

Review of the MFA Results and Report on Curricular Change

Spring 2004

B.A. English Education

Reviewing results of student comments on the SLU Exit Survey, we find our English Education Majors well satisfied with the quality of their teachers overall, particularly the individual care and attention their teachers give. In the last Exit Survey (2001-2002), over 81.8% of English Education Majors judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the effectiveness of the faculty as teachers, and a full 100% of those surveyed described themselves as “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with their opportunities to interact with faculty outside of class. Since 83.3% of respondents judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with their practicum, internship, or other hands-on experiences outside the classroom, and 100% of respondents judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with both their knowledge of literary history and their knowledge of major literary works, our English Ed graduates indicate confidence in both their major subject and their ability to teach that subject. This conclusion is confirmed by the 100% of respondents who described themselves as “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the overall quality of their degree program.

Further providing assessment of English Education Majors’ competency in language and literature and in teaching those subjects, the English Department maintains the policy that all English Ed Majors must maintain a C or better in all English courses, particularly in English 467, “The Teaching of Writing,” and in English 468, “The Teaching of Literature.” On the PRAXIS exam, English Ed Majors who took the exam between September 1, 2002 and August 31, 2003 averaged a 165 on the content specialty test sections, “English Language, Literature, and Composition: Content Knowledge” and a 147.3 on “English Language, Literature and Composition: Pedagogy,” above our minimum goals of 160 and 130. In the PPST Writing section, English Ed. majors averaged 176.5, above our goal of 171, while on the PPST Reading section, English Ed majors scored a 179.5, well above the goal of 172.

In addition, over 90% of the fall 2001 and spring 2002 graduates scored at least a 3 on the appropriate indicators of the Student Teacher Evaluation and Attribute Scale, all meeting our department’s goals.

In the area of scholarly research and criticism, the department continues to require a thorough knowledge of research and MLA documentation format beginning in English 102. Critical papers and/or research papers are required at every level of the major courses, and these are also evaluated for correct use of MLA documentation. Well over 80% of English Education Majors anticipating graduation in the next two semesters have a B or better in LS 102, also demonstrating research competency.

In the area of plans after graduation, 100% of those English Education Majors taking the 2001-2002 exit survey indicated they were seeking employment, though 83.3% planned to attend graduate school in the future.

Improving our English Majors’ global awareness and multicultural knowledge, the English Department is now conducting a search for one tenure-track position in the field of World Literature/Classical Literature/Literature of the Americas with stress on issues of race and sexualities from a global perspective. This new position will expand current teaching in global issues in our department and add to the many courses specified

in our Assessment Plan focusing on literature and culture from a global perspective. Meanwhile, our faculty encourages students to take advantage of the several Study Abroad programs offered by SLU which will provide valuable real-life encounters with the places and people inspiring our literary studies to add to research and classroom experience.

Two possible areas for improvement, according to student ratings in the Exit Survey, are the use of appropriate technology in the classroom and the availability of required and elective courses in the students' major. None of the students surveyed described her/himself as "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with the use of technology in the classroom. Because our future teachers must feel qualified to use technology in the classroom, this score indicates our faculty should increase efforts to utilize technology available. In the availability of courses, 16.7% gave a rating of "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied," in required offerings, while no respondents judged themselves "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" in elective course availability, indicating our department must evaluate the types of course offerings each semester to assure required and elective courses are readily available. This problem can also be addressed through careful academic advising, so that the student might plan future semesters with course availability in mind.