, Montgomery 2015*

These findings do not indicate a need for changes to be made to our undergraduate English major; however, we are in the process of adding to our present form of assessment. We used to administer a standardized test every two years to a random subset of English B.A. graduating seniors, but it became impossible to convince a representative sample of students to take the test. It was financially impractical for us to administer the expensive test to the entire graduating class, so we did not see how we could call it a requirement for graduation. Because our Director of Undergraduate Studies has been on emergency leave since December 2014, we were unable to solve this conundrum in time for this spring's assessment; however, we have put one of our advisors on summer pay (for one month) to research the possibility of adding a new component to our assessment in the future, perhaps in the form of a less expensive test that actually would be a requirement for graduation.

## Appendix B: Assessment Instructions

Hello Graduate!

Congratulations on achieving your goal of graduating from our Department of English undergraduate program. We are incredibly proud of you because we know of the rigorous challenges you have met and how hard you worked to get to this point.

Now that you have arrived, we need for you to complete one final task, in order to fulfill your **senior assessment requirement**. As mentioned in the *U of A Catalogue of Studies*, all graduating seniors are required to participate in a “senior assessment.” This year the assessment takes the form of an exam, which has been designed to test your knowledge from the courses all English majors are required to take (the survey courses and Shakespeare).

We’ve tried to make this process as simple as possible for you.

1. When you applied for graduation, we added your id number to the roster of a special Blackboard “course,” **Proficiency in English Assessment**. (Note: this isn’t really a course; it is just the easiest way for us to facilitate the exam.)
2. **By April 30**, you will take the Respondus on-line exam, as well as a three-question survey. You will find a short sample exam and the directions for uploading the Respondus Lockdown Browser onto your own computer on the Blackboard “class” page (for those with webcams. You can easily uninstall it after the exam, if you wish.) The list of labs on campus that have Respondus Lockdown Browsers installed (PC’s with webcams) are located in the following locations:

Mullins Library Computer Lab  
 Arkansas Union Lab  
 JB Hunt Computer Lab

The Student Technology Center (STC) at the Union has these items for checkout:

Webcams  
 Laptops  
 Headsets

\*Don’t forget to take your student ID to checkout items at the STC and there are lab operators available if you have any questions about the equipment.



Should you have technical difficulties in downloading the Respondus Lockdown Monitor or taking the exam, contact:

**Help Desk**

479-575-6804

[bbhelp@uark.edu](mailto:bbhelp@uark.edu)

**Help Desk Hours**

Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday, 4 to 11 p.m.

3. After you complete the exam, the assessment portion of your senior assessment requirement will be satisfied. (Note: The exam will need to be completed **by April 30**. If you don't complete the exam by that time, your assessment requirement will not be met, and you will not qualify for graduation. Should you apply for graduation late, please contact us at [engladv@uark.edu](mailto:engladv@uark.edu) so we can allow you access to the exam.)

The exam consists of thirty multiple choice questions that most will find easily answered in fifteen minutes, although we are allowing extended time for those who require it. We will score the exams, and then we will compile the information (without using your names) for a general assessment report about your graduating class.

This exam will not affect your GPA, nor will the results be used against you in any way. It isn't necessary to try to study or cram for the exam, either. Really, this exam is to assess how well our courses are teaching you. We do ask that you make an honest, good faith effort to try to perform well on the exam, however, as your results will be very valuable to us as a metric of the success of our curriculum.

We wish to assure you that this requirement is absolutely necessary for our accreditation—that is, for the Department of Higher Education to certify that your degree comes from an academically reputable institution and department.

Regards,

Dr. K. Madison

## Appendix C: Sample Questions

Proficiency in English Exam, Spring 2017 (Sample 15 of 30 questions)

1. Which poet is widely viewed to have inherited the mantle of W.B. Yeats?
  - a. Eavan Boland
  - b. Paul Muldoon
  - c. **Seamus Heaney**
  - d. Geoffrey Hill
  - e. Les Murray
  
2. Which of the following best describes the genre of *Paradise Lost*?
  - a. Romance
  - b. Epyllion
  - c. Alexandrine
  - d. **Epic**
  - e. Parable
  
3. T. S. Eliot is not the author of
  - a. **“The Idea of Order at Key West.”**
  - b. “The Hollow Men.”
  - c. “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.”
  - d. “The Waste Land.”
  - e. “Ash Wednesday.”

4. Beowulf wrestled with
  - a. Hrothgar.
  - b. Dracula.
  - c. Smaug.
  - d. **Grendel.**
  - e. Olaf.
  
5. My Ántonia is a novel written by
  - a. F. Scott Fitzgerald
  - b. Toni Morrison.
  - c. Christopher Marlowe.
  - d. Flannery O'Connor.
  - e. **Willa Cather.**
  
6. Of what poetic form is Dylan Thomas's "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" a classic example?
  - a. Elegiac stanza
  - c. Sestina
  - b. Sonnet
  - d. **Villanelle**
  - e. Sonnet

7. Stories associated with King Arthur and his court belong to the Matter of
  - a. **Britain.**
  - b. France.
  - c. Antiquity.
  - d. England.
  - e. Wales.
  
