

HSU Academic Department Reports – English September 30, 2008 - Program Prioritization

The departmental reports provide context for the academic programs administered by the department, and will be considered in conjunction with the program reports for final program ranking. This report is to be completed by September 30. Use 12-point Times New Roman with 1.5 line spacing.

I. Departmental History, Mission, and Goals

Mission and Vision Statement for the Department of English

The Department of English takes seriously its task of serving both the University at large through its courses and also preparing its majors to take their educated places among a variety of professions. We define our mission as teaching students the critical reading, thinking, and writing skills necessary to succeed in academia and throughout their chosen careers. In all of our classes, we strive to create the conditions that will encourage students, regardless of their majors, to work on these skills throughout their lives. Our goal is to motivate students to be critical thinkers, readers, and writers by imbuing them with strategies and confidence to grapple with ideas and the quest for excellence and perfection in their uses of language.

First of all, we make it a point to model good reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking. We introduce students to the great writers and intellectuals of our time and throughout history. We read elegant texts, analyze their attributes as well as the rhetorical choices made by authors, and the ways readers respond to literature. Secondly, we emphasize that communication is a social act and that for students to be comfortable in an academic community of readers and writers, they must become active participants.

We strive to produce students able to function as productive citizens in a democracy.

Department Goals

The current English major requires four core courses that set the tone and expectations required of a serious student of literature, language and writing. These courses introduce our majors to the vocabulary, research skills, concepts, and contemporary theory of the broader field of English. Students then choose a Pathway: literary studies; writing practices; English/language arts teaching. Regardless of the path the student chooses, he or she will complete a series of demanding courses leading to a senior-level, capstone course designed to support the student in compiling a portfolio of his/her work reflecting the student's depth of knowledge.

The English Department also sponsors special programs and opportunities to stretch student knowledge and experience. In addition to a student literary club, faculty mentors guide the student designed Toyon literary magazine, and participate in a Departmental fall conference introducing students to the world of scholarship and publication of research on a variety of topics. Students see first-hand that the literate community has high standards of inquiry, critical thinking, oral presentation skills, and wide reading.

Furthermore, English majors at Humboldt State work with faculty who are involved in the larger community, and students are encouraged to participate in service, as well. Students are given opportunities to tutor peers, international students, intern with faculty in classes, and volunteer in K-12 classrooms. Service activities demonstrate to students the rigors expected of them in the ‘real world.’

Testimony to our high standards and expectations are the successes of our graduates. Students with English degrees from Humboldt State successfully apply to top graduate schools for advanced degrees, are accepted to competitive teaching credential programs, and go on to satisfying careers and professions.

Observable, Measurable Outcomes

Students will be able to read their discipline as a text, locating the work of their chosen pathway in relationship to English Studies as a whole. Evidence of their success will be reflected in the portfolio of their work that they submit at the conclusion of the Capstone Course—English 490, which is evaluated by the entire faculty.

In particular, students will produce writing in a variety of genres that illustrates effective use of:

Concrete and sensory imagery; Citations and quotes; Literary and writing theory; Narrative accounts that use dialogue, action, character and plot development; Rhetorical strategies to inform, persuade and argue; Detailed attention to diction & syntax; Evidence drawn from research, analysis, observation & experience; Strategic choice of Standard/Academic English as well as other dialects; Focus, support and elaboration of concepts and theses; Organization, cohesion, and coherence; Aesthetic response and interpretation of a variety of media.

In addition, students will demonstrate depth and breadth of disciplinary knowledge by incorporating terms, theories, theorists, methods, and authors in an engaging manner in their writing and speaking products.

Students will analyze experiences and texts from several perspectives, exploring subjects in personal and general reflections, and demonstrating an awareness of their own writing process, strengths and weaknesses.

History

Twenty years ago, the Department of English had almost double the number of full-time, tenure track faculty. Four full time faculty taught courses in the Secondary English Education area, three faculty were Shakespeare and/or early English literature specialists, and most faculty had two areas of expertise. The Master of Arts in the Teaching of Writing was in its early childhood, and an Master of Arts in Literature followed the requirements and curriculum typical of Departments of English throughout the State. The department was robust and at the same time traditional—teaching the American and British canon often along chronological lines.

Now, however, the English Department has gone through several transformations to meet the needs of students today, changes in the field, demands of society and the community, and strengths in the overall Humboldt University campus.

