

Undergraduate Self-Study Report for the Department of English, B.A. Program January 2016

Introduction	1
Overall Performance	3
Performance by Focal Area	
Learning Outcomes	4
Curriculum and Co-curriculum	6
Teaching and Learning	14
Student Learning Assessment	17
Potential Initiatives	19
Matrix of Improvement Initiatives	19
Follow-up Report	21
Appendices	26

1. Introduction

Despite having split with Communications in 2013-14, the English department retains a primary role in the overall University mission of providing “a liberal arts education for all students,” generating more undergraduate student credit hours than any department at TTU, save Mathematics. This academic audit focuses on the English B.A. program, but the size and scope of what English is responsible for in the university, and delivers, should not be overlooked in any discussion of the department and its programs. In General Education courses, the department offers instruction in writing and speaking, emphasizes critical reading and critical thinking skills, and fosters increased understanding and appreciation of literature and theatre and acquisition of professional communication skills. Because the University mission also emphasizes “strong technical and professional education,” the department offers appropriate advanced instruction for majors and/or minors in Literature, Writing/Genre/Language, Dramatic Arts, and Professional Communication. The English major has the largest enrollment of any B.A. program at TTU. In addition, English serves as a concentration area for the B.S. in Secondary Education (SEED) and provides upper-level courses in technical writing, literature, folklore, and the Bible for programs in other departments (e.g., in Decision Sciences and Management, Engineering, Environmental Studies, Religious Studies, etc.). In keeping with the university’s commitment to preserve and enhance knowledge, the English department promotes scholarly activity (including creative work) and the dissemination of research findings through publications, conference presentations, and other means. As well, in the area of public service, the department faculty enhance the cultural climate of the university and the larger community by sponsoring lectures, readings, dramatic productions, forensic competitions, writing competitions, and other related activities. The program’s mission is as follows: The English BA curriculum is designed to improve students’ skills in writing, critical reading, and thinking; to enrich their cultural experience; and to prepare them for all professions requiring a high level of expression, imagination, and intellectual activity, including creative writing, editing, teaching, law, politics, and management.

Enrollment within the English B.A. over the past five years has experienced a slight upward trend:

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number Enrolled	86	90	75	102	91

The number enrolled for SEED English (not included in the enrollment table above) diminished in 2012 and 2013, but has since leveled:

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number Enrolled	75	64	55	54	51

The English B.A. features four concentrations. The following table shows recent enrollment numbers:

Concentration	Literature	Writing/Lang./ Genre	Professional Communication	Dramatic Arts
2011	40	25	9	9
2012	45	25	11	6
2013	34	23	8	8

2014	38	30	20	10
2015	31	24	22	12

The enrollment at the beginning of 2014 represents a high-water mark for majors in the B.A. program. One factor in this was improved retention in the 2012 and 2013 freshman cohorts, resulting from both departmental efforts and the new Student Success Center. Another factor was the burst of growth seen recently in the Professional Communication (PC) concentration. PC is drawing close to the numbers seen in Literature and Writing, and it may soon be the case that the three top concentrations draw virtually equal numbers of students. Dramatic Arts has a smaller, but nevertheless growing number in its concentration.

The full-time faculty represents a wide variety of areas of expertise (these are indicated in Appendix A). Presented below is an overview of numbers of faculty members within the department, by rank, as of Fall 2015; part-time and temporary faculty are almost exclusively limited to General Education courses:

Faculty Rank	Full Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Tenured Instructor	Lecturer	Temporary Full-Time Instructor	Part-Time (Adjunct)
Number of Faculty Members	11	0	3	4	1	9	23

The high concentration of Full Professors has slowly been leveling in recent years. There have been tenure-track Assistant Professor searches in five of the past six years, including one currently underway. One Assistant Professor is currently being reviewed for promotion to Associate. As well, the department is beginning to see growth in the Lecturer rank, a non-tenurable rank, renewable in three-year terms. Two current temporary Instructors are expected to be converted to the new Lecturer rank by Fall 2016. (Both Instructors joined the department in 2014, with the initial intention of being hired as Lecturers, but the rank was not yet fully defined at Tech until Fall 2015.)

The department made a senior hire at Chair level, starting in Fall 2014. In 2013-14, English department faculty had identified a need for an outside hire as Chair after having seen a succession of interim appointments at the position. This trend began with a previous Chair's appointment to the position of interim Associate Dean of Arts & Sciences some seven years before, and continued with several internal interim Chairs in recent years. The newly arrived Chair brought with him a vision for the department and its programs, which he has since taken steps to implement. Initially based on best practices in the field and subsequently developed in concert with the department since the new Chair's arrival eighteen months ago, this vision's implementation has been remarkably well in step with needs identified in the previous self-study, and by surveys of current and recent students and alumni.

Gathering information and composing this self-study has been a collaborative effort involving faculty at various ranks and incorporating student and alumni feedback. The committee that authored the report was comprised of the Chair, the most recent former interim Chair (who also serves as Chair of the department's Curriculum Committee), and the directors of two of the program's four concentrations, Dramatic Arts and Professional Communication (the concentrations in Literature and Writing/Language/Genre do not have directors), who contributed information on these concentrations.

In addition, committee members sought input from individual department faculty and other campus offices, including the Office of Institutional Research, the Provost's Office, the Office of Academic Services, and the department of Curriculum and Instruction, among others. This document is truly a narrative of many voices.

2. Overall Performance

ETS Major Field Test

Results of the ETS Major Field Test from Fall 2011 to Spring 2015 may be consulted in the English department Chair's office. The test is given to students in Literature and Writing/Language/Genre concentrations. There is a standard error of measurement reported by ETS for interpreting these scores: 4.5 for males, 4.6 for females.

Term	# of Students Tested	TTU Score Mean	National Score Mean	# of Students Above National Mean
Fall 2011	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Spring 2012	8	156	154.4	4 of 8
Fall 2012	5	142	154.7	2 of 5
Spring 2013	10	163	154.7	7 of 10
Fall 2013	7	147	153.9	3 of 7
Spring 2014	5	149	153.9	2 of 5
Fall 2014	5	144	153.8	2 of 5
Spring 2015	6	152	153.8	3 of 6
Totals	46	150.4	154.1	23 of 46

TTU English graduates are consistently at or around the national mean, and half of our students are above and half below the national mean over the four years covered here. The subject areas in which our majors show greatest strength, significant from a perspective of benchmarking our program strengths, are Literary History and British Literature Pre-1660. The subject area in which our students have scored weakest over this period is Literary Theory. This recent observation will be raised for discussion in the department in the coming year. During this audit process, the Associate Provost recently suggested the department have an annual retreat. This would provide an excellent opportunity for such a program conversation.

Praxis II Data

This test, administered by the Education department, is for students in the Secondary Education-English (SEED) program. The required licensure exam changed for the 2014-15 completers; the comparison state pass rate is still being calculated for this year, and results won't be available until spring.

Test & date	Program Completers	TTU Pass Rate	TN Pass Rate
2011-12 Eng Lang Lit Comp Content Knowledge (0041)	21	100%	100%
2012-13 (0041)	17	100%	100%
2013-14 (0041)	7	100%	100%
2014-15 Eng Language Arts: Content Knowledge (5038)	7	100%	

For other information on students' performance on the National Survey of Student Engagement, please visit <https://www.tntech.edu/assessment/student-surveys>. For information about performance on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, please visit <https://www.tntech.edu/assessment/critical-thinking#tab-1427906150001>. These assessment instruments are housed in the Office of Academic Affairs and offer data for use in processes of improving student learning, faculty improvement, and for documenting program change initiatives throughout the university.

To prepare our students for an increasingly global marketplace and support their future marketability and employment, students must also complete four semesters of a foreign language (or proficiency through the 2020 level). This standard also conforms with the national standard for B.A. programs.

3. Performance by Focal Area

A. Learning Outcomes

As the ETS test shows, the English program meets the benchmark national average of English programs, with half of our students in the traditional major concentrations exceeding the national mean over the past four years. Other measures of learning outcomes are described below.

All students in the English B.A., regardless of concentration, take a common core of 30 credit hours, which includes 9 hours that overlap with the General Education curriculum. The curriculum for the B.A. in English serves these program learning outcomes:

- 1) Students will demonstrate the capacity to write and speak clearly, read perceptively, and think critically;
- 2) Students will demonstrate understanding of historical traditions in British and American literature;
- 3) Students will demonstrate understanding of how written and spoken language expresses diverse cultural experiences; and
- 4) Students will demonstrate understanding of the functions and historical development of the English language.

The curriculum is organized so that students take their composition courses (ENGL 1010-1020) the freshman year and move into upper-division courses as sophomores. In the sophomore year, majors take a General Education literature course: ENGL 2330-World Literature. Also in the sophomore year, majors begin ENGL 3000-Introduction to English Methods and Research, which introduces them to literary terms and theory and also to cultural studies. This is the first of seven core courses (21 credits) specific to the English major. Students begin their survey courses in classes especially designed for English and Secondary Education English majors: ENGL 3810-British Literature I and ENGL 3910-American Literature I. The recommended sequence then continues with ENGL 3820-British Literature II and ENGL 3920-American Literature II in the junior year, so students are well prepared for their 4000-level courses. Finally, all majors take the capstone course ENGL 4995-Senior Colloquium. This course features intensive study of a theme or period, with an emphasis on research, writing, discussion, and presentation. Required of majors in all concentrations, the theme or period is designed to allow students with different skill sets to succeed. Recent subheadings for Senior Colloquium have included “Why We Read” and “Only Connect: Networking in the 21st Century.”

In the past year, the program has created uniform, measurable student learning outcomes for the core classes of the English major, aligned with departmental program outcomes. (See syllabi in English office.) Prior to this time, learning outcomes featured in syllabi for these classes were created by the faculty member teaching the class, and could change from semester to semester depending on the instructor, were not necessarily measurable, and might not be aligned with the articulated program outcomes (although student success in attaining these outcomes was assessed at the end of the student’s curriculum). In addition to ENGL 3000, ENGL 3810/3820, ENGL 3910/3920, and ENGL 4995, mentioned above, these core classes also include ENGL 4121-Shakespeare. Student Learning Outcomes in these classes were created through a collaborative process where two to three faculty with regular responsibilities for teaching each of these classes met together and drafted outcomes. The resulting seven sets were then brought to the full department for purposes of comparison and to check alignment with program outcomes.

An initiative assessing student learning success in the major via the ENGL 4995 capstone was begun in Spring 2013 and is described in the “Student Learning Assessment” section.

