

# **English and Writing Programs Five Year Program Review**



**June 2002**

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Five Year Program Review  
June 2002**

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## I. Introduction and Overview

While the English Program began in the Fall of 1997 when the university first opened, two English faculty were hired in 1994 to begin teaching English classes at the University of South Florida in Fort Myers, as well as to hire other faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences and to develop curriculum. As a result, the program began with approximately 30 students who were graduating with a degree from USF, which meant that the faculty had to continue offering courses that met the requirements for USF's English major.

The English Program emphasizes the development of critical and creative thinking skills and oral and written communication skills through the study of literary and cultural texts.

According to the program description:

The increasingly complex challenges of the 21st century call for university graduates who can think creatively and critically and who can communicate effectively. Students in the English Major develop skills that enhance their ability to thrive in dynamic, vibrant cultural landscapes; that initiate a lifelong process of inquiry, exploration, and discovery; and that can be applied in changing professional and personal settings. The program teaches research, analysis, and argumentation skills that allow students to evaluate and interpret texts from a variety of perspectives. Literary and cultural studies promotes an awareness that extends beyond aesthetic appreciation: students enrich their understanding of themselves and their world by delving into underlying causes, formulating and communicating complex ideas, and exploring the converging forces that produce cultural beliefs and artifacts. (See Document 4 English Program Description)

The mission and philosophy of the English program flows from the missions of the university, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Division of Humanities and Arts (see Documents 1 FGCU Mission, 2 College of A&S Mission, and 3 Division of Humanities and Arts Mission).

The Writing Program, which is an integral part of the English Program, also works to develop critical and creative thinking skills and effective communication skills through an emphasis on audience and purpose and on writing as a recursive process. According to the philosophy and mission statement:

Writing is a complex, integrated, recursive, and trying activity. Even for gifted writers, the act does not come readily, even naturally. However, the processes of writing do become clearer and more manageable once the writer understands the purpose of the writing task, the audience to be addressed, and the conventions for the particular writing situation. Good writing is not a matter of slavishly following a set of single rules--if only writing were that easy. Consequently, the Writing Program at Florida Gulf Coast University begins with an understanding of how difficult successful writing is to execute, whether the expression is poetic, professional, or academic. In order to help students be successful, the Writing Program emphasizes the importance of process--good writing is the result of good analytical and creative thinking, of careful and critical reflection, of rigorous and true revision. (See Document 5 Writing Program Description)

The faculty in the English program work together to support both the English major and the courses in the Writing Program in order to meet the needs of upper level students pursuing study in English and of lower level students meeting General Education requirements.

The English major is comprised of 30 hours of study at the upper level, along with 12 hours of study in the Collegium of Integrated Learning and 3 hours for the Colloquium: A Sustainable Future. The major meets all of the requirements in the state of Florida for English, including prerequisites. Students in the Program are required to complete ENG 3014 when they begin the program in their junior year; this course act as an introduction to the major, providing an overview of the outcomes and assessment measures as well as of the expectations of the program. Students then complete 24 hours of study of junior and senior level courses, based on a specific distribution. Students then finish the program with ENG 4930 Senior Seminar in

Literary and Cultural Studies where they complete several assessment projects, including a self-assessment of their learning. (See Document 4 English Program Description)

The Collegium of Integrated Learning, a series of issues-based, interdisciplinary courses, provides students with breadth in their educational experience. The Collegium, which is at the heart of the liberal studies mission of the College of Arts and Sciences, allows students to engage issues from disciplines outside of their major, broadening their learning, as well as to recognize the limits of their disciplinary perspective. The Colloquium provides students with an understanding of the economic, political, and cultural foundations for sustainability, meeting the university learning outcome of developing an ecological perspective. (See Documents 9 Collegium and 10 Colloquium.)

The English Program currently consists of nine full-time faculty, including three Associate Professors, two Assistant Professors, and four Instructors (one of these instructors has been in a visiting position). One full-time faculty has left Florida Gulf Coast University in the last year. Two of the Associate Professors have held administrative positions within the College of Arts and Sciences, reducing the amount of time they have been able to contribute to the program.

Ms. Carol Bledsoe; Instructor (2000-present)

Twentieth Century American Literature; Composition

Dr. Jim Brock; Assistant Professor (1998-present)

Creative Writing; Composition; Twentieth Century American Literature

Mr. Bill Doyle; Instructor (2000-present)

Anglo-Irish Literature; Composition

Dr. Myra Mendible; Associate Professor (1994-present)

Contemporary Literary and Cultural Studies; Composition

Ms. Linda Rowland; Visiting Instructor (2001-2002)

British Literature; Composition

Dr. Brad Sullivan; Assistant Professor (1997-2001)

Nineteenth-Century British Literature; Composition

Dr. Rebecca Totaro; Assistant Professor (2000-present)

Renaissance Literature; Composition

Dr. Joe Wisdom; Associate Professor; former Associate Dean, Arts and Sciences (1997-present)

Southern Literature; Interdisciplinary Studies; Composition

Ms. Jennifer Wojcik; Instructor (2000-present)

Colonial and Nineteenth Century American Literature; Composition

Dr. Jim Wohlpart; Associate Professor; Chair, Humanities and Arts (1994-present)

Nineteenth-Century American Literature, Environmental Literature, Composition

The English faculty work as a team to review and refine the English and Writing programs, meeting regularly to discuss assessment activities, student progress, and curricular and pedagogical issues. (Faculty vitae are included in a separate portfolio.)

The following Assessment is based on the Goals and Objectives established for the English and Writing Programs in our first year of operation. After each objective statement, information is provided for analyzing if the objective was met (or not met); this information is then followed by an analysis that provides recommendations for improvement where appropriate. The process of assessing the goals and objectives has provided direction for the English Program in establishing Goals and Objectives for the next five year period as well as for a revision of the English major. (Please see Document 6 English and Writing Program Goals.)

