

**Undergraduate Program Assessed:**  
**B.A. in English**  
**Prepared by**  
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## **ENGLISH DEPARTMENT UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

### **Introduction**

To assess the effectiveness of its undergraduate program in meeting its stated mission, goals, and objectives, the Department of English proposes to conduct an outcomes assessment as described in this proposal. The assessment will be an integral part of the continuing efforts to review our curriculum, enhance the quality of instruction, and improve the overall educational experience of our undergraduate graduate students. The assessment effort will be coordinated by Ravi Sheorey, who will work closely with members of the department's Assessment Committee (Robert Mayer, Denise Tillery, and undergraduate advisor Jules Emig, members) and members of the English Department faculty, especially the Department Head and the Associate Head.

The undergraduate program in the English Department leads to a Bachelor of Arts in English, with options in literature (the traditional English major which focuses on British and American literature), creative writing, technical writing, film, and secondary education teaching certification. Although the specifics of these degree options differ from one another in some respects, the assessment plan described below is intended to apply to all the students in the undergraduate program.

This proposal specifies the mission of the department, goals and objectives, desired student skills and outcomes, assessment methodology, and methods of data analysis.

### **Mission**

The English Department seeks to provide students with an opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of English language and literature and to critically analyze literary texts as works of art and as reflections of the cultural and social contexts in which they are produced. While the study of language and literature is at the core of English as a discipline, the English degree program also seeks to provide students an opportunity to explore the study of film, technical and business writing, and creative writing -- all of which have expanded our understanding of the ways in which words and images make an impact on our lives.

Students seeking the B.A. degree in English are prepared to fill positions such as teaching at the secondary school level; technical writing, editing, creative writing; others use their degree as a stepping stone to pursue graduate programs in law or business; still others pursue careers in marketing, publishing, and human services.

### **Program Goals and Objectives**

The major educational objective of the English undergraduate programs is to provide quality instruction that familiarizes the students with the literary works which shape our cultural heritage, but also develops their abilities to speak and write effectively, think analytically and critically, and consider various points of view when dealing with people and ideas. The English Department, then, seeks to develop in students the capacity to make balanced critical judgments and the ability to write logically, coherently, and persuasively--skills essential to success in a variety of disciplines for which a major in English provides excellent preparation, including law, administration, business, and teaching. Among the more specific objectives of the program are the following:

- X Prepare students for varied careers associated with the study of language and literature, technical writing, creative writing, film, and teaching.
- X Acquaint students with and help them appreciate and interpret the achievements of Western literature, especially American and British.
- X Assist students in developing skills to critically analyze texts and to write about them with clarity, precision, and insight.

- X Help students master analytical, imaginative, and communication skills that can be used in a wide range of employment possibilities.

### **Desired Student Outcomes**

The desired student outcomes listed below are intended to reflect the broad program goals and objectives stated above. In order to succeed in their chosen professions after they complete their degree program, graduate students in English are expected to demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Demonstrate a broad understanding of literature, technical writing, creative writing, or film as a discipline.
2. Complete, in high percentages, all the requirements of their degree programs in a timely manner.
3. Be able to compete and find acceptance into a graduate or professional school for further education or find employment upon completion of the degree program (including secondary school teaching positions, if appropriate).

In addition to these competencies, the undergraduate program in English hopes that the students will express satisfaction with the program as follows:

4. Display satisfaction with their educational experience in the English Department's Bachelor of Arts degree program.
5. Display satisfaction with their undergraduate educational experience in the English Department (as English majors) *after* they will have left the program for a period of 2 to 3 years.

### **Assessment Methodology**

To ensure an accurate and thorough assessment of the English undergraduate graduate program, we will use both quantitative and qualitative data. Some of the assessment will require the using of external personnel; others will essentially be internal assessments.

- X *Graduation Rates*: An on-going tally will be kept to record the number of students entering the program and successfully completing it (within an average of 4.5 years). The results of these quantitative measurements will be summarized annually (outcome 2).
- X *Exit Survey*: We will administer an exit survey to all the graduating students to obtain their views on the curriculum, advising, instruction, job placement, and future plans. All graduating students will be asked to complete a standard questionnaire and a sample of graduating students will be provided a confidential forum to make additional comments about the program--comments which will not be part of the exit interview record. These interviews will be conducted by the member of the faculty or a "senior" graduate student (outcomes 3, 4, and 5).
- X *Student Publications & Awards*: A list of publications, conference or other presentations, and any awards or scholarships won by the students for their school-related work will be prepared and reported (outcomes 2).
- X *[External] Evaluation of Students' Mastery of Written Communication and Content*: Graduating English majors will be requested to volunteer to submit terms papers written during their senior year, and a randomly-selected set of these papers will be evaluated by two faculty members from peer institutions (outcome 1).

- X *Alumni Survey:* We will design, draft, and distribute a survey to a selected sample of our program alumni to find out how their program of study and the faculty prepared them for life in the workplace and/or for their intellectual and social development. (outcome 5).
- X *Student Participation:* The Undergraduate Advisor will periodically meet with the graduating seniors to provide information about program outcomes assessment and to solicit their suggestions for improving the assessment process and their educational experiences (outcome 4)

### **Timelines**

- X The internal review measures (graduation rates, exit survey, student awards, student participation, external reviews of student writing ) will be implemented by the Spring semester, 2002, and will be reported on an annual basis.
- X The Alumni Survey will be conducted, respectively, during the spring semester, 2002 (of students who graduated in 1999 and 2000 ) and will be conducted every three years.

### **Data Analysis**

The Assessment Coordinator, with the assistance of the members of the department's Assessment Committee and Assessment graduate assistant, will collect and analyze the data and measure outcomes as specified above. In cases which call for qualitative analyses, representative remarks and suggestions will be included in the Outcomes Assessment Report. A variety of visual aids (graphs, charts, tables, etc, as appropriate.) and appendices (e.g., surveys) will be used to illustrate the results.

### **Feedback**

Results will be initially discussed by the Department's Assessment Committee, after which they will be shared with the English Department faculty and the English all of whom will be requested to provide feedback and suggestions. A final report will be prepared and submitted to the Department Head, who will have the ultimate responsibility to initiate any changes in the undergraduate program. As required, the final report will also be submitted to the Office of University Assessment through the Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences .

### **Proposed Budget**

The estimated budget for each Academic Year will be submitted by the deadlines set by the University Assessment Office.