Georgia State University
Assessment Data by Section
2012-2013 English PhD in Creative Writing
As of: 2/24/2014 01:11 PM EST
(Includes those Action Plans with Budget Amounts marked One-Time, Recurring, No Request.)

Mission / Purpose
The English department prepares PhD students in Creative Writing with comprehensive knowledge of literary composition, aesthetics, vocabulary and techniques, expertise with established literary models, ability to teach Creative Writing at the college level, familiarity with the publishing literary marketplace, and ability to produce publishable literary works.

Goals
G 1: Assure Mastery in Content Knowledge
The department strives to graduate PhD students in Creative Writing who have a well-rounded knowledge in the content of literary studies (including major figures, periods and movements, and vocabulary) as well as advanced knowledge in the content associated with their particular specialty.

G 2: Scholarly Engagement in Theoretical Frameworks
The department strives to graduate PhD students in this concentration who are able to successfully apply critical approaches, theoretical frameworks, and/or historical contexts in the study of literary texts.

G 3: Foster Effective Written Communications
The department strives to graduate students who have effective written communication skills that they can use successfully for any specific purpose and any particular audience.

G 4: Exemplary writers
Graduates of the PhD are exemplary writers, both in terms of communication skills and imaginative expression.

G 5: Knowledgeable about history of genre
Graduates of PhD are experts in the history of the significant figures and works, aesthetic techniques, and literary vocabulary of their chosen genre.

G 6: Experienced teachers of the workshop method of Creative Writing
Graduates of the PhD are experienced teachers in the use of the workshop method of teaching the craft of Creative Writing.

G 7: Able to produce publishable work of high quality
Graduates of the PhD have a working understanding of the writing profession and are able to produce publishable work of high quality.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives
SLO 1: Content Knowledge (M: 1, 2)
Ph.D. students will demonstrate a familiarity with representative examples of writing by major figures, English and American literary history, and form and theory in both fiction and poetry.

SLO 2: Applying Literary Studies to Creative Writing (M: 1)
Students will be able to draw upon the knowledge of composition and aesthetics gained in their English studies to compose meaningful literary works that are deemed worthy of being published in national literary journals. Students will also be able to develop vocabularies for studying and discussing poetry and fiction.

SLO 3: Craftsmanship (M: 1)
Ph.D. students will be able to produce writing of a sufficient quality to be deemed publishable in national literary journals.

SLO 4: Revising Skills
Students will be able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of both published and student writing and to offer specific and constructive criticism. Students will also be able to evaluate the range of critical responses from fellow students and the instructor and to revise their creative writing to create work of a sufficient quality to be deemed publishable in national literary journals.

SLO 5: Researching Skills
Using and building upon the knowledge and skills acquired during master's level study, doctoral graduates will be able to isolate a fruitful question for extended, in-depth investigation and to carry out focused, productive, and thorough research, using both traditional and non-traditional research methods.

SLO 6: Effective Communications (M: 2)
Students will be able to communicate effectively in a wide range of written and spoken contexts and will be prepared for professional publication in English studies.

Measures, Targets, and Findings

M 1: PhD dissertation (O: 1, 2, 3)
Graduating Ph.D. students in Creative Writing are assessed on the work of their dissertation. This assessment is facilitated by the Graduate Director at the student's dissertation defense, and the form is completed by faculty members on the student's committee. The dissertation assessment form, which uses a 6-point scale, rates how effectively the student work demonstrates the graduate learning outcomes. (See the attached assessment form for the Creative Writing dissertation.) In the summer, the Graduate Director meets with the Assessment Coordinator to analyze the resulting data in order to make suggestions for procedural and programmatic change. Those suggestions are brought to the Graduate Studies Committee in early fall for review, and an action plan is formulated and presented to the entire faculty at an early fall department meeting.

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

Target for O1: Content Knowledge
In the 2009-2010 assessment report, a 4.7 target out of 6.0 was set for this outcome related to
content knowledge.

**Findings 2012-2013 - Target: Met**

The five Creative Writing dissertations defended this year scored a mean average of a 5.93 on the three criteria related to Content Knowledge: the knowledge of representative examples of writing by major figures in poetry or fiction, depending on the student's choice of genre (which earned a score of 6.0); the knowledge of literary history of English or American poetry or fiction, depending upon the student's choice of genre (which earned a score of 5.8); and the knowledge of form and theory of fiction or poetry, depending upon the students' choice of genre (which earned a score of 6.0). This score surpassed the target and exceeded the average of 5.3 of the previous assessment cycle and moved closer to the 6.0 average of the two years previous. In addition, an average of 94% of dissertations earned an outstanding for content knowledge while 6% earned an excellent. Since this is the first year we are calculating the percentages for top scores, we do not yet have comparative data.

**Target for O2: Applying Literary Studies to Creative Writing**

In the 2009-2010 assessment report, a target of 4.7 out of 6.0 was set for this outcome related to the application of literary studies to a student's creative writing.

**Findings 2012-2013 - Target: Met**

The five Creative Writing dissertations each scored a 6.0 for this learning outcome (as listed in the criterion that rates the dissertation's ability to draw upon the knowledge of composition and aesthetics in English studies to create meaningful literary works, deemed worthy of publication). This exceeds the target as well as the 5.0 average of the previous year. It also matches the 6.0 averages of the two previous years. In addition, 100% of the dissertations earned an outstanding score in this area. Since this is the first year we are calculating the percentages for top scores, we do not have comparative data.

**Target for O3: Craftsmanship**

In the 2009-2010 assessment report, a 4.7 target out of 6.0 was set for this outcome related to craftsmanship.

