

Review of the MFA Results and Report on Curricular Change
Spring 2004
Liberal Arts Studies

Reviewing results of student comments on the 2001-2002 SLU Exit Survey, we find our Liberal Arts Studies Majors well satisfied with their degree program. A full 100% of LAS majors judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the clarity of the degree requirements and with the quality of instruction in advanced courses. They also indicate confidence in their language abilities, with 100% of LAS majors “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with their knowledge of grammar, rhetoric, and composition, and 83.4% “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with their ability to analyze both prose and verse.

Further providing assessment of our Majors’ competency in language and literature, the English Department maintains the policy that all LAS Majors must maintain at least a C average in all minor field classes in order to graduate.

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 upper English courses, and these are also evaluated for correct use of MLA documentation. Well over 80% of LAS 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, 66.6% of those taking the 2001-2002 Exit Survey indicated they were either accepted or were awaiting acceptance into graduate school immediately after graduation, surpassing our assessment goal. 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. 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 would be the LAS Majors’ concept of their knowledge of literary history, with 33.4% describing themselves as “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied,” and their view of the use of appropriate technology in the classroom, with 33.4% judging themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied.” One explanation of the first area might be the freedom the LAS curriculum offers in the choice of English courses, so that, without careful individual planning, a student may not feel the sense of continuity in the study of literature. The use of technology in the classroom, though often enriching, is not always helpful for certain courses. The English Department, however, will continue to encourage faculty to increase the knowledge and utilization of technology in the classroom.