

**English Department Assessment Plan
2002-2003**

<i>English Department Mission Statement</i>	<i>Program Intended Outcomes</i>	<i>Means of Program Assessment</i>	<i>Summary of Data Collected</i>	<i>Use of Results</i>
<p>The English Department provides a strong and diverse liberal arts education in literature and writing for majors, minors, and general education students</p> <p>Goal Statement: To provide courses, instruction, advising,</p>	<p>1. Graduates in English will compare favorably in their knowledge of literature with those students completing a similar program nationally.</p>	<p>1. The average score of the MFAT or GRE of graduating seniors will be at or near the 50th percentile compared to national results; no subscale score will be lower than the 30th percentile.¹</p>	<p>1. Six graduating seniors took the MFAT. We needed 5 for a statistically significant result. All students scored above the 50th percentile. Highest scores were in “Literature in English since 1945” and “American Literature to 1900; Lowest scores were on “British Literature 1660-1900.”</p>	<p>1. a. The English Department will create a plan to have more graduating seniors take the MFAT EXAM. b. For AY 2003-2004, the curriculum committee will examine course requirements to determine reasons for lower scores in certain areas.</p>

mentoring, and experiential opportunities for students in an atmosphere that encourages and supports free inquiry, critical thinking, creativity, and clear and honest communication.

2. Students will understand departmental and professional goals related to English study.

2. All English majors will evaluate the program as part of the English Department's exit interview.

2. 13 graduating seniors completed the exit interview. The rest the seniors were involved in student teaching across the state. It was difficult to make contact with them. On the whole, students' perception of the department was very favorable. We are still in the process of creating a statistical analysis of the data; our recommendations are based on a reading of each response.

2. Recommendations:

1. Analyze upper division (particularly 4000-level) courses for variety of subject matter and availability as well as faculty coverage. Make changes as necessary to ensure student accessibility to all areas of the department and field.

2. Faculty should develop a number of common, discipline-specific goals and objectives to promote continuity in the various emphases. Attention should be paid to all courses, beginning with specialized composition courses and introductory requirements such as 2510 Critical Introduction to Poetry and 2800 Critical Methods, and ending with 4000-level capstone courses.

3. Expand and develop avenues for supporting faculty publishing and professional endeavors.

4. Similarly, the department should continue developing opportunities for student/faculty mentoring in professional publishing and presenting through Sigma Tau Delta and other organizations.

5. Fine-tune the instrument and conduct statistical analysis.

6. Find ways in which student teachers can

¹ Major field Achievement Test (ETS) . For means of program assessment, I suggest requiring test of graduating seniors every third year.

3. Students will demonstrate a capacity to create diverse texts that reflect the program's mission statement and goals relative to critical thinking and clear and honest communication.

3.a. A committee of 4000-level instructors will review random samples of papers written in capstone courses offered during the academic year.
3.b. English Department faculty from institutions comparable to SUU will assess random samples of papers written in 4000-level (capstone) courses.

3.a. The 4000-level Literature Assessment Committee for Southern Utah University met on Tuesday, August 26 and reviewed eight papers randomly selected from the department's four capstone literature courses taught this last Spring 2003: English 4610 (Native American Literature), English 4200 (Literary Criticism), English 4740 (Shakespeare), and English 4640 (Defining National Identity- Modern Poetry). Two papers were selected from each class. The review was conducted by Professors Pat Matteson (American literature), Julie Simon (director of the SUU Writing Center), and Danielle Dubrasky (Creative Writing). We agreed that among the eight papers, half were of sufficient quality that the writers were ready to apply for graduate school and this because of their strong theses, the strength of their organizational strategies, the quantity and quality of the concrete detail they mustered for evidence to support their theses, and their skill in conducting an academic argument. The top four ranked were very well turned out in terms of coherent academic organization; they were persuasive and scholarly, and provided appropriate evidence using Modern Language Association (MLA) citations and Works Cited. While it needs mechanical editing, the best paper maybe publishable because it addresses a topic not already discussed in critical journals, the character of Paris in Shakespeare's play Romeo and Juliet.

