

**ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT  
PROGRAM REVIEW**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES**

**APRIL 18, 2017**

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# Part I: Department Overview

## A. History of Department and Programs

The evolution of the English Studies department is linked to the history of Fitchburg State University and to changes within the field of English Studies. Our department offers three possible concentrations for the English Studies major: literature, secondary education with initial licensure and professional writing, and these reflect changes within the discipline. In keeping with the university's origins as a normal school in 1894, the department continues to embrace a commitment to the training of teachers, many of whom serve in the classrooms of our regional schools. As secondary education teacher preparation and the demand for teachers has changed, the number of students in our program has also fluctuated. In the 1960s, for example, the number of these students in department dwindled to 35, but it expanded again and we now graduate students at a steady rate. These students complete both the literature concentration and the secondary education concentration requirements. Over the past few decades, the department added a professional writing concentration in the 1970s and a theater concentration in the 1990s. In 2012, the theater concentration moved to the Communications/Media department, and the professional writing and literature concentrations each expanded their focus, recently adding substantive studies in new and digital media, film, cultural studies, world, South Asian and Latin American literature, and other fields.

At the time of this writing, we have a total of 112 English Studies majors in our three concentrations (literature, secondary education with initial licensure, and professional writing); and 112 English Studies minors, 72 of which have chosen literature for their required minor (58 of those which are education majors) and 40 of which have chosen to minor in professional writing. Our number of majors has stayed relatively stable in recent years, although it is somewhat lower than in the 2012 Program Review. The change is due in significant part to the move of our theater faculty/concentration to the Communications/Media Department. Although numbers in our literature concentration have declined slightly, we are actively working to recruit new majors in all three concentrations, and the number of our minors has grown. We are also involved in several new interdisciplinary minors (discussed, following) that contribute the growth of our minors.

Changes within the field of English Studies—theoretical, pedagogical, and professional—have merited review and resulted in some curricular changes. In keeping with developments in literary and cultural theory, digital literacy, and changes in journalism and professional writing, we have made alteration to meet these specific areas of development in all of our concentrations. The department's speech courses, from first-year to advanced, continue provide significant offerings for students in and outside the major. Since the last program review, the department has created some new classes to add to curricular offerings in the literature, initial licensure and professional writing concentrations. These and other curricular changes and additions, which affect our majors as well as students across the university, represent the sum total of the faculty's continuing scholarship in the dual areas of research and teaching pedagogy. As manifested in both our continuing assessment process and a comprehensive curriculum mapping project, the department is actively engaged in reviewing goals and outcomes in order to stay current in our curricular offerings, to update our concentrations and departmental core, and to recruit and prepare new majors and minors.

## **B. Identification of Major Recommendations**

In October 2012, the department undertook its last formal program review. The external evaluator identified the following eight issues and areas for improvement, which we have addressed in the following ways:

### **1. Increase size of tenure track faculty. Pursue hiring requests in areas of emerging strength in the department. Continue to work with administration to increase number of tenure-track faculty in a department that is central to the university mission.**

Since 2012, the department has hired a number of new tenure-track faculty members, in the fields of creative writing (Steve Edwards and DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld), composition and rhetoric (Heather Urbanski), digital and new media (Elisabet Takehana), and a new professor specializing in Latin American and world literatures (Diego Ubiera), as well as two new faculty members in secondary education, Wendy Keyser and Katherine Covino-Poutasse. All but two of these hires were replacements for retiring or outgoing faculty or for a faculty member who passed away, so these hires did not increase departmental faculty numbers substantially but instead filled existing vacancies. Currently, we are in the process of hiring a new journalism professor to replace another retiring professor. However, shifts in the academic specialties of these faculty hires reflect our efforts to continuously reinvigorate well-established “traditional” curricular content by incorporating cutting-edge 21<sup>st</sup> century developments in the discipline to ensure that English studies remains exciting and relevant to our students.

### **2. Continue to implement already-successful plans to improve first-year writing program. Consider hiring a "Writing Program Director" to help structure Writing I and Writing II courses, assess course outcomes, assess faculty, plan non-tenure-track and tenure-track staffing, and support writing faculty. Recognize and continue the initiatives of the Writing Committee.**

Alongside its ongoing work of reviewing Writing I and Writing II courses, the department has recently worked on the area of Information Literacy. Our Writing Committee and a group of faculty partnered with the library to incorporate it more fully into the freshman writing experience. Professor Heather Urbanski, our recent hire in the field of composition and rhetoric, has been a vital contributor to our most recent efforts. Given the existing structure of the department which operates according to the MSCA Contract which stipulates that it is the department chair who evaluates faculty teaching performance, handles scheduling, and hires and evaluates adjunct faculty, the position of a “Writing Director” proves impossible. This notwithstanding, our department has in recent years placed great focus on our writing courses, incorporating information literacy and technology as well as new directions in the teaching of writing and rhetoric. We are fully compliant as a department with the MSCA’s “15% rule” in that our full-time faculty teach writing classes regularly and not more than 15% of our courses are taught by part-time faculty. Following Massachusetts’ higher education policy, our institution has adopted scaling corequisite academic support for students who would have otherwise been placed in traditional remedial education sequences.

**3. Encourage faculty interest in and enthusiasm for developing a curriculum that addresses new trends in English Studies. Consider creating a new concentration in cultural studies, gender studies, global literature, creative writing, or similar area of emerging strength.**

As previously mentioned, the specialties of all of our tenure-track hires since 2012 reflect recent curricular trends and their expertise expands upon the areas listed above in both professional writing and literature. Since our last Program Review, we have hired two creative writers, two faculty who work in digital rhetoric and new media, and one professor who specializes in Latin American and global literatures. These faculty have already created many new courses within both the Professional Writing and Literature concentrations. Our affiliation with interdisciplinary minors has grown, and faculty currently offer new courses in several growth areas such as Film Studies (with the Communication and Media department), Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies (in collaboration with the Economics, History, and Political Science department; Humanities department and Social Sciences department) and Asian Studies (again with the EHPS department). Furthermore, we have created a “Women and Gender Studies” concentration in our graduate-level MA in Literature program. We are also considering adding either a fourth concentration in the undergraduate major in cultural studies, or possibility incorporating it as “literature and cultural studies.” The recent creation of an interdisciplinary Film Studies Minor reflects and utilizes English Studies faculty and courses, and will help us continue to develop this cultural studies emphasis.

**4. Continue department’s curricular innovation and improvement. Continue assessment of individual courses and each concentration. Build on the successful revision of curriculum by addressing additional issues including student career planning, internships, and service learning. Ask administration for support of these initiatives, such as release time for career advising or a staff hire of an internship coordinator.**

The professional writing concentration has undergone curricular revision over the last four years, and the secondary education with initial licensure concentration has. At the department level, we have begun the process of comprehensive curriculum mapping to promote in-depth conversations within each concentration and to enable exchange between different concentrations regarding the curriculum as a whole. Our departmental Assessment Committee was one of the first to produce annual assessments of student work, and we have further developed that process in recent years, assessing both culminating work from our Capstone course and earlier work from Approaches to English Studies to learn more about where our English Studies majors are at each stage of their education and professional development. We have also created a departmental Student Success Committee, to make discussions of students’ professional as well as educational needs and trajectories a consistent part of our departmental work. We have a Writing Committee that examines our practices in teaching writing and rhetoric, discusses the function and work in student publications and makes suggestions to the department.

Our faculty have been instrumental in creating possibilities for Study Abroad, and classes taught by Dr. Kisha Tracy and Dr. Elise Takehana have taken students to the UK and to Paris. Dr. Joseph Moser plans to take students to Verona Italy this summer for a film studies course. We have addressed student career planning through several paths. Over the last few years, faculty



teaching our Senior Capstone course have built in work with professional materials (as well as graduate school application) into that class, which allows us to engage our English Majors more fully on these crucial questions. We have implemented units that seek to prepare students for professional applications in their concentration, such as resume creation and job applications, in addition to portfolio construction. We have also brought in successful alumni to speak to current students about career planning and job successes as part of our student success outreach endeavors. Additionally, we created and administered an alumni survey in 2016 which has helped us learn more about our students' perspectives on these issues of success and development and their experiences after graduation.

**5. Assess graduate program's goals for the Master of Arts and Master of Arts and Teaching degrees, determining if program growth is desirable. Work with Graduate and Continuing Education to articulate goals for enrollment and course offerings. Determine future of Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in English.**

The Graduate Program Director and the Graduate Curriculum Committee have undertaken a review of the curriculum, requirements, history and records of the program. Given the current state of the job market in higher education in the arts and humanities, graduate enrollments sometimes present a challenge, and our program is no exception. However, we have taken some measures that we think will ameliorate this problem. These include: offering pro-seminar courses that allow some undergraduates to take certain classes (a form of dual enrollment) with the permission of the department chair, graduate program director and instructional faculty; incorporating hybrid classes to provide more choices for graduate students; and changing graduate course sequencing to accommodate enrollment needs. In addition, the program is considering the feasibility of offering on-site sections of classes at local high schools to accommodate graduate students' schedules.

This department is very democratic in its approach to the graduate curriculum, integrating many faculty voices in decision making.

Subsequent to their MA study here, some our students go on to pursue higher degrees, returning to our university to study in our diverse Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) Programs or going on to enroll in a PhD program elsewhere.

**6. Identify ways of highlighting departmental leadership on campus. Consider creating a forum to bring departmental expertise to wider university community (such as a forum on curriculum development, student community-building, or engaged scholarship). Work with administration to identify opportunities to increase visibility on campus.**

Our department is highly active in leadership on campus. Our departmental representatives on university-wide committees -- from standing committees such as the All University Committee and the Liberal Arts & Sciences Council to occasional ones such as the NEASC Five-Year Interim Report committee, and the Strategic Planning committees -- have ensured that we have a strong presence and voice across campus. The English Studies department has a significant number of faculty members in leadership positions across campus institutions: Dr. Kisha Tracy as co-coordinator of the Center for Teaching & Learning; Dr. Joseph Moser as director of the

Honors Program; and Dr. Frank Mabee as coordinator for interdisciplinary minors. In recent years, Dr. Benjamin Railton has served as chair of both the All University Committee and the Liberal Arts & Sciences Council. Dr. Wendy Keyser currently serves as the Coordinator for the Secondary Education courses offered across campus by secondary education specialists. Similarly, English Studies faculty have spearheaded numerous campus-wide events -- from Dr. Anna Consalvo, Dr. Elisabet Takehana and Dr. Katharine Covino-Poutasse as organizers of the Robert Cormier Symposium, a three-year long project – to Dr. Aruna Krishnamurthy working on Women’s History Month celebrations, and organizing an interdisciplinary, International Faculty Pedagogy group and co- creating and fostering ( with the Economics, History and Political Science department) the Asian Studies Minor. Dr. Tracy continues to organize and conduct an annual Medieval Studies Workshop for future educators across the campus. She and Dr. Heather Urbanski have led sessions for faculty at Development Day, among many other activities in which our department engages. Numerous English Studies faculty are currently involved in the development and teaching of several minors: Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, American Studies, African-American Studies and Film Studies. Our involvements are highlighted and promoted in our departmental materials and department and university webpages.

**7. Build on support of newly-hired tenure-track faculty. Offer more funding for pre-tenure faculty development. Expand existing mentoring strengths by offering additional orientation-type support during faculty’s first year and articulating tenure expectations in service and scholarship.**

New faculty in the department received support and mentoring from the chair, from senior faculty and their peers. Faculty also benefit from support extended by the Center for Teaching & Learning, under the direction of Dr. Kisha Tracy and Dr. Kate Jewell, which is instrumental in addressing and strengthening these areas in a more formal setting: for example, this year Professor Katharine Covino-Poutasse is one of the CTL’s three new faculty mentors. The MSCA Union and Academic Affairs at FSU offer other specific presentations and workshops to sustain new faculty as they arrive at the university. We are actively working with our new FSU deans and administrators to develop new mechanisms for supporting new faculty, and one such initiative includes possibly creating a Faculty Research Center. Department representatives actively serve on committees that support faculty development. Our department continues its practice of securing proportionally greater conference funding for new faculty. Customarily, new faculty receive informal as well as formal support from faculty peers in the department.

**8. Highlight students’ extremely high levels of satisfaction with English Studies’ student-centered teaching and sense of community. Consider creating a formalized structure to organize, coordinate, and advertise student activities, such as a student advisory board.**

The recently created Student Success Committee offers one departmental avenue for such efforts, as do newly created events such as the fall English Studies Rally that engage our majors in the planning process. The English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta, holds an induction ceremony each year that is designed by the student office-holders and inductees. The High School Writing competition, an extremely important venue for highlighting FSU’s English

department 's work in the community and our Secondary Education concentrations outreach to area high schools continues to be a significant initiative that has had great success in fostering student and community satisfaction with our department's activities. Our students serve as editors for in-house publications *Route 2* and *Detour* and also help with the launch event of these magazines. We are working to get students more involved with the Student Success Committee, perhaps as part of a revitalization of the English Club. Additionally, the faculty is reviving and developing a Student Handbook to assist our majors in their studies and pre-professional development.

In the last two years, our undergraduate class valedictorians have both been English Studies majors, another mark of our student success. In addition, the Graduate Studies valedictory speaker last year was also an English Studies MA Program graduate.

### **C. Disciplinary "Best Practices"**

The Association of Departments of English has identified various best practices in the discipline, which they list as separate policy statements at <https://ade.mla.org/Resources/Policy-Statements>. Our department's efforts are definitely aligned with these recommendations. For example, in the statement on class sizes they recommend no more than 20 students in a writing course, while ours cap at 22 (as mentioned above, the Council of Writing Program Administrators recommends a cap at 15). Our literature courses have a maximum enrolment of 28 (much below the recommended 35), a number that has remained stable over the past five years. Likewise, the statement on teaching, evaluation, and scholarship recommends an emphasis on both teaching and scholarship (broadly defined, to include creative endeavors, service, and research). When it comes to departmental and institutional evaluations of faculty, Fitchburg State does indeed emphasize teaching expertise alongside scholarship in its peer and institutional performance evaluations.

When compared to peer institutions in the Massachusetts State system, our department's curriculum meets and often exceeds the state-wide benchmarks. The core curriculum at FSU includes surveys, a methods course, and a Shakespeare course, like our closest peer, Worcester State University. But, where the remainder of WSU's required courses are electives, we have a writing-intensive course, a 4000-level literature course, and the Capstone, all built into the core curriculum. At Salem State and Framingham State, both, the requirements (including a capstone and distributions across new literature categories) and the concentrations (including Professional and Creative Writing at both) are more overtly comparable to ours. We now offer, like these sister institutions, a minor in Film Studies, which is an area (along with Cultural Studies) that we have presently expanded into, this year having created, in partnership with FSU's Communications–Media department, a Film Studies Minor. We strive to keep our departmental offerings current with new directions in the discipline and with new hires who can add to our expertise.

## **D. Departmental initiatives and significant changes**

While some of our significant department changes have come in response to outside factors (such as revisions to the Licensure curriculum to reflect new state requirements), many have originated as our own initiatives on two main levels that are both closely tied to student needs and success. We have pursued a number of curricular changes to make our department and concentrations more flexible, more contemporary, and more useful for our students. These include allowing one World Literature survey to count toward our core survey requirements; creating new shell courses, including creating a Study Abroad shell course (in which our faculty have taken classes to England and to Paris) and a Genres shell course in Professional Writing courses (to allow for multiple contemporary connections that build on faculty expertise); and allowing existing shell courses such as Major Authors and the Seminar to be taken by students two times for credit, among other curricular revisions.

We have also undertaken a number of steps to better engage with and enhance student success. The newly-created Student Success Committee has launched initiatives such as bringing alumni back to campus to talk about their professional and educational arcs, and plans to create a student success pamphlet that would include information on careers and internships, graduate school, professional materials, and other relevant topics. Our faculty regularly mentor and train students as potential researchers and professionals in our fields. We emphasize student research and publication on a number of fronts, by sending students to present papers at the regional Shakespeare conferences, mentoring students for FSU's annual Undergraduate Conference, Medieval Studies conferences at Plymouth and by giving students significant reign over publications such as *the Point*, *Route 2*, and *Detour*. who present at a variety of local and regional undergraduate conferences.

The constitution of our faculty in the department has also had a significant effect on the curriculum. Since the time of our last program review, we have had faculty turnover owing to retirements and expansion through new lines, and have made adjustments to curricular and course offerings with the changes in existing faculty specializations. The new faculty hires in Professional Writing, Secondary Education and Latin American literature have reinvigorated our existing courses with the integration of technology, new pedagogical approaches, and different disciplinary perspectives. These faculty have also developed new courses in composition and writing, creative and professional writing, and cultural studies and have taken on key responsibilities in department committees and conversations. In addition, our senior faculty stay current in their disciplines, reflecting developments through the creation of new course offerings in literary and cultural studies, film studies, speech and world literatures, and seen in new content offered in our major authors and senior seminar courses, new topics classes in speech, literature and professional writing.

Our faculty has also strengthened the department's outreach to students in both formal and informal ways. Faculty have kept vital Sigma Tau Delta, the national English Honors Club, by encouraging our best students to take leadership roles in the club and to organize numerous events and readings as part of its purview. Faculty have also incorporated changes in the department's literary and creative writing magazine, *Route 2*, linking it integrally with our "Editing and Publishing" classes. We have also created a successful new online magazine *Detour*, and revamped our department-sponsored High School Writing Competition. At the

graduate level, new editions of our graduate publication, *The Falconer* continue to showcase exciting developments in the discipline generated by FSU students' and faculty scholarship. The Writing Associates initiative, through which our department offers academically talented students opportunities to work closely with a sponsoring faculty member in courses across the curriculum to serve as writing associates, continues to link teachers with writing tutors who assist during class work.

Our faculty are also highly active in campus-wide leadership roles, which include such positions as the current co-coordinator of the Center for Teaching & Learning, the director of the Honors Program, and the coordinator for the university's interdisciplinary minors. English department faculty members have also contributed to the redesigning and sustaining of the University's "Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies" Minor.

## **E. Centrality of the department and program mission and visions to the mission and vision of the university**

### **The English Studies Department Mission and Vision**

"The mission of the English Studies program is to offer students: a) knowledge of the broad field of literature in English; b) in-depth knowledge of its diverse aspects; c) the reading, writing, and research tools for exploring the field and its boundaries; and d) ample opportunity for hands-on experience in related fields to prepare students for careers." Our courses and concentrations are designed to train our students to read, analyze, discuss, and write about fiction, poetry, essays, and memoirs; to become teachers; to write creatively and professionally; and to become critical thinkers with sharpened writing and verbal skills. Our students often go directly into jobs which may involve teaching, or which require research, analysis, and clear communication. Our students may also choose among graduate programs including those in literature, education, journalism, law, business, counseling, teaching, or library science. They become informed and productive citizen leaders of the Commonwealth, and acquire the academic skills necessary for them to pass state-mandated certification tests for licensure.