8. Beowulf is set in
  - a. **Scandinavia.**
  - b. Anglo-Saxon England.
  - c. Germany.
  - d. Ireland.
  - e. France
  
9. During what time period did the English Renaissance take place (assuming it actually occurred)?
  - a. First to fourth centuries
  - b. Fifth to fourteenth centuries
  - c. **Fifteenth to Seventeenth centuries**
  - d. Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries
  - e. Twentieth century

10. On which river does *The Heart of Darkness* begin?
- a. **Thames**
  - b. Niger
  - c. Nile
  - d. Brahmaputra
  - e. Congo
11. Which of the following is credited with introducing blank verse on the Elizabethan stage?
- a. William Shakespeare
  - b. Ben Jonson
  - c. John Webster
  - d. Elizabeth I
  - e. **Christopher Marlowe**
12. Which one of the following was abducted from Africa and sold as a slave in colonial Massachusetts?
- a. Anne Bradstreet
  - b. Leatherstocking
  - c. Jesse Helm
  - d. **Phillis Wheatley**
  - e. Edward Taylor

13. A Room of One's Own features Woolf's narrative of
- a. Alfred Hitchcock.
  - b. **Judith Shakespeare.**
  - c. Orlando Woolf.
  - d. Judith Butler.
  - e. the English Civil War.
14. "Orientalism" refers to the stereotypical way that Western literature has traditionally depicted the culture of Asia and the Middle East. Who coined this term?
- a. Lionel Trilling
  - b. Virginia Woolf
  - c. **Edward Said**
  - d. Frantz Fanon
  - e. Gertrude Stein
15. The First Folio is
- a. the Italian source of Shakespeare's Roman and Juliet
  - b. **a collection of Shakespeare's plays produced after his death by two actor friends**
  - c. the "Bad Folio" of Hamlet, containing many misattributions of lines and nonsensical lines
  - d. the theory that Shakespeare's plays were written by Queen Elizabeth's prime minister, the Earl of Leicester.
  - e. what Portia mockingly calls the Prince of Morocco in The Merchant of Venice.

## Appendix D: Testing Sample Statement

### **Graduating Seniors Testing Sample Statement\***

According to Gary Gunderman, Director of Institutional Research and Assessment, populations of 100 or less are difficult to get a picture of using a sample, but he does not think it is feasible to shoot for a confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of five. That would require a sample of 49 [Ours is 50]. We have to consider what is manageable for the test administrators, graders and students as well as what is financially possible.

Gunderman chose a margin of error of 15% and a confidence level of 90% with a population of 100, which gives a sample size of 24, which he thinks are at least respectable numbers.

Those are not exactly confidence numbers we would want to put in a dissertation, he says, but the purpose of assessing learning outcomes is to provide feedback to the department on what can/should be changed about what they are doing in regards to student learning.

If the results support what our faculty is actually seeing in the classrooms, then we can have more confidence in the results and make changes to improve future scores. If the results do not support what faculty is seeing in the classrooms, then maybe we would want to look at the results more critically and make changes the next time we do the assessment.

\*Adapted from an email statement to Karen Lentz Madison from Gary Gunderman (21 October 2016), Director of Institutional Research and Assessment

## Appendix E: Teaching Excellence Survey

### Teaching Excellence Survey for Graduating Seniors

Created by and Administered for the English Department TES Committee

1. I have learned how to write better from my English courses.

yes

no

2. b. I have developed critical thinking skills from my English courses.

yes

no

3. I received excellent instruction from the following teachers in the English department

(Write in name/s.)



## Appendix F: Student Correspondence

Hello,

First of all, thanks for taking the exam and teaching survey that will be used to evaluate the Department's programs and goals. We do understand that some of you think it was a waste of your time to do these tasks, but the exam, at least, is part of the major's requirement, and in the past, actually was used to quantify the individuals talking it, rather than to "examine" the Department itself as to how well it is achieving its purpose.

**Assessment Requirement:** Every senior English major must take the program assessment exam administered by the department each spring semester to graduate. Exam results will not affect GPA, although the student's score will be noted on his or her permanent academic record. This requirement may be waived in extraordinary circumstances by the department's Director of Undergraduate Studies. Contact your adviser for more information.

While not being noted on your academic record as the catalogue states, the Assessment Committee will correlate your score with additional qualitative data, such as your Major GPA (which takes into account knowledge, research abilities, participation, your Senior Writing Assessment--another requirement for graduation) and your status (last semester senior). We hope the comparison provides a more comprehensive profile of you as a student, and to offset aberrations in test scores. In future years, the Department hopes to measure other significant factors relating to retention, graduate school acceptance, or job placement, for example.

Our rationale for choosing such a protocol is based on our extensive examination of a variety of methods (one being a portfolio). However, the other forms were very expensive with no proof of a better outcome for what we are seeking. Unfortunately, we did not have the funding or faculty for those other forms of assessment. Even if we could afford to compensate them, asking the same faculty who evaluated your course work to also oversee your indirect assessment process would have undermined the results in the eyes of our report's intended audience. The Department is required to assess its program for the Dean's Office and, in turn, for University accreditation purposes.

And so, we did ask faculty to contribute questions that each thought were important or interesting enough to remember from their survey courses (British, American, and World Literature) and our Introduction to Shakespeare Course. The Assessment Committee went through all of the questions sent us, coding each one as the four just mentioned--but also as diversity questions and as questions we considered extremely difficult.

From those, we chose five diversity related questions, five difficult questions, five American Literature questions, five Shakespeare questions, five British Literature questions, and five World Literature questions. You took an exam with thirty questions. We gave everyone ten incorrect answers *gratis* to mitigate testing glitches (those aberrations in test scores I mentioned earlier).

The PIES Exam is not a perfect system. We've had people with poor marks and those with perfect scores. But it is our first year for this particular task, and we plan to use what we learn to address ways in which our curriculum might better meet all of our students' needs. The assessment is not of the students but of the Department itself, and we could not assess ourselves on how we are doing without an assessment tool, such as our exam.

We trust that this email answers your questions and addresses your concerns, and we genuinely hope that the rest of your semester goes smoothly.

Yours truly,  
Dr. Madison and Ms. Lyons

## Appendix G: Offset Margin

While not being noted on the students' academic records as the catalogue states, the Assessment Committee correlated their scores with additional qualitative data, such as their Major GPA (which takes into account knowledge, research abilities, participation, the Senior Writing Assessment--another requirement for graduation) and their status (last semester senior).

The comparison serves to provide a more comprehensive profile of each student, and to offset aberrations in test scores. In future years, the Department hopes to measure other significant factors relating to retention, graduate school acceptance, or job placement, for example.

