

**Review of the MFA Results and Report on Curricular Change  
2010  
B.A. English**

Reviewing results of student comments on the SLU Exit Survey, we find our English Majors well satisfied with the quality of their teachers overall, particularly the individual care and attention their teachers give. In the last Exit Survey (2007-2008) over 78.9% of English Majors judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the effectiveness of the faculty as teachers, and over 73.7% were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the interest shown by faculty in the student’s academic development. In quality of instruction in advanced courses, 78.9% of English Majors judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied.” Almost 90% of English Majors were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the quality of instruction regarding standards and ethics in their major field. In the areas of Literary Theory and Literary History, 84.2% of English Majors felt “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” in Literary Theory while 78.9% felt the same in their knowledge of Literary History. The Exit Survey also indicates that over 84.2% of our English Majors are “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the overall quality of the English Department, while 78.9% felt the same about their degree program.

Further providing assessment of our Majors’ competency in language and literature, the English Department maintains the policy that all English Majors must maintain at least a C average in all major classes in order to graduate. In addition, the MFA committee has begun evaluating a critical analysis/research paper from each graduating English major for “Valid interpretation of primary text” with the following scale:

1. Below adequacy
2. Adequate
3. Good
4. Excellent

In this group of fourteen papers, English majors averaged 3.14, improving the 2.73 average at the last evaluation of papers and well surpassing our MFA plan goal of 2.0. In addition, Exit Surveys confirm that our majors feel competent in language and literature. A full 84.2% felt “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with their knowledge of major literary works, and 84.2% judged themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” in their ability to analyze both prose and verse.

Assuring our English majors’ expertise in composition, each instructor of a 300-400-level class evaluates essay assignments. In addition, the critical analysis/research papers from our graduating English majors that are collected by our MFA Committee are judged on essentials of composition: “Focused topic”; “Clear thesis/argument structure”; “Organization: development, transition, coherence, supporting evidence”; “Sense of audience”; “Sentence Sophistication / Effective use of voice and diction”; and “Mechanics / Grammatical correctness.” In these areas, 14 English major papers analyzed averaged the following on a 1 (Inadequate) to 4 (Excellent) scale, all improving upon our last evaluation and all above our goal score of 2 (“Adequate”), all above our 2.0 goal:

Focused topic	3.14
Clear thesis/argument structure	3.11
Organization: development, transition, coherence, supporting evidence	2.71
Sense of Audience	3.56
Sentence Sophistication / Effective use of voice and diction	2.82
Mechanics / Grammatical correctness	2.71

In the most recent Exit Survey, English majors indicated confidence in their writing skills: over 63% felt “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with their knowledge of the English language and grammar, while 79% were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with their ability to write a coherent essay that is well organized and developed, grammatically correct, and stylistically appropriate.

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 major courses, and these are also evaluated for correct use of MLA documentation. In the past three semesters, 93% of our English graduates earned a B or better in LS 102, also demonstrating research competency. In evaluating a critical analysis/research paper from each graduating English major, the MFA Committee considered the criteria “Incorporating Secondary Sources/Use of MLA documentation.” English majors averaged a score of 2.29% on the 4-point scale, the lowest average of the eight criteria yet above our goal of 2.0. On the Exit Survey, over 89.5% of English majors rated themselves in their ability to use library resources, especially in the field of English, “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied.”

Our English majors’ global awareness and multicultural knowledge is evidenced by several of their required courses that address multi-cultural literature. Also, our faculty encourage 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 faculty member in our department leads a summer study abroad trip focusing on cultural awareness, language, and literature. Of English Majors surveyed, 21.1% participated in study

abroad/exchange programs, and were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the experience. Almost 79% of English majors rated themselves “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the global perspective of their courses.

The future plans of our English majors indicate preparation for the real world. In the area of plans after graduation, 69.2% of those English graduates taking the latest Alumni Survey (Spring 2009) were employed full time, 38.5% were either enrolled in a graduate program or had completed a graduate degree and 38% indicated they are likely to enroll in a graduate program in the future.