

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

Program: BSIS-English Language Arts and Reading Grades 4-8 Certification

Assessment Period Covered: March 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009

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List Other Program Faculty:

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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

The last cycle's analysis – which may have gone incompletely reported for this degree program owing to some confusion about the AIER submission process – focused mainly on portfolios produced in ENGL 4399, the common capstone course for all ENGL programs. Moreover, the relatively low number of students in the program (which graduates fewer than 5 each year), makes analysis-based conclusions difficult (if not impossible). Still, by looking at the BS-ELAR-4-8 students alongside our other ENGL program majors in 4399, we can gauge their relative strengths and weaknesses; because we have opted to unify the outcome goals for all ENGL program majors (see the last paragraph in this section, below), we also hold the 4-8 certification majors to more rigorous disciplinary standards than mere teacher certification exams could measure.

Our concerns with the writing produced in 4399 echo previous years: the few results we see are uneven and hard to characterize. While discipline-specific writing is weaker than their standard ENGL major counterparts, little else distinguishes their writing, which hovers around satisfactory (but below our perhaps idealized goals).

At last year's retreat, we decided to unify the outcomes for all ENGL majors, regardless of whether or not they are in certification programs (this is partly owing to their ongoing success at the TExES – it is no longer a very meaningful measure for us).

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 of literatures in English, 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.
2. 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.
3. 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): *Identify the outcome(s) that will be focused upon this year.*

Students will demonstrate the ability to use a variety of strategies to achieve rhetorical intent and effectiveness in writing.

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 to 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 weakness of the essays and plan curricular changes accordingly.

Indicate when assessment(s) will take place

December 2008- January 2009

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.*

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 given the Criteria/Benchmark statement in Section I, above – ENGL program students performed unacceptably in both Discipline-Specific Writing (at an average of 1.9 on the rubric) and Research (1.8).

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 at <http://www.tamtu.edu/integrate/docs/Minutes-Template.doc>. Once completed, submit the minutes to assessment@tamtu.edu.*

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 work on designing 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.

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.

Effective immediately, program faculty will begin designing a new 3000-level ENGL course, described above, whose name will be along the lines of “Writing and Researching in Literary Study.” The course and a corresponding change to the program degree plan will be proposed to the Department, College, and University Curriculum Committees before the end of the Spring, 2009 semester. Starting as early as the fall 2009 semester, one section of the course will be offered each semester.

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
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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 additional resources are required.

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.

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

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