



Final Annual Report

Tennessee Tech University

President

Provost

College of Arts and Sciences

English

English MA



English M.A. Program Mission Statement

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Mission/Vision/Goal Statement

The English M.A. curriculum prepares its graduates for success in Ph.D. programs in English by increasing their knowledge of literary history and developing their skills in writing, literary analysis, and research; providing intensive training in writing and literary studies to help students excel as classroom teachers; preparing students for careers that demand advanced analytical and communication skills.



Student Learning Outcome 1 - Literary Knowledge

Define Goal

Students will demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge of literary history, theory, and pedagogy.

Intended Outcomes / Objectives



Student Learning Outcome 2 - English PhD Preparation

Define Goal

Students will be prepared for success in PhD programs in English.

Intended Outcomes / Objectives



 **Student Learning Outcome 3 - Graduate School Preparation**

Define Goal

Students will be prepared for success in other areas of advanced graduate education.

Intended Outcomes / Objectives

 **Student Learning Outcome 4 - Teaching Preparation**

Define Goal

Students will be prepared for careers in high schools and community colleges.

Intended Outcomes / Objectives

 **Student Learning Outcome 5 - Career Prep Outside Academe**

Define Goal

Students will be prepared for careers outside academe that require advanced analytical and communication skills.

Intended Outcomes / Objectives

 **Assessment: Graduation Rates**

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: Program Goal 1

Type of Tool:

Rationale

Tracking the graduate rate will aid the Department in determining the effectiveness of course offerings and advisement. The threshold for an M.A. program in good standing is 5 graduates a year. We should begin to show improvement with new concentrations in Creative Writing and Professional & Technical Communication starting in 2017-18, but did not yet reach 5 in 2016-17.



Academic Year	New students*	English M.A. degrees
2011-2012	4	5
2012-2013	3	3
2013-2014	3	4
2014-2015	3	4
2015-2016	5	3
2016-2017	3	4
2011-2017 total	21	23
2011-2016 annual average:	3.5	3.8

*Counts students in Fall plus any new entrants from prior Spring

Frequency of Assessment: Yearly

Assessment: Survey of TTU Graduating Students and Alumni

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: SLO 1, 2, 3, 4

Type of Tool: Survey

Rationale

Our most recent formal survey was an abysmal failure, yielding no usable information.

One of the improvement initiative items from our academic audit was to design and implement a better survey of recent graduates, to get good data on our most recent graduates, This will show some data by Spring 2018.

Anecdotally, indications are that students graduating from the Department's M.A. program have performed well. Three of nineteen post-2011 M.A. graduates are pursuing Ph.D. degrees in English—one each at Louisiana State University, University of Arizona, and University of Florida. Additionally, several current graduate students and recent graduates intend to apply to Ph.D. programs for fall 2017. Students who earned M.A. degrees since 2011 have presented papers at professional meetings and conferences, including the New Voices Graduate Student Conference at Georgia State University, the Mix Symposium on Comics in Columbus (OH), the Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900, the Tennessee Philological Association, the University of Florida's Conference on Comics and Graphic Novels,



and the Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference. One published an article in a well-respected academic journal, *Studies in the Novel*. Seven post-2011 graduates have taught either full-time or part-time at universities or community colleges, including TTU, University of Southern Mississippi, and Volunteer State Community College. Three graduates teach at the high-school level in Tennessee. One is a TTU academic advisor.

Frequency of Assessment: Annually

Assessments: Course-Embedded Assessments

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: SLO 1, 2, 3, 4

Type of Tool:

Rationale

Faculty assess student progress through different types of course-embedded assessments, such as seminar papers, annotated bibliographies, oral presentations, theses, project papers, and comprehensive exams. (All students in the MA program must take a written comprehensive examination emphasizing teaching methods/pedagogy and literary movements and/or critical theory.)

Frequency of Assessment: Each semester

M.A.-English Self-Study

Goal/ Outcome/ Objective: Goals 1, 2, and 3; Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4

Type of Tool: Other

Rationale

 2016_MA-English_Audit_Report-FINAL

 Self-Study (Fall 2011)

Frequency of Assessment: every 5 years

Results: Self-Study

Goal/Objective/Outcome Number: Program Goal 1, Program Goal 2

Results

Recommendations

The audit team makes the following Recommendations:



The development of a systematic process for program evaluation by faculty and students.

Increasing the availability of library resources in English/Literature (both books and databases) for faculty and graduate students.

The establishment of an external advisory committee whose members affiliated with sister institutions and/or private sector entities to enhance recruiting efforts.

To expand training opportunities in teaching for all graduate students in the program, not just the GTAs in the program.

Increasing university support to enable graduate students opportunities to present at and attend regional and national conferences.

Graduate program faculty engage in more frequent collaborative conversations about implementing innovative teaching strategies in graduate classes.

Attachments

 Response to M.A. audit final report

 TTU English MA Academic Auditor Team Report 2017



Results: Career Preparation

Goal/Objective/Outcome Number: SLO 1, 2, 3, 4

Results

The department made the initiation of an effective M.A. alumni survey one of our improvement initiatives in our academic audit, and we hope to show good data on this in next year's assessment report.