Created in 2007 and continually revised and strengthened in the years since, this mission statement, and a University-wide vision project that provided the catalyst for change, led to the development of our English Studies core curriculum. Specifically, faculty have rethought the teaching of our survey courses in order to promote a greater understanding and appreciation of important literary and cultural themes, they have developed new courses in world literatures to enhance our students' global perspectives, created a "writing-intensive" requirement for all English Studies majors to ensure our students gain writing skills that reflect the standards of the discipline and expanded our internship opportunities for students to gain footholds in careers after graduation.

As our departmental offerings and the field has changed, we have had an ongoing series of conversations about our departmental goals and mission, culminating in considerably revised and expanded Vision statement that we developed in 2015. Our new Vision Statement includes this language:

“Students who explore the many paths within English Studies are trained to become thoughtful, critical thinkers and engaged readers, writers, creators and teachers of texts. Our discipline is diverse, looking through cultural, literary, rhetorical, and pedagogical lenses to analyze, interpret, and author texts in a range of genres and media.

Students within our major find the training and flexibility to pursue individual talents and interests through a core of major requirements as well as through specialized concentrations focusing on literature, secondary education and professional writing. We are committed as one department to preparing the next generation of thinkers, teachers, and writers within our major by providing through a core of major requirements as well as specialized concentration offerings the training and flexibility for students to pursue their individual talents and interests. Our goal is to assist Fitchburg State students on their journeys to being critical and analytical citizens, writers and teachers who can engage within the dynamic, multi-cultural environments of the private and public sectors, well as academia.

As the department that trains every single student within this campus in analytical writing and critical thinking, English Studies prepares Fitchburg State students to engage with a multicultural world through such practices as reading closely to decode potential meanings in texts, synthesizing a range of sources and observations, and communicating their ideas in creative and critical ways. Students can expect to learn to recognize the profound issues that cross geographic and temporal boundaries as they sharpen their writing and verbal skills. Beyond teaching them about literature, writing and education, through the interactive, discussion-based format of our classes, we educate them in thinking, in academic culture, and about how to belong to an academic community -- essential training in our institution in which many are first generation college goers. Every graduate who applies for a job upon leaving this university applies the training that s/he has received in English Studies classes. The skills they learn from our department are readily translatable skills in the professional world.

English Studies plays an integral, sustaining role in Fitchburg State’s Liberal Arts and Sciences tradition and curriculum through literary and rhetorical study, writing instruction, film and culture study, and oral communication. We are committed to maintaining and expanding our role in our support of the Liberal Arts and Sciences mission/goals of the university by focusing on interdisciplinary work, highlighting diverse voices, and genre, gender and cultural studies.

Within the English Studies major and minor curriculum, itself, we are focused on expanding our engagement with digital media, community involvement and outreach, cultural literacies and information literacy to increase student exposure to a global, multicultural communication environment. We aim to build our representations of Latino and world texts to complement our offerings in Caribbean, African, and Asian cultural texts as well as to foster international perspectives. We also house three interdisciplinary minors and plan to expand our interdisciplinary involvement through our faculty whose expertise prepares them to team teach or link courses to further students’ interdisciplinary learning experiences, given institutional support.”

Our department will continue to examine our role and goals, particularly as our university contemplates revamping its Liberal Arts and Sciences requirements and considers adding a First Year Experience course to curricular requirements. **(See APPENDIX 1 for the English Studies Department’s full Vision Statement)**

## Contributions to the Liberal Arts and Sciences Program

The English Studies department is central to the Liberal Arts and Sciences (LA&S) Program in offering required courses in writing, speech, and literature to all students in the University. Our faculty see nearly every student at the University at least twice and generally three times in a classroom, regardless of major. Our department's significant contributions to the Liberal Arts and Sciences Program include the following:

### First-year Writing: Writing I and Writing II

These courses are required of students from all majors under the Liberal Arts and Sciences Program. The following chart illustrates the extent of the department's ongoing commitment to first-year writing. The figures denote the number of students enrolled in Writing I and II courses over the past four years, based on 22 students enrolled per section. Students enrolled in Basic Writing are not included in this table, following the Board of Higher Education's recent agreement concerning developmental writing courses, (which are no longer taught at the state universities unless *in extremis*, but are instead offered in partnership at the local community colleges.) Basic Writing courses are not counted towards our students' graduation requirements.

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Writing I	748	814	726	792
Writing II	770	836	770	792
Total	1518	1650	1496	1584

Students may place out of the required writing courses based on Accuplacer scores, Advanced Placement courses, or transfer credit. Accuplacer scores also dictate course placement in Basic Writing, Writing I, or, to a lesser degree, Writing II.

We believe this commitment to teaching writing to our first-year students is vital to the University.

### Speech Courses:

The department's 9 speech courses also contribute to the goals of the Liberal Arts and Science Program and serve the entire university's students as they fulfill its Speaking and Listening requirement:

SPCH 1000	Introduction to Speech Communication
SPCH 1100	Argument and Debate
SPCH 1400	Small Group Work
SPCH 1600	Public Speaking
SPCH 2600	Persuasion

- SPCH 2800 Rhetorical Criticism
- SPCH 3000 Speech Writing
- SPCH 3100 General Semantics
- SPCH 3004 Topics: Communication Theories: The Twilight Zone

A very large number of students pass through our courses every year, as the chart below demonstrates:

Academic Years 2013 – 2017

AY Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-2017
Speech Course Enrollment	402	353	305	317	340

5-Year Total **1,717**

Additionally, other majors, including Business Administration, require Introduction to Speech Communication of all its students. Altogether, the department offers 6-12 sections of speech courses each semester to meet students’ needs, a total of about 150-201 seats per semester.

### **Literature Courses—Global Diversity:**

In addition to the two first-year writing courses, all students are required to take one literature course. We offer a broad array of courses, not only in the more familiar areas of American and British literatures, but also in world literatures. These courses fulfill the Liberal Arts and Sciences Global Diversity requirement, western (GDA) or nonwestern (GDNA):

- ENGL 2400: World Literature I
- ENGL 2500: World Literature II
- ENGL 2600: Bible as Literature
- ENGL 2620: Classical Mythology
- ENGL 2650: Ethnic American Literature
- ENGL 2660: 19<sup>th</sup> Century African-American Literature
- ENGL 2670: 20<sup>th</sup> Century African-American Literature
- ENGL 3000: World Drama
- ENGL 3020: Modern Drama
- ENGL 3025: English Studies Abroad: Paris (new)
- ENGL 3061: Jewish American Literature and Culture (new)
- ENGL 3070: European Literature I
- ENGL 3080: European Literature II
- ENGL 3092: Transatlantic Literature
- ENGL 3100: The World Novel (new)
- ENGL 3700: African Literature
- ENGL 3710: South Asian Literature
- ENGL 3720: Caribbean Literature



## **Liberal Arts and Sciences: Option B**

As part of their Liberal Arts & Sciences program requirement, FSU students must select one of three additional options to meet an additional 12 required credits. Option A includes the study of a foreign language. Option C allows students to self-design a program of study. Option B, which requires students to take 4 additional courses in one liberal arts and science discipline, is the most popular option for student across campus and frequently enlists English Studies courses with ENGL and SPCH designations.

All these examples of programs and courses demonstrate the department's central position in fulfilling the mission of the University and its prominence within the Liberal Arts and Science Program.

### **Curricular support to other programs and majors:**

The English Studies department also provides faculty staffing for the Honors Program in offering the two-semester Honors Writing, which replaces Writing I and Writing II for Honors students, and a sophomore-level Honors Literature seminar offered once a year. (The current Honors Program director is also an English Studies faculty member, Dr. Joseph Moser.)

The department also contributes to Interdisciplinary Studies minors (discussed below).

The department's course offerings, number of sections offered, and scheduling of courses are also affected by its curricular ties to the Education department. Specifically, all Education majors (Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School, and Special Education) must declare a minor in either English Studies, Math, History, or Biology. To date we have 58 Education majors who have declared minors in literature (out of a total of 112 minors). With 18 credits (6 courses) required in the English literature minor, and with the Education department's specific course requirements in Children's Literature, Young Adult Literature, and Literature and Disability courses, we are obligated to routinely offer several sections of these courses each semester in order to meet their needs. (A fuller discussion of our minors can be found under Part IV: Curriculum.)

## **F. Program Structure/Department Organization**

**Undergraduate Program:** The English Studies department offers a BA and a BS degree. A BA requires language proficiency at the intermediate level; the BS does not require language study. The major is comprised of three concentrations: Literature, Professional Writing, and Initial Licensure. All students are required to take a common core of 7 courses (21 credits) and 7 courses (21 credits) within their concentration.

**Graduate Program:** The English Graduate Program offers the MA in English and the MAT in Teaching. The program operates within the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education. Full time faculty may teach one graduate course as part of their day division load or, more commonly, for an additional stipend.

**Undergraduate faculty:** In terms of the number of faculty members, the English Studies department is the second largest at FSU with 21 tenured and tenure-track faculty. The following is a breakdown of tenure track faculty hires per concentration, although it is customary for these faculty to teach courses within other concentrations as needed or desired:

Literature	11
Professional Writing	7
Initial Licensure	2
Speech	1

Of these, ten are ranked as full professors, five as associate professors, and six as assistant professors. The department also has a large pool of adjunct professors of whom about a dozen teach each semester on a regular basis.

**Numbers of Courses and Sections:** On average, in addition to the 32-40 sections of writing courses, the department provides approximately 72 sections of literature, professional writing, and speech courses *each semester*. The course distribution for Fall 2016 is typical of what the department normally offers:

Writing I and II	38 sections/courses
2000-level	30 sections/courses
3000-level	14 courses
4000-level	6 courses
Speech	8 sections/courses

Adjunct faculty are responsible for teaching a number of our Writing I and Writing II courses. The reasons are several: undergraduate enrollments have grown, faculty have taken sabbaticals and leaves of absence, and faculty must teach an increasing number of Liberal Arts and Science courses, several newly required courses in the major, as well as courses for the Honors Program and the interdisciplinary minors. Although the hiring of new faculty has helped the department diversify its offerings, hiring has not fully kept up with the demands placed on our curriculum. We have only two full-time faculty at present who can teach speech, necessitating the use of adjunct faculty for speech as well as writing.

The following table shows the percentage of Writing I and II sections taught by adjunct vs. full time English Studies faculty over the last 5 years. We have in the last four years had one full-time faculty member offering a Basic Writing class at FSU.

**Faculty and Adjuncts Teaching Writing I and Writing II courses:**

*\*ENGL 0100, ENGL 1100 Writing I, ENGL 1200 Writing II Section Data*

<b><u>Total sections</u></b>	<b><u># of adj</u></b>	<b><u>Total section</u></b>	<b><u># of adj</u></b>
------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------

<b>F12</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	-	-	<b>S13</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	-	-
1100	3	29			1100	1	3		
1200	1	5			1200	10	19		
	<b>4</b>	<b>34</b>	<u>38</u>	<u>13</u>		<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	<u>33</u>	<u>11</u>

<b>F13</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	-	-	<b>S14</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	-	-
1100	16	18			1100	2	1		
1200	3	3			1200	12	20		
	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>	<u>40</u>	<u>9</u>		<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<u>35</u>	<u>10</u>

<b>F14</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	-	-	<b>S15</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	-	-
1100	12	19			1100	0	2		
1200	2	4			1200	10	19		
	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>	<u>37</u>	<u>12</u>		<b>10</b>	<b>21</b>	<u>31</u>	<u>12</u>

<b>F15</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	-	-	<b>S16</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	-	-
1100	16	17			1100	0	3		
1200	1	4			1200	15	14		
	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<u>38</u>	<u>9</u>		<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<u>32</u>	<u>10</u>

<b>F16</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	-	-	<b>S17</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Adjunct</b>	-	-
1100	13	18			1100	0	3		
1200	2	4			1200	18	11		
	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<u>37</u>	<u>8</u>		<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<u>32</u>	<u>8</u>

*\*Plus minus 5% human error on data calculations. Dcl*

## G. Interdisciplinary programs

The English Studies department sponsors or co-sponsors a variety of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural programs. An Interdisciplinary Studies minor is a flexible, six-course plan of study in the humanities and liberal arts and sciences that crosses between academic disciplines to reflect the changing, challenging demands of today's academic and professional spheres. Interdisciplinary studies offer students the chance to address complex issues, pursue new or neglected fields of study and develop their own unique scholarly and problem solving skills.

English Studies supports many of these minors, such as the African Studies minor, African-American Studies minor, the American Studies minor, the Asian Studies Minor, the Film Studies minor, the Peace Studies minor, the Disability Studies minor and the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies minor. (The current Interdisciplinary Studies Program director is also an English Studies faculty member, Dr. Frank Mabee.)

## **H. Department Policies and Procedures**

Policies and procedures are largely contractual. The contract specifies dates, procedures, and forms for peer review and for tenure and promotion. Faculty workload, mandatory office hours, advising requirements, and voting eligibility for the elections of department chair and Peer Evaluation Committees are also contractual, as are the Chair's responsibilities. A copy of the current contract is available on-line at <http://mscaunion.org/day-and-dgce-contracts/>

*Department Faculty Meetings:* Meetings are scheduled for the first Tuesday of every month, with the possibility of a second monthly meeting as necessary in order to address emergent departmental business.

*Department Committees:* All departments are required to have an Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. At the start of each academic year faculty vote on the number of committee members we want on the Curriculum Committee, assuring that each concentration is represented and that the needs of the department will be met. Faculty members self-nominate, and final membership is determined by a ballot vote if the number of nominees exceeds the number of available seats on the committee. Curriculum Committee meetings are held monthly or more often as the needs of the department dictate.

The Graduate Committee, also required under the contract, is comprised of all department faculty members who have received formal Graduate Faculty approval. Meetings are held monthly or more often as needed.

The English Studies Department also has a number of standing committees, although the need for these varies from year to year depending upon need and circumstances. These committees may include Writing, Student Success, Assessment, the High School Writing Competition, Long-Range Planning, Hospitality, and Scholarship Committees. The department also relies on ad hoc committees for planning for graduation and for other events or initiatives. Faculty self-nominate for these committees. We are an active department, and multiple service on committees is strongly encouraged.

## **PART II: The Faculty**

### **A. Number, Rank, and Diversity**

As of January 2017, our faculty positions number 21 full time members. Of the English Studies Department's current membership at the time of this writing, we are in the midst of one faculty replacement hire, have 12 women and eight men. The English Studies department is the most diverse department on campus. We are proud of diversity and honor all races, ethnicities, sexual and gender choices, ages, abilities, bodies and religions. All members of our department, no matter where we sit on these spectrums of identity, view ourselves as role models for all students. We see ourselves and our offices as safe spaces for students and colleagues. Our commitment to diversity goes beyond categories listed on Equal Opportunity Employment forms; it is revealed in how we interact with the campus community on a daily basis. Of our full-

time faculty, one is of African-American descent, one of African descent, three of Asian descent, and one of Hispanic descent.

**Professor and date of FSU Appointment:**

Janice Alberghene (1988; Retired December 2015)

Judith Budz (1974)                      Chola Chisunka (1991)

Lisa Gim, Chair (1999)                Patrice Gray (2000)

Michael Hoberman (2001)          Aruna Krishnamurthy (2004)

Irene Martyniuk (1996)              Thomas Murray (1986)

Benjamin Railton (2005)          Doris Schmidt (1997; Retired December 2016)

**Associate Professor and date of FSU Appointment:**

Frank Mabee (2008)                    Joseph Moser (2008)

Angela Nastasee-Carder (1999)

**Assistant Professor and date of FSU Appointment:**

DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld (2013)    Katharine Covino-Poutasse (2015)

Steven Edwards (2012)                Wendy Keyser (2015)

Elisabet Takehana (2012)            Kisha Tracy (2011)

Heather Urbanski (2013)              Diego Iberia (2016)

**Professors no longer at FSU or retired since 2012:**

Anna Mary Consalvo (Left, June 2014)

Nancy Kelly (Deceased, July 2014)

Janice Alberghene (Retired, December 2015)

Doris Schmidt (Retired, December 2016)

**Full time, one-year instructors:**

Wendy Keyser (2014 – 2015)

**Temporary one-semester full time instructors:**

John Gillis (Spring 2012)

**Adjunct or Part-Year Instructors:**

John Crory	John Gillis	Eileen Hamm
Loren Hoekzema	Donald Hosley	Jeanne Moore
Amy Sach	Bernadette Stockwell	Elizabeth Lawson

**B. Description of Faculty Qualifications**

All full-time faculty members in the English Studies Department hold terminal degrees in their fields. Eighteen have PhD. degrees, two have EdD degrees, and two hold MFA degrees. All adjunct faculty hold, at minimum, a MA in English, Journalism/Communications, or an MFA. Some adjunct faculty hold PhDs and one is PhD, ABD. (See APPENDIX 2, Faculty CVs.)

**C. Faculty Development Activities**

Fitchburg State University offers financial support for travel to local, national, and international conferences, conventions, association meetings, workshops, and other professional development opportunities. Faculty in the English Studies Department routinely take advantage of these opportunities. As following sections and attached appendices will make clear, faculty members are active and engaged participants and contributors to the furtherance of their field. Their contributions to the development of the discipline take various forms, including research publications (journal articles, published/unpublished manuscripts, and books), creative publications and/or performances, and professional writing submissions. In addition to submitting work for review and publication, faculty members also serve as editorial consultants and journal reviewers.

In terms of service, a survey of faculty involvement in development reveals far-ranging interests and affiliations. For instance, Dr. Kisha Tracy in her capacity as Co-director of FSU's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) has fostered and conducted numerous sessions to address faculty development on a range of issues that include: designing and presenting sessions for FSU's faculty Development Day; devising Course Redesign Day Workshops; creating pedagogical

discussion groups dedicated to critical thinking; organizing Chronicle Conversations for faculty around academic issues raised by the publication; and running the CTL. Summer Institutes.

As another example of the creative ways our faculty have added to faculty development on campus, Dr. Aruna Krishnamurthy has helped shape FSU's attention to diversity and to international faculty with her work on two on-campus initiatives: the "Diwali Celebrations," activities that have showcased global diversity on campus, and by addressing pedagogical issues for international faculty. Dr. Krishnamurthy organized this new, interdisciplinary, International Faculty Pedagogy group (for the first time at FSU), and created a Faculty Scholarship Group which facilitates the sharing and support of faculty research and endeavors. She has also expanded students and faculty understanding of international issues by bringing the well-known Indian film-maker Pankaj Rishi Kumar to campus twice, during which he screened and participated in discussions about documentary films he had made about concerning cultural and economic challenges that face artists and rural villagers in India.