Changes in the curriculum and focus

Currently, both the undergraduate and graduate programs have adjusted to changes in the field of English studies by taking a cultural studies approach to the discipline. In other words, instead of focusing on authors, genres, and time periods, we examine literature and writing through a series of lenses influenced by the cultures that originated them. In addition, we emphasize environmental and nature literature along with creative writing and non-fiction writing about the natural world and environmental issues. This approach is consistent with our on-going work in the arts and educational communities. Four examples are described below:

The Redwood Writing Project

The RWP was begun in 1978 by now retired professor, Tom Gage, and has been directed by Professor Susan Bennett from 1990 until 2003 when she assumed the Chair position of the English Department. The RWP continues today under the leadership of Sue McIntyre, lecturer, and Dr. Nikola Hobbel, assistant professor. The RWP is one of two hundred teacher professional development sites of the National Writing Project, and brings teachers from kindergarten through the university together to share research, methodology, and curricula on the teaching of writing. Each year, the RWP brings in several thousand dollars in grant money from both the Federal and California State Department of Educations.

Toyon

The English Department literary magazine celebrated its fiftieth birthday two years ago. Currently, the **Toyon**, is a well-respected, student edited literary magazine with submissions from all over the country. Jim Dodge has been the faculty advisor of the **Toyon** since his appointment as a full time faculty at HSU.

The Book of the Year

During this five-year period, we have been collaborating with College of the Redwoods in sponsoring a Book of the Year selection. Each year over the past five, we have added events and activities which have attracted community members, students from majors across the campus, and staff and faculty to share in a literary experience.

FESCUE

FESCUE (the Fall English Studies Conference Uniting Educators) is the brainchild of Professor Hobbel and is a yearly conference for students, faculty, K-12 teachers from surrounding districts that promotes the theme of diversity and social justice through workshops, panels, and guest speakers.

Faculty

As was mentioned earlier, we have had a precipitous drop in the number of full-time faculty. On the other hand, the long-time faculty we have left plus the hiring of three new faculty in the past five years have infused our Department with energy, new areas of expertise, and optimism. Each of our pathways has benefited from a new hire: Literary Studies—Janet Winston; Writing Practices—Corey Lewis; Secondary Education—Nikola Hobbel. As the last of our FERP faculty retire this year, and two additional members enter the program, we will have a need for additional faculty to carry on the business of the Department and help it to evolve into the 21st Century.

II. Departmental Faculty and Staff

English Dept Instructors -- AY Average Count of Appointments facpos_ENGL report generated: 22-FEB-08						
Appt Category	AY 02/03	AY 03/04	AY 04/05	AY 05/06	AY 06/07	AY 07/08
Lecturer	14	14	14	12	13	12
Assist Prof	3	2	2	3	2	2
Assoc Prof	4	4	5	5	7	4
Professor	7	8	6	7	6	7
Teach Assoc	7	5	5	4	2	6
Volunteer	2	1	4	1	1	1
Total	37	34	35	32	31	31

English AY average FTEF (time base totals) facpos_ENGL report generated: 22-FEB-08						
Appt Category	AY 02/03	AY 03/04	AY 04/05	AY 05/06	AY 06/07	AY 07/08
Lecturer	9.25	8.15	9.21	8.14	8.97	8.54
Assist Prof	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00
Assoc Prof	3.50	4.00	4.50	5.00	7.00	4.00
Professor	7.00	7.62	5.25	6.50	5.00	6.50
Teach Assoc	1.40	1.00	.97	.70	.40	1.10
Volunteer	.50	.14	.47	.05	.03	.12
Total	24.65	22.90	22.39	23.39	23.40	22.25

English department release/assigned time facpos_ENGL report generated: 22-FEB-08						
Assignment Description	AY 02/03	AY 03/04	AY 04/05	AY 05/06	AY 06/07	AY 07/08
Excess Enrollment (=>75)	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.03
New Preparations	.00	.00	.00	.00	.26	.00
Course or Supervision Overload	.00	.10	.00	.00	.00	.00
Non-Traditional Instruction	.00	.10	.00	.00	.00	.00
In-serv Training for K-12 pers	.50	.37	.33	.00	.07	.00
Special Instr Programs	.30	.20	.00	.00	.00	.00
Instr Experimt Innov/Research	.00	.10	.00	.00	.00	.00
Instr-Related Services	.20	.20	.20	.20	.30	.20
Advising Responsibilities	.20	.20	.40	.30	.20	.20
Instr-Related Comm Assignmts	.60	.50	.43	.53	.10	.33
Curricular Planning or Studies	.00	.00	.00	.10	.00	.00
Dept Chair AY, Leaders/Dir.	.53	.53	.53	.73	.93	.90
Dept Chair - 12mo	.20	.20	.20	.20	.20	.20

Proj/Prog Leaders, Dir., Coord	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.20
Other State Funds	.00	.00	.00	.16	.00	.00
Grant: Redwood Projects	.00	.00	.00	.23	.30	.20
Grant: GWPE	.20	.00	.00	.20	.20	.20
Grant: Academic	.00	.00	.00	.00	.10	.00
Total	2.73	2.50	2.09	2.65	2.65	2.45