## II. Assessment of Goals and Objectives of the English and Writing Programs

### Teaching

#### (1) Develop English Curriculum

- Develop new courses in the program as needed

*Review: Over the five year period beginning in the Fall of 1997 when Florida Gulf Coast University opened, the faculty in the English program has developed and taught 38 of the 49 courses listed in the English Major. Because the faculty has attempted to provide the English majors with the widest variety of courses in order to increase their exposure to a wide range of topics, cultures, and texts and to allow them the greatest freedom in selecting their courses, only 10 of these 38 courses have been taught more than twice, and many of them have been taught only once. (See Document 11, Overview of English Course Scheduling)*

*In addition, faculty in the English program have developed and taught all 11 of the English courses listed in the General Education Program (freshman level Composition I and II, sophomore level US, British, and World literature surveys, sophomore level creative writing courses, and the sophomore level Nature Writing course). Most of these courses have been taught on a regular basis, but the faculty have continuously updated and revised their teaching of these courses, testing new texts and new approaches. Several of the faculty have developed a strategy called the "teaching cell" where they meet on a regular basis to discuss their approaches in order to consider how to improve their courses and their teaching.*

*Analysis and Recommendations: Teaching such a wide range of courses means that the English faculty has been continuously preparing new syllabi, reading and researching new topics and texts, and developing new pedagogical strategies for the classroom. This level of commitment should be rewarded, but cannot continue. Faculty need to have the opportunity to teach the same course several times in order to refine it and in order to allow for time to complete other activities. In order for the faculty to have the ability to work on refining their courses, they must have the resources they need to support their program and all of the activities that they are involved in at the program, college, and university levels and in the community*

- Refine ENG 3014 Intro and develop/refine ENG 4930 Senior Seminar

*Review: Faculty in the English Program worked together in the Fall of 1997 to develop, as a team, the ENG 3014 course. The course goals and outcomes, the texts, the assignments, and the policy statement and syllabi were all developed and reviewed together; the course was taught for the first time in the Spring of 1998. In the fall of 1998, the English faculty worked together to develop the outline for ENG 4930, developing the assessment techniques, the assignments, and the policy statement and syllabi; the course was first taught in the spring of 1999. With one exception, since that time, the faculty has continuously discussed and shared their syllabi via email and in program meetings when they were next in line to teach the course. When the deviation from the team-developed syllabi occurred, the English faculty met, discussed the process for teaching the courses, and agreed again that the course would be team developed and reviewed. (Please see Documents 12 ENG 3014 Syllabus, 13 ENG 4930 Syllabus, and 14 ENG 4930 Outline.)*

*Analysis: The faculty in the English program, with the exception of one semester, has worked collegially to develop the Introductory course and the Senior Seminar for the English major. As a result of this team process, and as a result of the assessment of student learning outcomes which has led to a need to refine the English program*

*learning outcomes (discussed in Section III. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes below), the faculty has begun a process to revise and refine the learning outcomes and, along with those outcomes, the Introductory course and the Senior Seminar. This process will become one of the primary goals in the English Program Goals and Objectives over the next five years.*

(2) Teach courses in the English Major

- To meet the needs of students in the English Major/Liberal Studies Degree
- To meet the needs of students in the Secondary Education Program/English Major  
*Review: In the fall of 1997, working with the College of Education, the English faculty developed a plan for offering courses that would meet the needs of both the English majors and the Secondary Education English Majors (please see Document 15 English and Education Major Scheduling). The plan called for courses to be taught on a regular basis so that all of the different requirements for both programs would be met within a one-year cycle. The plan called for these course requirements to be offered alternately day and evening every year to meet the needs of our students.*

*In the Spring of 2001, the College of Education, working with the College of Arts and Sciences, developed a Master of Arts in Teaching for secondary teachers and eliminated the Secondary Education program in response to the call for secondary teachers with more discipline based study. As a result, the English faculty refocused their energy on teaching courses to meet the needs of the English majors, developing stronger mentoring processes (discussed below). Since the Spring of 2001, the faculty has regularly polled the English majors regarding the draft course schedule, making revisions to the schedule as appropriate. As a result of contact with the English majors, more courses have been offered during the day because the English majors very often hold evening positions in the service and tourism industry.*

*Analysis: The English faculty has developed and taught a wide range of courses to meet the scheduling and programmatic needs of the English and Secondary Education majors. With the elimination of the Secondary Education program, the faculty has the opportunity to focus on the needs of the English majors which will allow for greater coherence in the schedule. However, with the growth of the English program, the faculty may need to return to offering more evening courses.*

- To achieve a high level of student learning (especially in relation to the English Outcomes)—Please see English Outcomes and Assessment  
*Special Note: Because Florida Gulf Coast University has a central focus on learning outcomes and assessment, the review of the degree to which the learning outcomes have been met will be discussed in Section III below.*

(3) Teach courses in the Collegium of Integrated Learning

- Teach courses that advance the goals/outcomes of the Collegium  
*Review: Over the five year period of this review, the English faculty has taught four of the six courses in the Collegium (IDS 3301, 3304, 3305, and 4910), having taught at least one Collegium course every semester except two and often teaching as many as three Collegium courses in one semester. One of the English faculty, Dr. Joe Wisdom, has been centrally involved in the Collegium, acting as the Collegium Program Leader and working to develop and teach the Capstone course (Dr. Wisdom has taught the Capstone course 8 times). In addition, during this five year period, Dr. Wisdom acted as the Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences for two years (with a reduced teaching load); Dr. Wohlpart acted as the Humanities Cluster leader and then the Chair*

of the Division of Humanities and Arts; and Dr. Mendible was on leave for one year. (Please see Document 16 Collegium Schedule.)

Analysis: The faculty in the English program has been regularly involved in teaching courses in the Collegium, as well as in participating in the development and refinement of the Collegium. With the heavy burden of teaching so many different English courses and with administrative responsibilities outside of English, the faculty has nevertheless demonstrated a willingness and ability to work beyond the boundaries of their discipline and support the work of the College.

(4) Mentor students in the English Major

- Develop Mentoring system for English students

Review: Every faculty member in the English program comes to the ENG 3014 classes to introduce themselves and their areas of interest so that they students can begin to get to know them; students are asked to select a mentor in their first semester in the program so that they can receive guidance as they progress through the program.

In addition, the English faculty has worked with the College of Arts and Sciences Advising staff to develop a Mentoring Checklist for the English majors. Students fill out the checklist with their mentor in the English program. The checklist, which does not replace advising in the college, provides guidance for students as they are signing up for classes. (Please see Document 17 Mentoring Checklist.)

Finally, the English faculty, working with the College of Arts and Sciences Advisors, has developed a Four Year Plan of Study, which is posted on the English program website. The plan of study provides guidance for students who matriculate as either freshman or juniors. (Please see Document 18 Plan of Study.)

Analysis: While the English faculty has developed a formalized mentoring system, a process needs to be put into place to ensure that students receive mentoring on a regular basis. Because many of our students work, and because the English faculty are stretched, the mentoring process does not always occur as regularly as it might.

- Assist students in development of portfolios

Review: In the development and refinement of ENG 4930 Senior Seminar, the English faculty has agreed that the faculty member responsible for teaching the course will oversee the development of student portfolios. While students can work with their mentors in this process, the primary responsibility for portfolio development remains with the instructor for ENG 4930 in order to ensure that the portfolios are created in a similar fashion. (Please see Document 14 ENG 4930 Outline.)

(5) Participate in collaborative teaching

- Share teaching resources

Review: Teaching resources have been shared on a regular basis in the Writing Program since the university opened. During Writing program meetings and in informal meetings with the Writing Program leader, various materials including syllabi, assignments, and sample essays have been shared between full and part time faculty.

In addition, a group of full time faculty has established a teaching cell in order to share materials and work on developing and refining the sophomore level literature classes. The faculty has discussed not only teaching resources and materials but also pedagogical and curricular issues as they have worked to redesign the courses.

Analysis: While the sharing of materials has provided some coherence in the Writing Program, because of the large number of part time faculty used in the Writing Program, the faculty needs to establish clearer guidelines and oversight of teaching materials and

resources. *The model used for the teaching cell for the sophomore level classes might provide a model for this kind of oversight.*

- Team-teach classes

*Review: Because of the scarcity of resources, very few courses in the English program have been team-taught. On two occasions, with the teaching of Environmental Literature, a faculty member from Environmental Studies and a faculty member from English have teamed up to teach the course. These experiences demonstrate the strength and usefulness of team teaching, especially in a liberal studies context that emphasizes interdisciplinary learning.*

*Analysis: Faculty should strive to offer at least one team-taught course per year with faculty outside of their discipline in order to strengthen ties to the liberal studies core. The university should provide resources for limited team-teaching because of the emphasis on interdisciplinary connections at Florida Gulf Coast University.*

(6) Maintain an appropriate ratio of full-time to part-time faculty

- A minimum of 80% of courses in the English major will be taught by full-time faculty

*Review: Over the last five years, the English faculty has taught a total of 80 upper level courses in the English major. Of these 80 courses, 70 have been taught by full-time faculty, a total of 88%. This includes a Linguistics course, offered every Spring semester for Secondary Education majors and for students seeking certification, which is taught by a part-time faculty member who has a PhD in Linguistics. All of the full-time faculty teaching courses in the English program have terminal degrees in their field (PhDs), although one faculty member came and taught for one year as an ABD (he finished his PhD at the end of this first year).*

*The courses that have not been taught by full-time faculty include courses in African-American literature; for these courses, we have hired a part-time faculty member who has a PhD with a specialization in African-American literature. (Please see Document 19 Full-time vs. Part-time/English Major.)*

- A minimum of 70% of courses in the Writing program will be taught by full-time faculty

*Review: The ratio of full-time to part-time faculty teaching Composition I and II and Professional Writing was not tracked before Fall 2000 because of the low number of Freshman and the strength of the English Program. However, starting with the Fall of 2000, the last semester when a new faculty member was added to the English Program, the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty has decreased tremendously.*

*In a 1998 article entitled "Setting Standards: Acceptable Ratios of Full- to Part-Time Faculty Members" in the MLA Newsletter, Phyllis Franklin, the president of the MLA, notes that "A commonsense approach to establishing a minimum ratio of full- to part-time faculty members . . . suggests that departments employing very large numbers of part-time teachers (say 90%) would likely not only become inefficient but also have difficulty carrying out the administrative work that full-time college and university teachers have done for over a century, managing these large numbers of part-time staff members, and sustaining coherent academic programs that are responsive to developments in the field and within institutions." The article goes on to suggest that adequate staffing should allow that at least 55% of the courses to be taught by full-time faculty, though a recommended level might be set at 70%.*

*The course cap in the writing courses at Florida Gulf Coast University is set at 20, which is the maximum suggested by such organizations as the MLA and the NCTE. According to the NCTE: "No more than 20 students should be permitted in any writing*

*class. Ideally, classes should be limited to 15. Students cannot learn to write without writing. In sections larger than 20, teachers cannot possibly give student writing the immediate and individual response necessary for growth and improvement” (see Document 20 NCTE Guidelines).*

*In the Fall 2000-Spring 2001 semesters, the English Program offered a total of 50 sections of Composition I and II; full-time faculty taught 26 of these sections, leaving part-time faculty to teach 24 sections. With only 52% of these courses taught by full-time faculty, the English Program is below the target of 70%. Furthermore, the Program offered a total of 10 sections of Professional Writing (a service course for the College of Business); only 3 of these courses were taught by full-time faculty, or 30%.*

*In the Fall 2001-Spring 2002 semesters, the English Program offered a total of 61 sections of Composition I and II; full-time faculty taught 22 of these sections, while part-time faculty taught 39 sections. With only 36% of the Composition courses taught by full-time faculty, the English Program has fallen well below its target of 70% and well below the minimum target of 50%. The Program also offered 14 sections of Professional Writing; only 5 of these sections were taught by full-time faculty, or 35%. (Please see Document 21 Schedule of Classes).*

*To date, we have not had the resources to offer Composition as a regular part of our summer offerings. Information concerning the need for resources in the Writing Program has been included in the Division of Humanities and Arts Budget Analysis (Please see Document 22 Budget Analysis).*

*Analysis: The English Program has failed to meet this goal, and is well below the minimum goal for percentage of full-time faculty teaching freshman Composition courses. The Program will continue to fall behind this goal with the increase in Freshman students and the lack of new faculty lines in the English Program.*

