

Department of English

College of Arts and Sciences

2014

Program Review

Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts

Degree Programs



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Executive Summary

For 2014-2015, with 20 professorial faculty, 11 term faculty, and 10 graduate teaching assistants, the English Department at WCU fosters an environment in which the primary role of faculty as teacher-scholars is recognized and valued. English Department faculty are prolific: since 2009, English faculty have produced 30 books and edited collections, 50 individual essays, articles, and chapters, 45 individual short creative works. They received 8 significant internal awards/honors and 20 significant external awards/honors.

The undergraduate programs in English focus on delivering the writing, reading, and critical thinking skills that are the foundation of the WCU 2020 strategic plan. Events such as the Spring Literary Festival bring national and internationally recognized writers to Cullowhee each year for a celebration that includes both the university and regional communities. WRCS was a pilot program in our last QEP implementation, and the English Department has been a key participant in the program. The department supports interdisciplinary connections, which allow students to study, for example, team-taught courses in African-American literature and history, and environmental science and literature.

Each concentration within our undergraduate program requires a capstone project designed to synthesize class work over the course of each student's university career, demonstrate proficiency in subject matter, and serve as a bridge to the world beyond WCU. Capstone projects include internships, co-op experiences, and conference development and participation. Many of our internships enable students to forge links to businesses in the area. Conference participants often go on from the in-house conference to present their work at national conferences, including the British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Conference and National Council of Teachers of English Annual Conference. Professional Writing interns serve the region at a wide range of locales, including: *Asheville Citizen-Times*, *Cherokee One Feather*, and the *Sylva Herald*; and, at more wide-ranging venues, including U.S. Dept. of Education, Turner Broadcasting (Atlanta), Charleston (SC) City Paper, and the office of U.S. Representative Ginny Brown-Waite.

Undergraduate secondary English Education (our BSEd) has shown distinction in the state. In two successive iterations of the Henry and Thompson report from UNC-CH measuring the effectiveness of teachers from all UNC campuses in NC public schools, WCU's secondary English Education majors have shown statistically significant positive impact upon their students' standardized test scores—alone among graduates from all other UNC English Education programs. The program's placement rate for graduates in the region and the state is exceptionally strong.

The MA in English offers a highly integrative curriculum with concentrations in Literature, Rhetoric and Composition, and Professional Writing. As one of the only MA degrees in the humanities at WCU, the MA in English allows for advanced proficiency in a broadly applicable liberal arts discipline

that provides for multi-faceted intellectual and career opportunities, both in the WNC and elsewhere. Some of our most recent graduates teach community college, write for local newspapers, work as research editors, and work in public relations, or are fellowship receiving top candidates in highly competitive PhD programs.

The MAT and MAEd programs in English work to help achieve the university's strategic plan to "position the University as a key leader in regional economic and community development efforts" (goal 3.2). Although these programs are small, they address external state need (as articulated by former UNC President Erskine Bowles) by preparing initially licensed teachers (the MAT) and by providing advanced licensure and a Master's degree to in-service teachers. The programs provide quality preparation for advanced licensure at the Master's level for both groups of candidates.

In 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, budget cuts resulted in the loss of some 15 term positions in our department, which required us to change what was our First-Year Composition sequence to a two-year program. With this loss of faculty and with increased focus on SCH production, class sizes have increased often beyond best practice recommendation. Our operating budget has remained flat even as we have begun to grow again, hiring to fill some of the positions we lost during cuts, and our summer revenue, which brought us over \$13,000 in 2011-2012, was cut last year. We continue to find creative solutions to funding problems, and we are still able – with greater and greater difficulty – to fund travel for our tenured and tenure track faculty. Our technology and library resources are good, but we could use a second full-time administrative assistant to help cover the needs of our large and complex department.

With the loss of our graduate TESOL programs in 2012-2013, the department has taken the opportunity to develop an undergraduate TESOL minor/add-on license that is consistently gaining students. We feel that this is a real growth opportunity for us, as is our newly reconceived graduate certificate in Professional Writing, which focuses very specifically on technical writing for business and industry. We have hired strategically over the past few years to achieve better balance in all areas of our curriculum, shifting our hiring focus from literature faculty to in English Education, Professional Writing, and Rhetoric and Composition, and because we have been allowed to hire to replace vacated tenure track lines, we have achieved a healthy balance of tenured, tenure-track, and term faculty even as we have been largely able to avoid hiring adjunct labor.

Standard 1: The purpose of the program reflects and supports the mission and strategic vision of Western Carolina University and the mission of its School or College.

The Mission of the English Department, in its teaching (at both the UG and GR levels), scholarship, and service activities is to (1) cultivate an appreciation of and facility with English Language and Letters – reading, writing, researching, and thinking about texts in the widest context – in the service of a rich and meaningful life; (2) provide students with disciplinary tools (writing and editing, information and visual literacy, grammar, research, textual interpretation, and document/media design, and others) they will need to succeed, as well as the ability to continually improve those skills; (3) produce life-long learners who, because of their facility with those disciplinary tools, are resilient, versatile, and capable of pursuing and advancing any career while responding to the changing forces of the marketplace; (4) foster global citizenship, cultural awareness, and community engagement as well as the sensitivity to solve complex problems and respond to a range of audiences; and (5) contribute to the discipline of English language, literature, and textual studies, both on campus and off, by encouraging engaged graduates, by producing notable scholarship and creative works, and by participating meaningfully in institutional, civic, and professional communities.

Alignment with University and College Mission. The College of Arts and Sciences' mission is to provide students with a liberal arts foundation where they are taught to think critically, grow academically, and communicate effectively, while preparing them to be intellectually, socially, culturally, and professionally engaged citizens and leaders who contribute to and promote the sustainability of local and global communities. The English Department is aligned with the college mission in a number of ways: the department enables students to think critically and grow academically by integrating into our courses research opportunities at national and regional conferences (See Standard 7). That the English Department is the primary driver of the college's third goal, to communicate effectively, is evident from its role as provider of first and second-year composition, technical and professional writing and editing, and creative writing, and by the large and increasing number of acceptances of our GR students to prestigious GR programs. English department students are engaged in a range of academic and regional communities, as demonstrated by their participation of a range of service learning projects. Changes in the department's course offerings in motion picture studies, world literature, and Appalachian literature contribute to students' understanding of regional and global culture and future teachers' success in their own classrooms.

The university's mission is to create learning opportunities that sustain and improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in Western Carolina and beyond. All of the department's goals align directly with the university mission statement. Recent changes to our curriculum have improved the ability of our programs to enhance economic and community development. For

example, our literature majors now begin with English 200, which emphasizes resume and portfolio development, and concludes with a capstone course that helps students focus on career goals or opportunities for advanced study. Professional Writing courses have increasingly emphasized editing, coding, and computer skills, and the Professional Writing GR curriculum, post-baccalaureate certificate and MA track have been revised to reflect current standards and industry needs. All students in our BSEd program now receive a BA in English Studies Pedagogy. This dual degree opportunity allows those who elect not to complete a BSEd career alternatives in counseling and private school instruction without slowing their progress towards graduation. Finally, recent hires in World Literature mean that English literature students' course offerings (now including Cherokee literature, Appalachian Literature, and African, Postcolonial, and Latin American literature and film) are even more diverse.

Program's Distinctive Features. Chief among the programs' distinct features is our Professional Writing concentration, which features two nationally acclaimed fiction writers, Ron Rash and Pamela Duncan, two award-winning poets, and our new nonfiction specialist Jeremy Jones, whose *Bearwallow* has been called the most significant book about our region. The creative writing program's Spring Literary Festival (now 12 years old) and Visiting Writer Series was the first of its kind in the region, has been widely imitated, and has been praised by the *Citizen-Times* and other regional publications. Of equal note is the BSEd in secondary Education, whose graduates enjoy a placement rate of close to 100%. Moreover, the biannual Henry et al study of teacher effectiveness, repeated in 2009, 2011, and 2013, has singled out the programs teachers: "On average, graduates of Western Carolina University's UG teacher preparation program were more effective than all other sources of teachers" in high school English I.

Strengths and weaknesses. Our primary strength is our faculty, which has made a commitment to collegiality, outstanding scholarship, and excellent, engaged teaching. Lecturers are rewarded with involvement and benefits; they share the department's commitment to high-quality instruction of critical thinking, reading, and writing. Quite a few recent awards (more than 13 external awards, many national in scope, for writing and research; eight internal teaching and mentoring awards; and regular teaching award finalists) attest to our faculty's outstanding teaching as well as its versatility and talent. Faculty can explore new areas of teaching and play to their strengths. Our teachers regularly win large, competitive grants to support research and teaching, university activities, as well as community nonprofits. All of our concentrations have excellent teachers doing cutting-edge work, and each program has a director. Moreover, recent hires have finally allowed us to improve former deficiencies in our programs. For example, 2013 and 2014 hires in technical writing will allow us to develop GR course and certificate offerings in Asheville. By eliminating our GR TESOL program, moreover, we have been able to dedicate our two TESOL faculty to creating a TESOL minor that will, as it is fostered and marketed, increase the competitiveness of our teaching program graduates.

Standard 2: The program engages in ongoing, systematic planning that is reflective of the University's strategic plan.

Program's strategic goals/objectives. In alignment with the University's 2020 strategic plan, the department developed a strategic plan in fall of 2013 to take us through to 2020. The department has chosen the following four strategic directions (or goals) as its focus: (1) to collaborate locally and globally on language-based research, teaching, and service that honors the past, seizes the present, and anticipates the future; (2) to integrate appropriate and current technology into its curricula and into its scholarly and creative output; (3) to address the needs of the region and the State with respect the department's disciplinary foci; and (4) to institute staffing plans that address the needs of students, institution, and state while supporting as much as possible our teacher-scholars.

Process for developing and modifying goals/objectives. The process for development and modification involves the department's revisiting of the plan and making adjustments as needed, and our annual ongoing program assessment drives the development of our goals and objectives. Since the plan was only implemented at the beginning of last academic year, we will revisit it at the beginning of this year to consider progress and adjustments, and the department head will establish a standing strategic planning committee to assess areas that need development and modification and to help the department choose aspects of the plan on which to focus during the academic year.

