

**Texas A&M International University
Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)
of Academic Programs**

Program: ba-elar-8-12

Assessment Period Covered: March 1, 2009 to January 31, 2010

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The Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review for Academic Programs is directed at Goal 1: Academics of the Texas A&M International University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan:

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 their chosen careers.

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 Mission

In unison with the institutional mission, the 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.

Provide summary of the last cycle's use of results and changes implemented

While there were a few outstanding examples of student writing, program faculty were generally dissatisfied with the results in every category of the QEP rubric. Specifically – and this is especially troubling – ENGL program students performed unacceptably in both Discipline-Specific Writing (at an average of 1.9 on the rubric) and Research (1.8).

Program faculty meeting to discuss the results – Dr. Sean Chadwell, Dr. Wanda Creaser, Dr. Paul Niemeyer, and Dr. Faridoun Farrokh – agreed that the scores were unacceptably low in key areas (and, indeed, that they were too low overall). Faculty generally agreed that better preparing ENGL majors for upper-level coursework (and specifically the expectations and demands of writing for literary study) should be made a priority. It was proposed that program faculty design a 3000-level course, prerequisite before taking more than 6 hours at the 4000-level, whose learning outcomes are tailored to discipline-specific writing and research conventions. The course, it was suggested, could replace one of the two additional required sophomore-level literature classes, could be open in subject matter provided it addressed writing and researching on poetry, the novel, short fiction, and drama.

Unfortunately, a severe disruption of program faculty prevented this new 3000-level ENGL course from being developed. The plan should be implemented in the coming year; as described above, the course's name should be along the lines of "Writing and Researching in Literary Study." The course and a corresponding change to the program degree plan should be proposed to the Department, College, and University Curriculum Committees before the end of the Spring, 2010 semester. Starting as early as the fall, 2010 semester, one section of the course will be offered each semester.

Selected list of program-level intended student learning outcomes (It is recommended that programs rotate through their entire set of outcomes over a multi-year period. Programs may focus on one or two outcomes each year, as deemed appropriate.

1. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the evolutionary stages in the development of the English language and its national and regional variances, and the variations between American and British English.
2. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the different literatures in English, including the emergence of major trends, movements, and standards of taste and creativity, as well as the knowledge of the social, political, and historical events that have been contributory factors to the emergence of such trends.
3. Students will exhibit the ability to make qualitative judgments about literary expression and to apply the resultant critical acumen to the use of language commensurate with professional standards.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to use a variety of strategies to achieve rhetorical intent and effectiveness in writing

Section I: Planning and Implementation

Outcome(s)

Students will demonstrate an awareness of the different literatures in English, including the emergence of major trends, movements, and standards of taste and creativity, as well as the knowledge of the social, political, and historical events that have been contributory factors to the emergence of such trends.

Please indicate if the outcome(s) is(are) related to writing (QEP).

Methods of assessment to be used:

We will continue to evaluate – as we already do for the QEP – portfolios of senior-level writing collected in the capstone course, ENGL 4399. After QEP-rubric scoring, members of the ENGL program discuss strengths and weaknesses of the essays and plan curricular changes accordingly.

Indicate when assessment(s) will take place

December, 2009- January 2010.

Criteria/Benchmark(s): *[Specify, if deemed appropriate to assess outcome(s). Criteria/benchmark(s) may be optional, especially if qualitative measures are used for data collection.]*

We expect that, in terms of the rubric – specifically in regards to the analytical category called “discipline specific writing” -- that all of our students will score at or above a B level. That expectation – while it isn’t a benchmark in the strict sense – structures our ensuing discussions.

Section II: Analysis of Results

What were the results attained?

Describe the primary results or findings from your analysis of the information collected. This section should include an explanation of any strength(s) or weakness (es) of the program suggested by the results.

In our 4399 Senior Seminar, 18 total students were examined on the basis of their writing ability and their knowledge of literary information. Each student submitted a portfolio of three papers, which were rated by at least two professors. 6 of the 18 students were English majors earning a certificate 8-12. The papers were rated on various criteria with a score of 4 being the maximum. The composite holistic score for the 6 majors was 2.84, and the range went from 2.0 to 4.0. That holistic score equates roughly to B, which meets the expectations stated above.

The students’ knowledge of literary elements was examined through a standardized test, MFAT, which is often used by US universities. The test examines several criteria, including students’ knowledge of literature prior to 1900, literature after 1900, literary analysis, and literary history. The total scores ranged from a minimum of 120 to a possible 200. The 6 majors scored an average of 130, with a range from 120 to 151.

What were the conclusions reached?

Should include a brief description of the procedure used for reaching the conclusion(s) based on the evidence collected and describe the process used to disseminate the information to other individuals. For example, if the discussion took place during the annual spring retreat, include a summary from those deliberations using the Meeting Minutes template found on the Project INTEGRATE web page at <http://www.tamtu.edu/integrate/docs/Minutes-Template.doc>. Once completed, submit the minutes to assessment@tamtu.edu.

The committee concluded that there is a wide gap between the students' overall performance in writing and their performance in the content-based test. While the statistical sample is too small to be scientific, some conclusions can be drawn: On the one hand, there is a slight increase in the students' performance in writing as compared to last year, while there is still a notable discrepancy between that and the students' performance in knowledge of literary elements. On the other hand, students did better in their knowledge of literature prior to 1900 than in literature after 1900. This is most likely due to the fact that the department lacked faculty specialized in that period, a need that fortunately has been made up for this year. Hence, the committee is quite optimistic about more satisfactory results in that area in the near future.

Describe the action plan formulated. (The plan may be multi-year in nature.)

Based on the conclusion(s), describe the action plan to be implemented to improve or maintain student learning, including a timeline for implementation.

Now that we have faculty specializing in more contemporary literature, it should be easier to offer more courses to majors and thus to strengthen their knowledge in that field. We will also continue monitoring the progress and the performance of our majors in both writing and knowledge of literary theory, history, and criticism.

Section III: Resources

Resource(s) to implement action plan:

Describe the resources that will be needed to implement the action plan. Also indicate if the resources are currently available, or if additional funds will be needed to obtain these resources.

Funding

- New Resources Required
- Reallocation of current funds

Physical

- New or reallocated space

Other

- Primarily faculty/staff time
- University/rule procedure change only

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

No new resources needed at the present time

Identify proposed outcomes for the next assessment cycle:

Continuation of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for continuation):

This outcome is the core element in our thinking about the degree program. It can be measured in a variety of ways.

We will continue with the present outcomes, since we think we still need to strengthen them.

New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below):

Modification of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for modification):

Date Completed: March 26, 2010