*In response to these demands, the English Program has implemented one change that will help maintain the current (though still unacceptable) level of a percentage of full-time faculty teaching Composition. With the oversight of the Writing Program within their purview, the English faculty will increase the enrollment cap in Composition classes from 20 to 23. While this surpasses the maximum enrollment cap set by the MLA and NCTE, the strengthening of the Writing Center will allow writing instructors to send their students to the Writing Center for remediation and help with their essays, something they cannot do currently because of the unevenness of the help provided in the Writing Center.*

*In addition, the English Program will be seeking to add a Master’s Program beginning in the Fall of 2003. The addition of Graduate Teaching Assistants will aid in reducing the reliance on Part-time faculty, though it will introduce another set of issues and concerns. The English program must be given the resources to teach the large numbers of sections of Composition, as well as the resources to develop training and oversight mechanisms for the instructors of these courses.*

- (7) Maintain a high retention of and appropriate graduation timeline for students in the English program
- Track student progress through the Program
    - Review: The English faculty tracks student progress through the program, beginning with their matriculation in ENG 3014. The faculty meets on a regular basis to ascertain whether students have remained in the program and how they are progressing through the program. (Please see Document 23 Student Tracking.)*
  - Retain 70% students who enroll in ENG 3014

*Review: Using the period from Spring 1998 (when ENG 3014 was first offered) to Fall 2001, a total of 67 of the 108 students who registered in ENG 3014 have remained in the program, moving towards graduation; this represents a 62% retention rate. This figure is lower than the established target, but it is also skewed because it includes two semesters when a particular instructor taught the course and we retained only 18% of the students. With these two semesters removed from the calculation, a total of 63 of the 86 students who registered in all of the other sections of ENG 3014 have remained in the program, moving towards graduation; this represents a 73% retention rate. The instructor with the low retention rates has since left Florida Gulf Coast University. (Please see Document 24 Retention and Graduation Rates.)*

- 80% of students who remain in the program will graduate within 2.5 years of enrolling in ENG 3014

*Review: Using the period from Spring 1998 to Spring 2000, which provides us with data for analysis of student graduation 2.5 years out, 28 of the 34 students who remained in the English program graduated within 2.5 years; this represents a rate of 82% of students graduating within the specified time period. (Please see Document 24 Retention and Graduation Rates.)*

*Overall Analysis: The English faculty has met its targets for retention and graduation, though it must remain diligent in tracking students and engaging situations where student retention becomes an issue.*

## **Service**

### (1) Develop English program

- Refinement of the Goals and Outcomes for the English Major
- Clearly define objectives and expectations for the sophomore, junior, and senior level classes in order to define the process that English Majors go through to meet the English student learning outcomes
- Develop Outcomes Assessment for the English Major, including process for internal and external reviewers of portfolios, process for internal and external assessment of scholarly presentations, exit exam, exit summary response, exit interview, Major Field Test, etc.

*Review: In the Fall of 1997, the English faculty met to develop the Learning Goals and Outcomes for the English Major (please see Document 7 English Program Learning Goals). In subsequent years, the faculty developed a clear set of expectations for the sophomore, junior, and senior level classes that mapped onto these Learning Goals and Outcomes (please see Document 25 Goals and Outcomes by Course Level). Finally, the faculty has worked together to develop clear assessment strategies, mostly centered around ENG 4930 Senior Seminar. The strategies that have been developed and that are in use currently include the following:*

- *Students write a self-assessment of their learning experiences in the program, tied to the creation of a portfolio;*
- *Students build a portfolio of all of their work completed in the English program to provide evidence of their learning;*
- *Students complete a Summary-Response essay in ENG 4930;*
- *Students complete a major scholarly essay which provides the foundation for a one hour oral presentation, using technology.*

*The English faculty review the presentations and the materials gathered together in the portfolio, completing several assessment forms. While the data has not been collected*

*on a regular basis, enough information has been assembled to assess the level of learning in the English program.*

*Analysis: While the English faculty has done a great deal of work to create learning outcomes and assessment strategies, the process of gathering and analyzing data needs to be streamlined so that it can become a part of the annual work completed in the program. In addition, the faculty needs to use the information gathered in order to review and refine the Learning Goals and Outcomes established for the program.*

## (2) Develop the Writing Program

- develop assessment of writing and tutoring
- develop and communicate clear Goals/Outcomes for the Writing Program in relation to the General Education program, the Collegium of Integrated Learning, and other Academic areas (especially the College of Business)

*Review: the English faculty has developed a clear set of Goals and Outcomes for the Writing Program, though these materials have not been communicated with other areas (General Education, Collegium, Business). In addition, the English faculty has developed several strategies for assessment of the Writing Program, including especially the use of Summary-Response essays in Composition I and II, though a method of implementing these strategies coherently and collecting this information regularly has not been established. (Please see Document 8 Writing Program Learning Goals)*

*Analysis: The English faculty should work to refine and revise the Goals and Outcomes for the Writing Program as well as to develop assessment strategies that will allow for the evaluation of the effectiveness of Composition I and II. The faculty must be given the resources to accomplish this task, as well as given the resources to reduce the reliance of part-time faculty which has a negative impact on the ability to meet the Goals and Outcomes. A more detailed discussion of assessment of Learning Goals in the Writing Program is discussed in Part IV below.*

- develop Hiring, Orientation, Mentoring and Supervision/Evaluation processes for Part-time Faculty
  - implement Mentoring and Supervision/Evaluation of Part-time Faculty
- Review: The College of Arts and Sciences and the Division of Humanities and Arts have developed general guidelines and processes for the Hiring, Orientation, and Supervision of part-time faculty (please see Document 26 Part-time Faculty Oversight). In addition, the English program meets with part-time faculty who teach in the Writing program in order to provide coherence to the program. These meetings include especially review of syllabi and policies and grading workshops (see Document 27 Writing Program Workshops). In addition, each part-time faculty is paired with a full-time faculty for one-on-one mentoring, and every new part-time faculty teaching in the Writing Program has their class observed by the Writing Program coordinator.*

*Analysis: While general policies and procedures have been developed and implemented, because of the very large number of Part-time faculty teaching in the Writing Program, the English faculty need to develop clearer guidelines and policies for the Composition I and II courses, as well as more definitive supervision of adjuncts. While the English program has been given the resources to allow one full-time faculty release time of one course per semester to coordinate these activities, the program needs further resources for adequate supervision of such a large pool of part-time faculty.*