The committee asked faculty to contribute questions that each thought were important or interesting enough to remember from their survey courses (British, American, and World Literature) and our Introduction to Shakespeare Course. The Committee went through all of the questions sent us, coding each one as the four just mentioned--but also as diversity questions and as questions we considered extremely difficult.

From those, we chose five diversity related questions, five difficult questions, five American Literature questions, five Shakespeare questions, five British Literature questions, and five World Literature questions. The students took an exam with thirty questions. We gave each one ten incorrect answers *gratis* to mitigate testing glitches or aberrations in test scores.

## Appendix H: Suggested Catalogue Emendations

The Committee suggests either of two strategies that the Department can implement to avoid confusion and resentment (see Appendix E) by updating our assessment requirement in the University Catalogue of Studies. The first acknowledges that the assessment is not noted on a permanent record:

**Assessment Requirement:** Every senior English major must take the program assessment exam administered by the department each spring semester to graduate. Exam results will not affect GPA, although the student's score will be noted on his or her permanent academic record. This requirement may be waived in extraordinary circumstances by the department's Director of Undergraduate Studies. Contact your adviser for more information.

The Committee suggests that the faculty adapt the requirement to read:

**Assessment Requirement: Final-semester English majors** must take the **Proficiency in English Studies** program assessment exam **when administered by the department** during spring semesters to graduate. Exam results will not affect **the student's GPA or permanent record.** **However, the student's score will augment the Department's on-going curriculum assessment endeavors.** This requirement may be waived in extraordinary circumstances by the department's Director of Undergraduate Studies. ~~Contact your adviser for more information.~~

On the other hand, if the student's score on the PIES exit exam actually were to be noted (which it is not at present) on a permanent record, students would take the exam seriously, as opposed to hurrying to complete it, which we suspect is the case with more than one of our students.

**Annual Academic Assessment Report**  
**M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in English**  
**June 1, 2018**

**Results of Analysis of Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

Assessment data regarding M.A. and Ph.D. students' comprehensive/candidacy exams, thesis/dissertation defenses, professional presentations and publications, and job placement indicate that the M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in English are achieving all six student learning outcomes and accomplishing all three program goals. (For descriptions of the program goals, student learning outcomes, and means of assessment, see the attached Academic Assessment Plan, originally submitted spring of 2015 and updated June 2018.)

**1. Exams and Defenses**

During the last seven years (from the fall of 2011 through the spring of 2018), 74 M.A. students and 53 Ph.D. students completed their programs and graduated. During this time 47 M.A. students successfully defended a thesis to graduate, 19 M.A. students passed the M.A. comprehensive exam to graduate, and 8 students (for the first time, in 2018) took a Portfolio Workshop course, taught by Dr. Lisa Hinrichsen, and presented M.A. portfolios as their final degree projects. (The portfolio option has now replaced the comprehensive exam option.) Since 2015, M.A. students choosing the thesis option also have had their thesis prospectuses reviewed and approved before being allowed to start writing their theses. Ph.D. students have always been required to write and successfully defend dissertations to graduate. Before being allowed to start their dissertations, these students must also pass a written candidacy exam in a broad area of specialization and an oral candidacy exam in a narrower area that anticipates their dissertation topics. Overall, students' successful completion of M.A. comprehensive exams, M.A. prospectuses/theses, M.A. portfolios, Ph.D. candidacy exams, and Ph.D. prospectuses/dissertations indicates that the M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in English are achieving Student Learning Outcomes 1 and 2 and Program Goal 1.

The average time to degree for Ph.D. students who graduated during the last seven years (from the fall of 2011 through the spring of 2018) was approximately 18 semesters (6 years), and the average time to degree for M.A. students who graduated during this time was approximately 10 semesters (3 years, 1 semester). It is important to note, however, that the average time to degree for the 45 graduating M.A. students who *started* their M.A. course work in the last seven years (i.e., started Fall 2011) was approximately 6 semesters (2 years). When the directors of the M.A. and Ph.D. programs started coordinating the programs in the fall of 2011, they took steps to reconnect with students who had started the M.A. program prior to 2009 but not yet completed their theses/comprehensive exams, advising approximately 11 of these students to degree completion and graduation.

Although the graduation of previously discontinued students was a positive development for the department as well as the students, their graduation increased the average time to degree for students who completed the M.A. program over the last seven years. Overall, the average time to degree for students completing the Ph.D. program indicates that the Ph.D. program is achieving Student Learning Outcome 5 and Program Goal 3. Now that we have new M.A. degree requirements in place (officially approved in 2016), allowing our M.A. students to complete a portfolio project in lieu of a thesis, we anticipate continuing to see an improvement in the average time to degree for our M.A. students in the coming years.

## **2. Presentations, Publications, Honors, and Job Placement**

During the last five years (from the spring of 2013 through the spring of 2018), students in the M.A. and Ph.D. programs presented papers (or gave talks) and published scholarship on a diverse group of authors and a wide range of literary, cultural, linguistic, and theoretical areas. During this time current M.A. and Ph.D. students presented conference papers or gave professional talks at least 170 times and published at least 31 articles, book chapters, dictionary entries, or creative writing pieces. Of special note is that four of the papers received outstanding-presentation-at-conference awards from the sponsoring organizations (the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, the Carson McCullers Society, the College English Association, and the Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association). Overall, the students' significant level of scholarly contribution indicates that the M.A. and Ph.D. programs are achieving Student Learning Outcomes 3 and 4 and Program Goal 1.

