2017-2018 Annual Program Assessment Report

College: Humanities

Department: English

Program: Undergraduate

Assessment Liaison: Scott Andrews

1. A. \_\_\_XX\_\_\_ Measured Student Work.

B. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Analyzed Results of Measurement.

C. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Applied Results of Analysis to Program Review/Curriculum/Revision.

2. Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s):

**Undergraduate** The English Department continued to assess the Common Undergraduate SLO #5: Students will analyze culturally diverse texts. Student work was directly assessed by members of the Department Literature Committee. The program was assessed relative to this SLO by surveying upper division literature courses taught in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 for indications of diversity within their reading assignments.

This SLO was chosen for continued assessment because of problems with an earlier method of assessment. In the previous effort, an assessment of student work conducted by the Literature Committee was supervised by one an instructor for a course that supplied that examples of student work. Other problems were encountered in that assessment process, but that deviation from assessment guidelines was sufficient to warrant a repeat effort.

Students papers were randomly selected from three classes offered in Fall 2017: two sections of ENGL 311 History of African American Literature and ENGL 369 Gay Male Writers. These courses meet the English Department requirement for 3 units in Literatures of Cultural Diversity.

A class also found in that category, ENGL 314 American Indian Literature, was not included in the assessment because its instructor is the Assessment Liaison.

A total of 12 examples of student work were randomly selected from the three courses mentioned above. A rubric for that assessment is included in this report. The Assessment Liaison and members of the Literature Committee discussed the intent of the SLO. As stated, the SLO suggests students will analyze culturally diverse texts, but it does not suggest that they are expected to analyze them well. Those involved with this process decided that the quality of the analysis would be part of the assessment. The SLO also has the potential ambiguity about the subject of the student analysis: Are students conducting conventional literary analysis of texts that just happen to be diverse (as deemed by their instructors and the English Department), or are students analyzing the qualities of those texts that qualify them as diverse. The readers for this assessment opted for the latter, as can be seen in the rubric.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5. Excellent | 4: More than satisfactory | 3: Satisfactory | 2: Less than satisfactory | 1: Not demonstrated |
| The student insightfully analyzes the text with explicit awareness of the aesthetic or ideological qualities that define its inclusion in a course on “literatures of cultural diversity.” | The student coherently analyzes the text with apparent awareness of the aesthetic or ideological qualities that define its inclusion in a course on “literatures of cultural diversity.” | The student analyzes the text with some awareness of how the text demonstrates aesthetic or ideological qualities that define its inclusion in a course on “literatures of cultural diversity.” | The student analyzes the text but offers no clear awareness that the text demonstrates aesthetic or ideological qualities that define its inclusion in a course on “literatures of cultural diversity.” | The student fails to adequately analyze the text and/or demonstrates confusion about the aesthetic or ideological qualities that define its inclusion in a course on “literatures of cultural diversity.” |

Four readers (including the Assessment Liaison) provided scores on a scale of 1 (not demonstrated) to 5 (excellent). The scores were:

1. 3.00

2. 2.75

3. 3.50

4. 3.25

5. 3.25

6. 2.50

7. 3.13

8. 3.13

9. 2.31

10. 2.75

11. 3.00

12. 2.15

Thoughts about the results:

Scores by readers at varied widely, and those differences disappear into the average. There was an initial discussion of the rubric and expectations, and some deviation in scores is to be expected. But the assignments themselves were also very different, and some may have more closely aligned with a reader’s expectations than another. Some of this could be addressed with student work generated from common (or at least similar) assignments across various classes. An embedded assignment would be valuable for a task such as this.

Seven of the examples of student work were deemed satisfactory by the group. And while some readers scored individual examples with a 4 or 5, no example received a consensus of “More than Satisfactory” or “Excellent.” This indicates room for improvement in the ability to analyze the qualities that enact or express what the Department and the discipline mean by “diverse.” Also, five examples collectively scoring below 3 suggests room for improvement.

Some of the lowest scores came from one particular class. ENGL 311 and ENGL 369 are General Education classes, and as such their assignments are frequently designed to accommodate non-majors in English. The set of essays from one class seemed to respond to an assignment that did not explicitly require the literary analysis of a text; instead, students were allowed to connect some of the readings from that semester to recent political, social, or cultural events. That made for some difficulty assessing them in relation to the SLO in question. The value of such an assignment is not being questioned, but the difficulty of assessing it in this situation demonstrates (again) the value of using embedded assignments.

If the English Department continues with this method of assessment – random collection of student work from courses – the Assessment Liaison recommends that embedded assignments be used. This would require some work with selected instructors before the semester began, but it should not be too difficult to do.

The Assessment Liaison repeated a survey of syllabuses conducted last year. The survey was in response to a remark that has been made when the Department discusses curriculum reform; some faculty members have suggested that the requirement for a course in Literatures of Cultural Diversity may not be necessary since the readings of other courses are now sufficiently diverse. The Assessment Liaison collected syllabuses from one semester last year and collated the authors of the assigned readings according to Literatures of Cultural Diversity course in which they might be found. Last year, the Assessment Liaison suggested the survey indicates students would miss out on much culturally diverse literature if they depended only upon the “regular” upper-division literature courses to supply that. However, some members of the Department asked if the sample was too small, that the whole year should be surveyed rather than one semester; so the Assessment Liaison looked at syllabuses from Fall 2017 and Spring 2018.

The courses surveyed:

**ENGL 473 U.S. Literature 1640-1800**

**ENGL 475 U.S. Literature 1912-1945**

**ENGL 478 Major American Novelists II**

**ENGL 467 Major British Novelists II**

**ENGL 474 U.S. Literature, 1860-1912**

**ENGL 429 Literature for Adolescents**

**ENGL 429 Literature for Adolescents**

**ENGL 429 Literature for Adolescents**

**ENGL 476 Contemporary American Literature**

**ENGL 463B Contemporary Poetry**

**ENGL 477 Major American Novelists I**

**ENGL 461 Modern British Literature**

What conclusions to draw from the list, whether it represents sufficient diversity, is for the Department faculty members to decide.

The results:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ENGL 312  African American Literature | ENGL 314  American Indian Literature | AAS 321  Asian American Fiction | PAS 344  Caribbean & African Literature | PAS 346  Contemporary Black Female Writers | ENGL 368  Gay Male Writers | ENGL 369  Lesbian Writers | ENGL 371 Jewish American Writing | EGNL 487  Latina/o Literature  (CHS 380) |
| Hurston  Larsen  Wright  Hopkins  Dunbar  Chestnutt  Parks  Yoon  Thomas  Wheatley  Morrison  Whitehead  Harper  Lorde  Clifton  Brooks  Komunyakaa  Rankine  Hayden | Alexie  Cervantes | Lahiri  Eaton\*  Akhtar  \* Sui Sin Far | Yoon  Equiano | Morrison  Yoon  Parks  Larsen  Brooks  Clifton  Lourde  Rankine | Saenz  Ness  Ginsberg  Doty  O’Hara | Stein  Anzaldua  Rich | Stein  Ginsberg  Spiegelman | Viramontes  Cisneros  Velasquez  Las Casas  De Vaca  Anzaldua  Cervantes  Soto |

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