

# ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

Bachelor of Arts with a Major in English

**Instructional Degree Program**

Spring 2004

**Assessment Period Covered**

July 20, 2004

**Date Submitted**

## **Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose Linkage:**

### **Institutional Mission Reference:**

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, is committed to the preparation of students for leadership roles in their chosen profession and in increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University is 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.

### **College/University Goal(s) Supported:**

To increase "(1) students' ability to communicate through the use of the written and spoken word; (2) their knowledge and appreciation of culture, fine arts, social integration; and (3) self realization. The College [COAS] also prepares students for a variety of professions and roles by providing a broad-based liberal arts education."

### **Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes:**

- 1.** Graduates will be able to write a documented essay that is free of distracting errors and that demonstrates the ability to integrate secondary sources appropriately into the essay.
- 2.** Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of literature that compares favorably to that of graduates from similar programs in the nation.
- 3.** Graduates will be successful in obtaining admission to graduate or professional programs.

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## **Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:**

1. Graduates will be able to write a documented essay that is free of distracting errors and that demonstrates the ability to integrate secondary sources appropriately into the essay.

## **First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **1a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

The research papers of English majors classified as seniors will be sampled from 3000-4000-level classes initially and then later exclusively from English 4399, Senior Seminar. Using the Analytical Rubric for English Papers (1) developed by the department, a team of faculty members will evaluate the papers from errors and for use of secondary sources. At least 85% of the seniors will receive scores of "satisfactory" or higher.

### **1a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Two English professors performed an analytical analysis of a randomly selected sample of 7 research papers (2) written by graduating senior English majors for 4000-level English classes. They read and scored each paper at least twice. Using a 4-point scale (with 4 being excellent, 3 acceptable, 2 unacceptable, and 1 totally inadequate), they arrived at the following results (3).

Overall: Five (71.4%) of the students scored a 3 or higher, with 2 scoring a 3.5 and 3 scoring a 3. Two (28.6%) scored below a 3, with 2 scoring a 2.0.

Analysis: In addition to the overall score, papers were evaluated for 6 qualities. The 6 qualities, followed parenthetically by the number and percent of students scoring a 3 or higher for that quality, were as follows:

Organization & Focus (4 / 57.1%), Development (3 / 42.9%), Logic & Coherence (3 / 42.9%), Syntax & Style (5 / 71.4%), Mechanics (4 / 57.1%), and Documentation (5 / 71.4%).

### **1a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

Although the results from spring 2004 have improved from spring 2003, 5 out of 7 (71.4%) papers written by senior English majors received an overall score of 3 or higher versus 5 of 9 (55.5%), respectively, it still falls short of our goal of 85% of graduating seniors writing a satisfactory paper. Though the sub-scores for the 6 analytical criteria differed slightly, the scores nevertheless suggest that students need to work more on organizing and developing their ideas logically, coherently and mechanically. English

faculty met on April 21 and on June 29 and discussed ways in which they can help students write better course papers. An increased emphasis on student-faculty writing conferences during the writing process will begin fall 2004. Also, the faculty decided to revise the Analytical Rubric for Senior English Papers to replace the 'yes/no' section with a 4-point scale in order to discriminate student skills more accurately. The revised Analytical Rubric for Senior English Papers will be used for the fall 2004 assessment.

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## **Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:**

2. Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of literature that compares favorably to that of graduates from similar programs in the nation.

## **First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **2a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

Graduates will score at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile or above overall on a norm-referenced subject test of literature (MFAT).

### **2a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Seven undergraduate senior English majors took the Major Field Assessment Exam (MFAT) published by ETS. The MFAT for Literature in English was revised in early 2003, and thus MFAT does not yet have national norms.

Overall, English graduates scored an average of 142.8 (Scale: 120-200), The 4 analytical categories producing sub-scores (Scale: 20-100) follow (4):

Literature before 1900	41.3 Av.
Literature after 1900	48.7 Av.
Literary Analysis	44.5 Av.
Literary History and Identification	42.0 Av

Additional "Assessment Indicators" are provided for 8 key areas. The areas and the overall results follow, ranked from high to low by percentage of questions answered correctly:

British & American Lit. 1901-1945	52.8%
Literature in English since 1945	51.5%
American Literature to 1900	48.2%
Identification	41.3%
British Literature pre-1660	39.5%
Literary Theory	35.8%
British Literature 1660-1900	34.0%
Literary History	32.8%

The G.P.A. of undergraduates did not seem to be a good indicator of MFAT results.

## **2a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

Without national norms with which to compare the performance of our students, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the meaning of the results that we have. These will have to await the emergence of patterns over a few years of testing. Nevertheless, some provisional conclusions seem justified – for this group of seniors, at least. First, the range of difference on sub-scores (41.3 to 48.7) is sufficiently narrow to suggest that in the broadest divisions of our discipline our students do not have any standout weaknesses – or strengths. Second, the “assessment indicators” which produce a score for more narrow categories of our discipline suggest that our current graduates are stronger in 20<sup>th</sup> century literature than they are in pre-20<sup>th</sup> century literature, that they are slightly stronger in American than in British literature, and that they are weakest in literary history, British literature from 1660-1900 and literary theory, all of which scored very closely together. The English faculty adopted a new degree plan for the B.A. in English for 2003-2004. This new plan requires that students take courses in each of the major historical areas of British and American literature. This change was taken to insure that each graduate had a balanced knowledge of British and American literature. We seem to have had some success in that there was an increase in the British and American Literature Assessment Indicator from 48.4% in 2003 to 52.8% in 2004. Last year we predicted that our students’ low scores in British Literature 1660-1900 would rise since we offered two courses in that area this year, but the scores did not go up (34.0% in spring 2004 and 38.8% in 2003). The faculty met on June 29 and April 21, 2004, and agreed to place greater emphases on literary history, British Literature 1660-1900 and literary theory. We will also be offering two courses in British Literature in fall 2004.

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## **Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:**

**3.** Graduates will be successful in obtaining admission to graduate or professional programs.

## **First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **3a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

60% of graduates who seek entrance into graduate programs in English will be admitted. A post-graduate survey conducted yearly will be conducted to collect this information.

### **3a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Two (100 %) of the May 2004 graduates with a B.A. in English have applied for graduate school and have been admitted.

### **3a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

The program faculty met on April 21, 2004 and are advising all graduating seniors to consider continuing their education at the graduate level.

## SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>LOCATION/Special Instructions</b>
(1) Analytical Rubric For English Papers	
(2) Random Sample of Senior English Papers	Essays located in the Department of Language and Literature, Chair's office, KL 428
(3) Results Analytical Rubric for English Papers	
(4) Results MFAT Major Field Tests	
(5) Results MFAT Assessment Indicators	