Our M.A. and Ph.D. students over the last five years also have had the high quality of their scholarship and their serious dedication to the discipline acknowledged in a range of ways. Honors that they have received outside of the Department of English include 6 James J. Hudson Doctoral Fellowships (awarded by the Graduate School), 4 Fulbright College Dissertation Research Awards, 1 American Dissertation Fellowship through the American Association of University of Women, 1 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute Fellowship, acceptance to a one-week summer Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth College, 3 African and African American Studies Graduate Fellowships, 1 travel award for an outstanding conference proposal (Center for the Study of Genders and Sexualities), 1 travel award for the Computers and Writing Graduate Research Network, 2 travel awards to attend the annual College English Association's conference, 1 award from the Delaware Tribe of Indians Education Program, 1 fellowship to the Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative, 1 Chancellor's Community Service Award (University of Arkansas), 1 Alex Marino Service Award (from the Graduate Student Congress), and 4 elections to officer positions for regional or national organizations (secretary and chair of the Nineteenth-Century Literature Committee for the South Central Modern Language Association, Midwest Region's Director of Communications for the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students, Board of Directors for the Vagantes Conference on

Medieval Studies, and member of the Graduate Student Committee for the Medieval Academy of America).

Since 2013, we have also had 16 incoming doctoral students awarded Doctoral Academy Fellowships by the Graduate School and 4 incoming doctoral student awarded Distinguished Doctoral Fellowships by the Graduate School. For those doctoral students planning to begin their program this fall (of 2018), 3 have already been awarded Distinguished Doctoral Fellowships and 2 have already been awarded Doctoral Academy Fellowships.

Students completing the M.A. and Ph.D. programs during the last eleven years (since the spring of 2007) have gone on to pursue a range of programs and positions after graduation. At least 42 of our M.A. graduates have been accepted to or gone on to start Ph.D. programs (University of Arkansas, the University of North Texas, the University of Tennessee, Purdue University, University of Kentucky, Texas A&M, Vanderbilt University, University of Kansas, Oklahoma State University, Georgia State University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Arizona State University). One went on to complete a second M.A. at Auburn University. (I believe she was initially planning to pursue her Ph.D. there but stopped after completing her second M.A.) One M.A. graduate has gone on to attend Harvard Law School. At least 6 M.A. graduates have gone on to pursue a master's degree in library science (at Rutgers University, the University of Oklahoma, the University of Alabama, and LSU) or to work in a library system. At least 4 M.A. graduates have gone on to work as college English instructors. And at least 18 of them have gone on to pursue an M.A.T. and/or work in a public or private school system as a secondary English teacher, a primary teacher, an ESL teacher, a substitute teacher, or a teacher's aide. In addition, our M.A. graduates have secured employment with institutions, organizations, and companies like the following:

- ACGME in Chicago, IL (Accreditation Standards Senior Administrator)
- AICPA in Raleigh-Durham, NC (Communications Manager – Tax)
- Alma School District (English Teacher)
- ArcBest (Director, Customer Solutions)
- Alexandria Library in Alexandria, VA (Children's Librarian)
- Arkansas Leadership Academy, University of Arkansas (Administrative Support Supervisor)
- Arkansas Teacher Corps (Teacher at Lee County High School in Mariana, AR)
- Arkansas Tech University (Adjunct Faculty)
- Asheville-Buncombe Technical College (English Instructor)
- Barre 3 (Owner)
- Berryville Public Library in Berryville, AR (Library Associate)
- Bentonville High School (English Teacher)
- Business Communication Lab, Walton College of Business (Tutor Coordinator)
- Business Services (Vice-Chancellor's Office) at the University of Arkansas (Travel Analyst)

- California State University Long Beach (Assistant Professor – This M.A. graduate completed his Ph.D. at Texas A&M University.)
- Central Arkansas Christian Schools (Pre-K through 3rd Grade Teacher)
- City of Fayetteville (Sustainability Coordinator)
- Colegio Granadino in Colombia (English Teacher)
- College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology, Oklahoma State University (Fire Protection Publications Senior Editor)
- College of Science and Engineering, Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia, AR (Administrative Specialist)
- Community Clinic of Northwest Arkansas in Springdale, AR (Communications Manager)
- Dell Medical School at UT-Austin (Associate Director for Strategic Content and Creative Services as well as Editor, *Rethink: New Perspectives on Health*)
- Department of Political Science, University of Arkansas (Administrative Specialist)
- Fayetteville High School (English Teacher)
- Graduate School and International Education at the University of Arkansas (Compliance Officer)
- Gravette High School (English Teacher)
- Haas Hall Academy in Bentonville, AR (English Teacher)
- Heifer International (Manager of Donor Engagement)
- Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum and Educational Center (Director)
- Honors College, University of Arkansas (Director of Retention and Student Advising)
- J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc. (Associate Business Partner in Human Resources)
- Kroger in Nashville, TN (Associate Communications and Engagement Manager)
- KUAJ (Membership Director)
- Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts (English Teacher)
- Marian Middle School (English Teacher)
- Marion Military Institute in Marion, AL (English Instructor)
- Miss Liang English School in Taiwan (ESL Teacher)
- Mohawk College (Instructor?)
- Mullins Library, University of Arkansas (Professional Assistant I)
- National Writing Project College-Ready Writers Program (Director)
- The New School in Fayetteville, AR (Full-Time Substitute)
- New Leaf Publishing Group (Assistant Editor)
- New Student and Family Programs at the University of Arkansas (Office Manager)
- Northern Oklahoma College (Language Arts Instructor)
- Northport School District (Teacher's Aide)
- Northwest Arkansas Community College (English Instructor)
- Office of Student Involvement and Orientation at Rockford University in Rockford, IL (Position?)
- Office of University Development at the University of Arkansas (Administrative Records Analyst – Records and Data Services)
- Program in Rhetoric and Composition, University of Arkansas (Adjunct Teaching Faculty)
- Rogers Heritage High School in Rogers, AR (Social Studies Teacher)

