

Department of English
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The following table shows the assessment methods used and the number of individuals assessed for the B.A. degree program in the Department of English:

Degree Program Assessed	Assessment Methods	Number of Individuals Assessed
Bachelor of Arts	Survey of graduating seniors	25
	Alumni survey (Class of 2002)	25

ABSTRACTED ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

The *English Department Senior Survey* is designed to assess graduating seniors= perceptions of the following aspects of the degree program:

- X Degree of knowledge and skills acquired
- X Overall quality of the degree program
- X Strengths and weaknesses of the English curriculum
- X Strengths and weaknesses of instruction and advising
- X Strengths and weaknesses of the English Department program as a whole

KEY FINDINGS

The major findings of the outcomes assessment are summarized below. Both quantitative and qualitative findings are reported to provide as complete an assessment as possible.

Degree of knowledge and skills acquired. Students (N = 25 or a little over 45% of the graduating seniors) who responded to the survey gave the following ratings on a scale ranging from ALow" improvement (= 1) to AHigh" improvement (= 5) to the knowledge/skills they felt they had acquired during their enrollment in the degree program:

SKILL	FREQUENCIES					MEAN
	1 (<i>low</i>)	2	3	4	5 (<i>high</i>)	
a. Writing about literature:	0	1	6	7	11	4.12
b. Critical/analytical reading:	0	1	6	10	8	4.00
d. Analyzing/interpreting texts:	0	0	5	9	11	4.24
e. Appreciation of literature:	1	0	4	3	17	4.40
f. Communication skills:	1	2	7	5	10	3.84

Overall Quality of the Degree Program. On a scale of 1 to 5 (the latter number indicating a higher quality), survey participants gave an average rating of 4.16 to the overall quality of the department=s program, a rating slightly higher than that given by the students in 2002. As in the past years, the respondents overwhelming indicated that they would recommend the English program at OSU to potential English majors. Major reasons cited for this recommendation are expressed in the following [sample] comments: "Very qualified instructors, variety of course work, small classes, great discussions, interesting visiting readers;" ". . . a solid program with an intelligent driven and respected faculty;" "I have found my time here fulfilling, beneficial, and valuable." Overall, the students also expressed a great deal of satisfaction with their "overall academic experience in the

English Department,” including the opportunity to study “under professors who actively engage their students. . . and promote collaborative learning,” and gain valuable skills like the ability to critically analyze a piece of writing to write clearly and effectively—two of the major outcomes of their degree program.

Most and Least Valuable Courses. While the students expressed satisfaction with the overall curriculum, they mentioned certain courses to be “most” valuable and some to be “least” valuable. Among the courses they found most valuable, students mentioned literature classes (especially American literature), survey courses, classes taught by certain professors in the department, and single author courses like the one on Shakespeare. Among the least valuable courses were those taught by some of the professors, some of the literature courses (including some of the American literature courses), courses on criticism, some of the film classes, and History of the English Language. Students suggested that certain courses should be added to the curriculum such as more single author courses, popular fiction, film courses, world literature courses, and a class that would examine the Bible as literature.

Other Assessments of the English Degree Program. On a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), students gave the following ratings to some of the other aspects of the degree program (N = 25); some students did not answer all the questions:

ITEM	FREQUENCIES					MEAN
	1 (low)	2	3	4	5 (high)	
a. Overall program quality:	0	1	3	12	9	4.16
b. Quality of instruction:	0	1	3	14	7	4.08
d. Faculty access:	0	0	3	6	16	4.52
e. Grading consistency:	0	2	2	11	10	4.16
f. Advising:	0	3	1	2	19	4.48

English majors clearly appreciate the accessibility and friendliness of the department’s faculty. In turn, they also rate the overall quality of instruction to be high (M = 4.08), and a majority of the respondents considers grading standards of the English faculty to be fair and consistent (M = 4.16). Students gave their highest rating to faculty access (M = 4.52) and academic advising (M = 4.48), praising the academic advisor for his patience and friendliness.

ALUMNI SURVEY

The English Department participated in the 2004 OSU Undergraduate Program Alumni Survey conducted by the OSU Bureau of Social Research, a survey that targeted alumni who graduated in 2002 (English alumni N = 25). The survey included 13 questions specifically geared toward alumni who had majored in English. Highlights of this survey are given below.

Ninety-six percent of the alumni who responded to the Alumni Survey indicated that they were “somewhat satisfied” (20%) or “very satisfied” (76%) with the quality of instruction they had received in their major, and by the same percentages they indicated their satisfaction with academic advising in the department. One hundred percent of the respondents found their interactions with the English faculty “somewhat” (40%) or “very valuable” (60%). Among the most valuable courses indicated by the alumni, in descending order were the following: (Historical period courses (36%); special courses and workshop courses (24% each); and single author courses (12%). Among the skills gained during their education which were helpful in their job responsibilities, mention was made of the following (in descending order of the combined percentages of “somewhat” and “very helpful”): Writing skills (100%); critical reading analyzing/interpreting texts (96% each); communication/discussion skills (92%); and oral presentation skills (88%).

The alumni who responded also indicated that they would like to see the following courses added to the curriculum in light of the job they were holding at the time the survey was conducted: grammar and technical writing courses and a course in teaching English as a second language. Suggestions for improving the program included career development and job placement sessions; better labs and computers; and more writing, grammar, and workshop courses.

Instructional Changes Planned as a Result of Outcomes Assessment

Overall, both the graduating students and graduated alumni continue to express a fairly high degree of satisfaction with the undergraduate program offered by the English Department. The results of the English Department outcomes assessment are being shared with the English faculty. Assessment results will also be presented to and discussed by the Department's Curriculum Committee with a view to modifying the current curriculum, as needed, in improving the quality and effectiveness of the degree program.

In the meantime, we are pleased to report that, in response to the previous outcomes assessments, the department is in the process of making several changes to the curriculum, including adding single author and film courses and developing a career-oriented internship program in film (similar to that in technical writing). In addition, the Curriculum Committee is currently considering setting up a mechanism to direct students to appropriate career counseling services available on and off-campus. The department continues to attract students who wish to major in English, and graduating seniors who wish to pursue graduate studies continue to be accepted into prestigious graduate and professional schools.