

**5-YEAR ASSESMENT PLAN PROPOSAL:
ASSESSING CONTENT AREA KNOWLEDGE
IN THE ENGLISH MAJOR**

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I. SUMMARY

Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CAC) proposes conducting an in-depth assessment of Content Area Knowledge for the next assessment cycle. The proposed assessment cycle would last 5 years:

- Year 1: Learning assessment methods for investigating this area;
- Year 2: Articulating content knowledge expected of students;
- Year 3: Developing an assessment measure of selected content knowledge;
- Year 4: Conducting assessment of selected content knowledge;
- Year 5: Analyzing collected data and report out to Department.
- Note: At each stage, CAC will regularly consult with and provide updates faculty.

Across all four Learning Outcomes, the results of the 5-year Assessment Plan (2012-2017) indicated that an average of 93% of 1000 English Majors perform at or above the Satisfactory level. The samples were taken from 26 different courses—ranging from introductory, large lectures to Senior Seminars—where instructors volunteered to participate in the Department Assessment.

While students performed at least satisfactorily or higher in three areas (Critical Reading at 95%, Critical Writing at 99%, and Scholarly Research at 93%) of the Department's four Learning Goals, there was a significant variation in the fourth area, Content Area Knowledge with 83% of students performing at satisfactory levels.

II. BACKGROUND

In Fall 2011, the Department updated and revised the Assessment Plan and Learning Outcomes to a more cohesive program, based on the recommendation of the 2007-2008 Department of English Assessment Committee Report. The 2008-2009 Department of English Assessment Committee chose not to pursue creating a 5-year plan, but strongly recommended that it be acted

upon. The 2011-2012 Department of English Assessment Committee, chaired by Julie Yen, brought forward a proposal that was approved by the Department in the fall. Additionally, based on the campus-wide Graduation Initiative, the assessment plan coordinates and responds to the University's Baccalaureate Learning Goals.

The four Learning Goals for the Department of English are (See Appendix 1):

- *Critical Reading*
“Students will demonstrate an ability to apply critical reading strategies to a variety of texts, which may include written, oral, or visual works, and to analyze language and texts using appropriate critical, theoretical, rhetorical, and disciplinary methodologies.”
- *Writing*
“In a process that includes revision based on feedback from peers and instructors, students will produce a variety of written texts that demonstrate an ability to analyze language, ideas, and forms and creatively engage with the writing traditions of our various disciplines.”
- *Content Area Knowledge*
“Students will demonstrate content knowledge appropriate to one or more of our various disciplines.”
- *Scholarly Research*
“Students will demonstrate an ability to perform scholarly research that incorporates analysis of primary and secondary sources using appropriate disciplinary methodologies.”

III. RATIONALE

After consulting with the Department and reviewing suggestions for the next assessment cycle, CAC has determined that assessing Content Area Knowledge is critical to understand better why this is the weakest area of student performance. While 83% of students performing at Satisfactory levels or higher is indeed impressive, it is an outlier for our Department that needs further investigation to begin to ascertain why this is the case. Questions: Is it a result of the previous assessment tool? Is it a result of the parameters of the open major? How can we assess this area to indicate more clearly why there is a drop in this area?

IV. PLAN PROPOSAL

CAC proposes that the Department approve a plan to assess Content Area Knowledge expected of English majors over the next 5 years. Indeed, as CAC embarks on the journey of investigation, the details will organically change and adapt, but we have outlined the provisional steps for each stage below to provide a clear vision of what will occur between 2018-2023.

Year 1 (2018-2019):

Practice Run: Map curriculum in Single-Subject Program

- Articulate Single-Subject Learning Outcomes as coordinated with State-mandated outcomes to practice the process in a highly defined major.
- Rationale: to conduct a “practice run” of mapping curriculum to learning outcomes and learn from that process before proceeding to assessing the broader open Major.
- **Goal:** Provide a framework for year two activities by using the state-mandated curriculum and learning outcomes as a model for our investigation

Year 2 (2019-2020):

Articulate Content Area Knowledge expected of all majors.

- Gather information from instructors regarding critical content knowledge (general, not specific) for their courses
- **Goal:** Identify expectations regarding content knowledge through curriculum mapping

Year 3 (2020-2021):

Create an assessment measure that assesses selected Content Area Knowledge.

- Determine selected content knowledge areas to be assessed
- Draft assessment measure
- Seek department approval
- **Goal:** Identify and articulate specific assessment plan

Year 4 (2021-2022):

Conduct a programmatic assessment of selected Content Area Knowledge.

- We are leaving the steps for this year open since they will be determined once we craft the assessment measure in the previous year.

Year 5 (2022-2023):

Compare assessment results against the Content Area Knowledge expectations and present it to the department.

- We are leaving the steps for this year open since it will be determined once we collect the data in the previous year.