

Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements

Department of English

Undergraduate Program

Assessment Measures

The Department of English uses the following measures to assess departmental learning outcomes:

Grades, course evaluations and enrollment totals for capstone seminars
Grades, course evaluations and enrollment totals for intermediary courses
Grades, course evaluations and enrollment totals for gateway courses
Comprehensive Exam

Assessment Findings

Senior Seminar Discussion (Attachments ENG 431.xls, ENG 432.xls, Final Outcomes 1.xls):

The Department of English analyzed course grade, evaluation, and enrollment data in ENG 431 and ENG 432 for a five-year period (Fall 2008 through Fall 2012).

Satisfactory performance in Senior Seminar consists of a grade of C- or better. Over the last five academic years, enrollment remained between 16 and 25 students with no consistent pattern of variation from year to year. Enrollment in individual sections is capped at 10 to 12 students. We have 31 students enrolled for the Fall 2013 term, and are offering three sections. The Department considers maintaining quality to be critical in achieving our goals, and that requires a low faculty/student ratio. Student evaluations remain very positive for these courses.

The vast number of students in Senior Seminar display good to exceptional performance, with a five year average of a B+. Over the entire period, very few students failed the course (5). Given the rubrics as explained in the program statement, the data supports the conclusion that we are achieving our departmental goals for the undergraduate program.

Intermediary Course or Introductory Course Discussion (Attachments ENG331.xls, ENG332.xls & ENG 333.xls)

The Department of English analyzed course grades, evaluations, and enrollment data in our sequence of genre based Junior Intensive courses (ENG 331: Lyric, ENG 332: Drama and ENG 333: Narrative) for a five year period (Fall 2008 through Fall 2012). These courses are for English majors only and majors are required to take two of the three courses. During the period reviewed, enrollment and student evaluations fluctuated widely according to who was teaching the course. The average grade for students in the courses was relatively stable (B) during the entire period, with the exception of ENG 331 during Spring 2012, when the average grade dropped to 2.75.

Introductory Level Course Discussion (Attachments ENG231.XLS, ENG232.XLS, ENG 235.XLS & ENG236.XLS):

The Department of English analyzed course grade, evaluation, and enrollment data in ENG 231 (Survey of British Literature I), 232 (Survey of British Literature II), 235 (Survey American Literature I) and 236 (Survey American Literature II) for a five year period (Fall 2008 through Fall 2012).

The number of students enrolled in these courses, which functioned as service courses as well as gateway courses for English majors, was significantly higher than in any other courses offered by the Department. Enrollments in these courses stayed fairly consistent, though evaluations varied according to no particular patterns except who was teaching the course and evaluations were higher for ENG 231 and 232 during summer session.

Curricular Improvements

Over the last two years, review of data has led to faculty discussions, but not to radical changes. The overwhelming factor effecting student evaluation and other measurements from semester to semester concerns who is teaching a particular course. Discussions revealed that different instructors used very similar course formats and pedagogical approaches. While the Department makes every effort to place teachers in courses for which they are best suited, analysis of the data also revealed that evaluations of individual instructors remains consistent from course to course. In other word, instructors with high evaluations in one course tend to be given high evaluations no matter what they are teaching and those with low evaluations tend to be given low evaluations no matter what they are teaching. Since it is impossible for the highest rated instructors to teach all the courses, the Department groups instructors in similar fields (e.g., American literature or medieval literature) and employs teaching rotations. Each group stays in close contact, and discusses developments in particular courses and teaching strategies, with the hope that closer professional teaching relationships will improve all faculty members overall performance.