

## 2012-2013 Annual Program Assessment Report

Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the Associate Dean of your College and the assessment office. You may submit a separate report for each program which conducted assessment activities.

**College: Humanities**

**Department: English**

**Program: Graduate Studies**

**Assessment liaison: RosaMaria Chacon**

**1. Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s) (optional).** Provide a brief overview of this year's assessment plan and process.

The four-member Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) – which includes the directors of the Creative Writing option and the Rhetoric and Composition Theory option, the Graduate Advisor, and the previous graduate advisor who stands in for Literature and provides some consistency from the Fall semester (2012) – assessed the graduate program's common SLO #3. To this end, a rubric was created and a random sample of essays was collected from a graduate elective course (English 623).

Common Graduate SLO #3: "Students will produce advanced analyses and/or creative work that take into account current schools of aesthetic, rhetorical, literary, critical, and historical methodology and are informed by disciplinary standards appropriate to their option."

**2. Assessment Buy-In.** Describe how your chair and faculty were involved in assessment related activities. Did department meetings include discussion of student learning assessment in a manner that included the department faculty as a whole?

During the previous year (2011-2012), our assessment activities and discussions were often conducted with all department faculty during monthly department meetings. Unfortunately, the English Department found this method to be rather unwieldy and unmanageable. This is particularly true since the English Department has five options with an additional graduate program in Rhetoric and Composition. This has resulted in 6 different 5-year plans, which can be confusing and unwieldy for all (whole) department discussions.

Therefore, this year (2012-2013), the English Department tried something different. At the beginning of each semester, the department chair met with each option head and the assessment coordinator (liaison) to discuss assessment plans and tasks. After these meetings, each option head met with their committees and conducted assessment. These 6 committees included 28 different faculty members (out of a total of

32 full time faculty). Thus, almost all English Department faculty were directly involved in assessment. Doing our assessment in this manner enabled us to conduct assessment more effectively in a focused effort.

In addition, the English department did conduct (in October 2012) one all faculty discussion and consensus re the adoption of a new rubric for assessment of Common Undergraduate SLO #3: Students will demonstrate knowledge of creative, literary, linguistic, and/or rhetorical theories. This SLO and rubric are shared by several options.

3. **Student Learning Outcome Assessment Project.** Answer items a-f for each SLO assessed this year. If you assessed an additional SLO, copy and paste items a-f below, BEFORE you answer them here, to provide additional reporting space.

**3a. Which Student Learning Outcome was measured this year?**

Common Graduate SLO #3: “Students will produce advanced analyses and/or creative work that take into account current schools of aesthetic, rhetorical, literary, critical, and historical methodology and are informed by disciplinary standards appropriate to their option.”

**3b. Does this learning outcome align with one or more of the university’s Big 5 Competencies? (Delete any which do not apply)**

- Critical Thinking
- Written Communication
- Information Literacy

**3c. What direct and/or indirect instrument(s) were used to measure this SLO?**

The following rubric was created for Common Graduate SLO #3 (“Students will produce advanced analyses and/or creative work that take into account current schools of aesthetic, rhetorical, literary, critical, and historical methodology and are informed by disciplinary standards appropriate to their option”), and the four members of the committee were asked to assess student essays according to the rubric.

<b>5: Excellent</b>	<b>4: More than satisfactory</b>	<b>3: satisfactory</b>	<b>2: Less than satisfactory</b>	<b>1: Not demonstrated</b>
<b>Work effectively engages with the issues and accurately uses theory and terminologies appropriate to professional discourse. Work is thorough and demonstrates in-depth knowledge. Consistent use of conventions appropriate to the medium.</b>	<b>Work engages with the issues and uses some theory and some terminologies appropriate to professional discourse. Work is clear and demonstrates some knowledge. In general, use of conventions appropriate to the medium.</b>	<b>Work may engage with the issues and show awareness of theory and terminologies appropriate to the professional discourse, but occasionally misuses them. Work is uneven and may demonstrate lack of knowledge. Uneven use of conventions appropriate to the medium.</b>	<b>Work engages in a way that demonstrates some awareness of the issues. Work lacks clear sense of theory and terminologies appropriate to the professional discourse, and minimally engages with these elements. Inappropriate use of conventions appropriate to the medium.</b>	<b>Work does not address the issues or engage with appropriate theories or terminologies. Work is incomplete and incoherent, with mechanically flawed sentence structure. Inappropriate use or no use of conventions appropriate to the medium.</b>

**3d. Describe the assessment design methodology:** For example, was this SLO assessed longitudinally (same students at different points) or was a cross-sectional comparison used (Comparing freshmen with seniors)? If so, describe the assessment points used.

Students were assessed at a single point in time during their matriculation through our program. English 623 is a seminar in the theory, forms, traditions and techniques of prose fiction, so it was particularly relevant to this SLO.

**3e. Assessment Results & Analysis of this SLO:** Provide a summary of how the results were analyzed and highlight findings from the collected evidence.