Through student exit interviews, which also use the survey form seen in Appendix E, we gather student perspective data regarding how well the department achieves our program outcomes, as well as on strengths and weaknesses of the program. In the past, student suggestions have led to various changes, including the creation of a course in the graphic novel, and offering a wider array of classes each semester and more career counseling and networking opportunities. Tabulation of our most recent three semesters of exit interview responses (2014-15 and Fall 2015) reported 7 out of 10 students were satisfied that the program was meeting all outcomes, as is seen in Appendix F. The minority of students who felt that not all learning outcomes have been met most often suggested the program had failed to satisfy the outcomes related to "diverse cultural experiences" and "historical development of the English language" (two responses). By and large, however, students praised the program’s performance in helping the students achieve all outcomes. These responses were typical:

TTU’s English BA program has satisfied all of the outcomes listed above. I attended another school in Ohio for my first two years of my degree and the differences are many, to say the least. Each and every professor has geared their class in some way to fit one, if not all, of those

bullet points. The only thing that is missing, is that English classes teach more than literature and cultural history. They taught me about myself and the world around me.

I never had an English class where I was not expected to read perceptively and think critically and without speaking clearly, one could not do well in the class. These are simply tools of the trade.... Overall, I would say the English department did an excellent job instilling all the above outcome[s] in me.

In the past year, English has also undertaken, in cooperation with the Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, who as well chairs the General Education committee, to ensure that our General Education literature classes also have articulated, measurable, and reportable learning outcomes, consistent with our program outcomes. An example of this is seen in ENGL 2130-American Literature, one of the three classes that are taken by sophomores at TTU as part of their Gen Ed curriculum, and which features these outcomes:

At the conclusion of ENGL 2130, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate perceptive reading through critical analysis of texts (GenEd goal 1)
2. Communicate their analyses in formal projects including written and/or oral assignments (GenEd goal 6)
3. Explain ways that American literature reflects the cultures and values associated with certain time periods, regions, or genres (GenEd goal 2)
4. Explain the diversity in/of American literature (GenEd goal 3)
5. Explore the roles of both change and continuity in American literature (GenEd goal 5)

The process by which we determined these outcomes, as well as those for ENGL 2230-British Literature and 2330-World Literature, invited faculty of all ranks teaching the 30 sections of sophomore literature to a meeting that outlined the task and asked for volunteers for a departmental Sophomore Literature Committee (co-chaired by an Instructor and a Full Professor) to poll the faculty and distill outcomes. As a General Education course (although 2330 is also required for English majors), these student learning outcomes are directly aligned with Gen Ed program outcomes stipulated by the Tennessee Board of Regents. A pilot assessment of sophomore literature is to be conducted in Spring 2016, designed by faculty teaching these courses.

B. Curriculum and Co-Curriculum

Curriculum

The faculty collaborates regularly and effectively to design and plan improvement of the curriculum. The impetus for course changes may come from student suggestions, faculty interests, or conversations between English and other departments at TTU, to mention three paths by which such changes have occurred in recent semesters. A course is frequently first piloted as a Special Topics, then subsequently added to the curriculum through departmental consideration involving email threads, proposals to the Curriculum Committee, and ultimately a vote by the full voting faculty. In such a way, the department recently approved THEA 3600-Film Studies, which is now on its way to

the College of Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee. This Spring, we will be offering for the first time ENGL 3600-Bible as Literature, which will double as a required course in the College of Interdisciplinary Studies' Religious Studies program; of great interest to students, the class has exceeded its registration cap. In Fall 2016, barring any obstacles, English will also incorporate an Internship for credit into our program, answering a need articulated in both student and alumni surveys (see Appendices F and H).

English also regularly analyzes sequencing of courses; we recently initiated a new survey of faculty expertise, the first in approximately ten years, to facilitate planning and staffing decisions. (See Appendix A.) In Spring 2016, English will offer more courses than any time since creation of curriculum blocks roughly ten years ago, both in response to student requests in surveys and indirectly, through registration numbers. Creative Writing courses having proven popular in recent years, more sections have been added, which have also enjoyed strong enrollment. A recent retirement in this area, as well as the likelihood of an M.A. track in Creative Writing (currently being developed), makes hiring in this area a priority. Through an extended e-mail conversation thread on hiring last year, the department determined its highest hiring priority to be an Early Americanist, and we are currently engaged in a tenure-track search for this position. Wishing to give our undergraduate students more flexibility and incentive to pursue graduate education, the department also recently approved a "Fast-Track" that will allow motivated students meeting certain criteria to take 6 credits of upper division coursework that will count for graduate credit as well.

Communication about program curricula and programs was greatly improved in 2014-15 when the department Chair joined with the Outreach Committee to restructure the department website. A year after the split with the Communication department, the website still featured many pages that reflected the former structure, and included no descriptions of the concentrations, among other deficiencies. A new system was put into practice whereby the former webmaster was replaced by several committee members with editing privileges. Updates to the site have since been occurring weekly, and new features include pages for each concentration, a list of faculty publications, and faculty and student highlight pages.

Below are brief discussions of each of the four concentrations within the English B.A. Sources of evidence for all these concentrations include course schedules, the undergraduate catalog, student/alumni surveys, and syllabi. Copies of AWP's *Writer's Chronicle* and *Homespun* magazine may be found in the English department office.

Literature

The Literature concentration has traditionally been the largest concentration in the program, and thus nearly synonymous with the English major. The Literature concentration requires courses in blocks that include one course from the British I block (through the eighteenth century), one from the British II block (the nineteenth century to the present), and one from the American literature block. Students in this concentration also choose at least one course from a culture and genre block, a writing block, and a language/ rhetoric block. Within the Literature concentration, we also offer a world literature option. The curricula are described in the university catalog, which is linked from the department's website.

Because the program requires students to take courses from the blocks described above, the department has to offer these courses with enough frequency so that students can move smoothly

through the curriculum. Most of the 4000-level courses are on a two-year rotation. Students in exit interviews praise the literature program as a sturdy, canonical literary education, taught by passionate professors who are powerful advocates for their respective subject areas in classes generally numbering 25 students or less.

Students' exit interviews from 2014-15 are seen in Appendix F. As has been indicated above, some weaknesses seen in survey responses, such as the perception of too few classes being offered and internships not being allowed for credit in the major, have already begun to be addressed.

Weakness: While the department is strong in canonical figures and periods, less traditional areas such as literary theory and ethnic and minority literatures are not well represented.

Writing/Language/Genre

The Writing/Language/Genre concentration requires one 4000-level course in British literature and one in American literature, plus four writing courses, one course from the culture block, one from the genre block, and one from the language/rhetoric block. This concentration seeks to provide the student who wishes to delve more deeply into the areas of writing and the English language itself with courses that meet those interests. Students from any major can also take these courses. Within the concentration are two options: The Creative Writing Option, for the student who wishes to focus on developing his or her own craft in the writing of fiction, literary nonfiction, and/or poetry; and the Writing Studies Option, for the student whose interest in writing is based more in the exploration of rhetorical theory.

Within the Creative Writing Option, four courses are offered: ENGL 3400-Introduction to Creative Writing; ENGL 4430-Creative Writing: Fiction; ENGL 4440-Creative Writing: Essay; and ENGL 4450-Creative Writing: Poetry. Students may take any of the latter three 4000-level courses for additional credit since every creative writing course differs in what the writing students submit for class discussion. The Creative Writing Option also includes, as a requirement, either English 4511-Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics or English 4531-Grammar and Language.

Within the Writing Studies Option, in addition to ENGL 3400, three courses are included: ENGL 4411-Writing in the Professions; ENGL 4421-Forms of Argumentation and Persuasion: Theory and Practice; and ENGL 4551-Introduction to Rhetoric: Theory and Practice.

The department offers one scholarship and two contests that relate to the Writing/Language/Genre concentration: The William W. Jenkins Creative Writing Scholarship, available to any student in the department of English, and The Clara Cox Epperson Prose Writing Competition and The Lora A. Printz Memorial Poetry Prize, also available to any full-time Tennessee Tech student.

The three faculty in the Creative Writing Option are all published writers, but unfortunately, one of these is the Chair, and teaching a limited schedule. A fourth full-time faculty Creative Writer retired in 2015. This will be an area in which the department intends to pursue a hire in 2017. Considerations in this process will be the pursuit of a fourth genre, playwriting/screenwriting, as well as addressing a lack of women faculty among the creative writing staff. This concentration also benefits from the presence of a specialist in Linguistics, hired on the tenure-track three years ago.

Co-curriculars related to this concentration include *Homespun* magazine, recently dormant but on schedule to resume in Spring 2016; the Bird is the Word! series; and the Meacham Writing Workshop,

described below.

The program has become a member of Associated Writing Programs, giving students access to *The Writer's Chronicle* magazine, the AWP website, and a great deal more information about publication and graduate school opportunities in Creative Writing than was available previously.

There had been little tradition of efforts to help students attain publication, and joining the Associated Writing Programs should help improve this.

Weakness: A faculty hire in Creative Writing was approved at the Lecturer level a year ago, but the department decided to hold out for another tenure-track faculty member in this area to replace a recently retired faculty member. This is a growth area, with more classes being offered here than was the case before the arrival of the new Chair; as well, while it goes beyond the strict purview of this report, the M.A. program is currently working on developing new graduate concentrations in Creative Writing and Professional Communication, which will require terminal-degree faculty. At present, one of the three faculty members in this area is the Chair, and all three are full professors.

Professional Communication

The Professional Communication concentration is the youngest and fastest growing of our four concentrations. This concentration includes the common core for the English B.A., plus an additional 24 hours of Professional Communication courses that include PC 2500, one of the General Education options for meeting the oral communication requirement. Among the other courses included in those 24 hours are two courses, PC 3700-Information Design in the Professions and PC 3750-Ethics in the Professions. Information Design in the Professions and Ethics in the Professions follow a theme the Professional Communication faculty began with PC 2500; each of the courses highlights ways oral communication, information design, and ethics apply in different professional/workplace contexts. Two or more sections of PC 2500 have recently been offered each semester particularly tailored to the writing needs of Business students, in a cooperative initiative with the College of Business.

Aside from the lower-division English courses included in the common core and PC 2500, there are no lower-division Professional Communication courses. Students take PC/ENGL 3250 first, which is a prerequisite for the upper-division courses. This course has a face-to-face version taught on our campus, and was also developed as an RODP course by one of the Professional Communication faculty, and all sections of that course are taught by TTU Professional Communication faculty. In this course, students learn the foundations of effective technical/professional communication that will serve them well in the upper-division courses.

Beyond this, PC 4970-Professional Communication II is a prerequisite for PC 4990-Seminar in Professional Communication; in PC 4970, the focus is on ethics and technical report writing, and these advanced technical writing skills prepare students for the seminar, which focuses on grant and business proposal writing. These courses tend to be small (about 10 students on average) and allow students opportunities to receive more individualized attention from the professor as well as to interact more closely with fellow students. In addition to these courses, in the junior or senior year, students must also take PC 4850, the internship course. The director of the Professional Communication program assigns internships to students based on the students' interests and needs, and some students choose also to find their own internships, if they would like to focus on a specific area in which the

director may not have internships available. Students work for 150 hours during the semester for a three-credit-hour internship and write a report at the end evaluating the internship and discussing tasks accomplished. Other documents from the internship supervisor and agreements between the students and Professional Communication Program director are required to officially document the internship. The internship serves as an “out-of-classroom” activity that complements the other existing courses.