- Science and Engineering Magnet High School in Dallas, TX (AP Teacher)
- Sims Memorial Library, Southeastern Louisiana University (Reference/Instruction Librarian)
- St. Mark's Episcopal School in Houston, TX (6<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Teacher)
- SVI (Content Manager and Client Champion)
- Texarkana College (Adjunct English Faculty)
- Tyson Foods, Inc., in Springdale, AR (Video Production Manager)
- United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit in El Dorado, AR (Judicial Law Clerk – This student earned her J.D. at Harvard.)
- University Information Technology Services, University of Arkansas (Blackboard Support Specialist)
- University of Arkansas Press (Editorial Assistant)
- University of Colorado-Colorado Springs (Systems and User Experience Librarian & Assistant Professor, Web Services and Emerging Technologies, Kraemer Family Library)
- Walmart (Manager of Executive Communications)
- Walmart (Product Development Specialist)
- Walton Arts Center (Development Coordinator)
- Walton College Honors Program (Academic Adviser and Scholarship Coordinator)
- Washington Junior High School (English Teacher)
- Wayne State University (Digital Publishing Librarian)

Note: For at least 24 of our M.A. alumni who have graduated in the last 11 years, including those who just graduated Spring 2018, we have not yet been able to confirm any post-graduation graduate school/job information. In addition, the positions above may reflect multiple positions held by the same M.A. graduate. Finally, not all of the M.A. alumni who have secured positions with the above employers are still working in those offices.

In the last 11 years (since the summer of 2007), at least 30 of our Ph.D. graduates have been hired for and/or promoted to assistant professor, associate professor, or other professor/tenure-track positions at the following domestic and international institutions. These alumni, as far as we can tell, are still/currently working, or will be by fall, in all of these positions. Those with asterisks are the most recent hires, made within the last year.)

- Alanya University (Turkey) – assistant professor
- Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (GA) – assistant professor
- Appalachian State (NC) – assistant chair of department and director of comp/rhet program
- Ball State University (IN) – assistant teaching professor\*
- Boise State University (ID) – assistant professor
- Butler Community College (KS) – assistant professor\*
- East West University (Bangladesh) – assistant professor
- Ferum College (VA) - associate professor
- Georgia Gwinnett College (GA) – assistant professor



- Howard Payne University (TX) – assistant professor
- Lander University (SC) – assistant professor
- Missouri State University – assistant professor
- Oklahoma Baptist University – 2 assistant professors
- San Jacinta College (TX) – English professor\*
- San Jose State University – assistant professor\*
- Texas A&M – assistant professor
- Texas A&M University-Qatar – instructional assistant professor
- Ulsan University (South Korea) – assistant professor
- University of Arkansas-Fort Smith – 2 associate professors
- University of Central Oklahoma – assistant professor\*
- University of Southern Mississippi-Gulf Park – assistant teaching professor
- University of the Ozarks (AR) – associate professor
- Volunteer State Community College (TN) – assistant professor
- West Virginia University – assistant professor
- Westfield State University (MA) – assistant professor
- Williams Baptist College (AR) – assistant professor\*
- Yarmouk University (Jordan) – 2 assistant professors

In addition, since 2007, at least 17 of our Ph.D. graduates have been hired for non-tenure-track or secondary education positions with the following institutions and are still/currently working, or will be by fall, with these employers. Those with asterisks are the most recent hires, made within the last year.

- Arkansas High School in Texarkana – 11<sup>th</sup>-grade English teacher\*
- Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts in Hot Springs – humanities instructor
- Auburn University (AL) – lecturer
- Baldwin School (PA) – chair of computer science and dean of academic affairs
- Bilkent University (Turkey) – lecturer\*
- Colorado State University – instructor\*
- King's High School (WA) – English instructor
- LISA Academy (AR) – English department chair
- Louisiana State University - instructor
- Northeastern State University (OK) – part-time faculty\*
- Richland College (TX) – English faculty member\*
- University of Albany – lecturers (2)
- University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Department of English – instructor and asst. dir. of graduate program
- University of Arkansas-Fort Smith – adjunct English faculty
- University of Mississippi – instructor\*
- University of the Ozarks (AR) – instructor\*

Finally, since 2007, at least 8 of our Ph.D. graduates have been hired for nonteaching or alternative-academic (alt-ac) positions that they are still/currently holding with the following offices, organizations, and institutions:

- Harper Collins Christian (TN) – acquisitions editor
- Inhab Real Estate (LA) – broker
- Interrobang (AR) – founder and lead storyteller
- Office of Nationally Competitive Awards (University of Arkansas, Fayetteville) – director of communications
- Ozarks Technical Community College (MO) - dean of academic and student affairs
- Transportation Security Administration (VA) – writer/editor
- University Information Technology Services (University of Arkansas, Fayetteville) – senior virtualization engineer
- Western Governors University (online, I believe) – writing center course mentor

Note: For at least 11 of our Ph.D. alumni who graduated in the last 11 years (not including those who just graduated this spring of 2018), we have not been able to confirm any post-graduation or any current information.

Overall, the students' successful level of placement into teaching positions, nonteaching or alt-ac positions, and new degree programs indicates that the M.A. and Ph.D. programs are achieving Student Learning Outcome 6 and Program Goal 2.

### **3. External Committee Review**

In the spring of 2013, an external committee of three faculty members in English from other institutions visited the English Department and reviewed all its programs, including the M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in English. The external committee's report included two important suggestions about the M.A. program: 1) that its "coverage model at the graduate level, however commendable in principle, may be out of sync with national trends in the discipline and with the current TT faculty size," and 2) that the department should consider (also because of national trends and tenure-track faculty size) "eliminating the M.A. thesis requirement and, perhaps, substituting for this requirement a seminar or workshop in revising seminar papers into journal articles" or "scholarly papers that might be included in applications for doctoral programs." Our new M.A. program (approved in 2016) responds to both critiques, through 1) offering the option of a specialist or generalist track, and 2) presenting an alternative to the traditional M.A. thesis in the form of a portfolio project and workshop class.