We have this anecdotal information. Via a general alumni survey in January 2016, we heard a lot of new stories about what our M.A. graduates had done with their degrees, outside of typical academic paths. One graduate, (M.A., 1996), reported a position as Director of Operations at a pharmaceutical company. He came to this in a roundabout way, but via a course that nevertheless showed how English training might function in building a corporate career. Having grown frustrated with limited prospects as an adjunct teaching basic writing, after having finished his M.A., David began working for the university alumni magazine. Through an article he was assigned to write, he became aware of and started to investigate corporate compliance procedures. In time, he recognized he had the skills to interpret syntactically dense government compliance procedures and communicate what was required



to others in a company. Work as a compliance officer led in time to a promotion, and ultimately an executive position in a field he had never imagined himself. Another M.A. grad (2006) reported being Communications Director for a Nonprofit Disabilities Research organization; another (2014) National Chess Education Consultant to the United States Chess Federation; yet another (2004) Legislative Auditor for the Comptroller of the Treasury of the State of Tennessee. Wrote this last M.A. graduate: "Though later I went back and obtained an accounting degree, I found that the skills I learned as an English major are far more valuable in my career. Each day, I research State and Federal law, contract agreements, and policy statements, and I spend a significant amount of time interviewing staff and management, drafting memos and audit reports, etc. The communication and drafting skills that I obtained as an English major are far more valuable than my ability to foot an accounting statement or process debits and credits. Sure, the accounting stuff was useful when I sat for the CPA exam, but I use my English degree every day in the office."

Attachments

No items to display.



Results: Employment as Instructors and Writers

Goal/Objective/Outcome Number: SLO 4

Results

Fifteen of the 38 recent MA graduates (2007-2015) have held instructor positions in English at Tennessee colleges or universities, including Tennessee Technological University, Nashville State Community College, Motlow State Community College, Volunteer State Community College, Roane State Community College, Daymar Institute, and Miller-Motte Tech College. Three graduates teach English at public schools in Tennessee.

Three recent graduates are freelance writers.

Attachments

No items to display.



Modification: Fast-Track

Goal/Objective/Outcome Number: Program goals 1, 2, 3, and 4

Program Changes and Actions due to Results

Also in response to recommendations that we graduate more students from our M.A. in English, the department began a Fast-Track program in 2017.



The Fast Track program is designed to enable undergraduates to accumulate up to six credit hours of graduate coursework, to satisfy both undergraduate and graduate degree requirements, while still pursuing their undergraduate degree. The coursework will enable an efficient graduate program transition with the potential for accelerated completion. The courses must be taken at Tennessee Tech University. (Students who reach the number of credits required for their undergraduate degrees can also take additional courses for graduate credit before graduation, thus potentially accelerating their M.A. program even more.)

The minimum admission requirements for participating in the English Fast Track Program are:

- Enrollment as a TTU undergraduate English major with at least 90 hours of completed courses within the program of study;
- Completion of ENGL 3000;
- Overall GPA of 3.25 or better; GPA in 3000-level and above English coursework of 3.5 or better;
- Recommendation from the student's undergraduate advisor;
- Course approval from course professor and graduate faculty advisor;
- In addition to the requirements for admission to the B.A./M.A. Fast Track program, all requirements for admission to the graduate program must also be met upon graduation. Meeting these minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to the graduate program.

Link to Assessment

Link to Flight Plan:



Modification: New M.A. concentrations

Goal/Objective/Outcome Number: Program goals 4 and 5

Program Changes and Actions due to Results

The department has received recommendations in recent years from a variety of different sources that it should enlarge its graduate program. We have spent a number of years on the THEC low-performing program list, failing to graduate an average of five students from our M.A. program over a five-year period. As well, the academic audit of our program in 2011-12 had as its last unfulfilled recommendation "that the department take action to enlarge their graduate program."

More serious efforts to engage these recommendations and build our program began with the arrival of a new department chair in Fall 2014. A new Master's program brochure, designed the previous year, was printed and distributed, beginning in Fall 2014. Discussion of new programs began in 2015 and two new M.A. concentrations, in Creative Writing and in Professional and Technical Communication, have now been



developed and adopted to begin in Fall 2017. These create a better fit between our Master's program, which formerly offered only a traditional literature-based degree concentration, and our undergraduate program, which has among its options concentrations in Professional Communication and Writing/Language/Genre in addition to Literature.

It is yet too early to see if this will have the desired effect on increasing our M.A. program graduation rates; we were not able to begin advertising the new programs until this summer, at a point when it was too late to have an effect on enrollment for this Fall. The number of Graduate Assistantships is now at 7, and the total number of students active in the program (including two provisionally admitted students and a readmitted student at the thesis stage) is now 10, both numbers as high or higher than they have been since the arrival of our new Chair. One of the provisional admits has stated an intention to pursue the Creative Writing concentration, having come from a B.A. in Education. We are hoping this will be the first of many additional students, perhaps from various areas of preparation, pursuing our new M.A. program offerings.

Link to Assessment

Link to Flight Plan: