

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

Reviewing results of student comments on the last two Southeastern Exit Surveys (2005-2006 and 2006-2007), we find our Liberal Arts Studies majors well satisfied with the quality of their teachers overall, particularly the individual care and attention their teachers give. An average of 86.4% (2006:80%; 2007: 92.8%) of LAS majors judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the effectiveness of the faculty as teachers, and 80% (2006: 60%; 2007: 100%) were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the interest shown by faculty in the student’s academic development. An average of 81.4% (2006: 92.8%; 2007: 70%) were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the quality of instruction in advanced courses. The Exit Surveys also indicate that 86.4% (2006: 92.8%; 2007: 80%) of LAS majors were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the overall quality of their degree program.

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 Exit Surveys, the LAS majors indicate satisfaction with their background in language and literature. In their knowledge of literary theory, 82.9% (2006: 85.8%; 2007: 80%) of LAS majors judged themselves Satisfied or Well Satisfied. In knowledge of literary history, 87.45% (2006: 80%; 2007: 94.9%) were Satisfied or Well Satisfied, while in knowledge of major literary works, 90% (2006: 100%; 2007: 80%) judged themselves Satisfied or Well Satisfied. Over 87.8% (2006: 85.7; 2007: 90%) were Satisfied or Well Satisfied with their ability to analyze both prose and verse. Attesting to their literary expertise, in an assessment of 300- and 400-level critical analysis/research papers from graduating LAS majors, these students rated, on average, 2.86, above our goal of “Acceptable” (2) on the criteria, “Valid interpretation of primary text.”

In composition and grammar knowledge, the Exit Surveys reveal that 77.85% (2006:85.7%; 2007: 70%) of LAS majors felt “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” in their knowledge of the English language, including grammar, rhetoric, and composition. Over 86% (2006: 92.8%; 2007: 80%) thought themselves Satisfied or Well Satisfied with their ability to write a coherent essay that is well organized and developed, grammatically correct, and stylistically appropriate. In an evaluation of 300- and 400-level papers from LAS graduating seniors, they averaged above our goal score of “Acceptable” (2) in the following relevant criteria:

Focused topic	2.91
Clear thesis/argument structure	2.57
Organization: development, transition, coherence, supporting evidence	2.64

Sense of Audience	3.14
Sentence sophistication / effective use of voice and diction	2.50
Mechanics / grammatical correctness	2.64

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 or other formal documentation style. In an evaluation of 300- and 400-level critical research papers from graduating LAS majors, the students received an average score of 2.07, above the goal of 2.0 (“Adequate”) in the criterion, “Correct incorporation of secondary sources / use of MLA documentation or other formal documentation style.” However, the department will stress greater emphasis and help in mastering formal research and documentation. Well over 80% of LAS majors graduating in the past two semesters earned a B or better in LS 102, also demonstrating research competency. In the Exit surveys, 91.4% (2006: 92.8%; 2007: 90%) of LAS majors judged themselves Satisfied or Well Satisfied in their ability to use library resources, especially in the field of English.

In the area of plans after graduation, LAS graduates are not included in the most recent Alumni surveys so we cannot determine employment/graduate school plans.

Our LAS majors’ global awareness and multicultural knowledge is evidenced by several of their required courses addressing multi-cultural literature. Also, our faculty encourages students to take advantage of the several Study Abroad programs offered by Southeastern, which will provide valuable real-life encounters with the places and people inspiring our literary studies to add to research and classroom experience. Two faculty members in our department lead study-abroad trips, both focusing on cultural awareness, language, and literature. An average of 8.55% (2006: 7.1%; 2007: 10%) of surveyed LAS majors had participated in study abroad/exchange programs and were Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the experience. Over 67.7% (2006: 85.7; 2007: 50%) of LAS majors rated themselves Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the global perspective of their courses.