Relation of program goals/objectives to its curricular and programmatic activities. In terms of curriculum, we have already completed one of our strategic initiatives – develop UG add-on TESOL license for K-12 – for strategic direction 3, and we are recruiting students into that program. We are making good progress with regard to our other initiatives with regard to curriculum and programmatic activities as well. For example, one of our initiatives is to offer at least one team-taught course per year, and the English department has worked (thus far) with the History department to offer team-taught courses in African American History and Literature, and in the spring of 2015, we will offer a team-taught course in Appalachian Literature and History. These courses allow faculty with expertise in these areas to engage in significant pedagogical interactions that can lead to scholarly productivity. In spring 2014, we revised the curriculum and structure of our GR Professional Writing Certificate to make it more focused on technical writing, and we are constantly revising our curriculum to create pedagogically appropriate forums (initiative 2.B).

Process of implementing program goals/objectives. Within our strategic plan, for each goal, we have clarified strategic ends, initiatives, and means designed to help us implement our goals. For example, for our first goal, our stated strategic ends are (1) to collaborate among faculty and between faculty and students in research, teaching/learning, and leadership/service, and (2) to foster an appreciation for the region while encouraging students to engage with the wider world (outside the region,

state, and country). To these ends, our initiatives are (1) to institute a yearly departmental thematic focus; (2) to offer at least one team-taught course per year; (3) host at least three disciplinary events before 2020; (4) to send more students abroad, bring more international students to WCU, and create support for international students.

In terms of what we have already implemented (in addition to initiatives detailed in the preceding paragraphs), the College of Arts and Sciences is committed to converting lecturer lines to instructor positions; we have requested two new instructor positions for the next budget cycle, and the College is supportive of this request, which will help us to undertake initiative 4.A, secure three permanent instructor hires for English 101/202. We hosted the TALGS (TESOL/Applied Linguistics Graduate Student) Conference in spring of 2014, which puts us well on our way to hosting three disciplinary events by 2020 (initiative 1.C).

Standard 3. The program provides and evaluates a high quality curriculum that emphasizes student learning as its primary purpose.

Curriculum

Alignment of curriculum with disciplinary standards. The English department houses a variety of disciplines: professional writing (both technical and creative), Rhetoric and Composition, Literature, Motion Picture Studies, English Education, and TESOL. Advisors work with students to help them choose appropriate courses at every level of study, and we strive to be flexible while also maintaining pedagogical appropriateness and rigor as is apparent in our course sequencing, prerequisite protocol, and semester-by-semester planning. At the UG level, students in all concentrations are required to take English 200, our Introduction to the English Major course, and introductory courses are necessary prerequisites for admission to upper-level curriculum.

Amount of time needed to complete the curriculum. Our BA and BSEd degrees are designed for completion in four years (they are 40 and 43 hours respectively. BA students also do a minor while BSEd students complete a professional education sequence). Students are provided checksheets, which they update during advising sessions, and eight-semester plans that lay out the best strategies for completion of coursework during the four-year time frame. Our GR degrees are designed for completion in two years, if students attend full time (and for the MAT and MAEd degrees, take some coursework during the summer). The MA is made up of a 12-hour core, a 9 hour concentration, and 12 additional hours that may constitute a 6 hour thesis and 6 hours of electives or a non-thesis option of 12 elective hours (for a 33 hour program). The MAEd is a 36-hour program (with 24 hours in English); the MAT is 42.

Multi- or interdisciplinary strengths of the programs. Program directors in each concentration work to develop curriculum that is pedagogically appropriate to the discipline and to integrate that

curriculum into a variety of concentrations and minors; as a result, coursework in any program in English is necessarily multi-disciplinary. For example, UG students concentrating in one area take courses in other concentration areas as well, and despite their concentration, our MA students take coursework in all three concentration areas (Literature, Rhetoric and Composition, and Professional Writing). BSEd, MAT, and MAEd students take courses offered in the College of Education and Allied Professions, so their experience is interdisciplinary as well.

Alignment of curriculum to meet University needs. The English department administers all courses in the C1 (Writing) Liberal Studies category (English 101 and 202), which all WCU students are required to take. We offer first-year seminars when possible, particularly English 191, “First-Year Seminar in Creative Writing,” 200 level courses – like English 206, “Literature of Place” and 207, “Popular Literature and Culture” – in the P4 (Humanities) category, and numerous upper-level perspective courses, like 352, “The Journey in Literature” and 367, “Appalachian Literature.” Several of our Professional Writing courses are required by other programs like Engineering and Social Work, and students majoring in Motion Picture and Television Production are required to take courses in our Motion Picture Studies curriculum.

Statement of course objectives that reflect the expected student learning outcomes of the program in all syllabi. All syllabi for English 101 and 202 contain the WRCS mission statement and learning outcomes for the course. In addition, the department has worked to encourage inclusion of learning goals that are appropriate to any given course that are in alignment with the expected learning outcomes of the program. Our departmental Peer Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness (PATE) committee reviews teaching materials – including syllabi – for all faculty in order to assure that course objectives are clearly listed. Syllabi are available for review upon request.

