



West Liberty University Program Review

English, B.A.

1. Synopses of significant findings by external review, J. Robert Baker, Professor of English, Fairmont State University

- Excellent faculty with a range of expertise and credentials
- An impressive catalogue of courses
- Promising curriculum revisions
- Resourceful and inventive paths of study

2. Program Strengths:

- One of the great strengths of the English program at West Liberty State University lies in its faculty who are gifted, enthused, and deeply committed to their students' development. There appears to be a strong consensus among the students that the faculty are experts who are accessible and supportive. Moreover, the students also perceive that the faculty have good working relationships.
- The English department at West Liberty University is fortunate enough to have a wide variety of faculty members with a range of expertise that is on par with, if not greater than, most English programs in the region. At very small cost to the University, the English program continues to play a vital role in the general education of WLU students. Moreover, the recent growth in the number of students choosing to major in English indicates that more students are beginning to see the “real-world” value of a degree in English. Businesses need graduates who can think, read, and write critically, and many companies (such as Williams Lea in Wheeling) are targeting English majors to fulfill those needs.
- The English program has recently undergone a curriculum revision that updated an earlier program of study and made it more appealing and useful to students without sacrificing the traditional values of English as a discipline. Under the revised curriculum, majors can elect one of three tracks in addition to the B.A. in Education with a concentration in English: Literature, Writing and Rhetoric, and Graphic Narrative. These choices respond to students' interests and professional aspirations than more conventional versions of the English major, which assume that coverage of literary periods will equip students both for advanced study and for professional work
- The faculty in English have responded to the HEPC's mandate to replace developmental courses with accelerated learning by offering supplemental instruction with ENG 101, College Composition, for students who need support to complete the first composition course. This accelerated learning program affords English Education majors the chance to teach the supplemental sections.

3. Program Weaknesses:

Greatest weakness is that we have not been doing an adequate job when it comes to assessing and promoting that fact. Without question, our programs most significant weaknesses almost universally relate to program assessment. That being said, this year the English Program has made tremendous strides toward establishing a credible assessment plan. Starting last fall, the curriculum was almost completely overhauled to better suit the needs of our students and, in the process, to lay the groundwork for a clearer pathway for assessment.

4. Address weaknesses or deficiencies from previous program review and describe how they have been addressed.

Corrective action focused on further development of the program's assessment plan, specifically student learning outcomes. Since the previous review, the English department has developed student learning outcomes, and they have developed a plan for collecting assessment data.



West Liberty University Program Review

5. Five-year data on graduates and majors enrolled:

Academic Year	Program Majors	Program Graduates
2013-14	32	8
2012-13	34	4
2011-12	35	4
2010-11	21	3
2009-10	14	3

6. What is the process for assessment of student learning? Include timelines of assessment implementation and describe how the results are used for program improvement.

In preparation for implementing valid assessment measures, the department made many curriculum changes during the 2014-15 school year. First and foremost, the creation of the “English Core” gives us a common set of classes where we can perform assessments.

Starting next fall, all WLU students will be required to purchase a five-year subscription to LiveText in their first general studies class, so students will eventually already have this subscription before they enroll in ENG 200. Unfortunately, rolling out LiveText in this way means that we have a gap in our department when it comes to students with access to LiveText. However, starting in the next rotation, ENG 495 students will be required to purchase a One-year subscription to LiveText if they do not already have a subscription. This will give us an opportunity to start assessing portfolios and to administer indirect assessments.

Again, using LiveText, English majors will be assessed in all of the courses in the English Core: ENG 200, ENG 204, ENG 205, ENG 214, ENG 215, ENG 385, and ENG 495. The department will need to agree upon a common set of elements to assess, but these elements may come directly from the lists of elements currently being developed by the General Studies Assessment Committee. That way, the department can use information collected in general studies as well, including ENG 101 and ENG 102. Also, every literature class is technically already a part of general studies and will, eventually, have to assess students using those elements. The department will then need to choose one of two methods of assessment. The first option will be to have instructors assess the work in their classes on their own. The second would be to simply upload the assignments into LiveText, hopefully as part of an ongoing portfolio, and the department can then assess the work together during an “Assessment Day” after being normed as a group.

While we DO feel that the large number of curriculum changes that took place this year were a giant stride towards an adequate assessment program, we are fully aware of the fact that we still have not collected any hard data. However, with the implementation of LiveText, there is now absolutely no reason why this cannot and will not be rectified in the next year.