

## ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING PLAN (ASLP): ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

2014-15 Academic Year

### A. College, Department/Program, Date

*College* College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences  
*Department/Program* English  
*Date* June 10, 15

### B. Contact Person for the Assessment Plan

*Name and title* Jane Kuenz, Chair

### C. Degree Program

*Name of Degree Program* B.A. in English

### D. Assessment of Student Learning in Your Program

**Step 1: Identify Student Learning Outcomes (What are students able to do by the end of your program?)**

*a. List 3-5 of the most important student learning outcomes for your program.*

1. Every major will produce a substantial body of analytical writing that uses evidence and employs formal standard written English to make a focused argument.
2. Every major will read a range of complex cultural texts and exhibit knowledge of different genres and literary history.
3. Every major will use advanced research tools and knowledge of basic literary terms to compile, evaluate, and document appropriate primary and secondary sources for a substantial capstone project.
4. Every major will critically examine and synthesize multiple, complex, often contradictory arguments and perspectives.
5. Every major will demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of texts and traditions of language and literature written in English as well as their social, cultural, theoretical and historical contexts.

*b. Then, identify which student learning outcomes were assessed this past academic year. (One or more of the outcomes and corresponding assessment plans could come from your department's CORE Course Blueprint(s)).*

We identified the following outcomes for assessment:

3. Every major will use advanced research tools and knowledge of basic literary terms to compile, evaluate, and document appropriate primary and secondary sources for a substantial capstone project.
4. Every major will critically examine and synthesize multiple, complex, often contradictory arguments and perspectives.

**Step 2: How and When were the Learning Outcomes assessed?**

- a. *Briefly describe the assessment tools, measures, or forms of evidence that were utilized to demonstrate students' accomplishment of the learning outcomes selected.*

Direct Measures

Beginning in Fall 2014 and every semester thereafter, we collected the following:

- ungraded initial papers from students in the major prerequisite course, ENG 140, Reading Literature, to gather data on writing skills on students entering the major;
- ungraded initial and final papers in the major's methods course, ENG 245, Introduction to Literary Studies to assess outcome #4;
- ungraded final senior seminar papers from the capstone seminars to assess outcome #3.

Indirect Measures

In Summer 2014, we collected indirect evidence of learning outcomes and student perceptions from an alumni survey. (See our more detailed report, in Appendix A).

- b. *Briefly describe when and how you implemented the assessment activity.*

Outcome #4: All majors in the capstone seminars completed a substantial (20 pp.) research paper. Seminar papers will be reviewed and graded by a group of faculty.

**Step 3: Process of Using the Assessment results to Improve Student Learning**

- a. *Briefly describe your unit's process of reviewing the program assessment results, and how you expect to improve student learning.*

English Major:

We're not yet to the point of being able to assess anything. For 2015-2016, we have the following goals for being able to assess outcomes 2, 3, and 4:

1. Develop common assignments in ENG 220 and 245:
  - a. ENG 220, World Masterpieces I can be used for assessing outcome #2 because all iterations of the survey will include "a range of cultural texts" encompassing "different genres and literary history."
  - b. ENG 245, Introduction to Literary Studies will be used to assess outcome #4 because all sections of the course introduce literary research tools and critical terms and also juxtapose different theoretical and critical models.
2. Develop rubrics for assessing the common assignment in ENG 245 and the seminar paper (outcomes #3 and 4)
3. Investigate ePortfolios for all majors beginning in ENG 245 so we can assess outcome #1. Require them for Public and Professional Writing minors.
4. Possibly revise the program learning outcomes; at the very least reorder them so that they follow the sequence of the major. Right now, the outcomes are too repetitive and one of them (#5) probably cannot be assessed at all.

#### College Writing

Besides the English major, we assessed the new version of ENG 100, College Writing.

Outcomes were measured using pass/fail rates, faculty comments about the course and the students' performance, and sample low- and middle-level student papers.

Faculty reviewing the data concluded that instructors should continue to focus on sentence stylistics and address social/economic status in the course (e.g., in reading sequences and assignments). Courses should include peer-review and one-on-one conferences, and the program should find ways to integrate writing tutors from the Learning Commons. (Full description and recommendations are listed in a more detailed report, in Appendix B)

#### **E. Other Course Assessment Activities:**

1. In Fall 2014 and Spring 2015, we began developing learning outcomes for the new minor in Public and Professional Writing.
2. In Spring 2015, we began developing learning outcomes for ENG 409 Internship in Professional Writing. We also began revising other Internship materials and forms, such as learning contracts/agreements and student site evaluation forms, which will be used later to assess these internships.

**F. Are there “community engagement” activities integrated in your departmental curriculum?**

a. Please indicate which of the components, listed below, are included in your program’s curriculum, and then indicate if the activities are required or optional for students in your major.

<u>Community Engagement Activity</u>	<u>Included</u>	<u>Required/Optional</u>	
Student Research (related to a community-based problem)	✓	R	<u>O</u>
Student-Faculty Community Research Project	—	R	O
Internship, or a Field Experience	✓	R	<u>O</u>
Independent Study (community-related project)	—	R	O
Capstone Course (community-related project)	—	R	O
Service-Learning (a component of a course)	✓	R	<u>O</u>
Study Abroad, or an International Program	✓	R	<u>O</u>
Interdisciplinary Collaborative Project (community related)	—	R	O
Student Leadership Activities (related to a team project)	—	R	O
Students/Faculty Community Leadership (advisory boards, committees, conference presentations)	—	R	O
Other Activities (not mentioned above):			

b. Please list the courses (i.e. EDU 400) that have a “community engagement” activity in your program:

*Entry-level courses:*

1. EYE 110 Literature and Medicine

*Mid-level courses:*

1. ENG 230 Literacy Studies: Students work with a range of community partners:
  - *Learning Works After School Programs* at Reiche Elementary School and East End Elementary School
  - English Language Learning (Adult/Family Literacy)
  - *Opportunity Alliance*
  - Parkside Community Center
  - Portland Adult Education
  - ESOL Informal Conversation Class at USM
  - Portland High School Mentoring Club

*Upper-level courses:*

1. ENG 409 Professional Writing students have interned with the following:

- *Bangor Daily News*
- TrueLine Publishing
- Living on Earth
- *The Free Press*
- MaineBiz
- Maine's Writers' and Publishing Alliance
- *Maine Magazine*
- *The Bollard*
- Switch
- One in Five
- *The Windham Independent*
- *The Portland Phoenix*

New Internships developed or being developed in 2014-2015:

- Spectacle Island Consulting (research, document and website creation)
- Alice James Books (editing, writing press releases and advertising copy, coordinating manuscripts, interviews, editing review quotes)
- Mishmash Content Creation (Freelance Writing and content development)

2. ENG 432 Internship in the Teaching of Writing

- Since 2010, interns have served as research assistants for an ongoing, IRB-approved research, The Writing Support Project. Interns are certified in ethical research. They conduct and digitally record interviews with first-year students at USM. The data is used to investigate the perspectives of students who struggle in first-year writing, comparing those who do and do not persist in college.

3. "Digital Maine"

- This grant in the digital humanities funds CAHS faculty from English, Art, History, and Economics engaged in interdisciplinary work. The initiative brings together computer science, information, and geospatial technology experts from USM and southern Maine companies with faculty and students in the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and the College of Management and Human Services, whose research, scholarship, and creative activity focus on Maine history, art, and culture.

**Additional Comments:** Details about our Alumni Survey, and our English assessment reports are available upon request and in our English comprehensive report.