Internal process(es) used by the program to modify the curriculum. Program directors work with faculty within the program to collaboratively modify and update curriculum, and changes to curriculum are made to accommodate both faculty areas of expertise and student need. We believe that regular curricular revision is important to the health and currency of our programs, and the University is currently working to streamline its present curriculum process.

Learning outcomes assessment

Learning outcomes expressed as measurable statements of what students will know or be able to do upon completion of the program. Our Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness requires that we submit yearly program assessment reports for programs in English; we are required, therefore, to submit plans for each degree that we offer (BA, BSEd, MA/MAEd/MAT). The department has chosen to submit plans for every concentration offered for the BA as well as plans for the other degrees. Therefore, each program/concentration has measurable outcomes that are evaluated on a yearly basis.

Consistency between the required curriculum and the intended learning outcomes. Program curriculum drives our learning outcomes, and those outcomes simultaneously shape our curriculum. Since the last program review, we fully revised the core requirements for our BA degree, and we now require that all UG students take English 200, “Introduction to the English Major,” a course that provides us with an introductory assessable writing sample that can then be compared to writing done in later courses as evidence of progress in terms of critical thinking, information evaluation, and effective communication. This past academic year, we revised a significant amount of our Professional Writing curriculum, so the PW program director revised our assessment plan to reflect those changes.

Assessment measures that are explicitly designed to provide results to inform curricular decision-making. In addition to data collection in English 200, capstone experiences, which include a senior seminar for students concentrating in Literature, internships for those in Professional Writing and English Education, and exit interviews in Motion Picture studies, provide an end of program collection point – as do comprehensive exams, which are required of all of our MA students. We have designed these experiences to provide us with results and data that necessarily inform our curricular decision making with regard to fostering student success, program rigor, and disciplinary currency.

Consistent use of assessment results to make changes/modifications to the curriculum. As a review of our yearly program assessment reports should make clear, program directors regularly evaluate program goals and outcomes with the specific aim of using their findings to modify and shape curriculum. For example, when assessment revealed that our MAEd population was having trouble passing our comprehensive exams, the GPD worked with faculty in the College of Education to revise curriculum so that students now receive more guided content in literature courses.

Standard 4. The program has sufficient faculty resources to meet its mission and goals.

Faculty (full-time, part-time, and instructional staff) credentials consistent with SACS and, if applicable, program accreditation standard. WCU requires verification of credentials at the time of hire, and all English faculty meet or exceed University and SACS requirements for highly qualified faculty. Except for the English Education and TESOL programs, departmental programs are not accredited by other agencies nor are they governed by accreditation or credential requirements other than SACS.

All but two of the tenure/tenure-track faculty possess terminal degrees in their fields. The two faculty who do not (Ron Rash and Pam Duncan) are both creative writing faculty with MAs and significant publications records which exceed the “alternative qualifications” required by the university and SACS. Visiting assistant professors, when employed, also have always held the terminal degree. All term faculty in the department (lecturers, instructors, and adjunct faculty) possess at least the MA in the field and some possess terminal degrees.

For NC DPI and NCATE accreditation, certain English Education and TESOL program courses and experiences, such as student teaching, must be supervised by a faculty member with a current NC teaching license in the appropriate area: Dr. Boatright and Dr. Carter both hold current NC licenses in secondary English Language Arts; Dr. Petrone (the coordinator of the TESOL minor and recently discontinued GR TESOL programs) and Dr. Callahan-Price hold current NC licenses in ESL.

Faculty backgrounds that adequately span the major concentrations in the program. In the past decade the department’s hiring practices have focused on reflecting the programmatic makeup of the department. Many faculty teach in multiple areas, and all program areas benefit from multiple T/TT faculty support.

| | Composition & Rhetoric | Literature | Professional Writing | English Education | Motion Picture Studies | TESOL |
|----------------|---|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Primary area | Baker Huber Kreuter | Adams Kinser Claxton Wright Debo | Elliott* Rash Martinez Virtue | Carter Boatright | Heffelfinger | Petrone Callahan-Price |
| Secondary area | (a number of t/tt faculty teach ENGL 101/202) | Carter Boatright Heffelfinger | Adams Carter | Petrone Callahan-Price | Bruder* | Boatright |

- Prof. Deidre Elliot retired at the end of spring 2014 and the department has hired a new non-fiction writer to fill her line, and Dr. Margaret Bruder, a term faculty since 2007, often teaches MPS courses.