Students may use elective hours to take courses in one or more of three options that are detailed in the online undergraduate catalog: Scientific and Technical Writing, Corporate Culture, and Information Architecture.

The Professional Communication Program offers three scholarships to its students: the Ballew Scholarship and the William W. Jenkins Scholarship, each offered to a current student with a competitive GPA, and the Vaden Scholarship, offered to an entering freshman.

PC’s growth in recent years has been very encouraging, but with growth come new challenges. One is staffing; there is only one full-time faculty member in PC who has a terminal degree. Otherwise, there is one tenured Instructor in PC, and two other full-time faculty who teach some courses in the concentration as part of their loads, neither of whom are tenured/tenure-track. Students sometimes have difficulty taking every single one of the required courses for the Professional Communication concentration, due to scheduling conflicts as well as staffing issues. A couple ways to increase flexibility in the PC program curriculum would be to allow students to complete an additional internship or add another course or two to the list of Professional Communication courses; while students would still be required to take 24 hours of these courses, they could choose which ones from the list to take. Adding a special topics course would allow for Professional Communication faculty to focus on relevant, current topics, such as gender and communication, online communication, and advanced document and information design. Hiring another Ph.D. faculty member (perhaps in 2018) would also strengthen the program and contribute additional areas of expertise to this growing concentration, as well as enabling the program to develop an M.A. track, which is currently being discussed, and for which there would likely be student interest.

There is also a shortage of instructors, including part-time instructors, to teach PC 2500, which is one of only two courses on campus (the other being SPCH 2410-Speech) that fulfills the General Education requirement in the Communication category, beyond the ENGL 1010-1020 writing sequence. This shortage results in many students having to wait for the class until their Junior or Senior years to take PC 2500, although this is supposed to be a lower-division requirement. This is a university problem rather than a program problem, but it is left to the department to solve; currently, requests for resources for General Education are made to compete with English program requests, which all too often means that one or the other goes begging.

Strength: It speaks to the versatility of our programs that a solid, traditional program in English has shown ability to grow in non-traditional areas, particularly Professional Communication, to become a flexible, multi-faceted major program.

Weakness: As with Creative Writing, another tenure-track faculty member is needed in this area, and is needed in an even more dire way, as Professional Communication only has one faculty member in this area at the Professor rank. As with Creative Writing, this concentration has seen

growth that makes it possible that it may be as large as Literature in coming years; it is also being planned as one of three concentrations in the M.A. program being developed.

Dramatic Arts

The Dramatic Arts concentration was introduced in 2007-2008, although the theatre program has been an active part of the Department of English for over fifty years. This concentration includes the common core for the English B.A. (30 hours), plus an additional 21 hours of Theatre courses that include THEA 1030, which fulfills a General Education requirement.

Among the other courses included in those 21 hours are courses ranging from THEA 2100-Acting to THEA 3300-Stagecraft to THEA 4300-Directing. Students are also encouraged to take THEA 2110-Play Production up to four times to get credit for working on University productions in the campus theatre, the Backdoor Playhouse. This credit can be obtained for performance work or technical work or “front-of-house” work such as publicity or working in the box office. Students focus on different tasks and work on different productions each time they take the course.

In addition to these core theatre courses, students can also choose from THEA 3000-History of the Theatre, THEA 4100-Advanced Acting, THEA 4400-Dramatic Literature, and THEA 4500-Creative Dramatics. These courses tend to be small and allow students opportunities to receive more individualized attention from faculty as well as to interact more closely with fellow students. There is also a THEA 3100-Theatre Special Topics course available for students seeking specialized study in areas such as Voice and Diction, Period Acting Styles, and Film Studies (Film Studies was adopted as a new course, THEA 3600, for Fall 2016). The content of these courses and the way they build upon each other, based on the knowledge, theories, and skills learned in each course, determine the order of these courses in the curriculum.

The recently created Theatre Internship course allows Dramatic Arts students to get credit for real-world theatre experience/employment outside the TTU campus theatre environment. Students have this opportunity in addition to the core courses, in the junior or senior year. The director of the Dramatic Arts program would assign internships to students based on the student's interests and needs, and some students might choose also to find their own internships, if they would like to focus on a specific area in which the director may not have internships available. The internship serves as an “out-of-classroom” activity that complements the other existing courses. A number of students from the concentration, though it is small, have gone on to professional theatrical careers.

As far as the resources and materials used in these courses, the Dramatic Arts faculty (two full-time and numerous adjuncts) strive to be aware of new textbooks, technology, and learning strategies available in the field and to implement those, when appropriate, into the classroom. The faculty often communicate among themselves about the appropriateness of textbooks and seek feedback about the textbooks used (especially the textbook for THEA 1030, which is evaluated every year). Access to a campus theatre, The Backdoor Playhouse, is a great asset to the program, but while this is currently under renovation, as part of the renovation of Jere Whitson Hall, productions are continuing in three different spaces during 2015-16, proving that the program is spirited enough to thrive in difficult circumstances. A new space, The Talon Theatre, has also been opened, for play readings and to host open mics and the Bird is the Word! series. Dramatic Arts students also have had regular involvement with professional theatre organizations such as the Tennessee Theatre Association, the Southeastern

Theatre Conference (SETC), and the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. The current director of the Dramatic Arts concentration is regularly in touch with University professionals from around the state. A recently hired Lecturer, specializing in Technical Theatre, is also professionally active, and has helped raise the technical level of productions since his arrival in Fall 2014, as well as allowing the concentration to offer a new course in Theatrical Design.

