

Department of English

Proposed Benchmarks, 2004

Undergraduate Program

Benchmark 1. As university funding permits, increase numbers of ESL course offerings and expand range of ESL training.

Target: Establish baseline data and measure increased demand as university implements its goal of increasing recruitment of international students; establish specific numbers of additional sections (and of new courses dealing with ESL student needs in writing and oral communication) required to meet this demand.

Impact: Improve undergraduate experience overall for international and domestic ESL students; permit university to recruit more international students ethically by insuring that they will have the writing and verbal skills in English necessary to succeed in WSU's degree programs; help to integrate more fully diverse students and scholars, both domestic and international, within the University community.

Benchmark 2. Improve academic opportunities for lower-division GER, interdisciplinary, and pre-major students.

Target: Establish baseline data for measuring increases in enrollments in

- a. Humanities courses after their cross-listing with Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures has been approved;
- b. Redesigned courses for the Film Studies minor (Engl 150 and 339);
- c. New GER offerings in Introduction to Shakespeare and Introduction to English Studies after university approval.

Impact: Improve undergraduate experience overall for WSU students by improving quality and range of GER and film studies offerings, especially in challenging courses encouraging critical thinking and interpretive skills that cross disciplinary boundaries.

Benchmark 3. Simplify, redesign, and strengthen undergraduate major offerings as called for in departmental Five-Year Plan. As part of that redesign, increase undergraduate opportunities for academic and pre-professional accomplishment beyond the classroom.

Targets:

- a. University approval of new curricula in major, which will reduce options from six to four and feature assessment measures stressing critical

thinking—and thus provide baseline data for future benchmarks to measure student intellectual growth and success.

- b. Increase overall enrollments in English major by 15% in five years relative to those for fall 2004;
- c. Maintain high standing on University Writing Portfolio measures (pass and pass-with-distinction rates, currently highest in the CLA) for majors in undergraduate program as enrollments increase;
- d. Establish baseline data for measuring increases in undergraduate research and pre-professional activities beyond the formal classroom:
 - Participation in English Conference for Undergraduates (a regional research conference, to be co-sponsored beginning in spring 2005 by Gonzaga and WSU's Departments of English);
 - Increasing eligibility and membership in Sigma Tau Delta, the national English honor society, along with participation in its regional and national conferences;
 - Participation in Creative Writing readings, publications, editing projects;
 - Presentation of senior Honors projects in the Honors College;
 - Participation in campus and external internships.

Impact:

In line with the university goal of providing the best undergraduate experience in a research university, the redesigned English major will help create an academic culture that promotes and rewards one-on-one faculty-to-student and student-to-student interactions, provide increased opportunities for undergraduates to be exposed to "hands-on" research, and more specifically offer

* a supportive and stimulating environment for research and scholarship in English studies, rhetoric and composition, cultural studies, literary theory, film studies, and creative writing;

* an ongoing commitment to thoughtful and pedagogically-sound instruction of WSU undergraduates in English composition, principles of argumentation, writing from sources, creative writing, literary interpretation, critical thinking, and cultural analysis alert to the diverse contributions and voices of the nation's and world's peoples;

* a positive societal impact, inasmuch as graduates of our programs are likely to pursue careers as writers, editors, teachers, and scholars, thereby positioning themselves to influence others and, both implicitly and explicitly, to exemplify the values of literacy, a liberal education, and humanistic study generally.

Graduate Program

Benchmark:

To provide high-quality academic and professional training for all graduate students enrolled in our M.A. and Ph.D. programs. The means for ascertaining the quality of our training may include, but are by no means limited to, such measurements as the following:

- * percentage of M.A. students who finish their degrees in two years

- * percentage of Ph.D. students who finish their degrees in five years

- * percentage of graduating M.A. and Ph.D. students who either (1) pursue further graduate study, or (2) secure field-appropriate employment

- * total number of Teaching Assistantships held by the English Department (i.e., available to be awarded to prospective and continuing graduate students)

- * number of “student successes” as measured by such criteria as the following: (1) number of grants awarded to graduate students; (2) number of papers presented by graduate students at regional or national conferences; (3) number of graduate student essays, articles, or creative works accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals, collections, etc.

- * number of classes taught per academic year by faculty members involved in graduate education (i.e., the standard departmental teaching load prior to reductions for administrative duties, editing responsibilities, etc.)

- * ratio of the total number of full-time English faculty members involved in graduate education against the total number of graduate students in our program

Target:

Establish baseline data for the measurement categories listed above (and for other relevant categories as we may define them). Collect data on an annual basis, charting changes over time. Juxtapose these data against annual budget figures (permanent departmental budget, etc.). Aim to maintain or improve success rates in all categories.

Impact:

* a positive graduate experience for all students in the program, which may in turn lead to increased visibility of the program, larger applicant pools, improved morale, enhanced attractiveness to prospective faculty members, etc.

* a supportive and stimulating environment for research and scholarship in English studies, rhetoric and composition, cultural studies, literary theory, film studies, etc.

* an ongoing commitment from all Teaching Assistants to thoughtful and pedagogically-sound instruction of WSU undergraduates in English composition, principles of argumentation, writing from sources, creative writing, literary interpretation, etc.

* a positive societal impact, inasmuch as graduates of our program are likely to pursue careers as writers, editors, teachers, and scholars, thereby positioning themselves to influence others and, both implicitly and explicitly, to exemplify the values of literacy, a liberal education, and humanistic study more generally