

## Institutional Effectiveness Report 2019-20

**Program:** English BA

**College and Department:** College of Arts & Science - English

**Contact:** Linda Null

**Mission:** The English BA curriculum is designed to improve students' skills in writing, critical reading, and thinking; to enrich their cultural experience; and to prepare them for all professions requiring a high level of expression, imagination, and intellectual activity, including creative writing, editing, teaching, law, politics, and management.

### **Program Goals:**

PG 1: Enrich English major through departmental life and cultural opportunities.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate the capacity to write and speak clearly, read perceptively, and think critically.

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate understanding of historical traditions in British and American literature.

SLO 3: Students will demonstrate understanding of how written and spoken language expresses diverse cultural experiences.

SLO 4: Students will demonstrate understanding of the functions and historical development of the English language.

A departmentally developed curriculum map can be found in Appendix 1 that shows the connections between courses and student learning outcomes.

### **Assessment Methods:**

*PG 1: Departmental life and cultural opportunities*

1. Annual Report - Departmental Life & Cultural Opportunities

The department yearly collects information from annual faculty effort reports as well as summarizing the highlights of general department accomplishments during the year. Information includes curricular and co-curricular activities offered.

2. Tracking Sheet of student participation in English Program Events and Initiatives

*SLO 1: Write and speak clearly, read perceptively, and think critically*

1. California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST)

The California Critical Thinking Skills Test is administered as a senior exit exam for all graduates. CCTST assesses students' critical thinking skills. The department's threshold of acceptability is to be in the top half of majors tested.

2. Faculty involvement in Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
3. Student Involvement in Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
4. ENGL 4995 senior Colloquium Oral Presentation

A rubric was developed in 2012-13 to assess student oral presentations in our departmental capstone course, English 4995-Senior Colloquium. The rubric was used to assess presentations in the capstone in Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2016, Spring 2017, Spring 2018, and Spring 19.

Threshold of acceptability: 85% of students will score Excellent or Very Good in each category of evaluation

5. Senior Exit Interviews

The Exit Interviews, which are both written and oral, provide students the opportunity to discuss the extent to which they have fulfilled Student Outcomes and to make suggestions for improving the English BA program.

*SLO 2: Historical traditions in British and American literature*

1. ETS Major Field Achievement Test:

The ETS Major Field Achievement Test in Literature provides a mean score but also sub scores in the areas of Literature 1900 and Earlier, Literature 1901 and Later, Literary Analysis, and Literary History and Identification. Additionally, "assessment indicators" show which questions students answered correctly, by area.

Thresholds: Minimum Performance: 3 semester average at 38%; Target Performance: 3 semester average at 55% or better

2. Senior Exit Interviews

*SLO 3: Written and spoken language expresses diverse cultural experiences*

1. National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE):

NSSE assesses students' experience with diverse ideas and communication of those ideas. (e.g., revision, group work, exposure to ideas different from their own).

*SLO 4: Understanding of the functions and historical development of the English language.*

1. Senior exit interview and graduating senior survey:

In Fall 2019, seven students participated in the senior exit interviews. All of them completed the senior survey. In Spring 2020, eleven students participated in both activities. The final question lists the four student learning outcomes and asks student: "Do you feel that your work in the program has enabled you to meet any or all of these outcomes. Please explain." All eighteen students felt that they met the four outcomes.

## Results:

### PG 1: *Departmental life and cultural opportunities*

Because part of the department's mission is to enrich students' cultural experience, the department strives to invite speakers, encourage theatrical presentations, and provide opportunities for students to take advantage of area cultural opportunities, as well as partaking in their own cultural initiatives. Through W.E.S.T., we have involved our faculty and graduate students in the improvement of writing capabilities for upper-division and graduate students across campus. Listings below are not comprehensive, but give a sense of the range of events and initiatives in the department. There were upwards of a thousand individual attendees at these events during the course of the year, including students, faculty, and members of the local community.

