

2002 – 2003

ANNUAL REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

CY KNOBLAUCH
CHAIR

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Improve the Quality of the Student Experience at UNC Charlotte*

Department or Unit Goal: *Implement a freshman learning community*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

A Proposal to Establish an English Freshman and Sophomore Learning Community was developed in August of 2002, describing the proposed community and outlining its objectives, curriculum, advising processes, means of assessment, staff support, and anticipated new resources. The proposal was reviewed by the appropriate governance bodies and approved for implementation during AY 2003-4.

2. Assessment methodology:

Procedures already employed for assessing English academic programs as well as performance in the major will be adapted for evaluating the learning community. An exit survey will determine how well the objectives of the community—including cohesion and uniform progression, support for requirements outside the major, cultural enrichment, and community outreach on literacy—have been met. The community advisors will review member student course evaluations for the block-scheduled classes in the curriculum. Student writing samples will be used, as they are in the major assessment, for evaluating the development of writing and interpretive reading abilities.

3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):

The first assessment will take place in 2004.

4. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process): N/A

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Improve the Quality of the Student Experience at UNC Charlotte*

Department or Unit Goal: *Maintain effective advisement practices and monitor student satisfaction.*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

The English advisement plan was implemented in 2000-2001 and is working successfully. A cadre of 5 or 6 advisors now provides students with information about their degree programs, consults with students about their scheduling as well as their career and personal goals, evaluates senior degree checks, and advises the English Chair on matters of student probation and suspension.

2. Assessment methodology:

The success of the advisement program is monitored by means of an annual report from the director, information from graduating seniors on the Senior Exit Survey, and periodic surveys of current majors.

3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):

The survey of majors is not completed each year and was not conducted during 2002-2003. In 2000-2001, 113 students completed the evaluation, revealing that the advisement system is generally accomplishing its goals. 82 students strongly agree or agree that advisors are knowledgeable and helpful; 84 that advising has made them aware of departmental and university requirements; 75 that advising has helped them clarify goals and ways to reach them; 73 that advising has helped them make timely progress toward graduation; 73 that advisors seem readily available; 76 that secretaries are helpful in explaining advising procedures; and 86 indicated that they preferred to have the same advisor for several semesters. Very few students disagreed or strongly disagreed with these statements, but a significant number responded N (Neutral). The survey will be offered in Spring, 2004.

The director's report indicates little change from previous years: on average, advisors work 5-6 hours a week with approximately 65 students each. The senior exit survey was completed by 37 students. Of that number, 8 reported seeing their advisors 1 to 3 times during the year, 19 reported seeing advisors 4 to 6 times, and 6 reported seeing advisors more than 7 times. 8 reported that advisement sessions were "somewhat helpful," 15 reported they were "helpful," and 10 reported they were "extremely helpful." No one said they were "not helpful."

3. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):

Because students have indicated a strong preference for continuity in their advisors, we have worked to extend the service of successful advisors and have reduced the number of faculty eligible for the advisement pool.

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Improve the Quality of the Student Experience at UNC Charlotte*

Department or Unit Goal: *Plan for anticipated enrollment increases*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

The Department has taken several steps to manage enrollment:

(A) We have created a two-year window for completing the English 1102 writing requirement in order to take advantage of a normal first-year student attrition rate of 15 to

20% that appears to be unrelated to academic programming. Optimal estimated savings: 400 seats (16 sections) of 1102 at current enrollment levels. The Department recognizes that not all students and not all programs will prefer to postpone English 1102 to the second year. For that reason, we will introduce the change gradually over the next two to three years and remain responsive to programs that cannot accommodate the adjustment.

(B) We continue to monitor the expansion of English 1103, hoping to increase the number of students whose incoming competence makes them eligible for a single semester of introductory writing.

© We have introduced new survey courses into the English major and several large-capacity, general interest courses in order to maximize enrollment and create more interchangeability among faculty.

2. Assessment methodology:

(A) The success of the two-year window for completing 1102 will be directly related to reduction in the demand for the course. If we need fewer sections, the plan is working.