### **Any Changes to Degree/Certificate Planned or Made on the Basis of the Assessment and Analysis**

The English Department routinely folds new assessment results into the administration of its graduate programs and has been using the above results in a variety of ways to continue monitoring and strengthening the M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in English. For example, in considering the external committee review, the department formed a Graduate Reform Committee of eight faculty members and one M.A. student, and the committee revised the degree structure of the M.A. program to include a generalist concentration as well as a new specialist concentration, a thesis option as well as a new portfolio option, a portfolio workshop course required for students who choose the portfolio option, and an introduction to graduate studies course required of all incoming M.A. students. These revisions to the M.A. program, approved by the university in 2016, have made the structure of the program more flexible and more in line with current best practices and the size of the faculty in English. In particular, the option to complete a portfolio for the program's final research project and the addition of a portfolio workshop course (offered for the first time in the spring semester of 2018) is already beginning to help more of our M.A. students complete their degrees in a more timely fashion; in the first class of M.A. students offered this option, 8 out of 11 chose the portfolio option and completed the M.A. degree program in 5 semesters this spring (of 2018).

Moreover, the department has started offering multiple graduate-level courses focusing heavily, if not primarily, on professionalization and career options (both within and outside the conventional path of teaching/academia):

- **Article Writing Workshop** (to be taught for the first time by Jo Hsu this August Intersession)
- **Introduction to Graduate Studies** (taught each fall by Sean Dempsey)
- **Job Market Workshop: Academic, Alt-Ac, Post-Ac** (taught every other year by Lissette Szwydky)

We are also now offering a course through which the department can facilitate graduate internships in areas such as grant writing, editing, publishing, special collections work (with the library), and university administration (specifically, university residential programming for undergraduates planning to major or minor in English). Two of our M.A. students participated in the graduate internship course during the 2017-2018 school year, and we anticipate having at least two more do so in 2018-2019.

Furthermore, the department's Professionalization Committee, often in collaboration with the Graduate Students in English (GSE) organization, has been considering assessment results in planning and implementing extracurricular workshops and other activities for M.A. and Ph.D. students. For example, the placement of M.A. and Ph.D. graduates into a balance of secondary-level teaching positions and non-teaching or corporate positions (see above) is positive confirmation that the committee's focus upon careers outside, as well as inside, academia is helping students respond productively to the current state of the academic job market in the humanities. Extracurricular professionalization activities offered to our graduate students just in the past year have included the following:

### Professionalization Events that Took Place Fall 2017:

- "Going on the Academic Job Market" (Drs. Bailey, Hsu, and Kayser met with graduating Ph.D. students.) - **Monday, Sept. 25th, 2:00-4:00 p.m., Kimpel Hall 339**
- "Publishing in the Areas of Literature and Rhetoric/Composition Studies" (Drs. Hsu and Kayser met with graduate students in English.) - **Monday, Oct. 23rd, 5:15-6:15 p.m., Old Main 208**
- GSE Professionalization Event: ["When Is It Okay to Say 'No'?"](#) (Drs. Hinrichsen, Jensen, and Jolliffe talked with graduate students about how to prioritize one's workload in one's post-graduate career.) - **Wednesday, Oct. 25th, 12:00-1:00 p.m., Kimpel Hall 713**
- GSE Professionalization Event: English Alumni Speaker Panel on Pursuing Careers in Secondary Education - **Monday, Nov. 6th, 5:15-6:15 p.m., Old Main 208**

### Professionalization Events that Took Place Spring 2018:

- **Monday, Feb. 19th, 11:00 a.m., Kimpel 321** - Pedagogy Lunch Series / [CLCS Doctoral Candidate Rashmila Maiti presented on "Teaching World Literature Online"](#)
- **Saturday, March 3rd** - GSE Annual Interdisciplinary Conference / ["Authority: Questioning Power Structures within the Humanities and Beyond"](#)
- **Tuesday, March 6th, 12:30 p.m., Kimpel 339** - Pedagogy Lunch Series / [Professor Constance Bailey presented on "So What Dream Course Would You Want to Teach?"](#)
- **Monday, March 26th, 2:00 p.m., Kimpel 111** - Panel Discussion (Vicky Hartwell, Laura Moix, and the Professionalization Committee) on [Graduate School Funding](#)
- **Monday, April 2nd, 2:00 p.m., Kimpel 111** - Panel Discussion on Alternative-Academic Careers

The Director and Assistant Director of the M.A. and Ph.D. programs have also been using the assessment results to improve strategies for advising students and disseminating information about the programs. For example, within the last few years, the directors have developed (in consultation with various IT and media specialists on campus) a new platform and new content for the department's website pages on the M.A. and Ph.D. programs, which will continue to be revised as we continue to balance our emphasis upon academic and alternative-academic professional preparation. To support graduate students in completing their program on schedule, a new advising web page was added in 2015 that includes information on "M.A. Requirements and Timeline," "Ph.D. Requirements and Timeline," and "Exams, Prospectuses, and Reading Lists." (The last page now also includes information on preparing M.A. portfolios.) To encourage students to continue making significant scholarly contributions in their areas of research, new web pages were also added in 2015 on "Graduate Student Awards, Publications, and Presentations" and "Professionalization Resources." To continue supporting students in their preparation for professional careers inside or outside of academia, a new page on "Career Resources" was added.

We hope to cultivate strategic partnerships with nearby nonprofits, corporations, and foundations unique to the Northwest Arkansas area that will lead to training and employment opportunities for our Ph.D. graduates. Finally, we have developed a new Graduate Student Handbook, which thoroughly covers program requirements, resources, and information about faculty, as well as our programs' process of evaluating graduate student progress. We plan to revise and update this handbook on an annual basis.

### **Any Changes to the Assessment Process Made or Planned**

We plan to continue the assessment process we've been developing over the last several years, which we describe above. The advisors of the graduate English students will continue to collect data on average time to degree for our M.A. and Ph.D. students and job placement (in both academic and nonacademic careers), as well track their annual numbers of awards, publications, conference presentations. We are also open to increasing our level of communication with personnel in other departments on campus as well as in off-campus offices/businesses within the Northwest Arkansas area to broaden the range of interdisciplinary research and professional training opportunities our students can pursue to be as competitive as possible when they go on the job market.