Strength: The Dramatic Arts concentration and its theatrical productions are a hidden gem on our campus. The Backdoor Playhouse and Tech Players perform high-quality shows three to four times a year (sometimes including a musical), play to full houses, and prepare students for actual careers in the arts.

Co-Curriculum

Co-curricular activities include those particularly for students in the English major, those more specifically for students in a particular concentration, and those (perhaps overlapping with the first two types) that appeal to the general student population, and may help draw students to the major and its programs.

One of the first ways a TTU student from any discipline might encounter English programs in a co-curricular environment is through the Festival of Student Writing, held each November. This well-attended event features the efforts of approximately 150 ENGL 1010 and 1020 students in an entertaining poster-display showcase where students show off the projects they've worked on during the Fall term, which run the gamut from the intellectual to the whimsical. Though the topics are all research-driven, students select subjects that interest them and use their creativity in creating their presentations. Previous participants used skits and songs to share their research. 2015 was the 14th year of the festival.

Another activity that draws students from many parts of campus to the English department is the Speech and Debate team, founded in 1930 and for several decades coached by our most senior English faculty member, in cooperation with faculty in Communication. This group is also known as the Tennessee Tech Chapter of Pi Kappa Delta Honorary Speech Society. The team travels to two or three tournaments a semester—often in Tennessee and Kentucky, sometimes beyond. It has been very successful: in Fall 2015 alone the team alone won 33 individual awards and three team awards. Team members come from a wide variety of fields of study.

Backdoor Playhouse productions are very popular — the two-week runs generally sell out, and students from many disciplines who share an interest and passion for theatre take part. An active drama club (The Tech Players) as well as an active chapter of the Alpha Psi Omega Dramatic Honor Society help drive the enthusiasm confluent with offerings in the Dramatic Arts concentration.

Several co-curricular activities support the Creative Writing option of the concentration. *Homespun*, the student literary magazine, is generally published annually at the end of the Spring semester, though it missed coming out in Spring 2015, largely owing to the retirement of the faculty advisor and lack of guidance for student editors. But it too has a tradition at TTU that dates back several decades. Momentum was lost when the magazine went online about five years ago, but new editors and advisors are currently gathering and reading submissions for the 2016 issue, which will return as a paperback journal. A more advanced opportunity for an internship for English majors exists with

Under the Sun, an award-winning creative nonfiction journal with a national reputation, founded by a current faculty member and edited by a former faculty member. *Under the Sun* is not a university publication, but the department placed an intern with the magazine for the first time in Fall 2015, with good results.

The Center Stage series brings significant, big-name artists to TTU, and the English department has had a successful proposal in this series each of the last several years, including Michael Chabon in 2013, Art Spiegelman in 2014, Margaret Atwood in 2015, and Junot Diaz in Fall 2016. Student interaction with the visiting artist is one of our goals with each visitor; most recently, Margaret Atwood not only gave an hour-long presentation to a general audience but met with and answered questions from a gathering of approximately 65 (mostly English) students and faculty. (A photograph from this event appears on the department website, www.tntech.edu/cas/english/bachelor-of-arts-in-english/writing/genre/language-concentration .) At the end of the evening, six students who had won spots by lottery joined Atwood and a small number of faculty for dinner at a local restaurant.

The Bird is the Word! reading series provides students with more frequent one-on-one opportunities to meet and learn from established writers who are generally faculty at other US universities. Funded generously by the department's Jere Mitchum endowment, Bird is the Word! brings visiting poets and fiction writers and was begun by the new English department Chair, who hosts the events. The writers do readings, hold Master Classes for students, and meet socially at the end of the day. A couple of events featuring local writers, students, and faculty on stage supplement the invited guest events, for a total of about 5-6/year. California College of the Arts professor and poet Joseph Lease visited this Fall, and guests this Spring will include Morehead State professor and fiction writer Thomas Williams, and Aimee Parkison, a fiction writer and professor at Oklahoma State University. Both Center Stage and Bird is the Word! augment what's possible with what is presently a rather small creative writing faculty.

The Mitchum fund has in the past also covered transportation and lodging for student field trips taking place at least once a year to the Meacham Writers Workshops, which occur every semester at the nearby University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. For over two decades, one of our professors, now retired, regularly took an average of five or six students from one of his creative writing classes (ENGL 3400, 4340, 4350) on this academic field trip. As of this writing, the program is looking into joining the Southern Literary Festival, which this year will be held at Middle Tennessee State University. Should TTU become a member institution in this organization, we would be eligible to host this festival sometime in the future.

The Mitchum fund does not provide a large amount annually (about 4 years of all the various departmental events it funds would not quite cover the cost of one Center Stage event like Margaret Atwood's visit). But, as relatively unrestricted money, the department has put it to a number of creative uses. In addition to the above and including a festive meal for students and current and emeritus faculty each semester, it has also provided budget for an increased number of events inviting alumni back to campus to share their career experiences with current students and, on occasions when these events have coincided with the university-wide Community Day, prospective students. These have taken place both through the department and through the Society for Technical Communication, the PC concentration club. Alumni have described career opportunities for English majors in a variety of fields, from publishing to finance to marketing to overseeing compliance procedures, as well as experiences as creative writers in the years after graduation. The frequency with which visiting

alumni told stories of the importance of post-graduation internships was one of the factors supporting the recent augmentation of the English internship course. Appendix G also shows how our networking with alumni in the past year and a half has begun to address concerns students have about English careers, by telling the stories of our successful alumni. We are seeking vigorously to counter the criticism of one of our alums that we once were a department that suggested the only opportunity for majors was graduate school in English. In truth, English majors enjoy a wide variety of careers, and we are avidly looking to promote these stories.