Dr. Wendy Keyser has done outreach to local high schools in the Fitchburg-Leominster area, offering workshops on site at area high school for their teachers who are interested in better preparing their high school students for college level writing. In another example of outreach to area high school educators, Dr. Keyser and Dr. Katharine Covino-Poutasse will be offering through Extended Campus Programs and Professional Studies two faculty development sessions on literature to K-12 teachers that center around young adult and children's literature and cultural conversations.

As a final example, when Dr. Benjamin Railton was President of the Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA) for its 2016 conference in Hartford, he created a special session on education, bringing in two of our faculty, Dr. Katharine Covino-Poutasse and Dr. Joseph Moser to present and work with students and teachers in classes at the Hartford Public Schools. At those visits and in his presidential addresses, Dr. Railton highlighted the role of the FSU English Studies Department in shaping his own career and modeling such pedagogical and civic engagements.

All of these efforts support both F.S.U. faculty development and bring our faculty and institution into connection and conversation with broader educational communities.

In addition to representation on nearly all of the all-campus committees, English Studies faculty also serve on (and in many cases lead) local and statewide academic initiatives, committees, and working groups.

Service also extends to volunteer boards and associations, in the Fitchburg community and far beyond.

English Studies faculty supports undergraduate and graduate students in many ways. Whether advising student organizations, activities, clubs, or accompanying groups of students on off-campus activities, or designing and implementing study abroad trips, or acting as liaisons between secondary and post-secondary schools in the area, the faculty pursues diverse means of recruiting and retaining students.

In recognition of their dedicated teaching, service, and scholarship, the faculty in the English Studies Department have received numerous awards, grants, and honors. (See **APPENDIX 3.**)

## **D. Faculty Involvement: Research and Publications**

The English Studies department's faculty are very involved and committed to scholarly work and research in their respective disciplines as is reflected in their active involvement in publications, conferences, workshops, reviewing of scholarly work, academic organizations, professional and community involvement, organizational memberships, institutional involvement and community outreach. Many of the faculty are widely published and evidence lively activity in their research and teaching fields. **(See APPENDIX 3, for the full listing of Faculty Involvement in Research, Publications, Scholarship, and University and Community Activities.)**

## **E. Faculty Involvement: Teaching**

With the exception of those professors who have release time, every member of the English Studies Department teaches a 4/4 course load. Faculty may teach one course in the Graduate Program as part of their undergraduate load; however, as mentioned earlier, many opt to teach in the Graduate division for a stipend. Faculty may also teach one online course as part of their day load.

Several faculty routinely teach in the Graduate and Continuing Education's evening undergraduate program and during Winter and Summer Sessions I and II. These courses may be traditional or online (Winter is entirely online course delivery.)

In addition to the existing courses within the program, faculty have the option to offer special topics courses as a means of piloting a course for future development or as a means to capture student interest in a specific area. These courses are reviewed and approved by the Curriculum Committee, and then by the entire faculty as a whole. Faculty may also be enlisted to develop new courses that, with the approval of the All College Committee and the President, are integrated into our curriculum as regular offerings.

Faculty also have the opportunity to share their research interests with our English majors through the required Senior Seminar course. In addition, English faculty routinely advise undergraduate directed/independent study projects, Leadership Academy honors theses, IDIS (interdisciplinary major) senior capstone theses, master's-level theses and master's level action research projects. Faculty also "team teach" with colleagues in the History, Economics, and Political Science department.

A full list of the department's courses can be found in the FSU Catalog:

<http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/university-catalog/>

**(See APPENDIX 4 for a full listing of Course Syllabi.)**



## Part III: The Students

### A. Enrollment Data

The first section of the study breaks down five years of enrollment data by semester, quantifying the service the English Studies department provides to students from all majors. Some of this was directly provided by Institutional Research while other totals and breakdowns were calculated or estimated based on data that was provided.

The enrollment numbers in the following chart include the numbers of students in English courses and does not include the number of seats we offer in our Speech, an additional 250-300 students each semester.

While a breakdown by course of student enrollment was only available for Writing I (ENGL1100) and Writing II (ENGL1200), the count of students enrolled in day-school English courses during the academic year (“students in seats”) is provided in the following chart.

Academic Year	Student Count	Writing I & Writing II
2012	4,330	1256
2013	4,075	1499
2014	3,860	1354
2015	3,753	1355
2016	3,688	1742

### Enrollment Data, by Section

The following chart shows the numbers of students enrolled in English Studies classes.

Semester	Total Sections	Total Writing Requirement <sup>1</sup>	Total Lit LA&S <sup>2</sup>	Total Major/Minor	3-4000 level
FA 11	96	35	33	61	26
SP 12	101	29	34	72	37
FA 12	98	37	27	60	31
SP 13	90	33	26	57	29
FA 13	95	41	26	54	28
SP 14	96	35	27	61	38
FA 14	93	38	25	55	30

SP 15	88	31	24	57	35
FA 15	93	39	27	53	28
SP 16	78	33	22	54	38

<sup>1</sup> Writing I and Writing II.

<sup>2</sup> All courses with Lit Designation.

Semester	% of Sections in Writing Requirement	% of Sections in Lit LA&S
FA 11	36%	34%
SP 12	29%	34%
FA 12	38%	28%
SP 13	37%	29%
FA 13	43%	27%
SP 14	36%	28%
FA 14	41%	27%
SP 15	35%	27%
FA 15	42%	29%
SP 16	42%	28%

The following chart includes total student enrollment that was calculated via information regarding enrollment breakdown by instructor. The enrollment numbers for Writing I and Writing II were directly available while the enrollments in the Literature LA&S courses was estimated based on section breakdown listed above. It indicates that in the five academic years included in this review, English Studies faculty taught more than 19,700 students, with more than 7,200 of those in Writing I and Writing II.

Semester	Total Students in ENGL Courses	In ENGL1100 & ENGL 1200	In LIT LA&S Courses (est.)
FA 11	2198	719	747
SP 12	2137	537	727
FA 12	2091	827	585
SP 13	1984	672	575

Semester	Total Students in ENGL Courses	In ENGL1100 & ENGL 1200	In LIT LA&S Courses (est.)
FA 13	2025	771	547
SP 14	1835	583	514
FA 14	1988	766	537
SP 15	1765	589	477
FA 15	2040	877	592
SP 16	1648*	865	462

\* There were three faculty members on sabbatical/leave of absence and one mid-year retirement that accounts for this lower enrollment numbers in spring 2016.

In addition, data was requested regarding how many students satisfied the writing and literature requirements here at Fitchburg State or transferred that credit from other institutions. The charts below indicate that a significant percentage complete Writing II as offered by the FSU English Studies Department while an overwhelming majority fulfill their literature requirement here as well. These data also indicate an opportunity for English Studies to play a significant role in persistence and retention as approximately 60-70% of students are enrolled in our classes during the crucial sophomore and junior years.

Institutional or Transfer Course

By Student Graduating Year

English 1100: Writing I

Graduation Year	Institutional	Transfer
2016	53.71%	46.29%
2015	54.03%	45.97%
2014	58.13%	41.87%
2013	57.24%	42.76%
2012	56.86%	43.14%

English 1200: Writing 2

Graduation Year	Institutional	Transfer
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2016	66.42%	33.58%
2015	68.82%	31.18%
2014	68.48%	31.52%
2013	70.20%	29.80%
2012	67.90%	32.10%

English 2xxx (LA&S Requirement):

Non English Studies Majors

Graduation Year	Institutional	Transfer
2016	91.14%	8.86%
2015	90.19%	9.81%
2014	90.26%	9.74%
2013	91.78%	8.22%
2012	93.27%	6.73%

English 2xxx (LA&S Requirement):

Semester Fulfilled (Based upon 30 credits each academic year)

Non English Studies Majors

Fall Term	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
2015	11.38%	40.92%	31.07%	16.63%
2014	10.47%	42.98%	29.18%	17.37%
2013	14.32%	34.84%	33.65%	17.18%
2012	15.52%	40.35%	28.38%	15.74%
2011	13.50%	40.88%	28.65%	16.97%

Finally, a demographic breakdown of students in Writing I and Writing II over the review period clearly indicated an increasing diversity among those enrolled in these required courses, with a particular growth in students identifying as Black or African-American (45 to 169) and Hispanic or Latino (121 to 234). As a department with diverse faculty, we are uniquely positioned to assist with the changing student demographic.

Writing I & Writing II	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
2 or more	19	50	41	56	53
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	1	0	2	2
Asian	18	28	29	54	62
Black or African-American	45	72	93	126	169
Cape Verdean	3	7	16	3	10
Hispanic or Latino	121	179	153	154	234
Unknown	23	42	13	18	10
White, Non-Hispanic	1033	1136	1020	969	1228

## B. Academic Profile

The following chart traces the numbers of students enrolled in each of the English department's four concentrations, by academic year.

### English Department ~ Undergraduate Enrollment Data

#### A. Numbers of Majors:

##### English Studies

2012-2013    2013-2014    2014-2015    2015-2016    2016-2017

##### Majors

	<i>FA12</i>	<i>SP13</i>	<i>FA13</i>	<i>SP14</i>	<i>FA14</i>	<i>SP15</i>	<i>FA15</i>	<i>SP16</i>	<i>FA16</i>	<i>SP17</i>
Literature	32	39	35	39	33	36	30	24	24	18
Initial Licensure w/Literature	46	43	42	35	35	29	29	27	33	30
Professional Writing	80	75	76	74	58	57	55	50	55	55

Total Majors:                    158    157    153    148    126    122    114    101    112    103

**B. Numbers of Minors:**

**Minors**

	<i>FA12</i>	<i>SP13</i>	<i>FA13</i>	<i>SP14</i>	<i>FA14</i>	<i>SP15</i>	<i>FA15</i>	<i>SP16</i>	<i>FA16</i>	<i>SP17</i>
Literature	88	104	104	94	85	86	70	76	72	56
Professional Writing	19	21	19	28	21	31	29	36	40	38

Total Minors:                    107    125    123    122    106    117    99    112    112    94

**C. Graduation Rates**

Institutional Research provided the following Degree Awarded Data, without disaggregation by concentration.

Academic Year	Degrees Awarded
2012	45
2013	39
2014	47
2015	37
2016	28

Entering Cohort Year	English Studies Freshman	All Entering Freshman
2007	4.62	4.54
2008	4.35	4.31
2009	4.54	4.39
2010	4.35	4.32

One of the new tools available for this Program Review is the Student Success Collaborative, which provided data on all English Studies majors who first enrolled between fall 2005 and fall 2010 with a transfer status of Transfer and Non-Transfer. Based on the analysis run with this data in May 2016, we are able to identify several insights into the experiences of our majors on their progress towards a degree. These include:

- The top two enrolled courses (by percentage) where our majors earned either a D or F over the analysis period were math courses (MATH1250 and MATH1700), with approximately 40% of attempts in each ending in a D or F and another 15% resulting in a W (withdrawal). While the graduation rates for students taking these two courses are above 60%, this would seem to point to an opportunity for English Studies advisors to intervene and recommend support on fulfilling the mathematics requirement for our majors.
- The most predictive course for graduation success was ENGL2999: Approaches to English Studies, indicating that the course is working as designed (graduation rate of 67.6%). It also has the highest enrollment numbers among majors in the analysis period.
- The second most predictive course was ENGL4999: Capstone, with an 86.5% graduation rate.
- Four of the other top ten predictive courses represent the foundational surveys in the discipline: ENGL2000 (American Literature I); ENGL2100 (American Literature II); ENGL2200 (British Literature I); and ENGL2210 (British Literature II).
- Finally, all but one (EXSS1000: Health and Fitness) of the top fifteen predictive courses for English majors over the analytical period were offered by the English Studies Department, which would seem to indicate effective alignment between course offerings and graduation rates/student success.

## D. Student Diversity

	ENGLISH MAJORS	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
F	Black or African-American	4	2	3	4	5
	Hispanic or Latino	9	5	8	5	9
	Asian	2	2	3	1	2
	Unknown	9	9	5	3	2
	Two or More	2	4	2	2	1
	White, Non-Hispanic	115	102	94	64	60

	Total	141	124	115	79	79
M	Black or African-American	5	4	2	1	2
	Hispanic or Latino	2	2	3	3	3
	Asian	0	1	1	1	0
	Unknown	4	3	3	3	2
	Two or More	1	1	1	2	2
	White, Non-Hispanic	77	62	60	49	43
	Total	89	73	70	59	52
	TOTAL	230	197	185	138	131

## **E. Academic Advising**

Currently, with between 112-158 English majors and between 107 and 112 English minors (depending on their academic/catalogue years), English Studies faculty have a reasonable advising load in terms of student numbers. Secondary Education faculty have a heavier load with approximately 40 majors split between two faculty. We also advise some Middle school students specializing in literature.

Our faculty take time and care with each student and in advising appointments try to assist students not only with course selection and their schedules, but also try to give students suggestions concerning career plans, as students often look for longer term guidance with graduate work and career advice. Our faculty are willing to devote this time and energy to their advising. We try to develop a close working relationship with our students and provide significant support to them.

## **F. Effectiveness of Advising**

Department faculty, much like their colleagues across campus, have become better over advisors. The advent of Degree Works has made advising easier and more accurate by providing student information on line in easy-to-access pages and formats. Depending on the size of the concentration and the number of students enrolled, faculty have different advising loads in our department, and this is sometimes an area of concern. For example, the two faculty in the Initial Licensure concentration (our second largest) divide among them some 40 Initial Licensure



students, an advising load of around 20 students for the two faculty in the concentration. Faculty in the two other concentrations, Literature and Professional Writing, have roughly equal numbers of advisees (approximately 10). To redress the inequity in numbers, sometimes faculty not in Secondary Education will share the advising load in this area.

Frequent faculty leaves of absence, sabbaticals, and one-year positions continues to have an effect on advising. Students have to be temporarily reassigned to other faculty and then reassigned once again when staffing has changed. Also, in order to maintain a roughly equal number of advisees, students are sometimes shifted to other faculty, and this breaks the continuity of advisor/advisee that we aim to maintain in ideal circumstances.

## **G. Integration into Department**

Student participation in the department takes place formally and informally. One advantage of the ratio of students-to-faculty in the English Department is that professors know many of their students who major or minor in English, as well as those who enroll in our upper-division courses out of interest in the topic. Contractually, student representation is required on the English department's Curriculum Committee. An ongoing challenge is to find students whose schedules allow them to sit on our committee that meets at a time when most students are in class.

Students and faculty also collaborate in a number of other ways. The English Studies faculty serve as advisors for the English Club and the University branch of Sigma Tau Delta, the national Honors Society for English majors. Students also work with faculty on the production of *Route 2*, the only arts publication on campus, which features photos, poetry, and prose created and juried by students. An online alternative "zine," *Detour*, launched in 2014, and is run by students with faculty advice from Dr. Elise Takehana. Additionally, our students participate in the FSU Undergraduate Conference for Research and Creative Practice; as an example, for the 2016 conference, seven faculty sponsored eleven students for the 2016 conference alone. In addition, our faculty frequently mentors students to present papers at a number of other conferences: Dr. Kisha Tracy has had her students present at The Plymouth Medieval Studies conference; Dr. Lisa Gim routinely has her students present papers at the Undergraduate Shakespeare Conference held annually in Central Massachusetts (FSU has actually hosted this conference in 2009 and may do so again); Dr. Katherine Covino-Poutasse has had her students present at the Robert Cormier Conference held which she co-hosted last fall at FSU; and Dr. Joseph Moser takes his students annually to the Northeast Regional Honors Council to present their work.

One ongoing series that has brought together students and faculty has been the English Studies Rally, an event held each fall where guest speakers share their experiences and informal conversations provide a kick-off event to each academic year.

Internship data has been recorded as responsibility for coordinating these opportunities has been recorded by the faculty member coordinating the internships (summer 2014-spring 2016). Since 2012, we have placed students in internships with the following institutions:

- Fitchburg Art Museum
- “The Alphabet Project” with the Fitchburg Art Museum and *The Fitchburg Enterprise Sentinel*
- MIT/Lincoln Laboratories
- The Harvard Press
- *The Worcester Telegram*
- Publishing Solutions Group
- Greater Lowell United Football Club
- Willy Wallace Hotel – Stirling, Scotland
- Cubick BCN – Barcelona, Spain
- The Washington Center

## **H. English Studies Department Student Alumni**

English Studies alumni of Fitchburg State University hold various kinds of positions in sundry organizations and businesses. They are educators, editors, designers, and managers. About fifteen of our graduates are entrepreneurs and/or freelance writers, editors, actors (when we still had the theater program) or work in similar fields in communications and media. Some of our alumni are in graduate school, pursuing MAs, MFAs, and PhDs. A few of our students do stay here for their MA, but many students study throughout the United States and abroad. Although many of our graduates work throughout the United States, the majority of the graduates remain in New England.

Presently, our Student Success Committee works on outreach and connections maintained between our graduates and department. Often in our Senior Capstone classes, alums are expressly invited back to speak as guests (either in a panel or on a one-on-one basis) so they can share to share their experiences and insights in the job world with our graduating English Studies seniors.

English Studies maintains a Facebook page which fosters connections between our department and its students and graduates. The information in this section was largely gathered via social media sites, including Facebook and LinkedIn, and by professors who have kept in touch with their graduates. (See **APPENDIX 5 concerning Student Alumni.**)

## **I. English Studies Scholarships and Awards**

The English Studies Department awards annually numerous awards and scholarships. These include the following:

**Department of English Studies Scholarship (\$250)**

The English Studies Department Scholarship is awarded to a deserving student who is pursuing English Studies for promise in the discipline and for a demonstrated love of literature, evidenced in an essay submitted to the department committee and selected through a competitive process.

**Robert E. Cormier Memorial Scholarship (\$500)**

The Robert E. Cormier Scholarship in Literature for Young Adults, intended to promote excellence in the study and teaching of literature, is awarded to two English Studies juniors demonstrating excellence in either the Secondary Education or Literature concentration. The award commemorates achievement in memory of Robert E. Cormier, a premier writer of young adult literature and the author of such classic American novels as *The Chocolate War* and *I Am the Cheese*. Cormier, an alumnus, received an honorary Doctor of Letters from the University, and The Robert Cormier Manuscript Collection is housed in the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library at Fitchburg State. In order to be eligible, recipients must provide a letter of application and submit either a sample of teacher work materials or a critical analysis of a literary work or other primary text.