Personnel (At least .5 FTE)

Name	Position	Description of Specialty and Key Contributions (no more than 100 words per person)
Christina Accomando	Professor	Specializes in Multi-Ethnic American Literature. Current research and scholarship interests: African-American literature; constructions of race, gender and slavery; 19 th -and 20 th -century U.S. legal discourse; Black feminist legal theory.
Marianne Ahokas	Lecturer	Specializes in American Literature; Women's literature; composition.
Nicolette Amann	Lecturer	Specializes in composition, remediation
Susan Bennett	Professor, Dept. Chair	Specializes in English Education. Current research and scholarly interests: Composition theory; school reform; teacher preparation; response to literature; Redwood Writing Project.
Arlene Britt	Admin. Support	Oversees day-to-day departmental operations including reception. Provides administrative support to the Graduate Program.
Mary Ann Creadon	Assoc. Professor	Specializes in Literary Theory. Current research and scholarly interests: English Renaissance literature; Romantic and Victorian English literature; Ecocriticism; Literature and the Environment, and regional literature
Barbara Curiel	Professor	Specializes in American Ethnic Literature and Creative Writing. Current research and scholarly interests: Chicano poetry and literature; Post national American Studies; Multicultural and Ethnic Studies; Women's Studies.
Barry Dalsant	Professor, FERP	Specializes in 18 th -century British Literature. Current research and scholarly interests: 18 th -century fiction, especially non-canonical women writers; critical theory; culture theory; computer applications in the arts and humanities.
Jim Dodge	Professor	Specializes in Creative Writing. Current research and writing projects: screenplay format as "text"; contemporary American poetry, particularly Jack Gilbert and Gary Snyder; mystery novel; nature writing.
Kathleen Doty	Professor	Specializes in Linguistics; 20 th -century Literature. Current research and scholarly interests: linguistic analysis of literature; early 20 th -century literature; contemporary Australian literature; Early American English.
Tracy Duckart	Lecturer,	Acting Director of Composition; composition theory, pedagogy, and curriculum.
Michael Eldridge	Professor. Graduate Coordinator	Specializes in postcolonial studies, critical theory, disciplinary history; teaches core curriculum and courses in postcolonial literature, including Caribbean, Native American, Arabic, and Black British literature.

Ellen Givins	Lecturer	Specializes in creative writing; children's literature, and writing for teachers.
Barbara Goldberg	Lecturer,	Specializes in composition studies; tutoring strategies; writing lab and center administration.
Nikola Hobbel	Asst. Professor	Specializes in English Education and Post-structural Analyses. Current research and scholarly interests: Racialized discourses in Teacher Education, Educational Policy Analysis, Young Adult Literature, academic literacy and Multicultural Pedagogies.
Corey Lewis	Asst. Professor	Specializes in Creative Writing and American Literature. Current research and scholarly interest: Nature Writing, Environmental Literature and Ecocriticism; Experiential Education, Service-Learning and civically engaged composition.
Russ McGaughey	Professor, FERP	Specializes in English Romanticism. Current research and scholarly interests: Feminist consciousness during the Renaissance, with especial emphasis on the influences of Machiavelli; compiling library of taped classroom lectures – Blake through Browning – and Shakespeare's plays.
Monika Newman	Admin. Support	Oversees general operation of the departmental office. Develops and maintains departmental budget; provides support with scheduling of classes and departmental personnel actions.
Jolien Olsen	Lecturer	Specializes in composition studies; remediation.
Terry Santos	Professor	Specializes in English as a Second Language. Current research and scholarly interests: Grammar; academic writing in English as a Second Language.
Suzanne Scott	Assoc. Professor	Specializes in Applied Linguistics. Current research and scholarly interest: teaching English as a second or foreign language; medical discourse; language and conflict.
David Stacey	Professor	Specializes in Rhetoric and Composition; Literary Theory; British fiction and poetry. Current research and scholarly interests: Kenneth Burke; web based teaching and writing projects; Summer Study in Oxford Program; "textual intervention"; future of English Studies.
Erin Sullivan	Lecturer	Specializes in composition, remediation; reading strategies.
Janet Winston	Assoc. Professor	Specializes in Cultural Studies; Postcolonial Studies; Gender/Sexuality Studies; British Modernism; Twentieth-Century Culture. Current research and scholarly interest: Critical race theory and "whiteness" studies; Postcolonial feminist theory; Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury; LGBTQ issues in higher education.