Representative nature of faculty in terms of demographics, tenure, and diversity. In the past five years, the department has maintained a gender ratio of approximately 60%-70% female to 30%-40% male with faculty of both genders spanning all rank areas. The ratio of tenure-line faculty to term faculty has remained relatively stable in the past five years with approximately 40%-45% of faculty in term lines (almost all full-time lecturers or instructors) in any given year, but the number of total faculty in each category has decreased over time, 21 T/TT and 17 term faculty in 09-10 to 18 T/TT and 13 term in 13-14. With respect to race and ethnicity, the department, like the university population, is predominately white. While the department has actively sought out, and hired, faculty of other races/ethnicities in the past, those faculty have gone elsewhere in the intervening years. For example, Dr. Balasubramanian left after the GR TESOL program was eliminated in the latest program review cycle. And Prof. Yazan, a term faculty, secured a job outside of academia with higher salary in the area.

Faculty that demonstrates continuing growth as professional practitioners, teachers and scholars. See Appendix for departmental bibliography. In the past five years alone, department faculty have generated over 30 books and edited collections, 45 shorter creative works, 8 significant internal awards/honors, 20 significant external awards/honors, and 50 individual essays, articles, and chapters. This impressive quantity of work is rivaled by the quality of that work, with publications in top-tier venues (like Duke UP [Kinser], MLA [Gastle, Debo, Wright], Yale UP [Kinser], *Poetry* [Carter], and Random House [Duncan]) and highest-level awards in scholarship/creative work and pedagogy (such as

the Board of Governors Teaching Award [Debo], Best of American Poetry [Carter], and MLA Award for Feminist Scholarship [Wright].

Adequacy of professional and pedagogical development opportunities for faculty. The department has managed to accommodate faculty quite well with limited resources. Most tenure-line faculty receive 70%-100% professional travel reimbursement for presentations, in part because faculty take advantage of university opportunities such as the Chancellor's travel fund. In addition to departmental budget funds, the department has access to modest endowment funds (\$3000/year) from the Joyner faculty development fund. And WRCS faculty, including term faculty, have had access to development funds deriving from residuals of the annual composition handbook, *Ink: Chronicles in Composition*.

Presence of a positive, productive work environment for all faculty in the program. While this is a difficult area to "document," it is fair to say that the department represents an exceptionally collegial work environment. While issues are often hotly debated in department meetings, they are done so respectfully and efficiently, as evidenced by the regular productivity documented in meeting minutes. All faculty (tenure-line and term) are invited to participate in decision-making on most departmental issues (save certain areas such as personnel decisions or GR courses where certain rank or position are required). The departmental lounge on the fourth floor of Coulter regularly sees faculty having lunch together. And a number of faculty have collaborated on teaching and/or scholarly issues.

Equitable distribution of instructional loads among the faculty. Tenure-line faculty teach a base course load of 3/3, with an expectation of scholarly productivity. Full-time term faculty teach 4/4, with no expectation of scholarly productivity and minimal service expectations. Relatively few course releases are assigned within the department; only 1) the DH, 2) the Graduate Program Director, 3) the WRCS (ENGL 101/202) Program Director, and 4) the Director of English Education receive standard, approved course releases. The DH teaches one course per semester. The Graduate Program Director, the English Education Program Director¹, and the WRCS Program Director each receive a one-course-per-semester reduction given the programmatic, supervisory, and advising loads of those programs. The Literature Director teaches a one-credit 40-student gateway course in lieu of one standard 3-credit course per semester. The Professional Writing Director teaches two courses per semester, but also supervises several interns per semester (and summer), which constitute a full load (since enough interns are in the field each term to constitute a course). Similarly, English Education faculty supervising more than six interns in a semester count those internships as a course in their load calculations.

Rational and coherent performance standards for faculty review, tenure and promotion.

The DCRD details these standards. See Appendix.

¹ The English Education director has only received that reduction intermittently given staffing demands.

Orientation of graduate teaching assistants to the mission and goals of the program, if applicable; Mentoring and evaluation opportunities for graduate students, if applicable. Apart from the Graduate School orientation activities, GTAs are all advised by the Graduate Program director and undergo significant orientation and training within the department. Graduate teaching assistant are assigned as instructor of record for either 101 or 202 only after having successfully completed 514 Teaching Writing and a total of 18 hours of GR coursework in English (following WCU and SACS requirements). Occasionally, the department employs “graduate lab assistants” (0-3 in any given semester) who teach 101 under the supervision of an experienced faculty mentor who is the instructor of record. While teaching, GTAs are observed by faculty in the WRCS program and participate in professional development activities of that program.

Standard 5. The program attracts, retains, and graduates high quality students.

*Size and demography of students enrolled in the program appropriate to its mission and goals; Diversity of student population; Enrollment patterns in the program relative to institutional and national enrollment patterns.*² The department’s vision is “to focus on engaged, practical, and critical ways of reading and writing the world that can only be derived from developing continually evolving skills in all forms of literacy.” To that end, the current size and demography of students is acceptable, but the department would like to see both modest growth and greater diversity. At WCU, total UG English major enrollment has ranged from 128 to 185 in the past five years, with AY 2013-2014 majors of 154/155 (fall/spring). National trends during this period show comparable average drops in enrollments in Humanities, and English specifically have seen slight decreases at US institutions as the economic downturn has focused enrollment in vocational and professional fields. During this period, the department has undergone staffing issues that may have affected enrollment, with faculty turnover (in part due to salary issues) in high-demand areas such as English Education and Professional Writing. English programs and courses require high levels of personal interaction and engaged activities in order to achieve its mission and goals. For English programs, large lecture classes are uncommon, which restricts enrollment numbers to some extent. At the GR level, the MA has ranged in enrollment over the past five years from 49 to 19, with 2013/2014 enrollment of 25/22 (fall/spring). As with the UG program, lower recent enrollments reflect decreasing enrollment in GR English programs across the country. Enrollment in English classes and programs has been deleteriously affected by the recent elimination of the GR TESOL program.