**Colin Bourn '63 English Scholarship (\$500)**

Awarded to a qualified undergraduate English major demonstrating academic excellence.

**Leo J. Hines Memorial Scholarship (\$200)**

Established in honor of Leo J. Hines, a professor of Medieval and Renaissance Studies in the English Department at Fitchburg State College from 1969-1988, The Leo J. Hines Memorial Scholarship Award is presented to a student demonstrating academic excellence who can "exemplify some of the zeal of Chaucer's Oxford Clerk, who took most care and heed of study, as well as the distinction of Castiglione's Courtier, who possessed courtesy of behavior, excellence in discourse, and wit and vitality in both speech and action."

**Louis Shepherd Memorial Scholarship (\$500)**

The Louis P. Shepherd Memorial Scholarship Award is presented to two qualified students demonstrating outstanding performance in the Secondary Education and Professional Writing concentrations in English Studies. Created by friends, family, and students in honor of Dr. Louis Shepherd, a dedicated professor of English at Fitchburg State College from 1952-1985, the prize is made possible by the Ruth and Louis Shepherd Fund for Teaching and Writing.

**Patricia A. Hess Memorial Scholarship (\$500)**

Awarded to a non-traditional female student; candidate must be undergraduate English and/or History major with at least 30 earned credits.

**Matti Antila Poetry Award (\$100)**

In recognition of the literary achievements of our undergraduate students in poetry, the Department of English Studies invites you to submit one or more of your best poems for the Matti N. Antila Poetry Award. Funding for this award is made possible by a generous gift to the University from Lauri and Signe Sipila in memory of Signe's parents, Matti N. and Fanny P. Antila.

### **Louis P. Shepherd Creative Writing Award (\$250)**

In recognition of the literary achievements of our undergraduate students in creative writing (open genre), the Department of English Studies invites you to submit a portfolio of your best work for the Louis P. Shepherd Award in Creative Writing. The portfolio need not be extensive, but should represent a selection of the writer's best work with a minimum of two and a maximum of five pieces of writing. The writings may be from one or more of the following genres: short stories, novel excerpts, poetry, nonfiction or drama.

The Shepherd Award in Creative Writing is named in honor of the late Louis P. Shepherd, a longtime English professor at Fitchburg State. Funding for the award is made possible through a gift from Professor Shepherd's wife, Ruth, and his daughter, Rae Shepherd-Shlechter.

### **English Studies Prize (\$100)**

The English Department Prize is given to an outstanding senior, chosen by the full English Studies faculty, who has demonstrated excellent academic performance, superb scholarly skills, and a high grade point average; who evidences a love of literature; and who has made significant community contributions to the English Studies Department.

### **Dr. Nancy R. Kelly '80 Memorial Award (\$800)**

The Dr. Nancy R. Kelly '80 Memorial Award is given to an English Secondary Education major graduating senior who demonstrates persistence, determination, empathy, and promise as a future English educator. The student must also have done meaningful community service. Recipients must hold a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher.

## **PART IV: Undergraduate and Graduate Curricula**

### **Undergraduate Curriculum**

#### **A. Program Goals and Objectives**

The department's goals and objectives are related to its mission:

The English Studies program offers students a) knowledge of the broad field of literature in English, b) in-depth knowledge of its diverse aspects, c) the reading, writing, and research tools for exploring the field and its boundaries, and d) ample opportunity for hands-on experience in related fields.

## **Excerpts from the English Studies Department Vision Statement**

The English Studies department recently completed a new Vision Statement. Relevant sections detailing goals and objectives of the department are excerpted in part below.

Students who explore the many paths within English Studies are trained to become thoughtful, critical thinkers and engaged readers, writers, creators and teachers of texts. Our discipline is diverse, looking through cultural, literary, rhetorical, and pedagogical lenses to analyze, interpret, and author texts in a range of genres and media.

Students within our major find the training and flexibility to pursue individual talents and interests through a core of major requirements as well as through specialized concentrations focusing on literature, secondary education and professional writing. We are committed as one department to preparing the next generation of thinkers, teachers, and writers within our major by providing through a core of major requirements as well as specialized concentration offerings the training and flexibility for students to pursue their individual talents and interests. Our goal is to assist Fitchburg State students on their journeys to being critical and analytical citizens, writers and teachers who can engage within the dynamic, multi-cultural environments of the private and public sectors, well as academia.

As the department that trains every single student within this campus in analytical writing and critical thinking, English Studies prepares Fitchburg State students to engage with a multicultural world through such practices as reading closely to decode potential meanings in texts, synthesizing a range of sources and observations, and communicating their ideas in creative and critical ways. Students can expect to learn to recognize the profound issues that cross geographic and temporal boundaries as they sharpen their writing and verbal skills. Beyond teaching them about literature, writing and education, through the interactive, discussion-based format of our classes, we educate them in thinking, in academic culture, and about how to belong to an academic community -- essential training in our institution in which many are first generation college goers. Every graduate who applies for a job upon leaving this university applies the training that s/he has received in English Studies classes. The skills they learn from our department are readily translatable skills in the professional world.

English Studies plays an integral, sustaining role in Fitchburg State's Liberal Arts and Sciences tradition and curriculum through literary and rhetorical study, writing instruction, film and culture study, and oral communication. We are committed to maintaining and expanding our role in our support of the Liberal Arts and Sciences mission/goals of the university by focusing on interdisciplinary work, highlighting diverse voices, and genre, gender and cultural studies.

### **English Department Goals for all Majors**

Enriched creative and intellectual life:

- Responsible and reflective citizenship
- An enlarged worldview

- Incentive for life-long learning
- Flexibility of mind

Preparation for careers:

- Education and certification as secondary teachers of English
- Classes and internships for professional writers
- Collaborative group work
- Information literacy: knowledge of sources and how to use and evaluate them
- Digital literacy and social media

Awareness of and respect for our literary heritage:

- An appreciation of cultural and ethnic diversity
- Commitment to human values embodied in works of literature

Learning and caring about literature:

- Reading on varied levels
- Writing to create new meaning
- Speaking effectively with a variety of audiences
- Listening critically and analytically

## **B. Description of Curriculum and Program Vision Statements and Curricular Changes**

The Literature, Professional Writing, and Initial Licensure concentrations each have their own requirements for graduation and four-year plans of study. Common to each concentration is a seven course English Studies Core, which provides the foundation of the major: ENGL 2999: Approaches to Literature, 3 literature survey courses, 1 upper-level literature course, 1 upper level writing-intensive course, and ENGL 4999: English Studies Capstone. This core has offered students more flexibility in their course selection, allowed them more “room” to take additional courses within their specific concentrations, and greatly strengthened their senior year and portfolio work and culminating departmental experiences. **(See Appendix 6 for lists of core and concentration specific requirements.)**

While our Program of Study acknowledges the value of a common curricular base, we also recognize the often conflicting needs of the students as they prepare for future careers in teaching, professional writing, in graduate school in English Studies, or in the many professions English Studies majors move into after graduation. Much of our curriculum is now performance based, and students must demonstrate competence in specific areas and skills. In the Initial Licensure concentration, these required skills and abilities are externally mandated by CAEP and the State of Massachusetts’ Board of Higher Education. For the Professional Writing concentration, courses must be reviewed and frequently new courses must be created in order to stay abreast of changes in publishing technologies and media. Literature concentration students have different curricular needs, particularly if they seek future graduate study in the discipline.

The different and potentially conflicting curricular needs of the concentrations present an ongoing challenge as the department attempts to define and describe itself to the University and prospective students.

### **Literature Concentration (Vision Statement Excerpts)**

The Literature concentration emphasizes reading and critical thinking, teaches the analysis of genre and form, explores the scope of literature, the history of its ideas and its tradition, features culture studies, educates in research and information literacy and equips students with the knowledge and skills for understanding and analyzing texts of all kinds.

Our curriculum strengthens students' connections to the discipline, to scholarship in the field, and to career opportunities. This training is achieved through emphasizing, in addition to academic offerings, conference presentations on and off campus, participation in the Sigma Tau Delta Honor Society, English Club, workshops with faculty, other co-curricular activities, and through student publications. Courses such as "Approaches to English Studies," "Major Authors," "the Senior Seminar" and "the English Studies Capstone" further promote student skills in small-class settings which emphasize academic rigor and interaction with faculty and peers. Expanding offerings in global literatures and cultures -- such as Caribbean, African, South Asian, and Latin American Literature courses -- and in various forms of culture study will help students cross geographic as well as genre and temporal boundaries.

The literature track aims to explore diverse texts, language, cultures, ideas, interpretative traditions and to continue to prepare students to become accomplished professionals and engaged global citizens.

### **Secondary Education Initial Licensure Concentration (Vision Statement Excerpts)**

The Secondary Education Initial Licensure concentration is committed to developing knowledgeable, skillful, caring, and ethical educators. All students completing the English major in Secondary Education complete all of the requirements of the Literature concentration in addition to their required education courses. This program provides teacher candidates with the knowledge and skills needed to become reflective educators in the field of English, grades 8-12. Teacher candidates learn to analyze and interpret literature and a variety of texts. They learn to develop and teach curriculum through coursework, pre-practicum experiences, and the final practicum. Professors in the program work closely with the teacher candidates throughout their four years to provide education on pedagogical theory and practice, so candidates will be fully prepared as licensed educators to teach in secondary English classrooms upon graduation.

### **Professional Writing Concentration (Vision Statement Excerpts)**

The Professional Writing concentration provides students with the enduring communicative skills needed to navigate in a dynamic world. We aim to challenge students to innovate with language and to see themselves as producers of texts. To do so, students study the process and the products of other writers, analyze rhetorical situations, and interpret cultural contexts while they practice and experiment with a wide range of styles and genres.

**(Refer to APPENDIX 1 for Full Vision Statement)**

## **Changes in Curriculum**

### **Professional Writing Courses**

With the hiring of new faculty, the department has added several Professional Writing courses over the last few years. These courses have been added to the electives for the major concentration as well as upper-level writing options for all English Studies majors.

ENGL 3540 Writing Film Criticism (created 2012-13)

ENGL 3045 Media Conscious Storytelling (created 2013-14)

ENGL 3026 Genres, Forms, and Themes in Creative Writing (created 2013-14)

ENGL 3015 Writing the Science Fiction and Fantasy Novel (created 2015-16)

ENGL 3027 Experimental Writing (created 2015-16)

In addition, in 2015-16, the department changed the title of ENGL 3860 from Writing for Business and Technology to Writing for Organizations. In addition, the course description was revised to reflect this change. The terms “business” and “technology” have so many meanings in the current environment that meeting student expectations for the course is difficult under the current title. The change to the description allows future flexibility to incorporate real-time case studies when current events warrant, such as the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in the early 1990s and the Volkswagen emissions scandal in 2015.

### **Literature Survey and Writing II Concurrently**

In 2014-15, we passed a proposal through AUC to allow students who have declared an English Studies major to take one of an approved list of ENGL literature survey courses concurrently with ENGL 1200 Writing II. Prior to this, due to prerequisites on 2000-level and above ENGL courses, students who declared an English Studies major upon enrolling had to wait either a semester or a year (depending on what Writing course they test into) before taking courses in the major. As a result, students sometimes lost interest and either decided to switch majors or even drop out of the university all together. Also, it was having an effect on student engagement in the department as students did not feel as much of a part of the department until sophomore year. In addition, English Studies majors are required to take ENGL 2999 Approaches to English Studies, an introduction to literary theory, in their sophomore year frequently without having first completed a college-level literature course. By allowing those students who declare an English Studies major early to take a literature survey (which is required for the major) concurrently with ENGL 1200 Writing II, we addressed issues of retention, student engagement within the major, and necessary preparation for courses in the major. In addition, if students then switch majors later, this survey course will fulfill their LAS literature requirement.

### **World Literature Courses**



In 2013-14, the department added ENGL 2400 World Literature I, ENGL 2500 World Literature II, ENGL 3000 World Drama, and ENGL 3100 World Novel to the list of approved options for the third survey for English Studies major requirements. These courses are equivalent in level and coursework to other surveys that were already listed as options for the third survey. These courses expand the options available to include more non-Western courses. In addition, students, particularly Secondary Education majors, had frequently requested a waiver to allow these courses to count for their third survey in the past; now this is no longer necessary.

### **ENGL 4000 Major Authors and ENGL 4400 Seminar**

In 2015-16, the department moved to allow students to take ENGL 4000 and ENGL 4400 more than once. Given the diversity of topics in these courses, students expressed frustration at not being able to take them more than once, and this change was in response to their feedback. Students will benefit from being able to follow their intellectual curiosity. Further, students being able to take the course more than once for credit helps course enrollment numbers and might reduce the number of independent studies the department offers.

### **Secondary Education**

In 2013-14, our Secondary Education faculty proposed to add EDUC 3122 Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) to our curriculum. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations that went into effect July 1, 2014 require that all applicants for an initial teacher license in a core academic area or as a principal/assistant principal or supervisor/director meet requirements for Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Teacher and SEI Administrator Endorsement, respectively. The purpose of the endorsement is to prepare the Commonwealth's teachers with the knowledge and skills to effectively adapt their content instruction, so that our growing population of English language learners (ELLs) can access curriculum, achieve academic success, and contribute their multilingual and multicultural resources as participants and future leaders in the 21st century global economy.

### **Literature Minor**

In 2014-15, the literature minor was changed as follows:

- Added ENGL 2400 World Literature I, ENGL 2500 World Literature II, ENGL 3000 World Drama, and ENGL 3100 World Novel to literature survey options
- Replaced one American literature survey and one British literature survey with two literature surveys selected from two of three different categories (American, British, and World)
- Replaced one literature elective with a GDA or GDAN designation with one literature elective at any level
- Required that one of the courses taken for the minor (in any category) have a GDA or GDAN designation

These changes allowed students to take world literature courses to fulfill the survey requirement for the minor. They also allowed Education majors to count ENGL 2900 Children's Literature (a course they are advised to take) towards their Literature minor as "one literature elective at any level."

### **Study Abroad**

In 2011-12, English Studies put forward a proposal to create the shell course ENGL 3025 English Studies Abroad. The then new Academic Plan called for the “creat[ion of] a plan to expand study abroad opportunities for students.” To that end, a course designated for foreign study in the English Studies department allows faculty members to design courses with a study abroad component. Prior to this, that mechanism was not in place, and it was difficult both for faculty to plan such courses and for students to incorporate it into their plans of study. With this course in the catalog, interested faculty can provide structured opportunities for students to gain the experience of study abroad, in a spring break, summer, or other model. After the creation of this course, Dr. Kisha Tracy led a spring break study abroad course in England, “In the Footsteps of Medieval Legend,” which created a model subsequently followed by other departments involving course study supplemented by travel abroad during the spring break period. Dr. Elise Takehana has taught a course centered on Modernist French literature, “Paris: Absurd and Experimental” in Spring 2017, and Dr. Joseph Moser will be teaching a summer study abroad course in film studies, Italian Film and Literature in the Post-World War II Era” in Verona, Italy in Summer 2017.

## **Select Curriculum Strengths**

### **Capstone Course and Portfolios**

The Capstone has become a key learning experience for our students. It brings together in scholarly conversation students from the different concentrations, it serves as a place where students engage one another thoughtfully and intellectually, it helps students move into their next professional and educational stages more successfully, it has greatly strengthened the senior portfolio process and results, and it has become a vehicle for greatly enhanced and useful program assessment. The department has utilized senior portfolios since 1986, intending them as a representation of the student’s growth as a writer during his or her time as a student in our department. In the portfolio, the student submits a handful of selected projects, along with a narrative explaining the pieces—context, level, and effectiveness. The projects represent different classes as well as different foci. In addition, the Capstone has allowed instructors the opportunity to invite alumni and professionals in all the concentrations to present to, work on projects with, and share experiences and advice with our current students.

### **Internships**

An increasing number of our professional writing majors choose to do an internship. Although the internship is not required, students are strongly encouraged to pursue such projects. Students may opt for three, six, or nine credits for their work, the equivalent of one, two, or three courses. Examples include positions at newspapers, non-profit organizations, colleges, in television and radio, and at a number of businesses. So important is the internship experience to these students in providing them necessary “real world” experience and helping them build professional portfolios, we continue to consider requiring internships for all professional writing students. Because of the large and growing numbers of our professional writing majors and the amount of time needed to supervise a sizable internship program, the department would require additional faculty resources.

### **Writing Associates**

The department continues to offer academically-talented students opportunities to work closely with a sponsoring faculty member in courses across the curriculum to serve as writing associates, that is class-linked writing tutors who assist students with their writing tasks. Each academic year, the English Studies faculty member who manages the program works in an independent study format with between 10-12 writing associates who are engaged in this work. Students are responsible for attending the classes in which they are assigned and for meeting on a regular basis with their sponsoring faculty member and the Writing Associates coordinator who have most recently included Dr. Patrice Gray and Dr. Steven Edwards.

### **FSU's College Newspaper: *the Point***

*the Point*, the university's online newspaper -- housed in English Studies department and whose faculty adviser is our department's journalism professor -- is produced by and for the students of Fitchburg State University. The newspaper serves as a laboratory publication for the College Newspaper Production course, in which students receive formal training in exploring the parameters of journalism, such as copyediting, photojournalism, opinion writing, newsroom management, online production, and social-media promotion. Stories submitted for credit in the Journalism course are submitted for possible publication in *the Point* as well. Participation is not limited to students enrolled in English courses, however; any student on campus may submit materials or be involved in production of the campus paper, and many take advantage of this opportunity. *the Point* can be found at <https://fitchburgpoint.com>

## **C. Curricular Trends in the Discipline**

When we changed our department's name to English Studies, we signaled our continuing efforts to connect to some of the core curricular trends in our discipline: the emergence of cultural studies and its many affiliated fields (such as film studies and gender studies), the inclusion of new textualities such as digital media and graphic novels, and a rejuvenated focus on rhetoric and composition. Our recent Professional Writing hires continue to align us with those trends: in cultural studies and composition and rhetoric and in professional writing with an emphasis on new and digital media. Our recent hire in Literature, who specializes in the literature of Latin America, demonstrates our commitment to expanding our world literature offerings, particularly those that are relevant to our student population and surrounding community. The discipline has not moved away from Shakespeare, Medieval Literature, African-American literature, journalism, or secondary education (to cite a few of the areas in which we already specialize) so much as expanded to include new kinds of writing, literature, and analysis.

## **D. Relation of the Curriculum to the Program Mission and Values**

### **Concentration Objectives:**

**Literature Concentration:** Students will

- Demonstrate and communicate why literature matters;

- Demonstrate a solid understanding of diverse literary traditions;
- Develop the skills for the critical evaluation of texts, identities, genres, and cultures;
- Demonstrate mastery of the use of primary and secondary textual and electronic resources.