(B) The success of expanding 1103 is directly related to student performance in the course, including the grades they receive, the development of their writing abilities, and their satisfaction with the quality of instruction. We will evaluate these indicators by monitoring pass/fail rates, assessing writing ability by means of the new Writing Program evaluation (see), and reviewing OPSCAN results.

© The success of the large-enrollment courses depends on the same indicators as the success of 1103 and will be evaluated in the same ways.

4. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):

(A) Since the two-year window for completing 1102 has just been introduced, it is too early to tell whether the desired easing of enrollment pressure has occurred. Since some Colleges are unwilling to take advantage of the window, it is likely, however, that the benefits will be more modest than we originally hoped.

(B) and (C) To date, there has been no deterioration in the three indicators we use to determine the success of these initiatives. Student performance and satisfaction remain at levels comparable to those in other areas of the curriculum.

5. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):

No changes anticipated at this time.

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Improve the Quality of the Student Experience at UNC Charlotte*

Department or Unit Goal: *insure that majors demonstrate competence in writing and analytic reading*

Note: The English Department evaluates the analytic writing and interpretive reading abilities of English majors, the oral competence and computer literacy of majors, and the work of Master's students, using a variety of instruments. Evaluation occurs annually but not every form of measurement is used every year. The evaluation of reading and writing occurs every other year since fluctuations in findings are not significant for program revision over shorter periods of time.

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

Writing and interpretive reading assessments were undertaken during AY 2002-2003.

2. Assessment methodology:

A. Samples of the writing of senior English majors are holistically evaluated by five members of the English faculty with reference to six broadly accepted criteria of successful writing, including focus (identifying an argumentative issue), organization (sustaining a line of reasoning), audience awareness (responding to the needs and expectations of a reader), effective use of voice (maintaining suitably professional demeanor and tone), sentence sophistication (using a mix of simple statements and complex subordinations), and technical control (using the conventions of standard written English).

B. A sample number of senior English majors submit writing assignments requiring them to respond analytically and/or interpretively to course readings. The reading exercises are evaluated by five members of the English faculty according to broadly accepted criteria of successful reading, including the ability to paraphrase, identify speaker, situation, and intended audience, identify thematic emphases, recognize organizational pattern, draw reasonable inferences, appraise general significance, analyze rhetorical and stylistic effects, and relate a text to historical, generic, or other contexts.

3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):

A. 25 of 32 papers (78%), distributed across ten different English courses, were judged to exhibit competent control of the techniques of analytic discourse while 22% were judged to exhibit deficiency in one or more of the categories of successful performance listed above. This statistic represents a decline from the success rate of 90% in the last evaluation, but is identical to the rate of two years ago. (It should be noted that the significance of such changes is not clear given the small N's of our samples and the

vagaries that attend the evaluation of writing ability.) Deficiencies were identified in two areas, especially, (1) failure to read directions carefully and (2) failure to proofread. These problems suggest carelessness in execution rather than serious skill deficits.

B. Of 32 essays submitted, 84% were judged to exhibit competent analytic and interpretive reading skills while 16% were judged to exhibit deficiency in one or more of the categories of successful performance listed above. The committee reported that deficient students produced readings that were “inexact, incorrect, and/or invalid,” suggesting that these students have difficulty, not merely with the interpretation of texts, but also with accurate representation of the literal substance of texts.

3. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):

Faculty are agreed that the writing of English majors is broadly satisfactory and that there is a reasonable relationship between high standards (which not all students, therefore, will successfully meet) and an acceptable level of competent performance. Last year, the Department modified the content of English 3100 to emphasize interpretive reading rather than formal schools of literary criticism, but it is too early to see significant results of that change.

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Improve the Quality of the Student Experience at UNC Charlotte*

Department or Unit Goal: *Insure that majors demonstrate competence in oral presentation and computing*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

All English majors must successfully complete Communication 1101, Introductory Speech, or an equivalent, which includes instruction and assignments related to the theory and practice of public speaking and specific opportunities to construct and deliver speeches. Students in English 2100 and 3100, required core courses, complete class assignments that entail the use of computer expertise (word processing, email, and/or WEB site research) appropriate for an undergraduate English major.

