

Annual Assessment Report

Every department and school must submit an Annual Assessment Report to its Dean each year by June 1. A copy of the report is also submitted to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness. This report summarizes progress in carrying out the Department/School assessment plan, analyzing key findings, and making program improvements.

The Annual Assessment Report should use the following format:

Writing

Annual Assessment Report

Department/School: LJML

Assessment period: (2012-13)

Assessment Plan Description:

- 1. Expanded Statement of Purpose or Program Mission Statement:** *This section includes the program mission statement or expanded statement of purpose.*

Embodying the core values of a Christian liberal arts education in the Wesleyan theological tradition, and focusing on the power of language and story to shape us and our world, the LJML department and programs will provide students with knowledge, skills, and experiences to equip them to understand, interpret, analyze, evaluate, and create texts as linguistic and/or artistic expressions of diverse human experiences. We value reading, writing, researching, speaking, and discussing as profound means of participating in the redemptive work of God in all of creation.

2. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):

The following are the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) negotiated by the faculty in the Writing section during the 2011-12 assessment cycle. To extend the work done in regards to developing these PLOs, the faculty members of the Writing Section articulated the integration of these outcomes in every course offered as part of the Writing major. This articulation further cross-listed the Writing outcomes with those of Journalism and Broadcast Journalism where the programs share courses. The resulting document is included with this report.

PLO 1: Students will apply creative and advanced skills in various forms and genres of writing.

PLO 2: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and terminology of creative and advanced writing within literary and non-literary texts.

PLO 3: Students will demonstrate knowledge of major literary-theoretical perspectives and terminology.

PLO 4: Students will develop connections between the literature and language studied and the contemporary world.

PLO 5: Students will engage writing and editorial processes through campus publications and external internships.

3. Curriculum Map:

Building on the work done in 2011-12 to refine the curriculum map for the Writing major, the members of the section have revisited and refined the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) for all of the courses required by the major, aligning them more closely with the PLOs described above. This work, tied directly to a greater understanding of which courses represent environments in which students' work is expected to represent introductory, developmental, and mastery level performance, allowed for a fine-tuning of language that was already in line with the expectations of Writing faculty, and the LJML Department at large. This work also underpinned efforts to develop assessment measurements for the courses being assessed this year and in the coming parts of the assessment cycle. These revised CLOs and the Writing curriculum map (which is unchanged from the previous year) are included with this report.

4. Multi-Year Assessment Plan:

Per the Multi-Year Assessment Plan approved during the 2011-12 term, the Writing Section evaluated PLO 2 via the upper division writing courses Writing 321: Poetry, Writing 322: Fiction, and Writing 323: Creative Nonfiction. In conjunction with the Literature section, they also evaluated PLO 3 via the Literature 250 course that is a requirement for all writing majors. The data collected from all of those courses and its meaning in terms program assessment will be discussed below and can be seen in attached documentation.

In addition to work completed in conjunction with the current year's assessment work, members of Writing Section also completed work on a formalized capstone experience in Writing 420, a need identified during 2011-12. This work led to refining an existing final portfolio assessment tool in existence, creating a new rubric that will provide a more nuanced assessment of students' work, and placed the Writing 420 course as the official culmination of the writing program's sequence of coursework. The capstone portfolio, which now allows students to designate their primary and secondary areas of emphasis and be assessed accordingly, is stored digitally both within the Writing section and will be in institutional collection platforms when Writing 420 is assessed again in 2014-15. The documents supporting this work are included with this report.

Assessment Activities: *This section will be completed annually for each PLO measured during this Academic Year (as described in your Multi-Year Assessment Plan).*

5. Methods of Assessment and Criteria for Success:

To begin, a note on a development related to the Program Assessment process of 2011-12. At the close of that year, the need for a clarification of the Writing 420 course was called for in order to consolidate an understanding of its role within the major in assessment terms. To quote the preceding annual assessment directly: "[i]n order to assess PLO 1 (see list above), all writing majors who took Writing 420 were required to complete a summative collection of a variety of their writing products over the course of their studies. This portfolio has been identified by faculty in the Writing section as the capstone assignment for the major and has been so unofficially for the past three years." To complete this work, members of the Writing Section collaborated on updating and

aligning the rubric for assessing the final portfolio students complete, creating a collection device that is useful to both students and the institution (see attached document). This rubric was introduced to students during the 2012-13 academic year and will be used to assess the course the next time Writing 420 comes up for review in 2014-15.