- develop WP Handbook and Website
- develop WP Student Handbook and Website

*Review: Under the Writing Program's leadership, the English program developed a very strong website and handbook for the Writing Program. The documents included on the web provide a clear statement of philosophy and mission for the program as a whole; outcomes and assessment strategies for individual courses; and resources for students and faculty. A parallel site for students has not been developed, though it would provide useful resources for students and create a coherence between the different sections of Composition. (Please see Documents 5 Writing Program Description and 8 Writing Program Learning Goals.)*

*Analysis: The English Program should work to update and refine the Writing Program website with the development of clear learning goals and outcomes and assessment strategies for the Writing Program. In addition, the faculty should work to develop a student site to provide coherence across the program. The faculty will need additional resources for these activities.*

- develop the Writing Center, including effective distance tutoring

*Review: Up until this time, the Writing Center has been located in the Office of Learning Resources in the area of Student Services. While faculty in the English program have occasionally tutored in the Writing Center and helped with the development of materials, the oversight of the program has not been within the purview of the English program. One faculty member has occasionally offered distance tutoring as a service to Learning Resource Services.*

*In the Spring of 2002, the Provost moved the Writing Center to the English program, effective August 2003. The English program has been given an additional faculty line in order to provide support for this increased load. In addition, the English program has requested funding from the Student Government Association to hire part-time faculty for tutoring services. (Please see Document 28 Writing Center Proposal.)*

*Analysis: The English program will need to develop clear guidelines and procedures for the Writing Center, as well as outcomes and assessment strategies. The addition of one faculty to the program will help provide support for the tutoring services, but the English faculty will need additional resources to meet the needs of the students and to develop the oversight and assessment of the center.*

(3) Provide outreach to the community as appropriate

- judging essay contests

*Review: Over the last five years, the English faculty have been involved in judging several essay contests, including contests for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Optimist Club, the Everglades Writing Contest, and the Anne Morrow Lindbergh Shell Coast Poetry Festival.*

- working with Middle Schools and High Schools with College Board/AP

*Review: Two of the English faculty were involved in the initial meetings with the College Board to establish AP programs in southwest Florida. These meetings resulted in the creation of the AP Institute at Florida Gulf Coast University (overseen by Dr. Chuck Lindsey, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences).*

*Overall Review: In addition to these activities, the faculty in English has been involved in numerous community based service activities that have demonstrated a high level of civic engagement. Faculty has provided readings and lectures and participated in forums; led readings and panels; participated on boards and steering committees. One of the major events includes the Forgotten Language Tour, a series of readings and forums of environmental writers on the FGCU campus and around southwest Florida.*

*The level of faculty engagement with community service demonstrates their commitment to civic engagement as a social responsibility and public trust. (For a complete list, please see Document 29 Community Service.)*

(4) Participate in University Governance

- Serve on College Committees and Teams
- Serve on University Committees and Teams
- Serve on the University Senate

*Review: Faculty in the English program has been very active in service at the college and the university level, often taking leadership roles on college or university committees. Some of committees on which faculty took leadership roles include SACS Self-Study committees, the university Faculty Affairs Committee, and the college Curriculum Team. In addition, the faculty in the program has participated on many committees as members, including the college Peer Review Committee and Curriculum Team, the university President search committee, and the senate. Faculty members in the English Program have served at every different level possible, as members and as facilitators and leaders, providing invaluable service to the university and the college. This level of service is important for the success of an institution that holds shared governance at a high esteem. (For a complete list, please see Document 30 FGCU Service.)*

### **Scholarship**

(1) Encourage undergraduate scholarship

- Participate in editing of and reviewing for *Ampersand*
- Encourage student submissions to *Ampersand*

*Review: Through the Fall 1999 semester, an English faculty served as the editor of Ampersand, and the other English faculty regularly served as reviewers. In addition, a total of 15 essays written by English majors were accepted in Ampersand (student essays must first be nominated by faculty; the essays are then go through a blind review process where each essay is read by a minimum of two faculty). After the Fall 1999 Semester, when the English faculty member resigned as editor, Ampersand folded. (For a complete list of publications, see Document 31 Ampersand Publications. Copies of these papers are included in a separate portfolio.)*

*In the last semester, a new web based outlet for scholarship has emerged, the Mangrove Review. Edited and composed by students, the Mangrove Review is overseen by a full-time faculty member in the English program and will provide a new venue for undergraduate scholarship.*

(2) Facilitate and participate in individual and, where appropriate, collaborative scholarship

- Present papers at local, regional, and national conferences
- Submit articles, creative works, essays, and books to publishers
- Apply for grants and fellowships

*Review: Even while the faculty in the English program has been overburdened with providing a program that is under-resourced, and even while they have been extremely busy with service activities, they have also remained productive scholars. During this time, the faculty has published 2 books and 26 articles, along with many other pieces including poems, freelance work, encyclopedia articles, and reviews. In addition, they have completed 44 conference presentations along with many other presentations including poetry readings and panels. Finally, they have been instrumental in the*

*successful acquisition of several grants, including a \$200,000 grant from the PEW Grant Program in Course Redesign and two National Endowment for the Humanities Grants. (For a complete list of scholarship, please see Document 32 Scholarly Activity.)*

*The English faculty's productivity in scholarship has come at the same time as the university has continuously reduced support for professional development. When the university opened, each faculty member was allowed \$1200 for professional development. In the last three years, that fund has been cut first to \$500 and then altogether, leaving faculty without any support for conferences or other means of professional development.*

*Scholarly activity is a primary means of maintaining currency in the field. Because Florida Gulf Coast University emphasizes innovative pedagogy and curriculum, the need for scholarly productivity is even that much more significant. If the university continues to expect a high level of teaching coupled with scholarship, then the university must also provide substantial professional development funds to faculty on a regular basis.*

### III. Assessment of Student Learning in the English Program

The faculty in the English Program has developed several assessment mechanisms to determine the level at which the students are meeting the established Learning Outcomes. While these mechanisms have been in place since 1998 when ENG 4930 was first offered, the faculty has not regularly gathered the data and information that is generated often because of the burdensome nature of some of the activities (discussed below) and because of their high level of commitments and responsibilities across the college, university, and community.

