

Major/Program: English Department

ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Fall 2017-Spring 2018

What are the student learning outcomes in the major/program?

The Bachelor of Arts in English degree program educates students in the history, linguistics, aesthetics, and analysis of literature in the English language.

The Department of English also offers a substantial program in writing, including creative writing, professional writing, and expository writing. The Department regularly offers courses in the full range of English and American literary studies, including the diverse groups that make up our literary culture.

Students are given a grounding in close critical reading, integrating such reading within an analytical essay. They are also exposed to the breadth of literary writing within the English language across diverse genres and periods.

Student learning outcomes:

1. Students will develop a wide knowledge of the history and traditions of literature written in the English language and an appreciation for the diverse cultures and backgrounds that contribute to the production of literature in English.
2. Students will learn critical and analytical thinking skills, especially close reading skills.
3. Students will learn how to comprehend and produce contextually informed arguments about literature.
4. Students will learn to write and communicate clearly and effectively.

Which outcome(s) did you assess this academic year?

We assessed goals 2 and 4 in keeping with our four-year continuous assessment cycle. (See above)

How did you assess the learning outcomes this academic year?

1. We performed a class assessment of W231, Professional Writing Skills.
2. We performed our continuous assessment of W130/W131.
3. We surveyed our graduates for the last six years to find out about their positions and what they want to learn about in more detail.

Our departmental plan is to have yearly assessment of Professional Writing, Composition, and Literature courses.

We also completed our formal departmental assessment this year, so we looked at our course numbers, curriculum, and faculty expertise in detail in that document.

Please **summarize the data** you have collected this academic year.

1. In W231, we focused on three outcomes. 1. Students should show an awareness of audience. 2. Students should communicate in a clear, efficient style. 3. Students should use the correct business format. To assess the outcomes, students in seven W231 courses were given the same assignment, and those were collected and analyzed by the Director of Professional Writing. We ranked the three attributes on a 1-5 scale for the submitted assignments. For example, with the first attribute, 5 signals all of the formatting is correct and a 1 signals that it is not correct at all. The following are the results: Audience Awareness: 3.39, Style: 3.29, Correct Business Format: 3.60.

2. In 2017, the writing program responded to a decline in enrollments in the first of our two semester First Year Writing Program sequence W130 by switching from a directed self-placement instrument to administering an essay to be scored by two faculty on a rotating basis. We discussed the prompt, a short rhetorical analysis of an op-ed length article, and looked at sample essays to arrive at a shared sense of what features of the writing would indicate readiness for W131 and which would suggest the need for the two semesters. In the first year and a half of implementation, we feel that the numbers of students placing in W130—about 55%--has returned to what the levels that we think is appropriate for our students.

3. Our survey of the English graduate for the last six years was enlightening. They work in a wide variety of fields. The most common suggestion for the department is to provide more courses on technical writing and publishing.

Please **describe any programmatic changes you have made or are planning to make based on the data you have collected (action steps).**

1. We are planning to have W231 teachers stress the format of the documents more than they do currently, and we will continue our assessment of these programs. The assignments from one teacher scored significantly lower than that of the other teachers, so we will discuss the results with the teacher so that she can improve.

2. In this coming year, we will be taking another look at our placements by having a couple of rounds of group evaluation of essays that have been placed for the Fall semester to examine and refine our criteria. We will also look at data such as grades and DWF rates to assess the effectiveness of the placement.

We will be discussing ways to help students make better use of feedback, both from peers and instructors, in our writing classes.

3. We are planning to offer our course on Literary Editing and Publishing in a future semester as well as more courses in creative writing. We are also discussing adding a more advanced course in professional writing.

1-3 Group Action: we have decided on some departmental actions steps that hopefully will help some global issues students have expressed formally on the senior reviews and informally during office conversations.

-- Students have been confused about how to find a job in their field. We have added a job day to our capstone course and have invited some professionals to come talk to the students.

-- We have also added a preparation/jobs day to the Fall and Spring semesters to be open all English majors/minors.

-- For this current year, Katherine Gustafson and George Bodmer will assess L390, "Children's Literature," a high enrollment course that runs every semester. By analyzing student final exams, Drs. Bodmer and Gustafson will be able to determine the success of key course goals and brainstorm innovations to improve student outcomes.

Please report on the progress of your **action steps** reported in 2016-2017. See [Assessment Results](#) for your previous unit reports.

1. We have seen some small growth in our department, but we are not sure if it is based on our outreach efforts yet.
2. The student honors society has been much more active, and the students have been put in touch with community events.