III. Recruitment and Retention

Describe any specific actions (other than HOP or similar standard efforts) the department has taken to recruit and/or retain students, particularly diversity students and/or students who are underrepresented in your discipline. What have been the results of those actions?

Throughout this report we have discussed our emphasis on diversity issues, FESCUE, Book of the Year, multi-cultural literature courses, and other topics and activities to make our department inclusive. In addition, we have a student literary club designed to give English majors a place to call 'home.' We have adjusted our advising procedures to insure student success and provide continuity. At this time we do not have the resources, human or financial to increase our efforts to attract a more diverse student body nor do we have the means to track our success.

IV. Learning, Curriculum, and Assessment.

List the student learning outcomes for your academic programs. Then for each learning outcome that has been assessed, provide a summary paragraph that includes the methodology and results of the assessment.

Outcome 1--Uses literary, linguistic, theoretical terminology meaningfully

Outcome 2--Writes effectively according to the conventions of Standard American English

Outcome 3--Displays organization, cohesion and coherence in written work.

Outcome 4--Understands and performs rhetorical strategies to inform, persuade, reflect, and argue.

Each year for the past five, we have used portfolio assessment to evaluate learning outcomes. After each assessment, as a Department, we discuss what worked and what we would like to change to improve our findings. , For example, last year we realized assessing 7 outcomes was overly ambitious. Therefore, for the academic year 07-08, we limited our evaluation to four outcomes; next year, we may choose just one outcome to analyze more deeply and we may try a different procedure for determining whether a student meets or exceeds expectations for this single SLO we choose. All Pathways share the same learning outcomes and are assessed through English 490 through a portfolio submission. Below is a description of that process.

All full time, ladder-track English Department faculty meet for four hours each semester to assess student progress in the major. Each portfolio submitted by graduating students enrolled in English 490 in the undergraduate English program is read by two faculty. Before each reading, we norm our responses by using portfolios from previous semesters. In addition, we have revised and improved the rubric after each semester. Every portfolio is scored by each reader on a scale from 1 being poor to 6, superior. Portfolios receiving a combined score of 8 are considered a pass.

Portfolios earning a 7 are read by a third reader and then given a fail or pass. When the scores from the two readers are more than one point apart, they are also reread by a third reader.

We discovered several things about our students and our program through this process:

- Overall, our students are meeting our expectations. Since we have instituted English 490 for graduates in all three pathways using portfolio assessment, approximately 90% of the submissions have passed. In addition, the vast majority of portfolios earned a combined score of 10.
- Students who did not pass usually had difficulties analyzing their work, their strengths, and weaknesses as readers and writers, and merely summarized their experiences as English majors. These students often, but not always, displayed a weak command over writing conventions.
- Many students noted that the Core Courses (120,220,225,320) contributed greatly to their understanding of complex concepts, their abilities to read critically, their command of academic written and spoken English, and their appreciation of literature and the English language.
- Most students used appropriate concrete examples from their experiences and the texts they had read, utilized numerous details in their essays, and were able to take into account multiple points of view in their analyses.
- Overall, student essays were well organized and employed appropriate writing strategies.

As mentioned above, for the 06-07 cycle, we experimented with 6 or 7 outcomes; this year we looked at 4 outcomes, and next year we plan to focus on one outcome. Most of us are familiar with holistic, rubric-driven assessments rather than observable learning outcomes as defined by the HSU assessment requirements. Therefore, we tried to keep as many variables constant each year until we became both comfortable and expert at designing and evaluating student achievement. Since we varied the number of outcomes between the two years, kept the same procedures, the same rubric, and asked the same questions, not surprisingly, we came up with the same conclusions. Next year, since we will be looking loosely at a single outcome, we plan to ask different questions which will lead us to a new set of data upon which to make decisions. The questions we plan to ask once we have decided on one of the outcomes from our rubric are:

- Are there differences in student performance based in individual Pathways? If so, what does that say about the strengths or weaknesses of that pathway in preparing students for that outcome?

- Are there differences in student performance based on gender? What needs to be addressed in the curriculum or instruction to address any differences?

Each year, the English Department is committed to looking at our program and ask probing questions to guaranteed that all of our majors are equally prepared to succeed in the study at Humboldt State they have chosen.

We recognize we need to continue to teach analytical skills in all of our classes regardless of topic. Although we focused on whether or not students passed the portfolio with a combined score of eight, we did not look carefully enough at the particular outcomes they were having difficulty with or which ones they were universally meeting. We now need to look carefully at each outcome and how it contributes to a passing, or to a superior score. We also need to see where the failing portfolios are showing the greatest weaknesses so that we can teach those skills more successfully. As we narrow our focus and refine our assessment skills and instruments, we intend to improve our ability to collect assessment data and interpret it carefully and accurately for the benefit of our students.