Texas A&M International University
Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)

Date Submitted: February 15, 2007

Assessment Period Covered (2006)

Academic Program/AES Unit: Master of Arts in English

Person(s) Preparing Review: Thomas R. Mitchell

Provide summary of the last cycle's use of results and changes implemented
This year we again had a limited number of students to graduate from the program (2 in the spring and 1 in the fall). The Graduate Advisor that we appointed as a result of the program evaluation for the previous year (2005-2006) has developed a tracking study and begun the process of identifying causes for not completing the program and of encouraging students to consider returning to the program.

Institutional Mission

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society … Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

Academic Program or Administrative/Educational Support Unit Mission

Department of Language & Literature: In unison with the institutional mission, this Department is dedicated to the promotion of intellectual and personal growth in students, with an emphasis on endowing them with flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing social, professional, economic, cultural, and political environments ushered in by this era of rapid technological change, information proliferation, and global interdependence. To achieve these aims, the Department is committed to the retention of a productive, professionally diverse and highly competent faculty involved in a wide range of academic endeavors.

Identify outcomes and the relationship to Strategic Plan

Outcome 1   **Is this outcome related to writing (QEP)?**   Yes
Graduates will synthesize and evaluate their knowledge of literary theory and criticism across genres.

Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 1
Goal 1: Develop, maintain, assess, and improve academic programs, administrative/educational support services and student services to admit, retain, and graduate students who achieve established learning outcomes designed to prepare them for success in chosen careers.

Identify Strategic Plan Objective related to Outcome 1
1.7 Establish and pursue student learning outcomes appropriate for each program with systematic assessment and use of results for continuous quality improvement.

Identify methods of assessment to be used
A portfolio of papers written for graduate English courses will be collected by the Graduate English advisor from each student completing -- or within 6 hours of completing -- the program. The papers will be evaluated by a team of graduate English faculty using a departmentally developed rubric.

Indicate when assessment will take place
Took Place: Early Spring Semester 2007
Will Take Place for 2007-2008: Early Spring Semester 2008

Criteria/Benchmark
At least 80% of the students evaluated will have an average score from "competent" to "excellent" on each of the evaluation criteria on the rubric related to their demonstrated ability to synthesize and evaluate their knowledge of literary theory and literary criticism.

Outcome 2   **Is this outcome related to writing (QEP)?** Yes
Graduates will employ a range of literary tools to identify, analyze, and synthesize literary genres.

Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 2
Goal 1: Develop, maintain, assess, and improve academic programs, administrative/educational support services and student services to admit, retain, and graduate students who achieve established learning outcomes designed to prepare them for success in chosen careers.

Identify Strategic Plan Objective related to Outcome 2
1.7 Establish and pursue student learning outcomes appropriate for each program with systematic assessment and use of results for continuous quality improvement.

Identify methods of assessment to be used
A portfolio of papers written for graduate English courses will be collected by the Graduate English advisor from each student completing -- or within 6 hours of completing -- the program. The papers will be evaluated by a team of graduate English faculty using a departmentally developed rubric.

Indicate when assessment will take place
Took Place: Early Spring Semester 2007
Will Take Place for 2007-2008: Early Spring Semester 2008

Criteria/Benchmark
At least 80% of the students evaluated will have an average score from "competent" to "excellent" on each of the evaluation criteria on the rubric related to their demonstrated ability to

deploy a range of literary tools to identify, analyze, synthesize literary genres.

Outcome 3   **Is this outcome related to writing (QEP)?** No
Eighty percent (80%) of the students who enroll in the program will complete it within four (4) years.

Identify Strategic Plan Goal related to Outcome 3
Goal 1: Develop, maintain, assess, and improve academic programs, administrative/educational support services and student services to admit, retain, and graduate students who achieve established learning outcomes designed to prepare them for success in chosen careers.

Identify Strategic Plan Objective related to Outcome 3
1.3 Increase student retention and graduation rates.

Identify methods of assessment to be used
The Graduate English advisor will compile a list of students who began the program in the Fall of 2002 or later and identify the progress of each student as of the end of Spring 2006.