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### **Academic Assessment Plan**

#### **M.A. and Ph.D. Programs in English**

**Originally Submitted Spring 2015 / Updated June 2018**

#### **Program Goals**

1. Students in the M.A. and Ph.D. programs should acquire specialized knowledge and develop academic skills in preparation for making scholarly contributions to their fields of research.
2. M.A. and Ph.D. students should also gain professionalization skills and knowledge in preparation for going on the job market or applying to other graduate programs.
3. M.A. and Ph.D. students should be able to complete their degrees in a timely fashion.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. M.A. students should be able to write and defend an original thesis of 50-75 pages or to pass a written comprehensive exam.
2. Ph.D. students should be able to write and defend an original dissertation of 250-350 pages and to pass a written candidacy exam covering a broad area of specialization as well as an oral candidacy exam covering a narrower research area.
3. M.A. and Ph.D. students should be able to develop, submit, and present papers for professional conferences.
4. Ph.D. students should also be able to develop, submit, and publish journal articles.

5. M.A. students should be able to complete their degrees within 2 years, and Ph.D. students should be able to complete their degrees within 6 years.
6. Graduating M.A. and Ph.D. students should be able to secure employment, or to pursue additional education, that will aid them in developing professional careers.

### Process for Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

#### 1. Timeline:

Assessment data regarding M.A. thesis defenses, M.A. portfolio projects, Ph.D. candidacy exams, and Ph.D. dissertation defenses are collected and analyzed throughout the year as the exams, portfolio projects, and defenses are scheduled. Data regarding M.A. and Ph.D. students' conference presentations and journal publications are collected and analyzed at the end of each year, as is information about the placement of graduating students into jobs and new degree programs. At the end of each year, an academic review report is also generated for, and sent to, each student. Additionally, in conjunction with university assessment efforts, an external committee evaluates the M.A. and Ph.D. programs every five years.

#### 2. Means of Assessment:

An advisory committee of three faculty members assesses the portfolio project developed by each M.A. student who chooses the program's portfolio option.

An advisory committee of three faculty members assesses the thesis prospectus of each M.A. student who chooses the program's thesis option, and a thesis committee of three faculty members assesses the student's performance at his or her thesis defense.

An advisory committee of three faculty members assesses each Ph.D. student's knowledge of a broad area of specialization during the student's written candidacy exam.

An advisory committee of three faculty members assesses each Ph.D. student's knowledge of a narrow area of specialization, typically the area to be pursued by the student in his or her dissertation research, during the student's oral candidacy exam.

A dissertation committee of three faculty members assesses each Ph.D. student's performance at the student's dissertation defense.

The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and Assistant Director of Graduate Studies (ADGS) collect and analyze assessment data about M.A. and Ph.D. students' conference presentations and journal publications.

The DGS and ADGS collect and analyze assessment data about the placement of graduating M.A. and Ph.D. students into jobs and new degree programs.

In preparing students' academic review reports, the DGS and ADGS assess each student's overall progress in completing program requirements (coursework in English studies, coursework and proficiency exams in foreign languages, portfolio projects and thesis defenses for M.A. students, candidacy exams and dissertation defenses for Ph.D. students). Each academic review report indicates whether a student is making satisfactory progress and, if not, what the student should do to make better progress, and the report is sent to the student as well as to the dean of the Graduate School.

Every five years, in conjunction with university assessment efforts, an external committee of three faculty members from English departments at other institutions evaluates the M.A. and Ph.D. programs and submits an assessment report to the department chair college dean.

### 3. Using and Reporting Results:

A graduate reform committee considers the assessment results in evaluating and revising the requirements and curricula for the M.A. and Ph.D. programs, and a graduate professionalization committee considers the results in planning and implementing professionalization activities for students in the programs. The department chair takes the results into consideration when scheduling and assigning graduate classes, and the DGS and ADGS use the results to improve their strategies for advising current students and for disseminating information about the M.A. and Ph.D. programs to current and prospective students. The DGS and ADGS are scheduled to submit a report on the program assessment findings and their applications to the department chair, college dean, and university provost by the end of June, 2018.

## Academic Program Assessment Report

### M.F.A. Program in Creative Writing & Translation

#### *Assessment Tools*

As outlined in our Academic Program Assessment Plan, the Program in Creative Writing and Translation uses the following assessment tools for student learning outcomes:

- A combined thesis defense and oral examination.
- A yearly review of each student's academic progress toward the M.F.A. degree.
- An indirect review of our graduates' professional success via published works, national program rankings, and anecdotal evidence.

#### *Assessment Results*

Thesis defense/oral exams: As of May 4, 2018, all twelve of the M.F.A. students eligible to graduate this spring had successfully written and defended a thesis manuscript that was deemed publishable by their thesis committees. Through oral examination, the committees were satisfied that graduating candidates were leaving the program with a broad knowledge of literature and technique.

Graduate success: In its latest ranking of M.F.A. programs, *Poets & Writers* placed the University of Arkansas M.F.A. program 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation (out of 150 programs) for job placement and 18<sup>th</sup> for post-graduate fellowships. Among the many accomplishments of our graduates this year,

- Jo McDougall (1986) was appointed Poet Laureate of Arkansas by Gov. Asa Hutchinson. This appointment marks a total of three Arkansas MFA graduates currently serving as state Poets Laureate: Jo in Arkansas, Beth Ann Fennelly in Mississippi, and Jack Bedell in Louisiana.
- *Damnation*, the television series created and written by Tony Tost (2004), aired its first season on USA Network.
- Jacob Shores-Arguello (2014) saw his Canto Mundo prize-winning collection *Paraíso* published and was named a 2018-19 Hodder Fellow at Princeton University.
- John Reimringer (1999) won a \$10,000 Artist Initiative Grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board.
- Caroline Beimford (2017) won a \$5,000 Individual Artist Grant for nonfiction from the Arkansas Arts Council.
- Kathleen Heil (2015) won a Robert Rauschenberg Archives Research Travel Award from the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation in New York.
- Elizabeth Harris (1999/2000) saw her translation of the novel *For Isabel: A Mandala* by Antonio Tabucchi long-listed for the 2018 Best Translated Books Award.
- Jesse Irwin (2017) co-translated the anthology *100 Poems About Moscow*, which won the 2017 Books of Russia prize in poetry.