The following review is broken down according to the established assessment mechanisms with a two part intention:

- To analyze and discuss the level at which students are meeting the Program Learning Outcomes, and
- To analyze and evaluate the practicality and effectiveness of the assessment activities.

Since this is the first five year review of the English Program, the second item is extremely important in working towards establishing useful assessment activities that the faculty will be able to complete on a regular basis in order to engage in continual assessment and improvement of the English Program.

As part of ENG 4930 Senior Seminar, students complete several assignments that allow them to synthesize and assess their own learning. These assignments also provide the faculty with the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the program in helping students meet the learning outcomes. The assignments include the following:

- Exit Essay and Portfolio
- Scholarly Presentation
- Summary-Response Essay

While the faculty has developed a full range of student learning outcomes, the assessment strategies in the first five years have focused on specific outcomes that the faculty has selected, including the following:

- I. Discipline Specific Content Knowledge
  1. a general understanding of the historic periods in United States and British literature and the major events, issues, and themes of these periods
  6. the ability to conduct Literary and Cultural Research and Scholarship
- II. Critical and Creative Thinking Skills
  1. the ability to analyze a variety of texts in their relevant contexts
  3. the ability to formulate interpretations through synthesis of material from diverse texts and contexts
- III. Technological Literacy
  2. the ability to communicate using technology (word processing, email, internet, etc.)
- IV. Effective Communication
  1. the ability to compose thoughtful analyses

The assessment activities that were developed allowed for analysis of the students' content knowledge and skills in relation to these specific learning outcomes, providing the faculty with data and information about the effectiveness of the program. (For a complete list of Student Learning Outcomes, see Document 7 English Program Learning Goals).

#### Exit Essay and Portfolio

Review: As a primary component of the Senior Seminar, students write an Exit Essay assessing their learning in the Program; the essay centers around knowledge of US and British literary periods and specific skills and abilities. Along with the Exit Essay, students compile a Portfolio of their course materials that provide evidence of their level of learning. Faculty then

review the Exit Essay and Portfolio in order to determine the students' level of understanding of each literary period as well as their achievement of the skills.

For the assessment of content knowledge, students are asked to state their perceived level of understanding of each literary period as well as to provide a synthesis statement of that period in the Exit Essay. Faculty rate the students' stated level of understanding, their synthesis statement, and their evidence (found in the portfolio) on a five point scale for each literary period (5 = excellent understanding; 0 = no awareness). Analysis of the Exit Essays and Portfolios over time has provided the faculty with clear evidence that students have not been meeting the primary content knowledge learning outcome of the program. (A review of the forms that have been compiled support this analysis; in general, students had an understanding of 4 or 5 of the 11 periods of US and British Literature.) Faculty review of the primary content learning outcome and the course work compiled in the portfolio has led to the realization that the English Program was never intended to teach this content outcome; rather, the focus in the program for content knowledge has been on making interdisciplinary connections and on understanding the way in which humans through time have attempted to make meaning of their lives through narratives.

On the other hand, analysis of the Portfolio materials over time has provided clear evidence that students are developing the Critical Thinking and Communication skills that are a part of the program. The written materials are analyzed on a five point scale (5 = excellent; 1 = weak). In the written materials compiled from their coursework, students consistently achieve at the good level (3) or strong level (4). In general, the students' scores were higher for the essays that they revised in the Senior Seminar than for the course work completed during their studies, suggesting that the skill level increased over time as expected.

(Please see Document 33 Portfolio Review.)

Analysis: The faculty in the English Program has used the assessment information that has accumulated over time to begin revising and refining the English Program and the Learning Outcomes. The faculty has recognized not only that they have not been offering a program that meets the overriding content knowledge outcome, but also that their desire has been to offer an innovative program that is not based on US and British Literary Periods. As a result, during the 2001-2002 academic year, the faculty has engaged in a discussion about how to restructure the program in order to create an innovative program that is in line with the liberal studies mission of the college. One of the primary goals of the next five year period will be to redefine the program, develop revised learning outcomes, and build clear assessment activities tied to these outcomes.

### **Scholarly Presentation**

Review: As a part of the Portfolio in the Senior Seminar, students are expected to substantially revise one of their major papers, extending its length and the use of research. At the end of the semester, students complete a one hour presentation of their scholarship to the faculty (20-30 minutes of an oral presentation using technology, followed by 20-30 minutes of question and answer). Faculty members assess each presentation on Style (articulatness, engagement with audience, ability to answer questions, and use of technology) and Content (centering on a focused thesis, including strong supporting material, organization and coherence, and depth of knowledge and comprehension). Each area is rated on a five point scale (5 = exceptional; 1 = unsatisfactory). Because the presentations have been completed every year, a great deal of data has been gathered concerning the Scholarly Presentations.

Analysis of the tallied assessment forms indicates that students have developed the skills and abilities for a strong presentation style: they are articulate, poised, engaging the audience well, and they use technology to enhance their presentations. While the overall assessment of the content of the presentations also suggests that students are able to produce papers that are in the good to strong range (3 to 4), the assessment of the content has been a

matter of much discussion because the faculty has felt that the oral presentations do not convey the depth and level of analysis that exists in the written papers. If the faculty decides to continue using the Scholarly Presentation as an assessment activity, they need to work together to come to a consensus on the level of expectation for these presentations.

In addition to scoring each presentation in particular areas, students are given a total average assessment based on the sum of the average of the score in each area, with 40 as the highest possible total average. The faculty has developed the following scoring range: 35-40 = Exceptional; 30-34 = Very Good; 23-29 = Good/Satisfactory; 18-22 = Weak/Inadequate. Of the 23 tallied assessments that have been saved, 11 have been in the Exceptional range; 5 have been in the Very Good range; 5 have been in the Good/Satisfactory range; and only 2 have been in the Weak/Inadequate range. These total average scores may be skewed, however, because of the possible discrepancy in the expectations of the content of the presentations.

(Please see Document 34 Scholarly Presentation Assessment.)