2. Assessment methodology:

Standards and assessment practices in oral communication are published in the syllabi of Communication 1101. Standards of performance in computer literacy are incorporated into assignment guidelines in individual sections of English 2100 and 3100 and generally correspond to levels of accomplishment expected in non-electronic communication. Each student’s faculty advisor certifies that competence has been achieved and records that

judgment on a check sheet in the student's Departmental record.

3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):

English majors generally performed at or above the norms for all students in COMM 1101 during 2000-2001, suggesting that they are preparing effectively for roles in public and professional life. Students show broadly satisfactory technical control of computing practices. Not surprisingly, students manifest the same writing difficulties in word-processing that they reveal in other media. They also show insufficient awareness of the copyright expectations that attend WEB-based research, including uncertainty about the responsibilities of attribution when they cite from such work as well as ignorance of conventions of footnoting and bibliography. Instances of plagiarism of internet resources appear to be increasing.

4. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):

The Department is satisfied that the Communication requirement is serving the needs of English majors. No changes are contemplated. The issue of plagiarism of internet materials will be discussed during AY 2003-4 and steps will be identified for improving students' awareness of copyright obligations.

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Improve the Quality of the Student Experience at UNC Charlotte*

Department or Unit Goal: *Insure that graduate students demonstrate MA-level competence in the discipline of English Studies*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

The M.A. written examination is typically scheduled toward the end of graduate study. Students elect one of three possible areas of concentration, including literature, rhetoric/composition, and linguistics, and demonstrate their knowledge of 11 core texts in the chosen field.

2. Assessment methodology:

Students in each of the three areas of concentration respond to sets of questions developed by a committee consisting of five members of the English graduate faculty appointed by the Chair of the Department. Three members of the committee judge each student's work in a blind review, resolving differences in their evaluations where necessary. A passing performance on the examination is required for graduation from the

program.

Periodically, the Coordinator of the Graduate Program leads the graduate faculty in an evaluation of the performance of students on the M.A. examination. The Graduate Committee subsequently makes recommendations, as necessary, for changes in the content of courses, the core reading list, or the kinds of questions being asked of students.

3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):

In fall, 2002, 8 Master's students took the comprehensive exam and 6 passed; the other 2 retook the exam successfully in the second semester; in spring, 2003, 23 students took the exam and 13 passed. 7 students are currently writing Master's theses.

5. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):

The higher failure rate on the Master's exam this year compared to previous years is regarded as a sign that faculty are enforcing higher standards in their evaluation of student performance. There is no indication that the failures relate to problems in recruitment, curriculum, or advisement. No student so far this year has failed a retest.

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Improve the Quality of the Student Experience at UNC Charlotte*

Department or Unit Goal: *Insure that all students in the Writing Program demonstrate competence in writing*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

The English Department is responsible for the two-semester writing requirement of the General Education program. It will also be responsible, effective 2004, for assessing the performance of students who complete the program.

2. Assessment methodology:

Samples of the writing of students in English 1101 or 1102 are holistically evaluated by a team of readers with reference to six broadly accepted criteria of successful writing, including focus (identifying an argumentative issue), organization (sustaining a line of reasoning), audience awareness (responding to the needs and expectations of a reader), effective use of voice (maintaining suitably professional demeanor and tone), sentence sophistication (using a mix of simple statements and complex subordinations), and technical control (using the conventions of standard written English). Each writing sample is evaluated on a three-point scale by at least two readers, with disagreements resolved through a third reading. A score of 1 indicates above average performance, while 2 indicates adequate performance, and 3 indicates substandard performance.

3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):

The protocol is being tested in 2002-3 and a performance baseline is being identified. Results will not be available until the fall of 2003.

4. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):

The protocol will be modified as appropriate after this year's trial run is completed.

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Expand the College's Research Agenda*

Department or Unit Goal: *Mentor faculty through the Faculty Development Committee*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

The committee is charged with supporting the professional development of the teaching staff, in particular assisting faculty in their preparation for reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion. The committee introduces new faculty to the professional standards and expectations of the Department, coordinates peer reviews of teaching, offers mentoring advice when asked, explains reappointment, tenure, and promotion documents, offers advice in the preparation of RPT files, and provides fora for intellectual engagement among the faculty.

