

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Department of English
Undergraduate B.A. Program in English
2013-2014**

Key Assessment Findings

Senior Comprehensive Examination

Format and evaluation. The undergraduate comprehensive examination in English consists of two sections completed over four hours on the same day. Section I includes objective and essay questions involving major authors and works, literary terms, historical backgrounds, literary periods, themes, and intellectual backgrounds. Section II presents a literary passage for close analysis (including scansion of verse), and two additional passages for comparison.

Examinations are written and evaluated by a committee of faculty chaired by the department's director of undergraduate studies, then voted on by the full department.

**UNDERGRADUATE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION RESULTS
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
AY 2010-2011 to AY 2013-2014**

| | Fail | | Pass | | High Pass | | Pass w/Honors | | TOTAL |
|--------------|----------|--------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | |
| AY2010-2011 | 1 | 4.00% | 20 | 80.00% | 4 | 16.00% | | 0.00% | 25 |
| AY2011-2012 | | 0.00% | 16 | 100.00% | | 0.00% | | 0.00% | 16 |
| AY2012-2013 | 2 | 8.70% | 17 | 73.91% | 4 | 17.39% | | 0.00% | 23 |
| AY2013-2014 | 1 | 4.00% | 23 | 92.00% | 1 | 4.00% | | 0.00% | 25 |
| TOTAL | 4 | 4.49% | 76 | 85.39% | 9 | 10.11% | 0 | 0.00% | 89 |

Note:

- 1) Milestone outcomes were included in the categories High Pass and Pass with Honors if these designations were explicitly indicated in the students' milestone record.
- 2) Category "High Pass" includes both "High Pass" and "Pass with distinction".
- 3) The count in this table is based on the exam outcomes of all attempts in an academic year.

Table of Results
Student Learning Assessment Rubric
Department of English
Senior Comprehensive Examination Results 2013-2014

| Trait | Level | | | | | | Mean | SD | Total N |
|---|-------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|------|------|---------|
| | Exceeding Expectations (3pts) | | Meeting Expectations (2pts) | | Below Expectations (1pt) | | | | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | | | |
| 1) Knowledge of Literary History | 1 | 4% | 23 | 92% | 1 | 4% | 2.00 | 0.29 | 25 |
| 2) Knowledge of Literary Terms | 1 | 4% | 23 | 92% | 1 | 4% | 2.00 | 0.29 | 25 |
| 3) Ability to Analyze Literary Texts Closely | 1 | 4% | 23 | 92% | 1 | 4% | 2.00 | 0.29 | 25 |
| 4) Ability to Write a Coherent and Well Documented Essay | 1 | 4% | 23 | 92% | 1 | 4% | 2.00 | 0.29 | 25 |

- Note: 1) The "N" represents the number of students at each level of performance for each trait.
2) The "%" represents the percentage of the number of students falling at the level performance for each trait against the total number of students.
3) The mean is the average of all scores across the levels within the trait.
4) The standard deviation (SD) is the measure of the variability of the data set, indicating how "spread out" these data are from the mean value.

In recent years, administration of the senior comprehensive examination has evolved into, effectively, a two-stage process. All seniors must sit for the exam during the Fall term. Evaluators may then require particular students to re-take, after advising, particular sections or more rarely the entire exam. This process has resulted in more consistent overall performance as well as a higher percentage of final passing grades.

Study groups and a scansion workshop have also improved preparation and performance.

**Senior Coordinating Seminar (Capstone)
Grade distribution, 2013-2014**

| | Fall 2013 | % | Spring 2014 | % |
|----|--------------|--------|----------------|--------|
| A | 6 | 23.08% | 11 | 42.31% |
| A- | 9 | 34.61% | 6 | 23.08% |
| B+ | 2 | 7.69% | 3 | 11.54% |
| B | 5 | 19.23% | 2 | 7.69% |
| B- | 1 | 3.85% | 1 | 3.85% |
| C+ | 1 | 3.85% | 2 | 7.69% |
| C | 1 | 3.85% | 1 | 3.85% |
| C- | 0 | | 0 | |
| D | 1 | 3.85% | 0 | |
| F | | | | |

The Senior Coordinating Seminar for English majors is a year-long experience in which each small group (maximum 11) remains together with the same instructor over two semesters. The first semester is devoted primarily to reading and discussing the works of a single author (or focused group of authors) in historical and aesthetic context. During the second semester, the group engages critical perspectives and each student completes a substantial research project.

During 2013-2014, three seminars were offered with 26 students total. From Fall to Spring semesters, 12 of the students improved their grades, while 5 made a lower grade and 9 performed at a consistent level over the academic year. These results are consistent with recent academic years and considered satisfactory by the faculty.

Curricular Improvements

The English department faculty are committed to maintaining and improving a quality undergraduate major focused on literary history and aesthetics.

The principal curricular issue facing the department at this point arises from an unanticipated consequence of the Freshman Year Experience. English has traditionally offered an array of courses at the 200-level, designed for non-majors as part of the Arts & Sciences distribution requirements; higher-level courses served majors and minors as well as students with developed interests in literature. The FYE, with heavy demand for instructors, has significantly limited our ability to staff the 200-level non-majors classes, many of which could not be scheduled during this and recent semesters. One result has

been a noticeable increase of non-majors in more advanced courses, seeking to fulfill general education requirements and, as a group, displaying lower levels of preparation, interest, or motivation. A related factor has been the establishment of the School of Business, which includes a literature requirement for its rapidly increasing undergraduate population and whose majors look for English courses to fulfill that requirement.

English faculty agree that these diverse populations in English literature classes bring in a welcome range of backgrounds, with many interested and engaged students who happen not to be in traditional literature or humanities programs. We welcome the opportunity to serve this population while also maintaining a high quality departmental major. The department has begun discussions of how best to combine these goals. These discussions are continuing.

Submitted by Glen M. Johnson
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