- Camilla Shumaker (2009) took the helm of the Science and Research Communications team at the University of Arkansas Office of University Relations.
- James Wright (2008) was appointed Multilingual Writing Specialist at the University of Maryland in Baltimore.
- Megan Blankenship (2016) won the Et Alia Press Neglected Histories of Arkansas prize for her collection *Mount Olive*.
- HBO ordered season 3 of *True Detective*, the series created and written by Nic Pizzolatto (2005). Filming began in Northwest Arkansas this spring.
- Kaj Tanaka (2013) had two pieces featured in the *2018 Best Small Fictions* anthology.
- Jack Bedell (1990), Poet Laureate of Louisiana, was named a Louisianian of the Year by *Louisiana Life* magazine.
- Cody Walker (1995) appeared on Bill Moyers' "Best U.S. Poetry Books of This Decade" for his collection *The Trumpiad*.
- Johnathon Williams (2010) launched *The Poesy Machine*, a weekly subscription service that reports the biggest news in poetry and publishing.
- At least eleven books were published by alumni this year through distinguished publishing houses such as W.W. Norton & Company and BOA Press.
- And hundreds of poems, stories, novels, essays, and translations by graduates were published by well-known presses and in journals such as *Poetry*, *Ploughshares*, *The Southern Review*, *The New Yorker*, *One Story*, *Measure*, *The Guardian*, and *The Washington Post*, among others.

### *Use of Results*

Almost without exception, students in the M.F.A. program graduate within four years. These students produce publishable manuscripts, and many go on to prestigious post-graduate fellowships and residencies, as well as careers in teaching and writing.

Last year, the Program in Creative Writing and Translation began teaching ENGL 2023, Creative Writing I, as a core course. Our director and assistant director devised an assessment process for the course. The resulting data showed that our student instructors are satisfactorily teaching the course according to stated student learning outcomes and are therefore gaining valuable teaching experience for their professional resumes.

This year, our literary journal, *The Arkansas International*, published its third and fourth issues and hosted its first Arkansas International Featured Reader, poet Kaveh Akbar. Akbar's reading, which kicked off the 2017 True Lit Fayetteville Literary Festival, saw overflow attendance of more than 200 people. M.F.A. students comprise the editorial board of *The Arkansas International*, through which they're gaining significant professional experience in editing and publishing.

The achievements of our students and graduates helped our program secure an important new donor this year for the creation of the J. Chester and Freda S. Johnson Graduate Fellowship, aimed at recruiting students to create and maintain diversity within our program. We successfully recruited our first Johnson Fellow, poet Hiba Tahir, who will join our program this fall.

Academic Program Assessment Report  
Graduate Certificate in Technical Writing and Public Rhetorics  
Director Adam Pope

### Student Learning Outcomes

Students in the graduate certificate program should be able to demonstrate the following skills upon their graduation from the program:

- Analyze the rhetorical situation of professional and public writing tasks through theory-driven audience research and analysis
- Produce high-quality texts that meet the audience, medium, and genre needs of a given writing task
- Oversee and manage large-scale writing projects in the professional and public writing workplace
- Utilize industry-standard technology and techniques to produce texts for online and paper-based audiences
- Compile a portfolio of professional-quality texts from their coursework as evidence of their skill in technical writing
- Analyze technical information and synthesize texts that relay that information to audiences of varying levels of skill and proficiency in the subject matter
- Demonstrate an understanding of and ability to write in a variety of styles
- Leverage user-centered usability testing and textual editing skills to tailor a text for specific audiences and their needs

### Assessment Tools

The Graduate Certificate program assesses students in two ways as they make their way towards graduation:

- End-of-semester assessment via capstone project
- End-of-certificate assessment via portfolio defense
- Student feedback on their own learning via end-of-course statements

### Portfolio Defense

Each certificate student is required to present and defend a professional portfolio before graduation. The defense is normally chaired by the program director and assessed by the director and two members of the Rhetoric and Composition faculty. Students present and defend a minimum of four of their projects from the certificate program, explaining why the pieces presented are effective and the choices behind their creation.

### End-of-semester Assessment

At the end of each semester, students are required to finish a capstone assignment for each major course. These capstone assignments are designed to be candidates for the final portfolio defense and to test students' ability to apply the content of the course in a professional setting. Through these end-of-semester submissions faculty in the program are able to check student's progress towards the certificate and offer guidance when necessary.

### **End of Course Assessments**

Students are asked to self-report on their progress and achievements from each course as they make their way through the certificate. This feedback covers what students feel they have learned, what they would like to know more about, and what they feel they didn't feel as confident in.

### **Use of Assessment Results**

This year, results from the annual assessment have been used to alter the peer feedback approach for the online courses. Previously, the program had used Eli Review as a platform for managing peer feedback, but the heavy focus on peer feedback with less interaction with the professor was identified by students in the end of course statements as well as any ongoing instructor assessment as a weakness in the approach. This year, the program has swapped away from Eli Review to solve this issue.

In addition, student feedback over the past few years has identified a few coverage gaps in the Writing for Online Audiences course, ENGL 5523. To address this coverage gap, the course will be reworked this fall to include a comprehensive focus on social media throughout, a swap from Drupal to Wordpress content management, and a greater focus on data analytics as part of website curation.