- Center Stage – Although some Center Stage events were cancelled for 2020, others went on virtually. US poet laureate Joy Harjo presented her poetry virtually as did David A. Romero. Novelist and short story writer Tawnysha Green also “visited” virtually. Regular events that provide opportunities for students to interact with diverse cultures such as the One World Cultural Evenings and Window on the World were not held in 2020. Usually, these events provide experiences which become the basis of both oral and written discussions.
- The Tech Players, in cooperation with the Theatre concentration in English, presented two live productions in the 2020-2021 season. The two plays were also streamed for those who did not wish to attend in person.
- As a member of the Associated Writing Programs, the English department distributed 40 copies of AWP Chronicle 6 times a year to students in our Writing concentration and other interested students and faculty. Chronicle features articles on creative writing, interviews with contemporary authors, and listings of grants and publishing opportunities for creative writers.
- The Writing Excellence Studio at Tech (W.E.S.T.), dedicated to tutoring upper-division and graduate students across campus and giving English graduate students experience in working with students in a variety of professional discourses across campus, offered a "branch" service in Clement Hall to help Engineering students with their writing.
- *The Iris Review*, a literary magazine sponsored by the English Department, gives students the opportunity to write creatively on the topic of their choice.
- While the NSSE results and the Center Stage events indicate that students have opportunities to experience and discuss diverse cultural ideas, the department does not have a method of directly assessing SLO 3. The need to develop a direct assessment for this SLO was also mentioned in the Five Year Review of the BA program in early 2021. The department is currently discussing assessment methods for this SLO.

### SLO 1: *Write and speak clearly, read perceptively, and think critically*

To determine thresholds of acceptability and target goals for the CCTST, the Institutional Effectiveness Assessment Committee reviewed the results for the past five years. Based on an analysis of the variance in scores across colleges, the committee agreed that a ratio of 100% should be the targeted goal, and a

ratio of 90%, which is within one standard deviation of the University’s five-year average ratio, should be an appropriate threshold of acceptability.

California Critical Thinking Skills Test

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
TTU English majors	16.4	17.7	18.0	19.2
National average	16.2	16.2	15.4	15.4
% of National Average	101.2%	109.2%	116.9%	124.7%

The English Department focuses on critical thinking and creative inquiry because those concepts were the topics of recent QEPs. The department currently has 24 full-time faculty. In the most recent academic year (2019-2020) six faculty received QEP grants. The chart below shows the number of faculty with QEP grants since 2016-2017. Faculty who receive these grants must have special training in incorporating critical thinking/creative inquiry into their courses.

2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
2	2	4	6

Student writing produced as part of the activities in classes with QEP grants has been featured in the Journal of Creative Inquiry as well as on Research and Creative Inquiry Day. Note, though, that some of the student writing mentioned below was written in courses taught by instructors who did not have QEP grants at time or perhaps never had QEP grants. The student accomplishments indicate the widespread emphasis on critical thinking and creative inquiry, with or without a QEP grant.

English Majors Who Read Papers on Research and Creative Inquiry Day

2018	2019	2020
3	2	5

Work by English Majors Included in *The Journal of Creative Inquiry*

2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
3	5	5

ENGL 4995 Senior Colloquium requires an oral presentation which is evaluated using the rubric attached at the end of the report. The chart below indicates the percent of students who scored “Excellent” or “Very Good” in all categories rated:

ENGL 4995 Oral Presentation Rubric

Semester	% Excellent or Good
Spring 2016	89%
Spring 2017	72%
Spring 2018	87%
Spring 2019	88%
Spring 2020	71%

These results were similar to past results. In Spring 2020, 71% of students in ENGL 4995 scored “Excellent” or “Very Good” in all categories.

English majors give oral presentations in nearly all their courses, so we would expect that in the senior colloquium their performance in this area would be “Very Good” to “Excellent.”

*SLO 2: Historical traditions in British and American literature*

Major Field Test Results

	Mean Percent Correct				3 semester average
	FY 2017 (n=11)	FY2018 (n=12)	FY2019 (n=15)	FY2020* (n=5)	
British Literature Pre-1660	54	46	44	53	48
British Literature 1660-1900	45	37	39	46	41
American Literature to 1900	57	47	51	61	53
British and American Literature 1901-1945	48	47	44	51	47
Literature in English Since 1945	52	45	47	52	48
Literary History	53	49	46	56	50
Identification	43	35	42	45	41
Literary Theory	45	41	36	38	38

Literary theory has historically been the area where TTU students make their lowest scores. The department curriculum includes a course in literary theory, ENGL 4630 (5630) Literary Criticism and Theory, but it has not been offered since Fall 2017. ENGL 3000 Introduction to English Methods and Research introduces students to literary theory, and most courses in literature that the department offers cover literary theory. When students meet with the chair for their exit interviews and are asked how the program might be improved, they have not, in the last two years I have been conducting the exit interviews, mentioned including additional emphasis on literary theory as an area of improvement.