**Initial Licensure:** Along with the goals listed above, students will

- Develop the ability to do long-range planning, including curriculum mapping and unit planning;
- Use instructional strategies that help them explore and relate personal experience and develop interpretive skills in creating lesson plans and teacher work samples (TWS);
- Develop a clear understanding of the history and structure of the English language;
- Understand reading and writing processes and be able to teach them to their students;
- Develop instruction and curriculum thought the use of media and technology;
- Develop the knowledge, skill, caring, and ethics, per the Conceptual Framework.

**Professional Writing:** Students will

- Demonstrate competency in writing and producing works for publication in a variety of formats;
- Demonstrate knowledge of professional standards and practices in electronic and print media;
- Demonstrate ability in interviewing, as well as in presenting ideas to a variety of audiences.

## **E. Relation of the Curriculum to the Program Mission and Values: First-Year Writing Goals and Objectives**

The first-year writing sequence at Fitchburg State, consisting of Writing I and Writing II, provides the undergraduate student with the foundation necessary for critical thinking through academic writing. Together, these courses afford a continuous space in which students cultivate the skills of argumentation, uses of evidence, analysis, close reading of texts (in any number of forms), and revision as essential elements of the college-level writing process.

**Writing I** seeks to provide a comprehension of (1) rhetoric, (2) argumentation, (3) uses of evidence, (4) process-oriented writing, and (5) academic community. By the end of Writing I, students should be able to:

Rhetoric:

- Understand the purposes of writing within specific and varied discursive communities
- Develop means of persuasion with an awareness of audience
- Recognize figures of speech and logical fallacies

Argumentation:

- Identify and construct an argumentative thesis

- Write essays that employ logical structures and transitions
- Synthesize critical thinking and close reading in analytical writing

Uses of Evidence:

- Locate, evaluate, and select sources
- Summarize and critique materials
- Paraphrase and integrate quotations
- Cite texts properly

Process-Oriented Writing:

- Build an essay in stages (from pre-writing and invention to drafting)
- Practice the revision process
- Differentiate between global and topical revision
- Utilize the classroom as a workshop

Academic Community:

- Make appropriate choice of tone, grammar, and format according to situation and convention
- Acknowledge the standards and modes of academic integrity

**Writing II** expands upon the argumentative and analytical emphases of Writing I (of which it is a necessary extension). It will foster research-based composition (with or without a thematic focus). By the end of Writing II, in addition to the objectives listed above, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate in their prose a knowledge of rhetoric, argumentation, uses of evidence, process-oriented writing, and academic community
- Employ a variety of research methods and genres (including, but not limited to, interview, annotated bibliography, fieldwork, archival work, multimedia, etc.)
- Obtain reference materials, books, and articles through the FSC library's search engines and databases
- Become familiar with the latest information technologies pertinent to their research
- Adopt either APA or MLA citation format and use properly

Upon the successful completion of the two-semester sequence, students will be prepared to utilize and enhance their writing abilities within their own fields of study.

### **Centrality of Writing I and Writing II to the Mission of English Studies**

Our department has 21 full-time faculty who hold PhD s or EdDs and specialize in the teaching of: writing, literature, and speech, rhetoric and composition, or English education.

Our faculty are experts in teaching writing. Every job search carried out in our department since 2000 has included at its center this specific question: "Faculty in our discipline regularly teach two writing classes to incoming freshmen. Describe how you would teach such classes, including

your philosophy concerning teaching writing, the texts and assignments you would use and your experience in teaching writing.” No other department on this campus holds this extensive expertise or to focus so closely on composition and its skills in its teaching or pedagogy. Educating our university’s students in the skills of writing and rhetoric is what our faculty are all specifically trained to do. Our two specialists in rhetoric and composition, and our speech and rhetoric professor are trained disciplinary experts: their combined pedagogical expertise encompasses many decades of teaching, theory and practice in rhetorical modes.

Our two freshman writing courses are designed to increase student preparedness in writing, to provide an understanding of academic rigor in freshman expression skills; to educate our students in modes of research writing and documentation and to train them in the initial skills of information literacy. These courses are not in any way introduction to literature classes, but instead focus in rhetorical and compositional skills. This important task of teaching writing draws upon our faculty’s specific training and pedagogical integrity in the areas of writing and the English language, and is native to the curricular matter and the very discipline of English Studies. Writing skills and the teaching of writing relate to the mission of our English Studies department, itself.

### **Writing I and Writing II as specific courses that draw upon English Studies Faculty’s pedagogical training in Rhetoric and Composition.**

The English Studies faculty view the teaching of freshman writing as a fundamental aspect of our discipline. We hold the following principles as foundational to our composition pedagogy and to our teaching mission at this university:

1. Teaching writing successfully at the college level requires pedagogical professionals who possess sophisticated, knowledge and reflective practice in composition studies, rhetoric, pedagogy, and educational theory. All full-time faculty who teach writing in the English Studies department have had extensive training in the teaching of writing and hold PhD s or EdDs. Our two rhetoric-composition specialists and our speech rhetorician are all PhDs, specifically trained in the teaching of rhetoric. All of our full-time faculty have had considerable experience in teaching writing, and the ability to teach composition is an integral part of our hiring process, constituting a central interview question asked of every new hire since 2000. All part-time faculty who teach writing in our department also either hold a PhD or an MA degree. All adjunct faculty that we hire have had taught writing at the college or university level for some time.
2. Current NEASC guidelines require assessment of academic and disciplinary work, and currently, student work at Fitchburg State University in “Writing I” and “Writing II” is annually assessed by English Studies. Our Assessments reflect robust student outcomes that have consistently met the NEASC guidelines.
3. The teaching of writing requires a sustained engagement with current scholarship in many areas. Some areas of knowledge and practice that we recognize as central to the discipline of teaching writing include:

- Adhering to the principle that “Assigning writing” is not the same as “Assessing writing” nor is it the same as “Teaching writing.”
- Sequencing assignments into a coherent, cohesive set of reflective tasks to improve students as writers.
- Using guided practice: feedback (at the individual level, one-on-one, as well as class level), reflection, and metacognition.
- Recognizing writing process differences for neuro-diversity and disability inclusion.
- Possessing extensive training and familiarity with the study of the history in structure of English and rhetoric as well as a sophisticated understanding of the complex distinctions in English language usage including grammar, idiomatic usage, spelling, punctuation, and other linguistic features that have a profound effect on writing success. In addition, having an understanding and historical appreciation for the dynamic nature of language (such as the social equity implications of a singular “they”).
- Understanding and being able to access the reference resources to assist students and multi-lingual writers in mastering the complexities of academic English.

4. The teaching of writing requires sustained faculty development concerning pedagogies. Our department believes in faculty development concerning rhetoric and a focus on teaching writing. One of the conferences that our faculty regularly attend is the College Composition and Communication Conference (CCCC), a subgroup of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the world's largest professional organization for researching and teaching composition, from writing to new media since 1949. In addition to attending conferences like these, our faculty hold discussions on writing, both informally and formally.

### **Writing and the English Studies Department Mission and Vision: The Importance of Composition and Rhetoric**

The central place of composition and rhetoric at the college or university level is a well-established and recognized as belonging to a defined academic discipline which requires an understanding of the English language, the practices and challenge of writing, and an understanding of discourse, its forms and modes, and specific pedagogies. The English Studies department has a commitment to this field, taking our commitment as a Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accredited institution seriously, signifying that our Secondary Education teacher preparation and our dedication to content and pedagogical knowledge is of the highest level.

Since our department mission specifically involves the study of discourse in a variety of forms, the proper place of the teaching of writing lies in our department. Our mission statement references this as a core value: “The mission of the English Studies program is to offer students: a) knowledge of the broad field of literature in English; b) in-depth knowledge of its diverse aspects; c) the reading, writing, and research tools for exploring the field and its boundaries; and d) ample opportunity for hands-on experience in related fields to prepare students for careers.” Our courses and concentrations are designed to train our students to read, analyze, discuss, and write about fiction, poetry, essays, and memoirs; to become teachers; to write creatively and

professionally; and to become critical thinkers with sharpened writing and verbal skills. Our students often go directly into jobs which may involve teaching, or which require writing, research, analysis, and clear communication. Our students may also choose among graduate programs including those in literature, education, journalism, law, business, counseling, teaching, or library science. They become informed and productive citizen leaders of the Commonwealth, and acquire the academic and writing skills necessary for them to pass state-mandated certification tests for licensure.

Initially created in 2007 and continually revised and strengthened in the years since, our mission statement, and a University-wide vision project that provided the catalyst for further articulation and refinement of this statement, has led us to the development of our English Studies core curriculum. Specifically, faculty have chosen a core of courses in order to promote a greater understanding and appreciation of important literary and cultural themes, have developed new courses in world literatures to enhance our students' global perspectives, created a "writing-intensive" requirement for all English Studies majors to ensure our students gain writing skills that reflect the standards of the discipline. We have also and expanded our internship opportunities for students to gain footholds in careers after graduation.

As our departmental offerings and the field has changed, we have had an ongoing series of conversations about our departmental goals and mission, culminating in considerably revised and expanded Vision statement that we developed in 2015. Our new Vision Statement includes this language: "Students who explore the many paths within English Studies are trained to become thoughtful, critical thinkers and engaged readers, writers, creators and teachers of texts. Our discipline is diverse, looking through cultural, literary, rhetorical, and pedagogical lenses to analyze, interpret, and author texts in a range of genres and media."

As a department that incorporates several areas of study, our unifying emphasis is on the English language, rhetoric and on text and discourse, whether that text is written, spoken or a creative combination of various media and modes. Our emphasis is on the communicative manifestation of English in a variety of forms.

## **F. Relation of Minors to the Program Mission**

The minors housed in the English Studies Department are strongly supplemented by classes in the English Studies Department that specifically support our mission at their core. At present we offer two English Studies minors, in English Literature and Professional Writing.

The department also fosters several interdisciplinary minors that serve students across the institution. These are: African Studies, African-American Studies, American Studies, and Asian Studies, and most recently Film Studies. We also contribute courses to other IDIS minors: Disabilities Studies, Peace Studies, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

The African Studies minor (supported by the expertise of our faculty member, Chola Chuisunka who offers the Introductory course for this and courses in African literature that) provides



offerings that also serve the African American studies minor. The African-American Studies minor emphasizes not only the literature of African-Americans, but all of their diverse texts, including music and art. Asian Studies adapts a similar approach and also considers a constituency shaped by globalization. American Studies courses are team-taught in order to make explicit their interdisciplinary focus. The new Film Studies minor, just developed this year, examines These approaches not only reflect the current practice of these fields, but also encourage students of all majors on campus to consider these and other interdisciplinary minors as useful options. In supporting these interdisciplinary minors, we enact our mission to provide in-depth knowledge of diverse communities.

## **G. Outcomes Assessment Plan**

For its ongoing assessment efforts, the department's Assessment Committee has used the concentration-specific objectives listed above under Program Objectives. Because the Literature concentration's objectives are expressly intended to cover students in all four concentrations, the Assessment Committee has chosen one of those Literature concentration objectives to serve as the basis for its first few years of department-wide assessments; representatives from each concentration have then been asked to choose one of the concentration's objectives to serve as the basis for a parallel, concentration-specific assessment.

In both cases, the senior portfolios have served as the evidence to which the Assessment Committee has turned in order to assess how well our students are meeting these objectives. There are a number of benefits to using the portfolios. They include work that represents both their literary studies (for all four concentrations) and their concentration-specific studies, and they prominently identify a student's concentration and year of graduation, making the collection of related facts and evidence for each assessment particularly straight-forward.

The Assessment Committee has identified two downsides to using the portfolios as evidence, with the first largely having been resolved and conversations about the second still very much ongoing. First, prior to the portfolio's location in the Capstone, the quality and seriousness of the portfolio work was variable and unreliable; but with that location as a graded part of a required course, the Committee has noticed a significant strengthening of the portfolio work. Second, the portfolio represents only senior-level work, and thus cannot serve to give us a sense of longitudinal development, of how the students work on these objectives has changed (and hopefully grown) in their time in the English Studies major. To that end, the Assessment Committee and the Department decided also to assess student work from the ENGL 2999 Approaches to English Studies course, which students generally take around their second (or at latest usually the start of their third) year.

In any case, the Assessment Committee has performed, over the past five academic years (2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16), five full rounds of department-wide assessments on the senior portfolios. The assessments have focused in each case on the objective "Students will develop the skills for the critical evaluation of genres"; in each round, the Committee members have assessed both the students' knowledge of the differences between genres and their abilities

to analyze fiction, poetry, non-fiction, and drama. Some of the Committee's main conclusions are detailed below, as are the ways in which the department has begun to utilize this information to make curriculum changes.

### **2011-12 Assessment Summary:**

During the 2011-2012 Academic Year, the English Studies Department's Assessment Committee completed our department-wide assessment of all senior portfolios received in the fall 2011 English Capstone sections. We assessed all 29 of the portfolios using a department-wide objective and rubric, using a three-point scale to grade the students' abilities to use, cite, and critically engage with hard-copy and electronic primary and secondary texts in the papers included in those portfolios. The students' best category was their critical engagement with primary texts; their use of both hard copy primary texts and electronic secondary texts was also strong. Their worst categories were their use of both hard-copy secondary texts and electronic primary ones; they were also not as strong at critical engagement with secondary texts as they were with primary ones. We also feel that the number of N/As is problematic, especially with electronic texts but also with secondary texts in both categories. See below for a bit more response to these findings.

It was decided that our top assessment priority for 2012-2013 would be to pilot a parallel assessment process with materials collected in sections of Approaches to English Studies, our sophomore-level gateway course. We are very interested in learning more about our students over time, and in being able to assess longitudinally their skills; so piloting an assessment of sophomore-level work, alongside the next round of senior portfolio assessments, should help us to begin that part of the process.

### **2012-13 Assessment Summary:**

During AY2013 the English Studies Assessment Committee targeted two key courses taken by all our majors: ENGL 2999 Approaches to English Studies and ENGL 4999 Capstone. Our goal was to gauge student performance in three key areas, which included use of sources/evidence, documentation of sources, and academic discourse. We used the three corresponding criteria of the LA&S Written Communication rubric to measure these student skills.

In November, after doing a norming exercise, we assessed 29 contextual analysis papers drawn from two Spring 2012 sections of Approaches to English Studies, both of which were taught by the same faculty member. As this is our gateway course to the English major and primarily focuses on literary theory and the use of secondary sources in analytical writing, we expected these students to do at least as well or better than average in our three target areas. Our data (see separate PDF attachment) confirm many of our previously held conclusions about our students. First, when given clear, detailed assignments that require significant use of evidence from sources, our students tend to perform well in terms of integrating and engaging sources. By and large, they are also competent in using language that represents an appropriate tone and vocabulary for academic writing (academic discourse). Where we know our students struggle somewhat, however, is in consistently following the rules of MLA documentation. The eight members of our committee agreed that our Fall 12 data, which we discussed at our first meeting

of the spring semester, accurately represented strengths and weaknesses that we have frequently observed in our students' writing.

In April we normed and then proceeded to assess 26 portfolios from the Fall 2012 section of the English Capstone course. This Spring 13 data (see separate Word attachment) largely followed the same patterns as we saw in the Approaches papers the previous semester, with students averaging a nearly identical score in academic discourse, a slightly higher score in documentation of sources, and a somewhat lower score in the use of sources and evidence. The latter may be attributable to the more flexible requirements of the Capstone portfolio, as some students, particularly those in our Professional Writing track, often lean very heavily toward creative pieces in their choice of work. This average is also in line with the Fall 2011 Capstone portfolio assessment data on this criterion.

Going forward, the data we generated this year proved valuable in enhancing faculty teaching by 1) lending additional urgency to our efforts to improve student skills in the area of correctly documenting sources and 2) informing any further curriculum mapping discussions that we have as a department in the future, particularly in terms of identifying where research skills are being introduced and reinforced within our required core English Studies courses.

In addition, in terms of our assessment work process, the data from Fall 12 and Spring 13 illustrated the importance of norming and assessing in quick succession, which we did in the fall but were unable to do in the spring. Our inter-rater reliability was remarkably good in the Fall 2012 data, but the Spring 2013 data was not nearly as consistent between scorers. This is likely a result of the fairly long lag time for most of our assessors between norming and scoring in the spring, which was largely due to a scheduling conflict between our long-standing hootenanny date and the campus visit of a job candidate that arose and required us to cut short our scoring period. We will do our best to remedy this issue in the future.

Our assessment work this year led to further substantive discussions of the content of the LA&S Written Communication rubric, which our committee members modified, particularly in the "Sources and Evidence" criterion.

### **2013-14 Assessment Summary:**

As we did in 2012-13, during AY2014 the English Studies Assessment Committee targeted two key courses taken by all our majors: ENGL 2999 Approaches to English Studies and ENGL 4999 Capstone. We examined 30 Approaches "Casebook" papers and 29 Capstone portfolios; each student project was scored by two English faculty members.

Our goal was to gauge student performance in three key areas, specifically (integration and interpretation of) sources/evidence, documentation of sources, and academic discourse. We used the three corresponding criteria of a slightly modified version of the LA&S Written Communication rubric to measure these student skills. In addition, we also assessed the Approaches to English Studies papers for controlling idea and development of controlling idea, but I will not comment on that data in this report; if it is possible to score Approaches papers according to those two criteria again next year, then those pieces of Fall 2013 data will indeed be useful.

In November, following a norming exercise, we assessed 30 Approaches Casebook literary analysis papers drawn from two Spring 2013 sections of Approaches to English Studies volunteered by one faculty member who has taught this course for over a decade. Despite the clear emphasis on the integration of primary and secondary/scholarly sources in the project assignment, these students, on average, fall slightly below sufficiency (1.83) in terms of the integration and interpretation of sources. The mean score is nearly identical for academic discourse (1.85), which seems acceptable for a sophomore-level course. As usual, however, English Studies students struggle most in the area of documentation of sources (consistently following the rules of MLA documentation), averaging 1.62. Discussing this fall data at our January 2014 meeting, our Assessment Committee members found nothing surprising in these numbers, as they point to issues we have frequently observed in our own students' writing.

