

## ASSESSMENT REPORT 2013-2014

### **English Graduate**

(Instructional Degree Program)

### **M.A.**

(Degree Level)

#### **Program Mission:**

The mission of the Department of English and Philosophy is to provide quality education leading to intellectual growth and professional success. In regards to “intellectual growth,” the program is committed to preserving, interpreting, and promoting the unique multicultural heritage of the region, and achieves this both the range of classes offered and the kind of unique theses our students complete, many of which are focused on the literary, creative, and composition aspects of the Southwest.

In regards to “professional success,” the graduate program serves regional secondary school teachers, prospective community college teachers, students who plan to enter PhD programs, and students who seek stronger credentials in English for careers in journalism, publication, and professional writing. Each year, graduate assistantships are awarded competitively to full-time students. Along with tutoring in the Writing Center, graduate assistants undertake extensive teacher training in composition and gain considerable experience as composition instructors.

#### **Student Learning Outcome 1:**

Students will produce high-quality written work demonstrating their interpretative and analytical skills through mastery of relevant and current theoretical concepts.

#### **First Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:**

Learning Outcome #1 is assessed by evaluation of a student’s written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on Quality of Written Work. These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for “Quality of Written Work.”

#### **Summary of Data:**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	5	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

**Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:**

Learning Outcome #1 is further assessed by evaluation of a student's written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members on the student's committee will, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on Mastery of Relevant and Current Theoretical Concepts. These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for "Mastery Relevant and Current Theoretical Concepts."

**Summary of Data:**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	5	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	100%

**Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:**

The English department met on September 17<sup>th</sup> to discuss the results of this Outcomes Assessment Report. In regard to Outcome #1, Quality of Written Work, all 5 students passed, which was good. Over the past several years, we have implemented several changes to improve student writing, and we discussed continuing those initiatives to make sure student scores remain high. Those initiatives were: stressing writing during 601, our "Research Methods and Methodologies" class; directing students who were struggling with their writing to take our "Graduate Writing Workshop" class (3 English MA students are currently taking this class in the Fall of 2014), and the formation of a writing group for work-shopping academic essays. Taken together, these three initiatives will help student success in their writing.

**Student Learning Outcome 2:**

Students will display mastery of the subject and form of their chosen concentration area (Literature, Creative Writing, or Linguistics and Composition).

**First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:**

Learning Outcome #2 is assessed by evaluation of a student's work at four key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, their thesis defense, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members on the student's committee will, utilizing a form, score these works on a scale of 1-5 based on Mastery of the Subject and Form. These four scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is

considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for “Mastery of the Subject and Form.”

### **Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	5	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	%

### **Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:**

While all students passed Learning Outcome 2, there was some discussion about the lack of preparation of students entering our graduate program, and how it often took an extra semester or even year for students to become fully comfortable with their chosen field. To help alleviate this problem, we decided to increase our recruiting efforts, to help make sure that students entering our program are as academically prepared as possible. Given faculty turnover in the English department over the past several years (between 2013 and 2015, we hired 5 new faculty members), it has been difficult to correctly sequence our courses to provide 500 and 600 level classes in all areas. The English department has prepared a multi-year road-map schedule, which should alleviate this difficulty.

### **Student Learning Outcome 3:**

Students will be able to conduct, synthesize, interpret, document, and present original academic research.

### **First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

Learning Outcome #3 is assessed by evaluation of a student’s written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members on the student’s committee will, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on “Ability to Conduct, Synthesize, Interpret, and Document Research.” These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for “Ability to Conduct, Synthesize, Interpret, and Document Research.”

### **Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students	5	Percent of Students Meeting	100%

Assessed:		Criterion:	
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### **Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:**

Learning Outcome #3 is further assessed by evaluation of a student's written work at three key points in their academic career: their qualifying exam, their thesis proposal, and their thesis. The two English faculty department members, utilizing a form, score these written works on a scale of 1-5 based on "Originality of Research or Creative Project." These three scores are averaged, and a score of 3.5 or higher is considered success. Specifically, 100% of English MA graduates will average a 3.5 or higher for "Originality of Research or Creative Project."

### **Summary of Data**

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	5	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	0
Total Number of Students Assessed:	5	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	<b>100%</b>

### **Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:**

As all students passed this area, this was one of the stronger outcomes for our current students. With the exception of one student, who was very resistant to academic research, all the students completed impressive and original thesis projects. One even won the university's annual MA thesis prize. Faculty noted that the theses for this year were stronger than in the previous two years, which indicates that changes we have made to the program (increased emphasis on research in 601, implementation of the Graduate Writing Workshop, greater emphasis on research at both the undergraduate and graduate levels) are beginning to work.