² For data on national trends in Humanities for this standard, see “Humanities Indicators. Part II. Undergraduate and Graduate Education in the Humanities. Section A. Undergraduate Education.” American academy of Arts and Sciences. <http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/hrcoIIA.aspx>

With respect to diversity of student population, programs reflect gender and racial diversity comparable to national averages for humanities programs. Nationally, approximately 60% of UG Humanities degrees are awarded to women; at WCU for the last three years the 72% of UG English majors have been women. Nationally, approximately 17% of UG humanities degrees are awarded to members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups; at WCU for the last three years the 12% of UG English majors have not identified as “White.” The department recently hired a second World Literatures specialist in part to improving offerings that would attract students from underrepresented groups.

Future viability of the program in terms of enrollment; Processes/activities to recruit and retain students; Adequacy of financial support/opportunities to recruit and retain high quality students. There is every indication that English will remain a strong and vibrant program. The department has embarked upon several recruitment/retention activities, such as faculty visiting high schools to guest lecture on specialty areas and discuss college with high school students, and recruitment activities for current WCU students. The department contacts prospective students, and the DH routinely communicates with these prospects to encourage recruitment. A limited number of modest scholarships and awards are available to English majors and GR students.³ While the department regularly updates its recruitment materials online and with admissions and career services, it is unaware of any dedicated or specialized support from admission to recruit English majors. For example, there has not been an English faculty member asked to participate in Western on Tour, nor is the department aware of how English is characterized or represented (if at all) by institutional recruitment activities.

Financial support to recruit GR students is available, but woefully insufficient. Stipends are currently \$8500-\$9500; these amounts are among the lowest in the state. Compounding this issue is the fact that WCU GR students generally do not receive tuition waivers (for 2013-14 and 2014-15 our MA program received 1 in-state waiver and 1 out-of-state waiver). Additionally, the loss of pay increases for masters degrees for NC teachers as also adversely affected the department’s ability to recruit new GR students. The Graduate Program Director actively recruits students (ad campaign, Recruitment Fairs, Social Media, brochures, etc.), but like the UG programs, there are few institutional resources allocated to GR student recruitment in English. In the past five years all GR recruitment expenses (except for two brochure updates) were paid for by the department or college.

Academic qualifications of students admitted to the program compared to the general profile of Western students. WCU English students exceed the institutional population generally with respect to qualifications. For the past five years, average HS GPA of ENGL majors has ranged from 3.51-3.81 (2013-2014 WCU average HS GPA = 3.49-3.67). Over the past five years, the ACT composite for new WCU UG ENGL students has averaged 23.9 (WCU average=21.7), and their SAT average has been

³ <http://www.wcu.edu/academics/departments-schools-colleges/cas/casdepts/english/undergraduate-english/english-scholarship-and-award-opportunities.asp>

1086.2 (WCU average=1039.4) with SAT verbal scores averaging 568 over that same period (WCU average=514), placing them in the top 25th percentile of all new WCU students in these metrics.

Accuracy and consistency of student advising: a. Mechanisms to monitor students' progress toward degree; b. Use of or collaboration with professional advisors and other student support services to provide quality advising to their students. At the UG level, all students are assigned a faculty advisor based upon area of concentration. This advisor provides both curriculum and career mentorship. ENGL 200, the introduction to the major gateway class requires all majors to complete a graduation plan and provides several mentoring/advising experiences. In the senior year, students also meet with the Undergraduate Studies coordinator who works closely with the student and the Registrar to ensure completion of requirements. The department maintains a close working relationship with the advising office that works with incoming students and assists with transfer advising. In the past five years, time to degree for graduating UGs has averaged 4.38, which indicates, in part, successful advising.

At the GR level, the Director of Graduate programs in English serves as the advisor for all GR students, and individual GR students work closely (as is common in our discipline) with other faculty mentors and theses directors. In the past five years, time to degree for GR students has averaged 2.98, which is not surprising given the common nature of stop-out in GR programs.

Student opportunities to engage in enriching activities that have been shown to promote retention and graduation such as involvement with faculty research, independent study, study abroad, internships and cooperative education, volunteerism, honor societies, and student organizations. UG and GR students regularly present at national and regional conferences (such as NCUR, the Graduate Research Symposium, the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference, NCTE, Rhetoric Society of America, etc.) and often with faculty sponsors/co-presenters. WCU's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society, has been particularly successful, with students regularly presenting at the national conference and achieving publication in STD publications (which have a <1% acceptance rate). Dr. Kinser's significant work editing the Carlyle Letters Online for Duke UP has engaged a number of students in coding and research projects. All professional writing students complete an internship, and English Education students complete a year-long student teaching practicum. Members of the Creative Writing Club, the school newspaper (the Western Carolinian) and the WCU Chapter of STC (Society for Technical Communication) are predominantly or exclusively English students.