Major Field Test

The Institutional Research Committee reviewed the results of major field tests (ETS and ACAT) for the past five years disaggregated by program. Based on an analysis of the variance in scores, the committee concluded that programs should have a ratio no more than one standard deviation below the University’s overall ratio. This translated to a threshold of acceptability of 90%. As for the targeted goal,

the committee agreed that the University and its individual programs should strive for achievement that was equal to or greater than the national average resulting in a goal of 100%.

	2016-17	2017-2018	2018-19	2019-20
TTU Average Score	156	150	148	155
National Average	153.1	152.8	152.6	152.5
TTU % of National Average	102%	98%	97%	102%

*SLO 3: Written and spoken language expresses diverse cultural experiences*

NSSE: TTU English Senior Mean

		2017	2019	2020
Attended an art exhibit, play or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.)	English	2.3	2.3	2.3
	TTU Total	1.8	1.7	1.7
Coursework emphasized: Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	English	3.0	3.3	3.3
	TTU Total	2.9	3.0	3.0
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	English	-	4.0	3.5
	TTU Total	-	2.3	2.3
Tried to better understand someone else's view by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective.	English	-	3.0	3.0
	TTU Total	-	2.7	2.8

Students continued to attend cultural events. The department sponsors many of those events and advertises them effectively.

The TTU overall mean scores for attendance at cultural events as indicated by NSSE results reveal that English majors attend these events more frequently than students in other majors. English majors also report that they are required to analyze ideas, experiences, and thoughts with more frequency than students in other majors.

**Modifications for Improvement:**

*SLO 1: Write and speak clearly, read perceptively, and think critically*

While student performance on the CCTST remains strong, faculty continue to apply for and receive QEP grants to implement critical and creative thinking activities in their courses. This year saw the largest number of QEP grants awarded to our faculty with six faculty receiving grants. CCTST scores have improved dramatically over the last 4 years.

*SLO 2: Historical traditions in British and American literature*

Literary theory has historically been the area where TTU students make their lowest scores. Department has asked faculty to focus on literary theory in ENGL 3000. The five different instructors who have taught ENGL 3000 since 2018-2019 have emphasized literary theory in the course. The department discussed adding ENGL 4630 Literary Criticism and Theory to the English major core but decided against it.

**Appendices**

1. English BA Curriculum Map
2. ENGL 4995 Senior Colloquium rubric

**Appendix 1: English BA Curriculum Map**

Learning Outcomes	Required Courses						
	3000 Introduction to English Methods & Research	3810 British Literature I	3820 British Literature II	3910 American Literature I	3920 American Literature II	4121 Shakespeare	4995 Senior Colloquium
Demonstrate the capacity to write and speak clearly, read perceptively, and think critically	I	R	R	R	R	R	M, A
Demonstrate understanding of historical traditions in British and American literature		I	R	I	R	R,A	M,A
Demonstrate understanding of how written and spoken language express diverse cultural experiences		I	R	I	R	R, A	M
Demonstrate understanding of the functions and historical development of the English language		I	R	R	R	R, A	M, A

**Appendix 2: ENGL 4995 Senior Colloquium rubric**

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
<b>Organization/ Content</b>						
Student presented a clear thesis statement at the beginning of the presentation.						
The presentation contained well-organized main points related to the thesis.						
Student developed the main points using effective rhetorical strategies.						
Sources used were appropriate to the purpose of the presentation and were managed well.						
Technical/audience-specific terms were explained; topic was appropriate for designated audience.						
<b>Visual Aid</b>						
The visual aid was visible, easily readable, and presented in a non- distracting manner using appropriate technological media.						
<b>Presentation Quality</b>						
Student presented using correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.						
Student used few fillers and maintained an extemporaneous style.						
Speaker dynamics, eye contact, and attire were appropriate for the purpose and context of the presentation.						
Student created a welcoming environment for audience interaction, including dialogue and questions, where appropriate.						