The committee assessed a random sample of 20 essays from English 623 (Fall 2012). Each committee member independently read five essays and assessed them according to the rubric. The scores assigned by different committee members indicated a certain consistency in the application of the rubric. The scores were as follows: Excellent = 25%, More Than Satisfactory = 40%, Satisfactory = 30%, Less Than Satisfactory = 5%.

The committee was encouraged with the fact that 95% of the students scored at least satisfactory in their performance of Common Graduate SLO #3. In our minds, this indicates that our students show a solid awareness of the theory and terminology appropriate to the professional discourse, and they are able to use conventions appropriate to the medium. Furthermore, 65% of the students demonstrated a more than satisfactory or excellent performance in these areas, which indicates that many of our students show a strong command and in-depth knowledge of theory and terminology appropriate to the professional discourse and conventions appropriate to the medium. A very small sample (5%) performed less than satisfactory.

On the other hand, nearly a third (30%) of the students were only satisfactory, which, as stated in the rubric, indicates that they may have misused theory and terminologies or showed an uneven use of conventions appropriate to the medium. The committee felt that while these students may be able to demonstrate knowledge of the theory, terminologies, and conventions, they showed difficulty in putting them into practice. The committee agreed that more work must be done to address the needs of these students.

**3f. Use of Assessment Results of this SLO:** Describe how assessment results were used to improve student learning. Were assessment results from previous years or from this year used to make program changes in this reporting year? (Possible changes include: changes to course content/topics covered, changes to course sequence, additions/deletions of courses in program, changes in pedagogy, changes to student advisement, changes to student support services, revisions to program SLOs, new or revised assessment instruments, other academic programmatic changes, and changes to the assessment plan.)

The positive results from the assessment affirmed that our program should continue to promote advanced analyses and/or creative work that take into account current schools of aesthetic, rhetorical, literary, critical, and historical methodology and are informed by disciplinary standards appropriate to their option. The fact that nearly a third of the students sampled were only satisfactory could be used to encourage instructors in our program to further emphasize the application of the students' knowledge of current schools of aesthetic, rhetorical, literary, critical, and historical methodology and disciplinary standards appropriate to their option. Assigning shorter projects that would lead up to the longer papers could potentially result in more emphasis. The committee could look at this possibility in the future.

**4. Assessment of Previous Changes:** Present documentation that demonstrates how the previous changes in the program resulted in improved student learning.

N/A

**5. Changes to SLOs?** Please attach an updated course alignment matrix if any changes were made. (Refer to the Curriculum Alignment Matrix Template, [http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms\\_guides.html](http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms_guides.html).)

N/A

**6. Assessment Plan.** Evaluate the effectiveness of your 5 year assessment plan. How well did it inform and guide your assessment work this academic year? What process is used to develop/update the 5 year assessment plan? Please attach an updated 5 year assessment plan for 2013-2018. (Refer to Five Year Planning Template, plan B or C, [http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms\\_guides.html](http://www.csun.edu/assessment/forms_guides.html).)

Assessment work in the English Department is always completely guided and aligned with the 5 year Assessment Plans (all six of them). We begin with the plans and stay with them. The only changes we ever have are in small supplemental tasks, which are not part of the actual assessment work. The changes are generally necessitated by an inability to fully complete a supplemental task due to organizational parameters, and are accounted for in our Annual Assessment Reports.

The English Department has updated or made adjustments in some of the Assessment Plans based on 1) discovery of previous errors in writing the initial 5 year Plans and 2) the overwhelming workload necessitated by six different, comprehensive 5 year Assessment Plans. In completing a self-study, writing six 5 year Assessment Plans, and conducting assessment all in one year (during 2010-2011) in addition to regular teaching, service, research and administrative duties, the English Department was quite swamped by work. Returning to the 5 year plans, on a year by year basis, we discover inadvertent errors and overwhelming assessment workloads. Therefore, we make small adjustments that will either correct our previous errors and/or alleviate some of the workload. During 2012-2013 adjustments were made to the Honors and Graduate option Assessment Plans. The corrected plans were sent to Gregory Mena, Marilyn Filbeck, and Bonnie Paller February 16, 2013.

**7. Has someone in your program completed, submitted or published a manuscript which uses or describes assessment activities in your program?** Please provide citation or discuss.

No.

**8. Other information, assessment or reflective activities or processes not captured above.**

**Outcomes for Special Tasks for 2012-2013 Assessment:**

1. The MA exam in Literature (English 697C) was modified to better serve our students, and a grading rubric was designed to assist both the students taking the test and the faculty evaluating the exams. The exam is no longer in the pilot phase.
2. GSC reviewed the length of time conditionally accepted graduate students take to get classified and found that it was not an excessive burden on the program.
3. GSC reviewed the effectiveness of the Verbal portion of the newly redesigned GRE and found that it was still a relevant admissions requirement for our program.
4. GSC reviewed the entrance GPA of incoming graduate students and the length of time they take to get classified and found no direct correlation.
5. GSC reviewed different aspects of the graduate program for optimization, including course offerings and sequences, and found that no significant changes need to be made at this time.
6. GSC reviewed some assessment materials for utility and flexibility, and decided to continue with our current assessment plan.