Analysis: Students who have graduated from the English Program have developed strong oral presentation skills and have mastered the use of technology, and especially Powerpoint, to supplement and enhance their presentations. While the oral presentations may not provide a clear representation of the depth of analysis the faculty would like, student papers included in the Portfolio do provide an indication of strong content. If the faculty continue to use this assessment activity, they need to work to define the level of expectation for the scholarly presentations to make the assessment activity coherent and useful.

### **Summary-Response Essays**

Review: Along with the Exit Essay, Portfolio, and Scholarly Presentations, students complete a Summary-Response Essay in the Senior Seminar. Students are given a timed assessment in which they must read and analyze an article written on a literary work that they are familiar with and then write a summary of the article (focusing on the thesis and main points) and a response to the article (if they agree or disagree with the article's thesis and why). Students are rated on a five point scale (5 = exceptional; 1 = unsatisfactory).

Analysis of the student Summary-Response Essays has been discouraging, revealing that students are generally not capable of identifying the thesis of the articles that the faculty has chosen or of summarizing the main points of those articles. In the one semester where faculty came together to holistically score the essays, only 2 of 6 students were able to discern the thesis and develop a thoughtful summary.

(Please see Document 35 Summary-Response Assessment.)

Analysis: The faculty has discussed the results of the Summary-Response Essay every semester, noting that the skills assessed in the activity are not actively taught in any of the classes in the program. In addition, the faculty has noted that the selected articles for the Summary-Response are written for an academic, not a student audience. The faculty has been reluctant to abandon the Summary-Response Essay as an assessment tool because it does provide a strong measure of critical thinking and writing skills and could be used along with an incoming assessment to gauge the level of growth. However, if the Summary-Response is going to be continued, faculty must find a way to make the assessment experience an accurate measure of undergraduate student learning.

#### IV. Assessment of Student Learning in the Writing Program

In the 1999-1999 academic year, a subset of the English faculty finalized the philosophy and mission of the Writing Program, which includes primarily ENC 1101 Composition I and ENC 1102 Composition II but also ENC 3213 Professional Writing and the Creative Writing courses (CRW 2100 Introduction to Fiction Writing; CRW 2300 Introduction to Poetry Writing; CRW 4120 Advanced Fiction Writing; and CRW 4320 Advanced Poetry Writing). In addition to the philosophy and mission, the faculty developed a clear set of Goals and Outcomes for these courses. However, strategies for assessing student learning in these courses have not been developed, primarily because of a lack of resources. With a large number of courses in the Writing Program taught by part-time faculty, assessment of student learning is all that much more important, but also that much more difficult. (Please see Documents 5 Writing Program Description and 8 Writing Program Goals).

Two activities that have been used over the last five years might be standardized and used as assessment strategies for any or all of the courses in the Writing Program, but especially Freshman Composition:

- **Portfolio Review:** students in the writing courses are often asked to compile their completed written assignments into a portfolio at the end of the semester. Each semester, on a rotating basis, select instructors could be asked to turn in their portfolios for review by the English Program. The review process could be used to assess student learning as well as to provide feedback to instructors on their teaching. If a portfolio review process is instigated, a standard format for the portfolio should be developed for ease of review and select outcomes should be targeted for assessment in a given year. In addition, the assignments for courses with large numbers of sections such as Freshman Composition or Professional Writing should have some level of standardization.
- **Summary-Response:** students are expected to complete a Summary-Response essay for their midterm and final in Composition I and II, though the articles used for the Summary-Response are left up to each individual instructor to select. The English Program could standardize the Summary-Response essays, providing a particular article for the Summary-Response activity. A selection of the students' essays could then be holistically scored, or perhaps assessed as part of the portfolio. Again, the results could be used both to assess student learning and to provide instructors feedback on their teaching.

These two assessment activities could provide a wealth of feedback and information on the achievement of the student learning outcomes in the Writing Program as well as to continue to strengthen the overall teaching in the program. The development of the assessment activities should work within the assessment of the General Education program and could become part of a larger assessment of effective written communication at the university.

Over the next five year period, the faculty will work to review and finalize the Learning Goals for the Writing Program as well as to develop and implement assessment activities. Faculty will review the results of this assessment and use this information to improve the Writing Program. For this project to be successful, the university must dedicate more resources to the English Program.

## V. Conclusion: Analysis and Recommendations

The English Program has laid the foundation for a high level of student learning and faculty support of the college and university in the areas of teaching, service, and scholarship. The overriding conclusion of this five year program review is that while a great deal of important work has been completed, the ability of the faculty in the program to continue and improve depends upon whether or not the university administration will provide the program with the support that it needs. Indeed, the accomplishments and success of the program, outlined in the remainder of this conclusion, are fragile and, without increased faculty and professional development resources, will very likely decline in the near future.

Over the last five years, the faculty in the English Program has provided the English majors with dynamic teaching of a wide variety of courses. From the team development of ENG 3014 Introduction to Literary and Cultural Studies and ENG 4930 Senior Seminar, to the development of a wide range of junior level readings courses in British and US Literature and the development of more specialized senior level seminars, the faculty has engaged in creating and offering a wide range of courses. The seminars, which provide students with an in depth, focused study on particular topics, range from a course entitled "Victorian Monstrosities" (where students read Arthur Conan Doyle, HG Wells, Oscar Wilde and others), to a course entitled "Shakespeare and the Art of War" (where students read Machiavelli, Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, and several histories), to a course entitled "Democratic Poetics" (where students read sociological studies of the rise of democracy and cultural studies of the creation of a democratic social structure along with literary texts), to an Interdisciplinary Literature course (which used a cultural studies approach to explore links between politics and popular culture imagery), to an Ethnic Studies course (which examined the political, cultural, and social construction of ethnic identity in a variety of contexts), to an Environmental Philosophies course and an Environmental Literature course. (Copies of all syllabi are included in a separate portfolio.)