In April we did another norming exercise and then proceeded to assess 29 portfolios drawn from two Fall 2013 sections of the English Capstone course. Like the student work drawn from Approaches, all the Capstone portfolios were the product of course sections taught by one senior faculty member who has taught this class many times. This Spring 14 data (see the separate Excel attachment) largely follows the same patterns we saw in the Approaches papers the previous semester. While these Capstone students have higher average scores on all three criteria (1.99 for sources/evidence, 1.76 for documentation of sources, and 2.06 for academic discourse), they once again score lowest in documentation. Furthermore, the smallest increase in average scores (.14) between the Approaches and Capstone student work is in the area of documentation. In addition, both the Approaches and Capstone averages track closely with our Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 Capstone portfolio assessment data on these criteria, with the only significant differences coming in the areas of sources/evidence in the Approaches papers—a .46 decrease between Fall 2012 and Fall 2013 data—and documentation of sources in the Capstone portfolios—a .19 increase.

Going forward, the data we generated this year proved valuable in enhancing faculty teaching by 1) lending additional urgency to our efforts to improve student skills in the documentation of sources, 2) providing a productive starting point for focused discussions of curricular goals and student learning outcomes among faculty who teach the Approaches to English Studies and/or Capstone courses, and 3) informing any further curriculum mapping discussions that we have as a department in the future, particularly in terms of identifying where research skills are being introduced and reinforced within our English Studies core courses.

In Fall 2014, we assessed 16 portfolios from the English Capstone course. We found that students were similar in their abilities to use and cite both print and electronic sources, with a slightly higher score on primary sources, 2.22, with only a .14-.16 difference in secondary sources.

We did find more of a disparity in students' abilities to engage with and analyze primary sources as compared to secondary sources. For primary sources, artifacts scored 2.37, and they scored a 1.97 on secondary sources – a .4 difference. This does indicate an area on which we need to put more focus, how to engage with and analyze critical sources as opposed to the primary texts.

### **2014-15 Assessment Summary:**

In Fall 2014, we assessed 16 portfolios from the English Capstone course. We found that students were similar in their abilities to use and cite both print and electronic sources, with a slightly higher score on primary sources, 2.22, with only a .14-.16 difference in secondary sources.

We did find more of a disparity in students' abilities to engage with and analyze primary sources as compared to secondary sources. For primary sources, artifacts scored 2.37, and they scored a 1.97 on secondary sources – a .4 difference. This does indicate an area on which we need to put more focus, how to engage with and analyze critical sources as opposed to the primary texts.

### **2015-16 Assessment Summary:**

The evaluation of student work and data generated by the English Studies Assessment Committee in 2015-16 supports many of the previous conclusions drawn from our assessments. Specifically, this year's data suggests that the majority of our English Majors engage with and integrate sources and evidence in their written work at a sufficient level or below and a thinner majority maintain proper academic discourse at a sufficient level or below. The most significant deviation in this year's data comes in the area of documentation of sources, where we see a significant uptick in the students' performance, with a mean score of 2.42 for Fall 15 Approaches to English Studies students and 2.25 for Spring 16 English Capstone students. This positive development seems to indicate that students are receiving more consistent instruction in documenting sources. In previous years, our students have scored lowest in documentation of sources (see the 2013-14 English Assessment report and data), with mean scores of 1.62 and 1.76 in Fall 13 and Spring 14, respectively.

In terms of our students' ability to establish and develop a controlling idea, or thesis, we also see mixed results, consistent with data in previous years (again, see the 2013-14 report and data), although these two skills were only assessed in the Spring 16 Capstone portfolios. The mean score in the area of controlling idea is 2.05, along with a nearly identical mean score of 2.07 for development of controlling idea.

The Assessment Committee will continue to engage faculty who teach Approaches to English Studies in discussions about how the skills emphasized in that "major gateway" course can support the growth and success of our majors throughout their programs of study.

## **H. Effectiveness of the Curriculum, Plans of Study and Course Rotation**

### **Curriculum Mapping**

The department Curriculum Committee has begun the process of mapping our curriculum, identifying learning outcomes for different levels and types of courses as well as discussing how to more align outcomes among different sections. This process is ongoing.

### **Four-Year Plans of Study**

Each concentration makes available to students on its webpages its four-year plan of study. These plans include a list of required courses in the major and concentration as well as Liberal Arts and Sciences requirements and free electives. Their year-by-year organization (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>) makes explicit to students a plan of study that will ensure timely matriculation. The department ensures that the Four-Year Plans are current, an ongoing task with a curriculum that continues to evolve. (See APPENDIX 7.)

### **Two-Year Course Rotations**

While the department has in the past published our Two -Year Course Rotation on our department website, the University has recently required these course rotations more formally. Through the University seats list as well as through the department, students can find confirmation when required courses are offered (each semester or once a year, depending on the requirement and size of the concentration) and see the range of elective courses available.

Although a useful tool for students to plan their course of study, the University and the department has some ongoing challenges in implementing it since faculty leaves of absence and sabbaticals result in ongoing course reassignments. Course enrollments also often complicate a Two-Year Course Rotation. Given budget constraints, classes with fewer than ten students may not run, and it is possible that required courses may not be offered every semester. Nonetheless, many courses can be offered in a two-year course rotation. (See APPENDIX 8 for the Two-Year Course Rotation.)

### **Range of Offerings**

With our many electives, we provide students a large variety of courses to enhance or augment their specific course requirements and to meet our Program mission to provide “knowledge of the broad field of literature.” We regard our considerable number of elective courses, many of them have been newly created in order to keep current in the field as one of our strengths. These may not run on a two-year rotation.

## **Graduate Curriculum**

### **A. Graduate Program Goals and Objectives**

**The Master of Arts in English program aims to:**

- promote graduate-level scholarship in the study of literature;
- advance the development of a wide range of literary knowledge, including a global perspective;

- provide a wide range of courses, from The Literature of the Middle Ages, Shakespeare's Plays, 20th Century American Women Writers, Africa through the Novel, American Historical Fiction: Practice and Theory, and Contemporary World Literature
- explore the expanding fields of science fiction and media-oriented literary production
- study the major literary theories and the history of English Studies as a discipline;
- encourage students' intellectual discovery and share those innovations by other critics and writers in the field.

The Master of Arts in English (MA) Program provides specialization in the study of the traditional and newer canons of literature, literary theories, and research writing. The MA is designed for students pursuing careers in literature, writing, research, and community college or college teaching. It provides a background for students planning to go on to doctoral programs.

The Gender Studies concentration of the Master of Arts in English program is designed to prepare teachers, researchers, writers and museum curators in an interdisciplinary area within the field of gender studies. It aims to provide students with the academic foundation needed to pursue doctoral work in gender studies.

#### **The Master of Arts in Teaching English Studies program aims to:**

- bridge the gap between cutting-edge scholarship and classroom practice;
- suggest ways to integrate the voices of women and minorities into the general literary canon
- enable practicing teachers to expand strategies for teaching writing through the use of composing strategies, collaborative writing, and technology;
- enable practicing teachers to expand strategies for teaching literature through the application for current modes of criticism

The Master of Arts in Teaching English (MAT) program is designed to develop the scholar teacher by providing a strong background in English studies and skills for the complex process of teaching English. The program is intended for students interested in studying the theories, methodologies, and materials for teaching English in the middle or secondary schools in addition to broadening their knowledge of literature.

Because some of our interested candidates live or intend to work in neighboring states, such as New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, they are not required to have a Massachusetts Teaching License. Therefore, the program offers a non-licensure track for those within the MAT to best service these students. The non-licensure track requires students follows the same curriculum as the licensure track with exception of fulfilling the pedagogical research requirement, a 6-credit course.

#### **The Master of Arts in Teaching English Studies with Teacher Certification Track**

A licensure track within this program leads to professional licensure as a teacher of English at the secondary level. The Master of Arts in Teaching English program is designed for students

interested in studying the theories, methodologies, and materials for teaching English in the middle and secondary schools in addition to broadening their knowledge of literature. This program is designed to provide students with the necessary course work for Standard Certification as teachers of English at the secondary level. This is a nationally approved program. Students not holding Provisional Certification with Advanced Standing take additional course work during their first semesters leading to this level of certification.

### **Post Baccalaureate Certificate Program, English Studies Concentration, Initial Licensure (8-12)**

Students who hold a bachelor's degree and wish to become a secondary level (grades 8-12) teacher of English may complete a post baccalaureate program that consists of the equivalent of a degree in English and 18 credit hours of pedagogical coursework in education.

Students who are interested in the program must meet the following criteria:

- Evidence of a bachelor's degree
- A GPA of 2.8 or better
- Successful completion of the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure: Communication and Literacy Skills Sub-test
- Applicants to the Post Baccalaureate Program in English Studies must complete an essay of no more than one page in response to one of the following statements or questions:

### **B. Graduate Program Description**

Since the last Program review, The Master of Arts in English Studies (MA) program has grown and developed both in quality and in enrollment. In this time of challenging enrollments in higher education, our program is still attractive to a broad array of prospective candidates in the region and occasionally outside the area. The program is designed to enhance and enrich students' understanding and reading of traditional and newer canons of literature, literary theories, and texts. The MA is designed for students pursuing careers in literature, writing, research, community college, or college students. Many of our students go on to pursue a PhD or return to university to pursue our diverse Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) Programs. Students engage in research and writing, employing a variety of strategies to build their skills in their interpretation and understanding of literature.

The Master's Program has a dedicated scholarly faculty whose expertise represents a wide variety of specialties and disciplines within the field. In their scholarship and teaching, faculty engage diverse subjects within English Studies such as: the changing definitions of literature and the literary, literary historical studies, culture studies, women's literature, gender studies, the place of race and class in the creation of texts, literary theory and criticism, folkloric narratives, myth and fiction, film and literature, media, and creative metafiction.

The Master of Arts in English Studies program has undergone some recent changes in terms of reshaping with new hires and new curricular offerings. One of these changes is manifested in the Gender Studies track of the Master of Arts program, which is designed to prepare teachers,



researchers, writers and museum curators in an interdisciplinary area within the field of gender studies. It aims to provide students with the academic foundation needed to pursue doctoral work in gender studies.

The Master of Arts in Teaching English Studies (MAT) program is designed to develop the scholar teacher by providing a strong specialization in the traditional and newer canons of literature in English with theories and methodologies for teaching English in the middle and secondary schools. A Certification track within this program leads to standard certification as a teacher of English at the secondary level. **(See APPENDIX 9 for the MA and MAT Programs of Study.)**

The Graduate Program is comprised of 15 full-time members of the English Studies Department's tenured and tenure-track full-time day faculty. Some specialized courses, like those in the licensure program in the education track, are taught by adjuncts who are licensed professionals in the field. These instructors are mostly from local high schools. Usually, between three and four graduate courses are offered each semester, including Summer I and Summer II. Students have the opportunity to create independent studies with specific faculty members during their degree program to meet their curricular needs or to pursue specific interests. **(See APPENDIX 10 for Graduate Course syllabi.)**

The Program is run by the Graduate Program Chair, and our current chair, is Dr. Chola Chisunka (with Dr. Irene Martyniuk serving as Interim chair this past spring) . As per contract, we have a Curriculum Committee in the form of the English Studies Graduate Program Committee, which approves and superintends the program's curriculum matters. All Graduate Program Chairs at Fitchburg State work under the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education (GCE). They are nominated by their colleagues within their departments, and are formally approved by Administration of the University (Dean, Graduate and Continuing Education, Vice-President and President) or his/her designee. All Graduate and Continuing Education chairs are responsible for the administrative oversight of their specific programs, under the aegis of GCE management. All instructors who teach in the program are automatically members of the Graduate Committee, which meets monthly. The committee makes curricular decisions, as well as voting on thesis proposals, student applications, and other programmatic issues.

### **Enrollment Data**

The Master of Arts in English Studies (MA) program continues to attract students from the central Massachusetts area and beyond. There are numerous students at work in various stages of completing their MA and MATS, and a large number of students who continue to take courses although they are not matriculated into our graduate program. Those that have passed through the program continue to praise the experiences they have had with faculty and offerings in the program. In fact, some of them say that this program is "the best kept secret" in the region, and that FSU's program compares very favorably with other graduate programs in the UMass system.

### **Number of Students Accepted into the MA in English program**

Academic Year	Students
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2012	7
2013	4
2014	2
2015	3
2016	2

### **Number of Students Accepted into the MAT in English Program**

Academic Year	Students
2012	1
2013	1
2014	2
2015	1
2016	2

### **Enrollment**

Fall Enrollment	MA	MAT
2012	16	13
2013	17	12
2014	13	9
2015	16	10
2016	8	10

## **C. Relationship of Courses and Curriculum to Objectives**

The English Studies Graduate Program at Fitchburg State University has a very strong regional reputation. It is the one of the few “full service” programs in the area, providing a broad range of both MA and MAT degrees. The MAT Program, especially, appears to have a positive impact on the quality of primary and secondary education in Central Massachusetts as evidenced by the large numbers of teachers in the area who enroll in the program. The MA program, too, has a very strong effect on those students who eventually want to pursue more advanced studies in the discipline. A substantial number of our students have graduated from the program and have gone on to do PhD studies at other institutions, including the University of Massachusetts, Brandeis, the University of New Hampshire, the University of Rhode Island, Tulane University, and the University of Missouri, and UMass Lowell.

Through a selective process, the best of our graduate students write a master’s thesis. These students (who include those who eventually attend PhD programs as well as some of their MA counterparts) craft proposals concerning the writing of a graduate thesis for Graduate Committee

approval and engage in extended research. These theses have enriched and nourished our program, and the field of English Studies. (See **APPENDIX 11 for a list of Theses for the last five years.**)

## **D. Curricular Trends in the Discipline**

Over the last few years, the English Graduate Program's curriculum has deepened its focus through the creation of new course offerings and broadened its scope by embracing new interdisciplinary trends correspondent with developments in English Studies. Our classes are a mixture of traditional offerings and those that combine new directions in the discipline. Our more traditionally focused classes familiarize our students with essential knowledge about the study and history of literature; Shakespeare's Major Plays, The Shapes of Modern Drama, and 20th Century British and American Poetry are some of the courses we offer in this way. Other courses, like Genre, Adaptation and Hybridity, Literature and Film, and The Quiet Revolution: 19th-Century American Women Writers, reflect our interest in pursuing new directions in the discipline. This double movement has created remarkable opportunities for cross disciplinary understanding and new kinds of creative tensions, allowing for epistemological scrutiny and beneficial grappling with less familiar sources of knowledge from other disciplines.

Such confrontation with the uncertainties that arise from the changing shape of English Studies is a part of a new curricular trend in the field, which opens up the study of a wide variety of topics and issues, including: cultural studies, gender studies, literary theory and its applications, postmodernism, historical fiction and historiography, literature and identity, literature and documentary film, aesthetics, world fiction, and diasporic literature. Many of these subjects and topics also engage with writing and metafiction, politics, theories of the novel, class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and nationality.

## **E. Outcomes Assessment Plan**

Given the number of students who elect to take our graduate classes but who do not formally apply, gain admission to, or graduate from our program, systematic outcomes assessment is a challenge. Often students may take one or two classes then leave and perhaps return at a later date. This varied graduate student population of students who are formally enrolled in our program and those who take selected courses for personal or professional enrichment also complicates outcomes assessment. The various means by which students enter, take courses, and graduate from our program presents us with a number of challenges. However, since the last program review, we have developed a reasonable structure for outcome assessment. Since the Department of English Studies offers two graduate degrees in English, (1) the Master of Arts (MA) in English and, (2) the Master of Arts in teaching English (MAT), there are two different degree assessment paths, as described below.

The past few years have seen many of our students graduating and completing their degree requirements in record time. Although the time they are given is a 6 year maximum, most finish within 2-3 years. Many of the students are in-service teachers from local schools who come back

to finish their master's degree as part of the state requirement that one must obtain a professional license within 5 years of completing their initial licensure.

1. With the Master of Arts in English (MA) degree that focuses on intellectual discovery while also preparing students for future doctoral work by training them in recognized fields of study, students to proceed either through the MA Thesis or the MA exit exam. Requiring 33 credit hours of course work (typically, eleven courses) for graduation, the MA necessitates that students take two courses in literary research and literary theory in their first year; the remainder of their course work consists of pro-seminars and seminars. To complete the degree, students must then choose one of the two options: (a) The Master's Thesis Capstone or, (b) The MA English Exit Examination. Students must inform the Graduate Chair of their intention to pursue either of the two options during the semester in which they are completing their 21<sup>st</sup> credit. Those choosing the Thesis option apply, and submit a proposal with a working bibliography to the English Graduate Advisor and Committee.

### **MA Thesis Option:**

- After the proposal has been approved, the student must write and defend a 6-credit master's thesis.
- Including the thesis supervisor, the thesis committee requires 3 faculty members. All members of the thesis committee, including the chair, vote on the acceptability of the oral thesis defense. A majority vote is required.
- Committee approval is conditional upon certain recommended changes in the thesis.

### **MA Exit Exam Option:**

Those students choosing the Graduate Exit Examination option will be expected to adhere to the following examination requirements:

- Each semester the graduate committee appoints a three-person committee to conduct the exam. The examination is divided into the following two parts:

#### **Part I:**

- In the first part of the exam, the student is expected to compile a list of texts that include the following three categories: Theory/Criticism, American Literature, and British Literature (including World Literature).
- The list should have a minimum of 25 primary texts. A list of secondary sources should also be submitted.
- This list, along with a rationale for the selection, should be submitted to an advisor (one of the three appointed for the semester) for review.
- After conferring with the Program Chair and the Exam committee, the advisor will submit a list of three exam questions to the candidate, who can opt to write the exam on a set date at the University or as a timed Blackboard assignment. Each written response should be 500 words or more in length.

#### **Part II:**

- In roughly two weeks, after the committee has evaluated the response and found it satisfactory, there will be a viva/oral exam session with the exam committee. The options for the committee are: fail, pass, or pass with distinction. Students will have two opportunities to retake the exam (with a revised list of books, and a revised questionnaire) in order to pass.

With the current MA Thesis option and the newly required MA Examination, we have the means by which to construct meaningful assessment for our graduates. A list of some of the thesis projects reveals the scope of our student's scholarship: *Womanhood at War: A Take on Alcott's Domestic Feminism in the American Civil War*, *The Hollow Crown: Performance as the Mode of Monarchical Power in Shakespeare's History Plays and Early Modern England*, and *The Battle for your Hearts and Minds: The Occupation of Iraq, information warfare, and American war culture*.

2. The Master of Arts in Teaching English (MAT) degree focuses on developing the scholar-teacher by providing a strong specialization in the traditional and newer canons of literature in English. Teacher candidates pursue a 39 credit hour program that prepares them to become English educators. Through acquisition of theoretical knowledge and explanations of practice, students become exposed to new methodologies for teaching English in the middle and secondary schools. After completing 33 credits, students are expected to engage in a 6 credit Action Research Project that serves as an Outcomes-Assessment through which the program assesses them to determine their level of understanding of research, professional practice and their knowledge of practical theory.