Indicate when assessment will take place
Took Place: Early Spring Semester 2007
Will Take Place for 2007-2008: Early Spring Semester 2008

Criteria/Benchmark
Eighty percent (80%) of the students who enrolled in the program in the Fall of 2002 will have earned the M.A. in English.

When (term/date) was assessment conducted?
Outcome 1
Spring 2007 / February 5-8, 2007

Outcome 2
Spring 2007 / February 5-8, 2007

Outcome 3
Spring 2007 / January 22-26, 2007

What were the results attained (raw data)?

Outcome 1: Graduates will synthesize and evaluate their knowledge of literary theory and criticism across genres.

Portfolios from the three students who graduated in 2006 were examined by three graduate English faculty members. Two students submitted 2 papers, and one student submitted only 1 paper. A total of 5 papers were thus evaluated. Each faculty member rated each paper for evidence of the student's ability "to synthesize and evaluate their knowledge of literary theory and criticism across genres." They used the following rubric:
   5 = Excellent
   4 = Above Expectation
   3 = Acceptable (Competent)
   2 = Below Expectation
   1 = Unacceptable
Of the 5 papers evaluated for "Outcome 1," 4 papers were rated a "3" by all three reviewers, and 1 paper was rated a "4" by all three reviewers.

Conclusion: All three students demonstrated competence in this program outcome, and one student exceeded expectations.

Outcome 2: Graduates will employ a range of literary tools to identify, analyze, and synthesize literary genres.

Portfolios from the three students who graduated in 2006 were examined by 3 graduate English faculty members. Two students submitted 2 papers, and 1 student submitted only 1 paper. A total of 5 papers were thus evaluated. Each faculty member rated each paper for evidence of the student's ability "to employ a range of literary tools to identify, analyze, and synthesize literary genres." They used the following rubric:
   5 = Excellent
   4 = Above Expectation
   3 = Acceptable (Competent)
   2 = Below Expectation
   1 = Unacceptable

Of the 5 papers evaluated for "Outcome 2," 3 papers received a score of 3 from all three faculty reviewers. One paper received a score of 4 from two reviewers and a score of 5 from the other reviewer. Another paper, written by the same student, received a score of 4 from all three of the faculty reviewers.

Conclusion: All three students demonstrated competence in this program outcome, and one student exceeded expectations.

Outcome 3: **Eighty percent (80%) of the students who enroll in the program will complete it within four (4) years.**

Four years ago, in the Fall of 2002, nine students were enrolled in the M.A. in English program. Of those nine, five (56%) had graduated by Fall 2006, four years later. One additional student was still active and pending passing his comprehensive exam, which he has failed once. Of the three who did not complete the program, one moved out of town. None of the three who failed to finish the program had completed more than 6 hours in the program.

Who (specify names) conducted analysis of data?
Outcome 1
Dr. Sean Chadwell, Dr. Kevin Lindberg, and Dr. Thomas R. Mitchell

Outcome 2
Dr. Sean Chadwell, Dr. Kevin Lindberg, and Dr. Thomas R. Mitchell

Outcome 3
Dr. Thomas R. Mitchell

When were the results and analysis shared and with whom (department chair, supervisor, staff, external stakeholders)? Submit minutes with data analysis to assessment@tamiu.edu (Please use Minutes Template located on the Project INTEGRATE web page.)

The entire English faculty of the Department of Language and Literature was sent a copy of this report on February 8, 2007 and asked to provide comments and recommendations. No additional recommendations were made.

NOTE: Submit all assessment documentation (i.e., surveys, rubrics, course exams with embedded questions, etc.) to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning.

Use of Results: Indicate whether criteria were met/not met and what changes, if any, have been identified based on the data collected?