Student performance on licensure or professional certifications exams relative to regional and national standards. There are currently no exams required for licensure or professional certifications. NC DPI will be requiring Praxis exams for Education students in the future, but currently only portfolio assessments are used. The mean scores for ENGL students on portfolio assessments used to recommend NC teaching licensure range from "proficient" to "accomplished."

Standard 6. The program has an administrative structure that facilitates achievement of program goals and objectives.

Processes for effective decision-making. Currently, our department head is guided in her decision-making process by several committees, in particular the Executive Committee, made up of program directors, and the elected Collegial Review/Personnel Committee, made up only of tenured faculty. Other key committees are the PATE (Peer Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness) Committee; the WRCS committee, which oversees first and second-year composition; and the program committees, which are overseen by Program Directors. Finally, an elected committee handles post-tenure review of tenured faculty. These committees ensure that not only are decisions made effectively but also that those making decisions receive the widest possible feedback. Non-tenure-track faculty may serve on all committees except those that make personnel decisions.

Support and training for department leaders. Department heads attend department head workshops twice yearly and once during the summer. The university provides no other formal training for department leaders and program directors, although all faculty members have opportunities for supplemental training on teaching, budget, and advising matters. The department compensates when possible by providing informal mentoring for all faculty; in addition, new department heads and program directors usually receive generous assistance from outgoing leaders (for example, the current department head received mentorship from former head Dr. Gastle before he stepped down, and both Professional Writing and English Education were co-directed for a semester to make the transition from one director to the next as easy as possible.)

Faculty involvement in ongoing program activities. Procedures for hiring, assessing, and tenuring and promoting faculty are outlined in our department Collegial Review Document (DCRD). While decisions about national searches are brought to the entire faculty, hiring is overseen by the Personnel Committee, which appoints subcommittees based on the nature of the search itself (so, for example, professional writing faculty would staff a subcommittee searching for a technical writer).

Every effort is made to involve a wide array of colleagues in collegial review decisions. Each faculty member's teaching is assessed by peers who serve on the PATE committee. This assessment includes a class visit, a review of course evaluations, and an analysis of teaching materials. The department head combines this assessment with her evaluation of the faculty member's research and service, and these are summarized in an Annual Faculty Evaluation (AFE) statement. Tenure-track faculty members also prepare periodic dossiers that include annual AFE statements and a host of other materials; these dossiers are evaluated by the Collegial Review Committee (CRC) for reappointment and tenure/promotion. Tenure/promotion decisions are made by tenured faculty only, and their decisions are reviewed by college and university committees as well as the College Dean and the Provost.

Program directors coordinate activities and curriculum for each program (WRCS, Professional Writing, UG Literature, Graduate Studies, English Education, and TESOL), soliciting the input of program faculty. Program directors also submit annual assessments to the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (OIPE) of their programs' ability to address student learning outcomes. Because most of our faculty direct at least one program during their career at WCU, and because assessment-related activities take up more and more of our time, we expect that all faculty would benefit from training in outcomes assessment and the specialized language it demands.

These structures insure that both program and personnel decisions are made with the greatest possible care and input. If anything, university structures for faculty evaluation are occasionally redundant, but these structures are outside of departmental control.

Student/alumni involvement in program decision-making. Although we have no formal means of seeking input from students and alumni, we have used a range of informal measures to ensure that students are involved in decision making. Students' written faculty evaluations and internship reports weighed when we evaluate faculty and assess classes and programs. In the past, an assistant department head did exit interviews with graduating students, and we have discussed re-instituting that assessment tool. We also use information gleaned from co-op and internship supervisors. We often make use of such input when making program decisions. For example, students and co-op supervisors suggested our writing students needed stronger computer and editorial skills before they do their internships, so Professional Writing split its Intro course into two classes, Intro to Creative Writing and Editing and Intro to Professional Writing and Editing; each stress conventional and computer-assisted editing skills. Professional Writing students now take classes only in computer classrooms, where they use InDesign, Flash, Dreamweaver, and imaging software. Moreover, an informal poll of GR students was used in the hiring of a global literature specialist. Job candidates must teach a class related to their specialty as part of the interview process, and surveys of students' impressions are used as part the hiring process. In the past, senior exit interviews revealed that our literature students need more guidance in choosing and applying for GR programs, so our Literature Director created both a 200-level intro to the major and a senior seminar with rigorous new guidelines about content, portfolio and CV development .

We have recently addressed the challenge of tracking and involving alumni by creating Facebook pages and Twitter feeds for our UG and GR alumni, and in just one year we've had an impressive response. We've used that feedback to create a student-designed alumni profile page (<http://wcuenglish.net/alumni/>) linked to our home page, and we hope to create an alumni advisory board in the near future.

Standard 7. The program has adequate resources to meet its goals and objectives.

