**Departmental Assessment Report**

**English**

**BA (English Studies, English Education options)**

**2015-16**

**1.What learning outcome(s) did you assess this year?**

Competency in research literacy: an understanding of research methods and the ability to apply those methods.

**2. What instruments did you use to assess them?**

Rubric used to assess competency on final “term papers” in all sections of our 193T and 194T Senior Seminars, one of which is required of all our majors in their senior year. We would expect 3 out of 4 (adequate research literacy for someone at this stage of study). We use a reporting form that measures attainment of all of our SOAP outcomes; this allows us not only to measure the one outcome we have decided to focus on in any given year but also to help us select what we need to look at more closely in the future. (See question 5 below.)

This is not an outcome measurement “detailed in the timeline of the SOAP” because, frankly, our SOAP documents need to be updated. That is not to say that we do not do assessment. But we are currently without an Assessment Coordinator or anyone else with the time and energy to devote to assessment as a thing in and of itself rather than a natural and inevitable part of our continual review of curriculum at the levels of individual classes as well as programs.

**3. What did you discover from these data?**

In Fall 2015 the average was 3.074 and in Spring 2016 3.4. This tells us that our students are, in fact, learning how to do research as they progress through the major. Previous assessment of this same outcome in English 105 (Introduction to Literary Analysis) taken by majors at the beginning of their careers, as a prerequisite for all other work at the upper division level, had shown similar but slightly more disappointing results: as low as 2.46 out of 4. There had therefore been discussions within the Department as to strengthening the teaching of research skills at all levels, from First Year Writing, through lower division prerequisites, 105, and upper division major classes. Since some of the students assessed this past year in 193T/194T may well have been the same ones scoring below expectations in past years, their improvement suggests that our efforts have been successful.

**4. What changes did you make as a result of the findings?**

No major changes. We will, however, continue to focus on strengthening student research skills, and encouraging scholarly engagement through participation in, for example, our annual Undergraduate Conference on Multiethnic Literatures of the Americas.

**5. What assessment activities will you be conducting in the 2016-17 academic year?**

Discussion of this will take place this semester, based on our reading of . No decision has been made at yet, as we consider the results from this past year’s sampling. (See response to Question 2 above for explanation of the process.)

**6. What progress have you made on items from your last program review action plan?**

Our recent 5-year Review made 5 specific recommendations. None of them were directly linked to learning outcomes per se, but did speak to the conditions in which teaching and learning occurs.

*Continue to build department community*: With the recent revival of Sigma Tau Delta (the English Studies honor society) we have been able to begin planning some events bringing together students and faculty to celebrate achievements. We look forward, too, to reactivating our once more-active Students of English Studies Association (SESA) and toward offering more events such as orientations and meet-and-greet sessions. We are updating our web pages, and have begun using our email lists more extensively as well as expanding our social media presence.

*Support faculty travel*: An increase in the Department’s operating budget last year allowed a little more support for faculty scholarship. For the most part however, there is still much room for improvement (as the Review Panel noted) in the University’s support of faculty scholarship.

*Provide space for the community to develop*: No action taken. If anything, our needs for faculty office space and decent classrooms is more pronounced. We do look forward, however, to the future use of the planned Levine Reading Room as some sort of social/cultural center.

*Classroom space must meet pedagogical needs*: No action taken. Our classrooms remain problematic.

*Staffing*: In this area we have made some progress. We have engaged in discussions about the future curricular and disciplinary needs of the program, and those discussions have allowed us to determine specific hiring requests. This year we added three faculty in Literacy/Composition Pedagogy, and we look forward to the their strengthening not only our writing programs but also the English Education option. This year we will be looking to hire Literature faculty who will (finally) replace a long-lamented gap in our offerings: 20th and 21st Century British Literature. We will be looking for two people who can also expand and update our curriculum by providing expertise in global Anglophone literatures and digital humanities.