Outcome 1

Met X   Not Met

Provide narrative: Portfolios from the three students who graduated in 2006 were examined by three graduate English faculty members. Two students submitted 2 papers, and one student submitted only 1 paper. A total of 5 papers were thus evaluated. Each faculty member rated each paper for evidence of the student's ability "to synthesize and evaluate their knowledge of literary theory and criticism across genres." They used the following rubric:
    5 = Excellent
    4 = Above Expectation
    3 = Acceptable (Competent)
    2 = Below Expectation
    1 = Unacceptable
Of the 5 papers evaluated for "Outcome 1," 4 papers were rated a "3" by all three reviewers, and 1 paper was rated a "4" by all three reviewers.

Conclusion: All three students demonstrated competence in this program outcome, and one student exceeded expectations.

Outcome 2
 Met X   Not Met

Provide narrative: Portfolios from the three students who graduated in 2006 were examined by 3 graduate English faculty members. Two students submitted 2 papers, and 1 student submitted only 1 paper. A total of 5 papers were thus evaluated. Each faculty member rated each paper for evidence of the student's ability "to employ a range of literary tools to identify, analyze, and synthesize literary genres." They used the following rubric:
    5 = Excellent
    4 = Above Expectation
    3 = Acceptable (Competent)
    2 = Below Expectation
    1 = Unacceptable
Of the 5 papers evaluated for "Outcome 2," 3 papers received a score of 3 from all three faculty reviewers. One paper received a score of 4 from two reviewers and a score of 5 from the other reviewer. Another paper, written by the same student, received a score of 4 from all three of the faculty reviewers.

Conclusion: All three students demonstrated competence in this program outcome, and one student exceeded expectations.

Outcome 3
 Met   Not Met X

Because only 56% of the students enrolled in the program four years ago completed the program with a M.A. in English, we failed to meet our goal of an 80% graduation rate. In reviewing the records of all of our students during this four year period (not just those enrolled in the Fall of 2002, which we tracked for this outcome statement), it became clear that few leave the program because of grades. One preliminary finding is that some students try graduate school and decide that graduate work is not appropriate for them; another is that some students have transferred to another graduate degree program at the university (the M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction) which consists of 18 hours of "content" courses as well as C&I courses; another is that some students meet their educational goals before earning the degree (transferring to a Ph.D. program, supplementing another master's degree with 18 graduate hours in English to meet SACS teaching credential requirements); and, finally, another is that some students experience personal problems that make completing the degree difficult, if not impossible.

Given the nature of our students (most with families and a full-time job) and the educational goals of our students, our program goal of having 80% complete the program within 4 years is too unrealistic and should be lowered.

Though we should establish a more realistic program outcome goal, we should also redouble and improve our efforts to orient students to graduate work and to encourage them to return to the program when we note a lapse in enrollment.

A follow-up questionnaire identifying reasons for withdrawing from the program should accompany these efforts so that we can better identify how we can improve student retention.

How have these data-based changes improved your program/unit?

The study from 2005-2006 submitted in the spring of 2006 led to the appointment of an unpaid graduate advisor who has developed a tracking study and who is in the process of re-recruiting select students back into the program in order to complete the degree.

Based on this year's assessment of outcomes, we will strive to do improve the program in the following ways.

1. Increase the number of students who demonstrate a more than competent score for "Outcome 1."
2. Increase the number of students who demonstrate a more than competent score for "Outcome 2."
3. Update the tracking study and contact each semester students who have begun the graduate program in English and fail to enroll in a graduate English course during a fall or spring semester – an early sign that they may fail to complete the program. Responsibility for updating the tracking study and for contacting students will reside with the English graduate advisor.

Are resources affected by the changes identified in Section II?   Yes   No X

If so, specify the effect(s) using the chart below:

Funding	Physical	Other	
New resources required		Primarily faculty/staff time	
		University rule/procedure change only	
		Other: Enter text here	

Provide a narrative description and justification for requested resources (include linkage to Strategic Plan)
Enter text here

Identify proposed outcomes for the next assessment cycle:
Continuation of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for continuation): Enter text here
New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below): Enter text here
Modification of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for modification): Enter text here

Are resources requested a priority for the academic program/AES unit?
 Yes   No
Comments:
Enter text here

If funding, physical or other resources were requested, what is the impact of the budget decisions on the academic program/AES unit?
Enter text here