Among the four remaining papers, organization and theses, were noticeably weaker. These papers tended to a more narrative or listing strategy to serve as

3.
a. The department should tighten our advising and curriculum programs so that creative writing majors are required to take at least two 3000-level literature classes before they are allowed to take a 4000 capstone class. We should put structural barriers in place to prevent all students from taking capstone classes before they have taken two 3000 classes. Yet we must make this requirement without jeopardizing the enrollments in our capstone classes.

b. We considered that some students might want to take an English class that focuses on ethnic writing and so jump at the chance to take one of two capstone courses before they have taken sufficient 3000-level classes. We offer only two in the program: Engl. 4610- Native American Literature (offered Spring semesters only) and our Major Authors 4640-Engl. Woolf and Morrison (offered only every other year). One way to resolve this is to offer another ethnic literature class at the 2000 level, such as "Introduction to Ethnic Literature." This strategy would also strengthen and support our program's coverage of diversity.
c. To support students in writing about literature and to strengthen our concerns about rhetorical weaknesses in their writing, we should require of English majors and minors that they take English 2010 theme-based class, "Writing about Literature." Currently there is no such class offered. In 3000- and 4000-level classes teachers should strengthen their

4. In English, Secondary Teaching Emphasis, students will demonstrate knowledge of methodology in teaching composition, grammar, and literature,

4. Secondary teaching majors will score favorably on the PRAXIS content area exam and on the PLT methodology exam before entering into student teaching.²

4. The Education Department has provided the English Department with English major scores. English majors score well above the cutoff score for content area knowledge

4. Continue to monitor PRAXIS scores of English Secondary Education majors.

² Required by the Education Department. The English Department will receive results of these tests.

5. In creative writing, students will be capable of writing a creative work acceptable for publication or admission into graduate school.

5. Create writing students will submit senior portfolios that comprise a collection of their work while in the program. Portfolios will be evaluated by departmental and outside creative writing faculty.

5. The course assessed was English 4080, Advanced Fiction Writing, Six samples from the course were chosen randomly, three of which were stories written in the genre of fantasy. This course was assessed using both an outside reader and internal reviews. The outside reader was Professor Bruce Jorgensen of Brigham Young University; he has taught a comparable fiction course. The internal reviews were conducted by two assistant professors of creative writing-- Professor Danielle Dubrasky and Professor Todd Petersen.

The stories that the committee agreed were the strongest in terms of voice and scene were ranked lower by the instructor than the weaker stories. This ranking seemed to be a reflection of a problem that was consistent with all of the stories--they were poorly edited. The outside reader noted that the best edited story was the one he considered the weakest narrative. He then commented, "I let voice, story, and world outweigh editing in my overall ranking." This seemed to be the criteria of the rest of the committee. In contrast, the instructor's syllabus emphasized, correctly, the professional presentation of the stories. This could explain why the instructor ranked a story that was well-edited over stories that were not, even if the latter were stronger narratives.

An important observation made by the committee was that considering these stories were a summation of a creative writing education, some students had not shown considerable progression in their writing. These students seemed to resist changing or developing their writing toward a more sophisticated

5.
a. Create a philosophy of the creative writing program that would help students to keep in mind the quality of their writing as they continue through the program. This goal would be implemented by introducing common texts and writing assignments in English 2060, Introduction to Creative Writing, that would reflect this philosophy and educate students on a standard against which they should assess their own writing. The curriculum of English 2060 is set up with this idea in mind, but with common readings students can carry over basic criteria of quality into subsequent classes.

b. Create a stronger relationship between reading and writing, so that the students look at readings as a way to understand the craft of a writer. This goal will be accomplished by requiring all creative writing majors to take a 4000 level literature course.

c. Emphasize the importance of careful editing, copy editing, and proofreading, and of submitting work in a professional format. This goal will be accomplished by introducing a 3000 level editing and production class that will teach students editing skills and the publication process. This class is already in the catalogue and will be taught Spring Semester, 2004.

6. Dependent upon funding, students will learn in a variety of experiential circumstances such as course assistants, reading series assistants, interns, writing center tutors, and literary magazine editors.

6. An English Department committee will conduct a self-study to determine means of evaluating experiential learning in the Department. This evaluation will include Writing Center tutors.

6. Writing Center tutors were evaluated by the students they tutored and by the director of the Writing Center. All tutors receive high marks from students. We are looking at a more reliable instrument to evaluate tutors, however. Students tend to be so effusive with their evaluations that we would like to fine-tune the instrument so that we could identify any problem areas. We did not evaluate our student workers otherwise.

**6.
a. Fine-tune evaluative instrument for Writing Center tutors.
b. Create instrument to evaluate student workers.**