### **MAT Assessment: Pedagogical Research Project**

- The research begins with the candidate submitting a proposal with a working bibliography to the English Graduate Advisor and Committee.
- As a trigger mechanism for the Pedagogical Research students are encouraged to discuss their selected project with the Program Chair to go over details of the project. This is followed up by the actual registration of the 6 Pedagogical Research credits. The project is registered through a petition process since DGCE considers credits outside class as a modified program.
- After the proposal has been approved, the student must write and defend a 6-credit Pedagogical Research Report. Including the project supervisor, the Pedagogical Research Committee requires 3 faculty members. All members of the Committee, including the chair, vote on the acceptability of the acceptability of the defense. A majority vote is required. Committee approval is conditional upon certain recommended changes in the report.

The Pedagogical Research Project addresses the program objectives of the MAT program, which are: 1) to promote graduate-level scholarship in the study of literature; 2) to encourage the development of a wide range of literary knowledge, including a global perspective; and 3) to enable practicing teachers to expand strategies for teaching writing through the use of process writing and collaborative writing. Students are also assessed throughout their stay in the MAT program with regard to their content knowledge, inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy

and their application of new technology to promote active learning. A list of some of the titles of the research projects demonstrate the various approaches of our students: *Standard-based Grading: A Reflection of Student Ability and Academic Performance*, *Gamification and the Writing Process in the Sixth Grade English Language Arts Classroom*, and *Choose your own Adventure: Implementing Guided Inquiry in the English Language Arts Classroom*.

## **F. Effectiveness of the Curriculum**

### **MA/MAT Curriculum Philosophy and Structures**

The English Studies Master programs continue to be inclusive of the classics but also to be innovative, involving both the study of texts and the process of enlisting theoretical, cultural, critical and historical contexts in their interpretation. The program seeks to ground students in periods, genres, theories, and renowned authors, while at the same time paying attention to contemporary issues and developments in the discipline. This convergence of old and new ways of addressing the discipline has given room to the growth of new concentrations such as gender studies, culture studies and the treatment of race, class and identity, folklore, the filmic landscape, and the graphic novel. In a general sense, our program has gained strength by taking students beyond a mere surface reading of the text to a broader, deeper view of the subject by incorporating literary, cultural, historical, and critical methods. Through small seminar classes, covering a wide range of topics, and advanced seminars treating specialized issues, the programs deepen, enhance, and extend students' acquisition of literary and pedagogical knowledge.

### **Graduate Colloquia**

The program also sponsors a faculty/student English Studies Graduate Program Colloquium. These well-attended colloquia, in which participants offer lectures within their academic interests, benefit the students. They move faculty research and graduate student research outside the classroom and enhance the scholarship of our department. **(See APPENDIX 12 for a list of Graduate English Studies Colloquia.)**

### **Graduate Program Literary Journal**

The Graduate Program's literary journal, *The Falconer* (formerly titled, *The Text, FSC Review*) moves students' research outside the classroom and into the scholarly realm. The best work that our program's students have done is sometimes groundbreaking and reflective of original thinking and solid research skills learned in the classroom under the supervision of our able faculty. Thus far, the program has published editions of the journal twice every academic year since 2003, centered on topics ranging from British and American Canonicity, to Revisiting Shakespeare, Jewish American Identity, The Novel, British Modernism, and American Voices. The journal's showcases our program's facility in moving our students from writing classroom essays to doing scholarly, publishable work. As far as we have observed, we are the only graduate program within the state university system that produces such a journal. **(See APPENDIX 13 for a list of *Falconer* issues.)**

## **Future Directions**

The program is currently working on further developing a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS) that is designed to offer professional advancement and/or personal enrichment beyond the Master's degree. At the present time, faculty and administrators in the Massachusetts State University system are exploring partnerships with the University of Massachusetts to offer doctoral programs, although no plans are currently in place to offer a doctoral program in English Studies on our campus. **(See APPENDIX 14 for a description of the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies program.)**

## **Part V: English Studies Department Resources**

### **A. Operating Budget**

The English Studies Department Operating Budget **(See APPENDIX 15 for AY 2015-16)** covers supplies and day-to-day operation costs for all faculty in our three concentrations. The budget is administered by the chair and the department secretary. This budget also includes funds for department faculty/student initiatives such as the publication of *Route 2*, the campus literary journal, and our annual High School Writing Competition.

Faculty travel funds, which amount to \$400.00 per faculty member per year, are issued separately from the Operating Budget, but placed within it for allocation. Actual travel reimbursements vary among faculty members' needs and the yearly goals of the department. For example, every year a small number of faculty opt not to use their travel funds: these days, \$400.00 does not go far in conference travel. Their funds remain in the department travel fund pool, and, at the discretion of the chair, are used to augment other colleagues' travel. Department policy for travel reimbursement is determined by the following priorities: 1) Travel to a professional conference to present a paper or to participate in a formal capacity such as organizer or officer, and 2) Attendance at a conference, usually out of one's major field of study, to promote professional development in such areas as program assessment. If funds remain, they can be used to support attendance at conferences that support other department initiatives.

In addition to the travel funds provided by the University through our budget, faculty are also eligible to receive annual Continuing Scholarship funds, typically amounting to \$821.00. Faculty may also apply for Special Project and Ruth Butler Grants that can be used for travel or other professional expenses. During the period of this review, faculty were granted funds to support their scholarship. Adjuncts, then and now, do not receive any travel or professional development support.

### **B. Library**

Like all departments on campus, the English Studies Department benefits from the FSU library, but does not dictate its content. The FSU library maintains a solid collection of primary texts in English Literature, coupled with important criticism. New works are added every year as space and budget allow. The library also maintains a collection of print journals important to the field. The most important trend has been the increasing acquisition of important online databases, which allows students access to full-text articles from journals to which FSU does not subscribe. Additionally, English Studies faculty collaborate with FSU librarians to promote information literacy. For example, several of our faculty including Dr. Elise Takehana and Dr. Katharine Covino-Poutasse, along with our former faculty member, Dr. Anna Consalvo (now at the University of Texas at Tyler) are working with librarian Asher Jackson to digitize texts from The Robert Cormier archive (first brought to our university by English Professor Emeritus Marilyn McCaffrey), housed at our university library. Such collaborations and the daily help provided by our librarians enable us to reach our students though offering vital sustained research experiences in information literacy vital and collaborative, hands-on learning opportunities for students. (See **APPENDIX 16 for the Library listing for English Studies.**)

### **C. Space**

The English Studies Department is housed in Miller Hall, where it occupies the entirety of the second floor, as well as several offices on the first floor and in the lower level of the building. We also maintain conferences room for faculty and student meetings on the first floor.

One full-time administrative assistant runs the main office, which is open to students from 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Our faculty teach in classrooms across campus, including at the McKay Campus School.

### **D. Technology**

All full-time faculty are issued laptop computers (PCs or Macs) that are replaced every three years. All full-time faculty's technical or mechanical problems with their laptops or with accessing various technology platforms across campus are addressed at the Information Technology's Help Desk during the week or through an off-campus technical support service available 24 hours a day. With all students enrolled in Blackboard, and with more faculty using it as part of their courses—as well as with the increase in number of online courses offered—the services of the Help Desk are vital. Faculty use SSC in advising.

The English Studies Department, as with all departments and programs on campus, maintains its own FSU website. We also have a Facebook page. All of the department's publications, *the Point*, *Route 2*, *Detour* and *The Falconer* also have an online presence.

### **E. Equipment and Materials**



The English Studies Department provides its faculty members with complete service through basic office equipment such as a department printer/scanner that allows faculty to print and scan from their laptops. Department faculty are well supplied with paper and office supplies and may request special equipment or materials as needed.

All full-time faculty have personal offices with a desk, office chair, bookcases, and an additional chair for students or guests. Each office is equipped with a phone and a separate phone extension specific to that professor.

## **Part VI: Strengths and Weaknesses**

### **Areas of Strength**

#### **1. English Studies Department Structure, Emphasis and Concentrations:**

The English Studies department with its three concentrations offers our majors, minors and non-majors a wide variety of courses across several areas – literature, secondary education and professional writing. Our courses provide students with opportunities to analyze, read, write diverse discourses, to produce a variety of texts, to examine the English language, literary, cultural and historical contexts, and to write and speak in different rhetorical modes. Our large range of courses in nonwestern literatures encourages students to appreciate their roles as global citizens in a multicultural, changing world. A constant in our teaching is our emphasis on ensuring that all our majors demonstrate a core understanding of the many aspects of English Studies through intense training in reading and writing. We seek to give students a foundation that will provide them with the skills and confidence needed to find successful futures – whether those future lie in graduate study, teaching, writing or in using communication skills in diverse workplaces. Students also receive training in researching and in using the skill and tools required for digital literacy in this present age. As previously noted, all of our classrooms are fully wired, and all our students are expected to have access to laptops. Using technology not merely as a tool but also as part of a pedagogical methodology, and in its many forms as a research resource and in writing for its many platforms plays a significant role in many of our courses, and complements our constructivist, discussion-based approach in the classroom.

#### **2. The English Studies curriculum and diverse course offerings are an area of strength.**

In English Studies, we offer our majors, minors and non-majors a wide variety of courses that spans several areas and concentrations, including literary, cultural and period studies, American, British and world literatures and film; culture study; writing classes that probe both creative and professional genres and skills; writing classes that explore digital and media related specific platforms, and which include journalism, experimental styles and modes as well as technical and business writing; and rhetoric and speech classes which prepare students to use rhetorical modes in professional and everyday settings. In addition, we feature courses in secondary education that probe the discipline and the relevant literatures taught in elementary, middle and high schools and which lead to state licensure. Such courses provide students opportunities to analyze and

produce many modes of writing as well as a variety of texts. Our many courses in world and nonwestern literatures encourage students to appreciate their roles as global citizens in a changing world. Although our offerings are varied, all ensure that students taking them demonstrate a core understanding of English Studies through intense immersion in reading and writing, a foundation that provides our graduates opportunities to pursue advanced graduate study successfully. We also continue to develop up-to-date courses to reflect trends in the literary disciplines, and in Professional Writing and Initial Licensure so students may secure professional work in their fields upon graduation. As previously noted, technology plays a significant role in many of our courses which prepare students to use digital resources, scholarship and to access relevant technology. All of our classrooms are fully wired, and all our students are not only required to have access to laptops but to know about information literacy, technology platforms and how to negotiate the veracity and wealth that the internet may offer.

As the department grows and expands, our new hires are diverse scholars who can and do teach across concentrations and are interdisciplinary. They frequently look for ways to work with colleagues from other departments to create new, interdisciplinary opportunities for students. Our department is extremely involved with a variety of interdisciplinary programs and in fact the current director of the interdisciplinary minor is one of our faculty members. We continue to keep pace with current developments in our fields, and in Professional Writing and Initial Licensure, to follow changes in these disciplines and prepare our students with resources to find and secure work related to their fields upon graduation.

### **3. Assessment practices for entry level and senior level classes have led to productive changes.**

Since our last review, our Assessment Committee has examined our key gateway course, “Approaches to English Studies,” as well as some of our senior level classes, the Senior Capstone course. Our faculty teaching these classes continue reworking and updating the content of these classes to reflect outcomes we wish our students to have and skills and pre-professional skills that they need in order to apply for jobs. We have also utilized student work and portfolios from the capstone class as a source of assessment data, and to drive our sense of the skills that students need to have, and alter our key courses accordingly: these classes now incorporate a strong emphasis on apprising students of practical ways to apply analytical and writing strengths they have gleaned from their studies in the department; it now also emphasizes through assignments and guest panel presentations ways to prepares students to envision and apply for jobs that enlist and value their training skills. Our department’s Assessment Committee has done significant work here. Our intensified assessment practices reflect the department’s capacity for self-scrutiny and productive self-criticism and evidence our proactive responses to emerging challenges for our students as well as indicating professional areas of need.

### **4. Our faculty members are active scholars who hold deep pedagogical commitments.**

As previously noted in the above narrative above and as their vitae demonstrate, the English studies faculty are accomplished scholars and teachers whose specialties reflect an impressive range of academic, scholarly and pedagogical expertise. Our faculty are both experts in their fields and are deeply engaged teachers, dedicated to exploring and utilizing the best pedagogical

practices in their English Studies fields. Despite the demands inherent in teaching four courses every semester, in our department we are active scholars. We consistently engage in studies at conferences, present papers at academic conferences, publish articles, books and creative works, and serve in administrative positions in professional associations. Our scholarly work in English Studies not only enhances our own teaching, but also serves as model to our students. We seek to involve students in the scholarly process, often going beyond the classroom by mentoring and encouraging students to submit their work at undergraduate and graduate conferences, and to publish in campus and in professional publications as well. Our faculty not only model but also mentor students as teachers, and scholars, helping them to discover and join appropriate undergraduate organizations, and to take leadership positions within those groups. Our faculty organizes events and activities that promote student success in their areas of study.

#### **5. Faculty are extremely involved in University leadership positions, governance and service.**

Our faculty are extremely active on university committees, governance and leadership. As noted in the above narrative, our faculty engage in active and high profile leadership in all levels of university committees-- from standing committees such as the All University Committee and the Liberal Arts & Sciences Council to occasional ones such as the NEASC Five-Year Interim Report committee, the Strategic Planning committees, and as faculty representatives on hiring committees for leadership positions in Academic Affairs. (As examples, Dr. Judith Budz, and also Dr. Chola Chisunka, both senior faculty members recently served on not only the departmental PEC committees, but were simultaneously also serving on university Deans and Vice-Presidential Search Committees, and such double service is typical of our involved faculty.) Our involvement and commitment has ensured that we have a strong presence and voice across campus and that our department is deeply engrained in the academic life of this institution. English Studies faculty have been particularly active in this review period at high level: serving on the All University committees: that they are lead as the directors for the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Honors Program, the Interdisciplinary Studies Minors program, and serve in the capacity as the Coordinator for Secondary Education offer pertinent examples. Our faculty continues to serve on nearly every governing body of the university, including the All University Committee (AUC), AUC Curriculum, Academic Policies and many other campus-wide committees. Faculty continue to contribute to leadership in the Liberal Arts and Sciences Council and in exploring plans for FSU's initiation of the First Year Experience. Our faculty also generously give of their time to participate in numerous co-curricular academic offerings for the entire FSU community, including running conferences, teaching session and workshops, on and off-campus, giving talks, sponsoring film screenings and lectures, and participating in multicultural and international events.

#### **6. Our faculty values involvement with and demonstrates strong commitment to students.**

Our diverse faculty shares their experience and evidences this commitment to students and in university life in many settings, both formal (in clubs, at organized events, by bringing in speakers) and informally (as faculty club advisers and sponsors), in on-campus and in off-campus community events. The faculty in our department are among the most active on campus.

We support our majors in numerous clubs and organizations, including the Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society and the English Club, in publications like *the Point*, *Route 2 Detour* and *The Falconer*, in the FSU radio station WXPL 93.1FM, and in organizing events like the English Studies Rally, and as faculty advisers to groups like the Black Student Union and Latin American Student Organization. Engagement, for our students, often presents a challenge, as most work long hours to support themselves financially as they go through college. Our faculty are motivated by a sincere caring for students, and evidence dedication, adaptability, flexibility, and an affection for students as we strive to support and involve our students in many different facets of university and departmental life.

## **7. English Studies provides a wealth of training for our students and university.**

The English Studies department with its three concentrations offers our majors, minors and non-majors a wide variety of courses across several areas – literature, secondary education and professional writing. Our courses provide students with opportunities to analyze, read, write diverse discourses, to produce a variety of texts, to examine the English language, and write and speak in different rhetorical modes.

As mandated by the current Liberal Arts and Science requirements, our department instructs every student on this campus in Writing I and II and in a literature class. We take our responsibility and commitment to our students and this university very seriously, placing emphasis on our expertise in writing as well as in our literary and education fields. In our classes, students master principles of organization and structure, grammar and rhetorical modes. They also receive training in researching and in using the skills and tools required for digital literacy in this present age. Faculty expertise in the teaching of writing and composition is sustained in this regard through added professional and development at conferences, at the CTL and during sustained departmental discussions about our pedagogies and teaching, both at formal and informal levels carried out in meetings and in our Writing Committee.

We offer a large range of literature and writing courses in English Studies courses that provide majors, minors and non-majors with depth and with diverse choices, and our many courses in nonwestern literatures encourage students to appreciate their roles as global citizens in a multicultural, changing world. A constant in our teaching is our emphasis on ensuring that all our majors demonstrate a core understanding of the many aspects of English Studies through intense training in reading and writing. Our faculty teach students that technology is to be used not just as a tool but is also as part of a pedagogical methodology. We emphasize digital literacy in its many forms – as text, as a research resource and as a writing form, and its many platforms plays a significant role in many of our courses.

We seek to give students a foundation that will provide them with the skills and confidence needed to find successful futures – whether those future lie in graduate study, teaching, writing or in using communication skills in diverse workplaces. We continue to keep pace with current developments in our specializations, and in Professional Writing and Initial Licensure, to follow

changes in these disciplines and prepare our students to find and secure work related to their focuses upon graduation.

While English Studies has three separate concentrations -- Literature, Professional Writing, and Secondary Education with Initial Licensure -- all our students, regardless of concentration, are required to take 21 core credits and 21 credits in the concentrations (and Initial Licensure, with its mandated education requirements, has 76 credits). This balance of shared courses among the core and the concentrations provides a solid foundation in literary study while offering students relevant professional preparation.

We are the only department at Fitchburg State trained specifically in the teaching of writing, and our successful execution of teaching in Writing I and Writing II; and all current annual assessments of writing courses for NEASC reviews of academic and disciplinary work have met with approval in this area. Our assessments of Writing I and II reflect robust student outcomes that have consistently met the NEASC guidelines. Indeed, the Student Success Collaborative (SSC) data has found Writing I and II to be a predictor course for student success and vital to retention efforts.

Our department's Writing Committee examines our practices in teaching writing and rhetoric and makes suggestions about our courses. We have three rhetoric specialists, two in writing and one in speech. Teaching writing successfully at the college level necessitates pedagogical professionals, possessing sophisticated, knowledge and knowledgeable about reflective practice in composition studies. Our faculty have studied rhetorical, pedagogical, and educational theory. All of our full-time faculty in the English Studies department have had extensive training in the teaching of writing and hold PhD s or EdDs. They have had considerable experience in teaching writing. All part-time faculty who teach writing in our department also either hold a PhD or an MA degree. All have taught writing at the college or university level for some time. In fact, every faculty member hired in this department since 2000 is asked during the hiring interview about his or her ability to teach writing, a job requirement.