Because the faculty in the program believe that a high level of expectation will allow students to reach their potentials in ways that surprise even themselves, the courses have been offered with a high level of rigor. In a recent article, Valen Johnson discussed a study completed at Duke University which reviewed the grades given in courses and in programs across the College of Arts and Sciences. The program with the highest grade point average, a 3.69, was Music; the program with the lowest grade point average, at 2.91, was Mathematics. The mean grade point average in the humanities was the highest at 3.54, with social sciences not far behind at 3.4, and the sciences and math well behind at 3.05. (Please see Document 36 GPA Article.) Significantly, the average grade point average in courses in the English Program at Florida Gulf Coast University is a 2.8, well below even the lowest grade point average at Duke. Clearly, the students at Florida Gulf Coast University do not have the same level of knowledge and abilities as those at Duke, but these statistics suggest that the faculty in the English Program is maintaining a high level of expectation. (Please see Document 37 Grade Distribution.)

Despite the rigor of the courses in the program, or perhaps because the rigor is complemented with very high levels of faculty support for the students, the students respond with a high level of satisfaction with the program. In an anonymous survey completed after graduation, students uniformly stated that they were "highly satisfied" with the Quality of Instruction, the Level of Intellectual Engagement, the Academic Standards, and with the Availability of Professors. When the students were asked to rank the contribution to student learning in relation to the faculty's willingness to provide individual instruction and to the level of faculty mentoring, students responded that these items provided a "substantial contribution." As one student stated in the comments: "I think that FGCU has gone above and beyond what is typically expected of students and professors—being challenged is not a negative thing; it creates an environment that focuses on student learning." Another student commented: "All the

English professors were very approachable—I received a lot of help—thanks.” (Please see Document 38 Student Assessments.)

The faculty support reaches beyond helping with course assignments. The English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta, has received enthusiastic support and has consequently grown and become very active. Students have had their work published in *Ampersand* and the *Mangrove Review*, and have even been given the opportunity to edit and compile an on-line journal. The high level of expectation across the program coupled with the high level of support and ongoing mentoring has retained the students in the program and led them to graduation within two and a half years. Students have matriculated in graduate programs in Communication at the University of Central Florida, in English at the University of Florida, and in Environmental Journalism at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Students have taken positions as web designers with engineering firms, as writers with real estate firms, as counselors working for the county, and as teachers in middle schools and high schools in the local region, the state, and in other states.

In addition, the faculty in the English Program has provided support to the Collegium of Integrated Learning, regularly teaching a wide range of courses and demonstrating a commitment to the College of Arts and Sciences. The faculty has also supported the Humanities Elective in the General Education Program, often teaching 55-60% of the elective courses offered. (Please see Document 21 Schedule of Classes.) The commitment to a high level of innovative and continually refined teaching is demonstrated through the teaching cell where a group of faculty meet weekly to discuss their syllabi, pedagogical strategies, assignments, and grading.

Finally, faculty has also demonstrated a commitment to the Writing Program, offering all of the classes on a regular basis to meet the needs of the students. The faculty has continuously refined their syllabi, trying out new texts and new approaches; participated in the Learning Academy, the university’s freshman learning community; and offered workshops on grading and assignments for part-time faculty. Each part-time faculty member is paired with a full-time faculty member and has occasional class observations for review of their teaching

Assessment of student learning in the English Program demonstrates a high level of achievement in relation to the targeted skills—critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, and the use of technology. On the other hand, this assessment also demonstrates a low level of achievement in relation to the primary content knowledge of the program—knowledge of US and British Literature—a fact corroborated in the Student Assessment (see Document 38 Student Assessment). The results of this assessment suggest that the program focus and the content knowledge outcomes are not designed to build on the strengths of the teaching in the program. The faculty has taken this period of self-reflection as an opportunity to engage in innovative development of the major, beginning the discussion of the program philosophy and core, the requirements in the program, and the learning outcomes. (Please see Document 39 English Program Revision.) This process will necessarily include revision of ENG 3014 and 4930, along with the assessment activities in the program. As part of this effort, the faculty will develop assessment mechanisms that they can support and maintain in order to provide regular feedback on the effectiveness of the program.

Perhaps a larger task will be to review and finalize the learning outcomes for the Writing Program and to develop assessment mechanisms. Because of the large numbers of part-time faculty in the program, this process should be collaborative and open so that the part-time faculty buy in to the assessment process. **Most importantly, however, the Writing Program must be given the resources that it needs to fulfill the task it has been assigned at the university.** With only 36% of Freshman Composition sections taught by full-time faculty, the program is well below the minimum goal of 50% set by the Modern Language Association and the National Council of Teachers of English; in the 2002-2003 academic year, without the addition of new lines and the increase in Freshman, this figure will fall below 30%. While a key

goal over the next five years will be the development of Assessment activities for the Writing Program, without increased support from the university these activities may not be completed as all of the available energy and time will be devoted to maintaining the course offerings; with such a large percentage of courses taught by part-time faculty, meaningful assessment is difficult if not impossible.

One of the primary strengths of the English program, and perhaps at the heart of the productivity of the faculty, is the collegial and collaborative approach that is taken in governance of the program. The team based approach that has been used for review and refinement of the major, for the development of outcomes and assessment activities, as well as for the development and review of syllabi has led to a coherency that is rare and that should be maintained as the faculty move into the next five years. In times when this collaborative approach has failed, the faculty has confronted the failure and developed clear procedures for moving forward.

The faculty has also demonstrated a high level of support of and commitment to the College of Arts and Sciences and the university. Faculty members have taken on leadership roles for university and college level committees, even though this commitment takes time away from other important activities. The faculty has demonstrated a commitment to the Collegium of Integrated Learning, the liberal studies core of the college. Finally, the faculty has engaged in service activities in the community, providing lectures, programs, and interviews; judging essay contests; contributing to round tables and forums; and serving on boards for citizens' organizations.

Finally, the faculty has been heavily involved in scholarship, producing a high number of quality publications even with decreased university support. Because scholarship is the key to maintaining currency in teaching, and because of the emphasis on innovative teaching and learning at Florida Gulf Coast University, the strong teaching and scholarship that have been hallmarks of the English program will be jeopardized if the university does not provide substantial and continuous professional development support. Significantly, student involvement in scholarship has decreased at the same time as university support, suggesting a correlation between the faculty's ability to continue scholarly activities which enhance student learning and involve students and the availability of professional development funds.

## Appendices

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5	Writing Program Description
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7	English Program Learning Goals
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