Two PLOs were identified for evaluation by the Writing program's Multi-Year Assessment plan, PLOs 2 and 3. The first of those outcomes reads that students will "[d]emonstrate knowledge of the conventions and terminology of creative and advanced writing within literary and non-literary texts." In order to capture evidence regarding this outcome across the breadth of the program, members of the Writing section elected to assess the Writing 321 – Poetry, Writing 322 – Fiction, and Writing 323 – Creative Nonfiction courses that all majors must take multiple times. In order to assess students' acumen regarding this outcome in these courses, members of the Writing section created common objective and subjective measures for each. The objective measure is a test of students' ability to identify and comprehend the major terminology of each of the three forms of writing. This assessment was, at the professor's discretion, employed as a stand-alone assessment or as part of the midterm and/or final examination. Results of these assessments were collected and will be discussed in the following sections of this report. For the subjective, common rubrics were created to assess major assignments identified in each of the three courses (see attached documents). These rubrics were approved by members of the Writing and Journalism Sections and can be implemented regardless of who is teaching the course. The results of those assessments will also be discussed in the following sections of this report.

In order to assess whether writing students are adequately meeting the requirements of PLO 3, the Writing section partnered with Literature professors. The outcome reads that students will "[d]emonstrate knowledge of major literary-theoretical perspectives and terminology." All writing majors are required to take Literature 250 – Introduction to the Study of Literature, the gateway course through which literature and writing majors are exposed to and explore the major movements and expressions of literary theory. The instructors of this course assess students' understanding of these major concepts via a unified course assessment tool and share that data with the members of the Writing section who then disaggregate the writing majors' results and evaluate their performance in terms of the rest of the major's coursework. The results of these discussions will be discussed in the following sections of this report.

6. Summary of Data collected:

In summary, the data collected from Writing 321, 322, and 323 indicates two things: that students are meeting the goals of PLO 2 at a more than adequate level and the Writing Section needs to work on better unifying the gathering of these results. Over the course of the year, two writing majors took WRI 321 in the Fall 12 semester and none in the Spring 13 term. According to the professor, those students achieved more than adequate results in both the objective and subjective measures he employed (see example of the subjective rubric included). WRI 322 was offered only in the Fall 12 semester and six writing majors took it. Their average score on the objective portion of the final exam that assessed their grasp of PLO 2 was an 81 percent and none scored below a 70 percent. In the subjective measure (sample rubric included), there was the expected variation in the overall quality of the writing majors' fiction, but all demonstrated at least an adequate grasp of the concepts of fiction in the way they applied them. And finally, four writing majors took WRI 323 in the Fall 12 Semester and six in the Spring 13 semester offering. The assessment measures for this course we constructed late in the fall term and as such were not employed formally by the professor

that term. However, the professor evaluated the writing of the students after the fact with the included rubric and found that all four students performed at an adequate level or better. In the spring, the average score for writing majors on the objective portion of the final examination was an 83 percent. In their subjective work, none of the writing majors performed below an adequate level, though a few of their non-major classmates did.

In relation to the data collected in Literature 250, the writing students who took the course showed consistent growth in their understanding of the theoretical perspectives and terminology and excelled in comparison with their peers. In terms of the course's literary analyses papers (one done in the early stages of the course and a second at the end of the term), all writing majors showed improvement in their scores and none scored below an 85 percent on the final analysis in the fall or spring semesters. Additionally, the results for the final examination were almost identical, with an average grade of an 87 percent on the test for the writing majors in the course. In short, these indicators show that students are very successfully addressing and internalizing PLO 3 as part of their work in the LIT 250 course. (See attached forms for specific information).

In summary, the results of the assessment work for the 2012-13 academic year show that writing majors are indeed successfully achieving the goals articulated in PLOs 2 and 3. In most cases, they are establishing mastery of said skills and knowledge, and that indicates a successful articulation on the part of the courses assessed. Please see the next section of this report for the ways in which these results will be used moving forward.

7. Use of Results:

While the results of the assessment work of the 2012-13 academic year indicate that students are, in fact, achieving the goals the program as set out for them, they also indicate a variety of ways in which the data collection could be streamlined and reformatted to enhance the way the members of the section use it for assessment work. In terms of the work done in WRI 321, 322, and 323, there is a distinct need to create a universal collection point for both the objective and subjective data the courses are providing. This would enable professors to drill down a bit more specifically on the concepts that students are not clear on in order to decide if those struggles indicate a trend or not. This would allow for more focused fine-tuning of the section's curriculum. In terms of the subjective indicators, migrating the forms to a digital collection point, like LiveText, would allow for easier comparison across courses and allow the members of the section to see how all writing majors are performing, not just the ones who take their particular section. As it stands now, the specific rubrics employed by Writing Section faculty members remain housed with them and are not readily attainable. This digitization of the forms would also alleviate potential access issues in courses such as WRI 323, which are shared by the Writing and Journalism programs. This is also the case in terms of the assessment of PLO 3 in LIT 250. Since this course is a requirement for all writing majors, but taught by members of the Literature faculty, a more specific data collection method that allows for a better disaggregation of the results would be helpful for drawing down the focus on the different constituencies within the classroom. These needs will be addressed and implemented before the next round of assessment in these two courses.