Our professional writing students benefit from internships that frequently help pave the way to jobs, and our education students undertake study in the classroom, reflected in pre-practicum and practicum courses. We successfully place our Initial Licensure students at area schools. By the same token, a number of our recent literature and professional writing track graduates have gone on to advanced study at reputable MA and PhD programs. Our graduates often secure jobs that enable them to employ their writing skills in a variety of forms and settings. In the end, although all our students are English Studies majors, our graduates may emerge from our program with very different academic interests and trajectories. Their growth underscores the breadth and dynamism of what we do.

## **B. Areas Needing Improvement**

- 1. Professional Writing is seeking to institute a new set of course requirements in this concentration based on a reassessment of desired writing skills.**

As our faculty in the Professional Writing concentration has changed due to retirements, faculty departures and additions of new hires with new specializations, the direction of this concentration is changing. In recent departmental discussions, it has become clear that faculty in this concentration wants to redefine their curricular goals for students in this path of English Studies. The faculty in this concentration has been engaged in a series of systematic discussions about how to revise the course requirements and determine the specific, desired writing skills with which students will emerge after their studies. The professional writing concentration is in the process of reviewing and revising the goals and outcomes of the concentration through course redesign, sub-area emphases, and student needs. Because the field of professional writing is dynamic, we want to address certain issues through technology, course re-design, and new courses designed for the twenty-first century. We would like to align our concentration with those at comparable schools by offering more rhetorics of culture, linguistics, writing studies, and project based learning opportunities that could benefit the campus community.

In addition, as this is being written, we are hiring a new specialist in journalism who may bring to our department not only new ideas, but also new courses, developments in this field and perhaps other directions and objectives for Professional Writing to consider. There will also be a need to respond to developing technology by requesting some equipment that our department does not yet have. All of these factors will fuel ideas for curricular reorganization and will become part of the new rethought Professional Writing structure already underway.

## **2. Examine our course numbering levels and sequencing.**

The English Studies department has long felt that many of our course numberings in the literature and professional writing concentrations do not really reflect different or appropriate levels equivalent to the course sequencing of skills. Although this appears to be relatively a small matter, it is still one that we need to resolve.

## **3. Continue to improve advising and mentoring as students graduate from the program and attempt to get jobs in the real world.**

While our students are the university, our faculty act as diligent and caring advisers, our graduating students are often less prepared to face life after college than we would wish. Although our department prepares students in many ways already—through practica, internships and conference presentations, students still may need more practical advice about careers and ways to utilize the skills that they have learned at the university than intuitively surmised. Our Senior Capstone class engages students in this somewhat, but our department is presently exploring other ways to help our graduates: developing a Student Handbook for English Studies majors, by organizing panels of professionals who evidence what an English Studies degree can translate into, and by tapping our student alums who have insights to offer. Our student Success committee is presently working on ways to further assist our graduates, and keeping closer contact with our students after they graduate. The development of a departmental Facebook page and addition to our official university website have assisted in this, but we are still exploring other methods to help us in this matter. The development of a First Year Experience an initiative

presently underway at our campus, may help our entire student body in this regard by reaching them earlier in their college lives.

**4. The department needs to continue to work on outcomes assessment and undertake more curricular mapping of courses in relation to recently re-articulated departmental and concentration vision statements.**

During the current review period, our Assessment Committee has undertaken further assessment of many of our core courses, particularly with assignments focused on literary analysis. We have utilized student work from capstone portfolios as a source of assessment data in core literature courses. Our departmental Assessment Committee has done significant work in this regard, reflecting the department's capacity for productive self-criticism and for taking proactive responses to emerging challenges and areas of need. Although our department has been forward-thinking in beginning this assessment and moving toward curricular mapping, more work remains to be done. Additionally, we need to focus on achieving consistency in articulating desired course goals and objectives. For example, these are clearly denoted in our Writing I and II classes; they are also most specifically defined in our Secondary Education classes as well, which use the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Standards as definitive course measures. However, not all faculty syllabi explain their class objectives equally extensively. Improving our ability to delineate course goals will help our department to more closely measure and assess the success of our teaching and our curriculum, and also to identify how each course contributes to outcomes identified as key to concentration to which that course belongs. Improving clarity here will also be valuable to students -- not just English Studies majors or minors but also to the non-majors enrolled in English Studies classes - - and will help us continue our systematic assessment of our courses in relation to their concentration goals as recently rewritten in our departmental and concentration vision statements. In that regard, improved assessment data will prove a useful tool for targeted instruction and student learning centered outcomes.

**5. The Department should continue to develop other programmatic evaluation measures and to utilize data resources provided by the university to assist in self- analysis.**

As our department continues its analysis of our program, we need to continue curricular mapping and expand our self-analysis, taking advantage of the data resources with which the university now provides us. Although we have identified some areas of interest with data resources, we are only just beginning to understand and utilize what it promises. With the new initiatives undertaken by our university to provide departments with data and to answer specific requests for data patterns, it is clear that we will be able to move to the next progressive phases of assessment. We will continue to determine study patterns, utilize and collect data, analyze it and implement what it has to tell us in review.

**6. We need to continue to improve connections with our alumni to help current students benefit from their experience, insights and connections as students move from college to professional life; we need to keep soliciting meaningful student feedback.**

We have begun this initiative, but additionally, we need to more fully integrate student voices and views into our department committees and discussions because they offer us another, valued perspective. We need to continue our current initiative in using social media and our departmental media pages as a way to solicit student input and feedback, and to keep our connections with alumni current. This will assist us in furthering our efforts to monitor student success in the years following graduation, and to better understand the career trajectories of alumni. It will allow us to connect with them and their achievements, struggles and post-college endeavors.

**7. We need to request and receive equipment, resources and space to support the growth and changes relating to digital developments in professional writing and journalism.**

As the Professional Writing concentration updates its curricular requirement, undertakes developing courses for our students in writing and publishing in digital media, and when our new faculty replacement hire in journalism joins our department in this coming fall semester, our department will need some additional technology to help support faculty teaching in this area.

One notable current omission in our student newspaper has to do with the missing element of video clips, commonly used in digital journalism now. Adding this would not require extensive, sophisticated gear (since nearly all students have cell phones which they can individually use), but would necessitate some equipment for instructors and students could use in editing. Such requests might include some modest video and camera equipment, editing software and a work space where publishing and editing work might take place and that could also be used for meetings and for safe storage of the equipment. Some of this goes beyond what our work currently in the traditional classroom can offer, and may include having: an HD video camera, a few desktop computers, a digital camera, mobile phone grips, portable audio recording hardware and access to relevant software. It would also include a dedicated space for student journalists, student writers, and student editors in which discussions and work on our publications, *the Point*, *Route 2* and *Detour* could take place. Beyond just departmental and concentration goals, there is a greater need for this technology -- to provide our students with the tools and skills that they need to succeed in their fields after graduation.

## **Part VII: Plans for Change**

### **A. Program content and organization**

As described above the Professional Writing concentration is reviewing its curricular requirements, four-year plan of study and making suggestions for changes, even as at this writing, we now hire our faculty replacement in journalism. Faculty in this concentration are



presently redesigning courses and exploring the development of new ones. Our department will continue to foster writing internships for professional writing majors and is exploring mandating an internship requirement.

Our Initial Licensure concentration continues meet CAEP -mandated student competencies in the use of media and media literacy and recently revised all our courses to meet DESE standards. The track maintains its full accreditation, and has successful placement of our students in area schools, which we will continue to maintain. Our faculty in secondary education have expanded their outreach to both our students and to area high school instructors with two developments: our faculty now run an MTEL prep workshop for our students in education, and also will begin offering next fall -- through FSU's Extended Campus Programs and Center for Professional and its director, Lisa Moison's initiative -- two courses around subject-area diversity and cultural competence for area high school teachers: one for children's literature taught by Dr. Katherine Covino-Poutasse, and one for young adult literature taught by Dr. Wendy Keyser. Through these instructors' efforts, and through other outreach -- like the department's High School Writing Competition and the Medieval Studies Workshop run at FSU by Dr. Kisha Tracy -- our department is reaching out to area high schools in productive ways that we hope will increase our enrollments in secondary education.

The Literature concentration continues to expand its task and mission in the context of the English Studies major. In recent years, we have added courses in Latin American literatures, South Asian literature, Film and Culture studies, and Gender studies in addition to offering British, American and World literature surveys, and courses in European, African and Caribbean literature. This concentration has made improvements in terms of the Senior Capstone class for both assessment and career preparation purposes, and this will continue to be an ongoing emphasis. As course offerings have been created, older courses maybe have been eliminated or adjusted. Presently, this improved curriculum is more flexible with a wider range of study and with more varied literary traditions to discuss than ever before.

In order to improve student and programmatic assessment, faculty and concentrations will continue to review course outcomes, rewriting them or recreating them as necessary. Faculty will also reexamine course numbering and sequencing in order to gain greater coherence within the literature and professional writing concentrations.

The Senior Capstone portfolio requirement draws upon English Studies students' knowledge and understanding of each's discipline: for Literature students, upon knowledge and skills gleaned from their studies in literatures; for the Professional Writing on current writing projects they can use as a professional portfolio in job applications; for Secondary Education students, upon what they have learned relative to secondary teaching positions are required. For example, this semester Dr. Hoberman has chosen in his capstone class to explore career options for our graduating seniors beyond their coursework in two interesting ways. He featured six guest speakers to talk to English majors about possible career paths: former *Wall Street Journal* editor Abe Loomis; Renee Fratantonio from the FSU Library; Andrew Marciello, owner of Valley Wild Books; Jan Freeman, poet and founder of Paris Press; Jackie Butler, a teacher at Groton-Dunstable Regional High School; and an Immigration attorney, Bryan McGowan to talk about possible careers in law. Additionally, Dr. Hoberman ran a resume and copy letter workshop, in response to suggestions by the students themselves. Through field trips and discussions, he also

encourages those not presently in jobs or planning on graduate school to look at careers outside Massachusetts, to travel and broaden their experience and scope. In the future, we will continue to seek understand and assess our majors' needs in this course and in others as they move toward graduation, using programmatic data assessment, information and interactions we have with our students and our alumni so we can improve our course outcomes and better student learning.

Our teaching of Writing I and Writing II, which we offer to every student at FSU, is a key responsibility of this department and one vital to the heart of English Studies. The teaching of writing draws upon the central expertise of our department faculty and will always remain a major focus of our teaching and our service to students of this university. Our department is perpetually attentive to the purpose and outcomes of our writing courses, and as well as to making modifications to our pedagogy, such as adding theme-based classes and working collaboratively with our librarians and the CTL to bring forward cutting edge developments in digital research and digital literacy, as well as adding theme-based classes to improve featured offerings. Our Writing Committee continues to discuss on both a formal and informal basis, the practice, goals and aims of writing. The presence of two rhetoric and Composition faculty enhance this ongoing discussion of the practices and future of teaching writing.

## **B. Departmental organization: configuration and concentration nomenclature**

Properly speaking, our Professional Writing concentration should be called, "Professional Writing, Rhetoric and Speech," and this nomenclature change is something the department should consider, given the structure of other English Studies departments that incorporate these disciplines. Speech is a requirement for all students in our major and also in the present LA& S is mandated for all our university's students. While some students also fulfill this "speaking requirement" through their own programs and through requirements in their own departments, a very large number of the university's students do take Speech from our department – between 305 and 402 over the past five academic years. In this review period, that number totaled 1,717 students.

While our department has improved its depth and range in Professional Writing and Composition Rhetoric with new faculty hires, at the same time the numbers of our faculty who teach speech in our area of Speech Rhetoric has diminished. We have only one true PhD specialist in Speech Rhetoric, Dr. Angela Nastasee-Carder, who holds three professional degrees in Speech Communication. When the two faculty members in Theater (who formerly taught Speech sections in our department) moved from English Studies to Communications Media in 2012 and our senior professor, Dr. Nancy Kelly died, the English Studies department lost several key faculty who also taught speech. Our department has long considered the possibility of a Speech Minor, which Dr. Carder's professional expertise and range of courses she offers – a total of nine at present – makes possible. However, a minor cannot be built upon the teaching schedule of a single faculty member. At present, therefore, we only have one dedicated faculty member, Dr. Dr. Carder, to teach speech along with Dr. Thomas Murray (who also teach classes in speech as his schedule allows since he has commitments to teaching professional writing classes). Growth in the Speech-Rhetoric aspect of our department would therefore be greatly desirable through future hires that could whose teaching capabilities could, at least in part, support Speech in our

department through their teaching specializations, since Speech courses serve the larger university student population.

Additionally, the Literature faculty has considered formalizing a name change from the Literature concentration to Literature and Culture Studies. Since this concentration already includes Film and Gender Studies, such a name change would make sense.

Both of these shifts -- which are not simply about nomenclature but which reflect pedagogical emphases in our department -- are something we will be considering.

### **C. Procedures and policies**

We have tried to include student representation on our Curriculum Committee as required in the bargaining agreement, but we struggle with this goal continually. Complications include student scheduling, sensitive curricular discussions, and sometimes unresolved issues appropriate students to be invited to serve on the committee. We intend to make a stronger commitment to including student representation on this committee in future.

### **D. Resources**

The Professional Writing concentration is in the process of reviewing and revising the goals and outcomes of the concentration through course redesign, sub-area emphases, and student needs. This concentration is looking at dividing the classes offered by sub-areas (such as creative writing and journalism), and exploring what courses may be missing from our curriculum. Because the field of professional writing is dynamic, we want to address certain issues through technology, course re-design, and new courses designed for the twenty-first century. We also would like to align this concentration with those at comparable schools by offering more courses in the rhetorics of writing, speech and media, and more project-based learning opportunities that include the campus community. Since Professional Writing needs to train students in modes that extend beyond the traditional classroom, we must provide our students with the tools they need to succeed in their fields after graduation. Some of this necessitates added technology for our teaching of journalism, editing and publishing, including such possible equipment as an HD video camera, desktop computers, digital cameras, mobile phone grips, portable audio recording hardware, and relevant software. The use, access and storage of this needed equipment would also ideally incorporate a dedicated space for instructors to work with our student journalists, writers, and editors.

### **E. Action plan for the program**

In the next five years, we plan to build upon existing strengths and improve the English Studies Department in a number of ways. Our vision for the future intends to incorporate changes with

our discipline, to expand in areas that need change or growth and to address the national phenomenon of declining enrollments, particularly in the arts and humanities.

**1. We will work to create new assessments in more of our classes concerning student work that will complement and extend existing assessment of our course objectives.** Additionally, we will continue to work on developing more concentration-specific assessments. We will also seek ways to incorporate student feedback, developing some tools to gauge student comments and utilizing feedback from alumni. We will look for opportunities to find out more about how students within our concentrations utilize the skills we teach them in the workplace.

**2. We will develop and expand existing initiatives within the department.** These include expanding our Internships outside the campus and continuing and growing the Writing Associates outreach. We will continue plans for our Speech minor and formalize a proposal for that will enhance students' academic options in this area of study. We will also expand our current curriculum development in cultural studies, contributing to our own concentrations and to the many other interdisciplinary minors English Studies supports, for example, Film Studies, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, and Disability Studies.

**3. We will continue to showcase the exceptional work of our faculty and students.** Our very active faculty and their engagement with our students in campus activities will be further extended in extra and co-curricular activities. We will seek continued institutional support for events we create -- like our Cormier Symposia and our Poetry and New England Writers Series to encourage even greater levels of student participation. Further, to highlight the tremendous strength of FSU as an institution, we will promote our ongoing English Studies faculty research and scholarship on campus and in at large in both the Fitchburg and Massachusetts community.

**4. Each of our three concentrations has a specific plan in mind.**

Implicit in the future vision of the Literature Concentration -- which emphasizes reading and critical thinking, teaches the analysis of genre and form, explores the scope of literature, the history of its ideas and its tradition, educates in research and information literacy and equips students with the knowledge and skills for understanding and analyzing texts of all kinds -- is to strengthen our students' connections to the discipline, to scholarship in the field, and to career opportunities. This training is achieved through emphasizing, in addition to academic offerings, conference presentations on and off campus, participation in the Sigma Tau Delta Honor Society, English Club, workshops with faculty, other co-curricular activities, and through student publications. This concentration has expanded course offerings in global literatures and cultures, adding Latin American literature to its global coverage that includes (as well as British and American) the literatures of Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, and South Asia as we continue to prepare students to become accomplished professionals and engaged global citizens.

The Secondary Education Initial Licensure concentration, committed to developing knowledgeable, skillful, caring, and ethical educators, seeks in the future to promote a greater number of secondary education students graduating with Bachelor of Arts degrees (incorporating a language) rather than Bachelor of Science degrees; specifically, this concentration would like to see an increase in second language competency among our graduates since teacher candidates who can speak multiple language are better able to support and serve the students and families

living in many Massachusetts communities. In addition, their vision includes strengthening our collaboration with the middle school program (currently housed in the Education Department). Because students in our secondary education program work synergistically with middle school teacher candidates, they share a number of courses and develop ongoing dialogues about education. This synergy is valuable, and our professors in this field would like to support students who are engaged in pursuing an initial licensure in 5th- 8th grade English. We hope to continue to strengthen and further develop relationships between the community and the university by offering more professional development workshops for local secondary school English departments, and are in the process of exploring the possibility of creating and offering onsite graduate-level coursework for secondary education teachers.

The Professional Writing concentration seeks to challenge students to innovate with language. It aims to help graduate see themselves as producers of texts as they study the process and the products of other writers, analyze rhetorical situations, and interpret cultural contexts while they practice and experiment with a wide range of styles and genres. Their current vision involves to reorganizing and assessing course offerings in creative writing, professional writing, journalism and rhetorical and cultural study in accordance with their reiterated emphasizing having curricular requirements be more flexible and responsive to their students' needs.

**4. As a department, we will seek to develop projects that will expand our community outreach which helps attract students to FSU and our major since enrollments in the arts and humanities is an increasing challenge nation-wide.**

Our department is already involved in several ongoing projects that raise the department and university's profile, and which contribute to community outreach. Our High School Writing Competition that reaches out to area schools and their teachers continues to be health with over 50 people attending this year. Our Writers series and Film series are open to the community. Additionally, our Secondary Education teachers are seeking to strengthen and further develop relationships between the community and the university by offering professional development workshops for local secondary school English departments both onsite and at FSU. We also seek to build stronger ties between our university paper and the outlying community, both in the way of coverage and through the creation of more professional local internships.

**5. We will examine reasons for students' non-completion in English Studies.**

SSC data has made easier the task of tracking student non-completers. We now need to further probe the reasons and to track cause surrounding student retention in English Studies concentrations. We hope to use the SSC data in future that is specific to our department to address the areas in which we can help our students – majors and minors -- so as to increase our students' success and maintain the health of our major.