**Findings 2012-2013 - Target: Met**

All five of the Creative Writing dissertations scored a 6.0 on the three criteria related to the learning outcome that addresses issues of craftsmanship: the ability to produce work that is authentic and engaging; the ability to produce work that is grammatically sound and syntactically correct; and the use of a variety of literary techniques. This score exceeds the target and represents an increase from the 5.4 average of the previous year. It also matches the perfect scores from the two years previous. In addition, 100% of the dissertations earned an outstanding score in this area. Since this is the first year we are calculating the percentages for top scores, we do not have comparative data.

**M 2: PhD Exams (O: 1, 6)**

The Creative Writing Ph.D. examinations are conducted in the fall and the spring each year. Each student writes two exams (one in a primary area of study and a second in a secondary area). The candidate works with a primary advisor to create a reading list for each exam. The exams serve to demonstrate detailed and thorough knowledge of all facets related to the candidate’s study.
and dissertation area. Each exam is read by three faculty members and is assessed on a scale of three possible grades: high pass, pass, fail. The readers provide written commentary that explains the assigned grades to the Director of Graduate Studies.

Source of Evidence: Writing exam to assure certain proficiency level

**Target for O1: Content Knowledge**

In the 2009-2010 assessment plan, a target was set for the Creative Writing PhD exams that 20% or fewer of the examinees would earn a low pass or a fail on their exams. In 2012-2013, the department discontinued the use of the low pass grade, retaining the 20% or fewer target for failing grades.

**Findings 2012-2013 - Target: Met**

In 2012-2013, one student took the exams in the Creative Writing PhD program, and scored a pass on each of the two exams. Thus the fail rate was 0% and the target was met. The 100% pass rate is a large improvement over previous years, but the small sample size makes it impossible to gauge any trends from this data.

**Target for O6: Effective Communications**

In the 2009-2010 assessment plan, a target was set for the Creative Writing PhD exams that 20% or fewer of the examinees would earn a low pass or a fail on their exams. In 2012-2013, the department discontinued the use of the low pass grade, retaining the 20% or fewer target for failing grades.

**Findings 2012-2013 - Target: Met**

In 2012-2013, one student took the exams in the Creative Writing PhD program, and scored a pass on each of the two exams. Thus the fail rate was 0% and the target was met. The 100% pass rate is a large improvement over previous years, but the small sample size makes it impossible to gauge any trends from this data.

**Details of Action Plans for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)**

**Revise the mission statement and the goals**

Faculty in the Creative Writing concentration will revise the mission statement and their goals on the assessment report. Presently, these items reflect the mission and goals for the whole of the PhD program. Now that we have broken up the assessment reporting in terms of concentration, Creative Writing can rewrite these items to more specifically match their program.

- **Established in Cycle:** 2009-2010
- **Implementation Status:** In-Progress
- **Priority:** High
- **Projected Completion Date:** 01/2011
- **Responsible Person/Group:** Director of the Creative Writing program in collaboration with the Creative Writing faculty.
- **Budget Amount Requested:** $0.00 (no request)

**Distinguish between scores on primary exams and secondary exams**

To get a better understanding of the Creative Writing PhD exam results, the department will
distinguish between scores earned for primary and secondary exams.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: Medium

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
  Measure: PhD Exams | Outcome/Objective: Content Knowledge

Projected Completion Date: 08/2011
Responsible Person/Group: Assistant to the Graduate Director

Poetry faculty who write secondary exams will hold regular meetings with examinees
Since fiction students often have difficulty with the poetry secondary exam, poetry faculty who writes these exams will be asked to schedule regular meetings with examinees to better prepare them for the exams.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: Medium

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
  Measure: PhD Exams | Outcome/Objective: Content Knowledge

Projected Completion Date: 08/2011
Responsible Person/Group: Director of Creative Writing and poetry faculty

Provide fiction PhD students with examples of successful poetry exams
The Director of Creative Writing will ask the poetry faculty to keep examples of successful poetry secondary exams that can be used as models for students who are taking the exam.

Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: Medium

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
  Measure: PhD Exams | Outcome/Objective: Content Knowledge

Projected Completion Date: 08/2011
Responsible Person/Group: Director of Creative Writing and poetry faculty

Consider limiting the outcomes used in assessing Creative Writing dissertations
In past years, the department has always used the full range of outcomes in the graduate assessment work. The department has decided it wants to limit the number of outcomes to be considered each year, perhaps on a rotating basis, as is done with the undergraduate assessment work.

Established in Cycle: 2011-2012
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High
Implementation Description: Assessment forms have been updated to include 3 criteria.
Projected Completion Date: 09/2013
Responsible Person/Group: Coordinator
Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM QUESTION 1:**
What changes in the assessment process has your degree program made since last year's assessment report? (e.g. revised learning outcomes, measures, targets, etc.) Why were these changes made? What changes and improvements in the assessment process will you make in the coming academic year?

There were no changes in 2012-2013. The findings show that a score of 6.0 ("outstanding") has been, in the past, routinely given for PhD dissertations in Creative Writing. The Creative Writing faculty will discuss ways to better distinguish between outstanding and "excellent" (5.0) evaluations so that the top score is more unusual rather than typical. This concentration will also complete mission and goal statements for the PhD and scale back the number of assessed criteria from 9 to 3 to enable more focused targeting. The concentration will also consider appropriate early measures other than the pass rate on exams, which is too broad a measure to permit actionable conclusions about the strengths/weaknesses of the program. Possibilities include using the final paper from a student's initial workshop or craft course, to be evaluated on the same criteria as the completed dissertation.

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM QUESTION 2:** What is the impact of the data obtained from assessment findings on your educational degree program? What changes and improvements to your educational program will be made based on this year's assessment data? (e.g., revised curriculum, courses, sequence, etc.) If changes to curriculum or courses are made for other reasons, please explain.

There are no planned changes to the academic program at this time.