The previously mentioned Society for Technical Communication student chapter for Professional Communication majors (although open to all majors) promotes networking among majors and connecting with area businesses, completing service projects, and developing effective communication skills. In addition, the chapter has also focused on helping students acquire useful job-finding skills.

The department's honor society Sigma Tau Delta offers opportunities to socialize and engage students in extracurricular intellectual debate. Recently, STD has begun, encouraged by the department Chair, to discuss becoming more of a classic student English club, to help make the B.A. program more welcoming to new students. This responds to a perception in surveys of both alumni and exiting seniors.

Strength: The program has made excellent use of scant resources with both its theatrical productions and the Bird is the Word! series. The latter augments limited instructional resources with visits from writers who generally are respected university professionals elsewhere.

Strength: The program has begun to strengthen its connections with alumni and use these former program students and their subsequent life experiences as a rich resource.

C. Teaching and Learning

Faculty regularly review teaching evaluation results via their annual effort reports, in which faculty discuss their performance over the year in areas of teaching, scholarship and professional development, service, and advising. Faculty designate the percentage of their efforts that will be devoted to each of these areas. Teaching is weighted at between 70-90% for most program faculty not performing administrative functions. Using IDEA evaluation forms, students assess classes and teaching performance. Junior faculty have all classes evaluated; senior faculty need only have one class evaluated. The department chair rates faculty performance on a 1-5 scale in each area, and the overall score is factored into salary determinations. Not more than 50% of the department's faculty may have a score of 5. Faculty also individually discuss evaluation results with the Chair, including IDEA data, professional accomplishments, service, and plans for improvement over the coming year. Faculty are encouraged to reflect in their Effort Reports upon how teaching strategies and practices have succeeded or fallen short in classes evaluated.

The English department is among the more active research departments in the College of Arts & Sciences. Department members have won the past two College of Arts & Sciences Research Awards, awarded biennially. Another faculty member just returned from the college's only awarded non-instructional leave of 2015. Still another has just had original scholarship published in the Duke University flagship journal, *American Literature*. Yet another is the internationally respected author of a book on the changing significations of the Tower of London. The three creative writers also

published fiction, poetry, and both humorous and scholarly nonfiction, and inaugurated the Bird is the Word! series in September 2015 by each reading from recent work. In the most recent year for which a report is available, refereed scholarship was published by department members in the sub-fields of popular culture, the graphic novel, 19th century American literature, 20th century British literature, and postcolonial literature. Faculty also presented work at national and international conferences on rhetoric and composition, linguistics, Shakespeare, William Blake, Jane Austen, business communication, engineering education, and Iraq war literature. Given that the base teaching load in the department is 4-4, this output is impressive, and in such an environment one can be fairly sure of firm connections between teaching and scholarship. Each of these faculty projects occurred simultaneously with faculty teaching undergraduate courses in these areas.

In the past year, the program took the opportunity, encouraged by senior administration, to offer course releases to professionally active, publishing faculty. We developed criteria, with preferred qualifications being an active publication record; lack of current or recent course releases from other sources; and standing as a member of the graduate faculty and, particularly, one regularly teaching graduate-level courses. In our department, graduate faculty all teach undergraduate courses, as well. Faculty getting course releases then present their research to the department the following semester. The department Chair makes judgments on faculty applications. This system enables support for faculty research, gives the department autonomy to make these decisions, and as well enriches department intellectual life by regularly featuring presentations of faculty scholarship and creative activity.

The department also encourages students to attend undergraduate and regional conferences, workshops, auditions, etc., including the national Sigma Tau Delta convention, the Tennessee Philological Association Conference, and the Southeastern Theatre Association so that they can see how principles they are learning apply in a broader context. Students may travel to these activities with support from departmental endowment funds. In July 2014, an undergraduate presented a work of original scholarship at the Literary London Conference in London, England, and in recent years undergraduates have also presented at The University of Virginia's College at Wise Medieval-Renaissance Conference.

Several faculty have received curriculum redesign grants through the university's Quality Enhancement Program over the past several years. Faculty projects receiving grants have included: a student book project based on interactions with various writers invited to campus, the "Living Writers Project"; providing flip cameras to students with which they recorded their readings and critiques of poems by William Blake, "Flipping Over Poetry"; revising the syllabus for PC 3750-Ethics in the Professions incorporating an ethical question from the student's discipline, using research, and culminating in a poster presentation; revising a British survey class through a creative assignment which asked students to devise speculative, plausible fictions in approaches to canonical authors; developing a course-pairing where students in ENGL 4650-The Graphic Novel coordinated with students in a drawing class to create an anthology of original comics.

Technology has been incorporated into instruction in the program through smart classrooms that came online in Henderson Hall a few years ago. Use of multimedia in the classroom is now commonplace, and students called upon to do presentations make easy and fluid use of the technology. Classes are equipped with the iLearn course management system. Many courses taught within the English B.A. include an online component, including a discussion board where students can ask questions and

receive responses from others in the class; the online environment is also a convenient way to post class and additional resources in an accessible way. Faculty have available a variety of classroom technologies, such as TopHat Monocle, which allows students to respond to real-time surveys in the classroom via their cell phones. Prezi presentation software is utilized by at least one faculty member regularly in both first-year composition and upper-division linguistics classes, so that students learn to showcase their ideas in a clear and engaging way and to effectively move from the written medium of the essay to the visual and oral medium of the presentation. New faculty can also take advantage of Learning About Learning sessions, and get financial incentives to learn about flipped classrooms, cognitive learning, multiple intelligences, and how these might change how we teach.

