

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

May 2010

Reviewing results of student comments on the last SLU Exit Survey (2007-2008), 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. A full 100% of LAS Majors judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the effectiveness of the faculty as teachers, and 100% were also “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the interest shown by faculty in the student’s academic development. In the quality of instruction in advanced courses, 100% of LAS respondents judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied.” The Exit Survey also indicates that 100% of LAS Majors are “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the overall quality of their degree program and of the English Department as a whole.

Further providing assessment of our LAS 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 classes in all the English and the secondary 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, 85.7% of LAS majors judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Well Satisfied.” In knowledge of literary history, 85.8% were “Satisfied” or “Well Satisfied,” while in knowledge of major literary works, 85.7% judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Well Satisfied.” Attesting to their literary expertise, in an assessment of 300-400 level critical analysis/research papers from graduating LAS majors in 2008, 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 71.4% of LAS majors felt “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” in their knowledge of the English language, including grammar, rhetoric, and composition. Almost 86% 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 300-400 level papers from LAS graduating seniors in 2008, 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 300-400 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. Of those LAS Majors graduating in the past three semesters, 80% earned a B or better in LS 102, also demonstrating research competency. In the Exit surveys, 85.7% 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 SLU which will provide valuable real-life encounters with the places and people inspiring our literary studies to add to research and classroom experience. One English faculty member leads a summer study abroad trip focusing on cultural awareness, language, and literature. An average of 57.2% of surveyed LAS majors had participated in study abroad/exchange programs, and were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the experience. In the area of global perspective of their courses, 85.7% of LAS majors rated themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied.”