2. Assessment methodology:

Ultimately, the most useful measure of the committee's success is the quality of the RPT cases forwarded from the Department. More anecdotal measures include the satisfaction of faculty who are served by the committee and the turnout at our Work-in-Progress Seminars (WIPS).

3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):

No RPT cases were forwarded this year. But junior faculty report satisfaction with the accessibility of committee members and the helpfulness of the documents the committee has prepared to orient new faculty to RPT procedures and expectations. This year the committee sponsored 3 WIP seminars, each with a turnout of 12 to 18 faculty and graduate students.

4. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):

Next year the committee will be expanded from 5 to 8 members in order to staff a subcommittee whose particular concern will be the professional development of our enlarged lecturer cadre. The lecturer subcommittee will include 3 lecturers and 1 tenure-line faculty member. Its responsibilities will include helping lecturers to maintain their reappointment files, managing the classroom peer evaluation schedule, and discussing

issues (salary, teaching assignments, office space, working conditions) of particular importance to lecturers.

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Expand the College's Research Agenda*

Department or Unit Goal: *Meet performance standards in research and professional activity*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

The Department's workload policy was updated and approved in AY2000-01. It reflects a practice of differential workloads in accordance with guidelines governing professional expectations in teaching, research, and service. Faculty this year engaged in a wide range of professional activities in each of these categories.

2. Assessment methodology:

The Department continues to undertake systematic faculty evaluation through yearly productivity reports, Salary Review Committee evaluations of teaching, research, and service, a yearly Chair's evaluation of individual performance, personnel reviews for renewal, tenure, and promotion, TFPR evaluations, qualitative (written) as well as quantitative (OPSCAN) evaluations of all courses, peer evaluation of teaching for lecturers, junior faculty, and faculty standing for promotion, exit surveys for graduating seniors, PRAXIS results for English Education majors, and written as well as oral consultation with graduate students about the effectiveness of their programming. Performance as assessed by means of these measures correlates directly with salary increment decisions.

3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):

In teaching: OPSCAN evaluations show that the Department compares favorably with College norms, frequently surpassing them (in fall, 2002, instructor effectiveness in English averaged 4.33 compared to 4.16 College-wide). The salary review committee rated 7 of 41 faculty as "excellent" in the category of teaching, 32 as "good," and 2 as "below average" (note: lower ratings sometimes reflect size of teaching load rather than quality of instruction.). Of 31 students who filled out the senior exit surveys, 29 reported the quality of our teaching to be good or excellent, 30 commented favorably on the range and pertinence of our curriculum, 27 were satisfied that the schedule of classes met their needs, 6 of 35 said they had taken an internship course and 5 rated the experience good or excellent, and 28 agreed that our office staff were supportive and helpful. Most seniors report satisfaction with the Department's writing instruction, commenting typically that

they received useful responses to their writing, had ample opportunity for revision, and improved as writers through their coursework. Three faculty passed successfully through post-tenure review, two lecturers successfully completed comprehensive reviews, and six lecturers were reappointed on the strength of their teaching.

In scholarship: the full-time faculty authored or co-authored 4 books, 1 edited collection, 40 journal articles (both refereed and nonrefereed), 3 reprinted articles, 21 poems, 1 poetry chap book, 2 short stories, and 3 reviews. In addition, faculty read 45 papers at assorted professional conferences, both national and local, and delivered 11 public lectures and readings. 3 faculty received funding from 5 external grants for a total of \$266,300, and 4 faculty received funding from 4 internal (UNCC) grants for a total of \$24,800 . The salary review committee rated 12 of 23 faculty either good or excellent in research productivity.

In service: the faculty of the English Department performed on 53 College and University committees, task forces, and searches, served as editors, contributing editors, or consulting editors of 3 journals, were members of 2 different editorial boards, read 26 manuscripts for presses and journals, held 5 leadership posts in professional organizations, served as consultants to 19 local organizations (ranging from public schools to area businesses to State government), and served as members on various boards and councils in Charlotte (Arts and Sciences Council), the State (Native American Academy), the region (NC Humanities Council) and the nation (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards). In addition, each tenured and tenure-track faculty member served on at least two departmental committees. Not counted in this service activity are the efforts of one English faculty member serving as an associate dean and one directing a University program (UWP).

4. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):

No changes are anticipated.

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Expand the College's Research Agenda*

Department or Unit Goal: *Develop a research center in linguistics and community literacy*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

This year a detailed proposal for the Center was developed and forwarded to the office of the Associate Provost for Research. In response to changes in the procedures for

evaluating such proposals, the Department will redirect its arguments next year to COAS.
<p>2. Assessment methodology:</p> <p>Eventually, the Department will judge the productivity of the Center by reference to benchmarks in numbers of grant proposals developed, total dollars requested, the advancement of proposals through the review levels of federal and state agencies, and total dollars received.</p>
<p>3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):</p> <p>N/A</p>
<p>4. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):</p> <p>N/A</p>

College or Administrative Area Goal: <i>Integrate Information Technologies into the College's Instructional and Research Programming</i>
Department or Unit Goal: <i>Make appropriate use of electronic instructional resources</i>
<p>1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:</p> <p>Individual instructors make use of WEB CT, electronic classrooms, internet resources, electronic data bases, electronic libraries, email, movie projectors, and other technical support, but the Department does not focus its energies at this time on programmatic change through technological innovation.</p>
<p>2. Assessment methodology:</p> <p>Courses that make use of information technologies are not singled out for evaluation of their specific strategies of instruction. Their success is measured by OPSCAN results, written student evaluations, and other conventional indicators.</p>
<p>3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):</p> <p>Students are generally satisfied with classes (typically in technical writing) that meet in our two electronic classrooms, with the small number of courses taught by means of WEB CT, and with our large-enrollment film courses.</p>
<p>4. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):</p> <p>Increasing numbers of faculty are becoming aware of the advantages of WEB CT and are attending the orientation sessions available in COAS.</p>

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Expand the College's Inventory of New Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Programs.*

Department or Unit Goal: *Develop the doctoral program in curriculum and instruction*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

The Department continues to work with the College of Education to develop a joint doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction that will reach a broad audience in the Charlotte region, including school teachers and administrators along with students interested in two- or four-year college teaching. The program has now been formally approved by the NC System and the first cohort of students will begin in fall, 2003.

2. Assessment methodology:

N/A

3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):

N/A

3. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):

N/A

College or Administrative Area Goal: *Expand the College's Inventory of New Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Programs.*

Department or Unit Goal: *Develop an MFA in creative writing*

1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:

The Department's Planning and Assessment Committee has recommended in favor of developing a proposal for the MFA and submitting it to governance in AY 2003-4. We successfully hired a fiction writer this year to support such a program and we are hopeful of attracting an established writer of children's literature, under the joint auspices of COAS and the Charlotte Public Library, who will join the faculty in AY 2004-5.

<p>2. Assessment methodology:</p> <p>The objectives and time-table for this initiative are detailed in the 2009 Plan: the Department's efforts to meet them will be described in subsequent annual reports.</p>
<p>3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):</p> <p>The initiative is on schedule.</p>
<p>4. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):</p> <p>None.</p>

<p>College or Administrative Area Goal: <i>Expand the College's Inventory of New Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Programs.</i></p>
<p>Department or Unit Goal: <i>Develop minors in writing and in Children's literature and literacy</i></p>
<p>1. Activities undertaken within the department or unit to accomplish this department or unit goal:</p> <p>The Department's Planning and Assessment Committee has recommended in favor of developing a proposal for a minor in writing and submitting it to governance in AY 2003-4. A tentative schedule of requirements and courses has been outlined and will be discussed in appropriate Departmental fora during the coming year.</p> <p>The Planning Committee recommended against pursuing a children's literature/literacy minor at this time until discussions of change in program requirements currently under way in COE (which this program would serve) have reached their conclusion.</p>
<p>2. Assessment methodology:</p> <p>The objectives and time-tables for these initiatives are detailed in the 2009 Plan: the Department's efforts to meet them will be described in subsequent annual reports.</p>
<p>3. Assessment findings (i.e. what did the assessment of this goal reveal?):</p> <p>The writing proposal is on schedule; the children's literature/literacy proposal is tabled for now.</p>
<p>4. Changes planned in the department or unit as a result of assessment findings (may include changes to enhance effectiveness or to improve the assessment process):</p>

None.