Adequacy of budget to support the mission and goals of the program. The department's budget has remained relatively flat (at around \$35,000) over the past few years, even as the size of the department has increased. More significant, however, is that summer money – which constituted significant additional funds for the department – has decreased dramatically over the past three years.⁴ The loss of summer revenue combined with a flat budget and increasing faculty size has made it increasingly more difficult for the department to fund faculty travel that is essential in order to maintain currency, do research, and engage with scholars outside the university.

The department requires faculty to apply for the Chancellor's Travel Fund, and these funds, which constitute a \$1,200 award per faculty member, have allowed us to cover nearly all travel for tenured and tenure track faculty – but doing so has not been easy. The department now asks that faculty who attend more than one conference per year also apply for Coulter Faculty Commons funds as well, and this year, several faculty members received funding from that source. Resources are more limited for our term faculty, but via funds generated from the sale of *Ink*, a text of exceptional writing from WCU students that all English 101 students are required to purchase, we have been able to support the travel of some of our WRCS term faculty to present at conferences.

Currency and adequacy of facilities and laboratories, instructional technology, and library resources to support the mission and goals of the program. One-time money was used to purchase new desks for all faculty several years ago as well as to upgrade the furniture in the faculty lounge. We have been able to use one-time funds to purchase a white board and upgrade software in two of our four electronic classrooms so as to better support the needs of our technical writing faculty and students. The institution – particularly the College – has been very good about allowing for regular and recurring computer refreshes. While there are only two printers available to English faculty, the Paw Print system allows faculty to print to any printer on campus. Our library resources are quite good; in addition to substantial holdings that serve English faculty, we have access to the ABC loan system (Asheville, Boone, Cullowhee), whereby holdings at UNCA and ASU are available to us, and our Interlibrary Loan librarians generally very quickly track down anything else that we might need. We have no one person who maintains our web presence – an increasingly important interface for prospective students – and that job has traditionally fallen to our half-time administrative associate. As a result, our web pages quickly become outdated.

Program staffing needs. In AY 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, during a massive round of budget cuts, the English department lost 15 term lines. As a result, the department had to reconfigure its 101 and

⁴ In AY 2011-2012, the department received \$13,369 in revenue generated by English summer school courses. In 2012-2013, that figure dropped to \$6,831, and in 2013-2014, summer funding was recoded to cover expenses in the College of Arts and Sciences. We received only \$2,238.

102 course offerings, which had constituted a first-year two semester sequence to 101 and 202, a first and second-year sequence. In addition, we were forced – against pedagogical best practices – to raise our 101 and 202 caps to 24.⁵ We have not been allowed to lower these caps, which are currently the highest in the UNC system. The department continues to advocate for lower caps in these classes, but we have been unsuccessful. As student enrollment numbers have increased, we have been allowed to hire new lecturers with some degree of regularity, and we have assiduously avoided hiring adjuncts whenever possible (believing that adjunct labor is unethical). Nonetheless, as the demand for 101 and 202 increases, we still need more staff to cover those classes – and tenure track hires are always preferable to term positions.

Over the past several years, the department has made strategic hiring decisions in terms of the tenure track lines that we have been given, the goal of which was to better balance faculty in our various disciplinary areas. As a result, we have shifted from being primarily at department of literature faculty to a department with a more even faculty distribution in Professional Writing (having hired one Technical Writer in 2012-2013 and another this past year as well as new non-fiction specialist to replace one who retired), English Education (we hired a second specialist in 2012-2013), and TESOL (we hired a third faculty member in that area last year). Despite having lost our TESOL GR programs during Program Prioritization, we created a new UG TESOL add-on license/minor that we began to implement last academic year. Also this past academic year, we also made our first Literature faculty hire since 2005, and this person constitutes our second global literature specialist.

Effective and appropriate use of staff. Department staff (currently 1.5 positions) seem far too few to meet the needs of such a large and complex department. Moreover, they do much more than the title Administrative Associate suggests. Instead, they design and maintain databases, build the schedule and make adjustments to fit everything into the tight space, attend Banner training, help faculty with Banner, build and maintain courses (most of them doubly, as the only way Banner will automatically schedule electronic classrooms is by changing the starting and ending time for the EC day), and carry out other tasks formerly done by the registrar. They maintain computer carts, repair equipment, train student workers, maintain all budgets, do payroll, fix copiers, order supplies, and help students to GR, while assisting over 30 faculty with travel, forms, and other administrative tasks. In this department, no one is available to update web sites, type forms, make copies, or do any of the tasks considered routine by secretaries only a few years ago. We believe that two full-time staff positions would help this department to run effectively.

⁵ The CCCC, the organization of record in composition studies, states that "no more than 20 students should be permitted in any writing class. Ideally, classes should be limited to 15" (see <http://wpacouncil.org/archives/31n1-2/31n1-2horming.pdf>, p. 19). Furthermore, the Association of Departments of English's position is that no instructor should teach more than 3 sections of composition/term, and "the number of students in each section should be 15 or fewer, with no more than 20 students in any case" (<http://wpacouncil.org/archives/31n1-2/31n1-2horming.pdf>, p. 20).