Departmental teaching methods are not dependent on technologies, but are nevertheless various and tailored to different pedagogical situations. For example, in an effort to ensure students are involved with the material, Professional Communication courses include real world, problem-solving assignments and teamwork. In PC 4970-Professional Communication II students are asked to write a team recommendation report, based on a real-life scenario that can be fictitious or taken from the news. In Creative Writing, the workshop approach is common, wherein students critique each others' work presented as drafts in progress, and have their own work critiqued in turn by the same method. This teaches not only craft, but the ability to articulate responses accurately and with sensitivity, there being a necessity to offer real advice, to help improve the work for a better grade, while at the same time learning to do so in a way that is constructive, building and preserving the self-esteem of peers. The motivation behind the various presentation modes to be seen at the Festival of Student Writing is that students' communicating what they have learned in different, engaging ways further solidifies the knowledge they have gained and turns them into teachers, as well, within an informal environment. Learning Villages, which are communities designed to foster student community and learning interactions within certain campus residence halls, are another mode of non-traditional instruction. Some sections of ENGL 1010 and at least one section of ENGL 2130-American Literature are taught in these villages, and a faculty member who receives course release to act as a Village Head has used this position to help develop an active Spoken Word series on campus, one event of which will be part of Bird is the Word! this Spring.

The department is also engaged in various initiatives to help student writers across campus, and to make the curricular strategies already in place work better. Space constraints will limit the examples to two. Strong undergraduate writers were recruited from within the department to work as embedded tutors in high-risk freshman composition classes, particularly in Spring sections of ENGL 1010 and Summer sections of both 1010 and 1020. These students engaged in peer tutoring as a regular function of the course. The pilot of this program showed significant improvements in students' D-F-W rates. In another initiative, following the Provost's decision to locate all campus tutoring, including for basic writing, under the library's authority, the English department designed a campus-wide writing support service for upper-division students across campus, the Writing Excellence Studio at Tech, or W.E.S.T. Not only will this utilize English department expertise for the benefit of student writers in various major disciplines across campus, but our students, primarily graduate students but also some undergraduates, will benefit from real world training in different professional discourses and writing situations. PC will soon be proposing an internship class whereby our students will work within W.E.S.T., bringing students together from across the divides of our technological university for mutual peer-driven educational experiences.

In three different multi-section classes in different parts of the English major, instructors meet, discuss, and make group decisions about textbooks and teaching strategies. PC 2500 instructors share information about effectively teaching this General Education course through a lunch meeting at least once a semester. THEA 1030 instructors share information about effectively teaching this General Education course through regular conversations throughout the semester. Finally, the director of the composition program holds monthly meetings of instructors teaching the sixty to seventy sections of 1010 and 1020 administered by our department each semester.

Student persistence and success in our courses and program rely in the early years upon the College of Arts & Sciences Student Success Center, which mentors and monitors students in selecting classes, determining a major, and awareness of requirements, to optimize student success. Once a student reaches her sophomore year as an English major, she is advised by one of three departmental advisors, one for both the Literature and Writing/Language/Genre concentrations, and one each for Dramatic Arts and Professional Communication. Student exit data gives high praise to departmental advising, as one of the strongest aspects of the program.

Strength: Faculty are productive in areas of research and professional development, despite heavy teaching loads, a great many modeling scholarship that strengthens teaching. Program faculty routinely receive curriculum redesign grants for innovative teaching practices.

Weakness: The ETS Major Field exam results shows a program that adequately meets a benchmark standard. Faculty should accept the challenge of what it would mean to reach a higher standard and, even if this proves elusive, reflect on what the data are saying and make the attempt.

D. Student Learning Assessment

In Spring 2013, the program began requiring student presentations in ENGL 4995, the program's capstone class. Each student in this class gave a presentation scored on a rubric adapted from a TBR model, thus providing data regarding major students' accomplishments while in the program. Data from this assessment instrument, which was used again in Spring 2014, and will be used again in Spring 2016, appear in the appendix.

Both ENGL 1020 and PC 2500 are assessed as part of the mandated, General Education, TBR assessment process. A list of outcomes is used to assess both research-based essays and oral presentations, and the results are used to improve teaching.

ENGL 3000-Introduction to English Methods and Research, which students take during their Sophomore year, helps assure that student learning is assessed at multiple points throughout the program. This course serves as a bridge between lower- and upper-division ENGL courses. See Appendix C for a list of ways that ENGL 3000 uses a variety of learning assessments and experiences to prepare students for success in the major.

English majors also participate in an exit interview before graduating, during which they give opinions about strengths and weaknesses of their major programs. This information is used to improve course offerings and content, as well as determine possible needed curriculum changes.

Other assessment information is determined by the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Major Field Test our majors take before graduating, the Critical Thinking Assessment Test (some of these results are discussed earlier in the “Overall Performance” section), formal IDEA teaching evaluations, and the undergraduate, graduate, and alumni surveys distributed as part of this self-study. The ten-year SACSCOC review process (and the recently implemented five-year interim evaluation process) also assist in the continuous process of evaluation; the five-year audit/review process has also been helpful in assessing the English major concentrations. Because these various reviews occur at different times, the English B.A. is constantly being assessed.

Another assessment process that takes place is an annual faculty review, during which each faculty member lists specific accomplishments, based on the annual agreement on responsibilities each faculty member fills out at the beginning of the semester. Faculty members complete effort reports which are reviewed by the Chair, and an evaluation is completed for each faculty member, based on ways the report demonstrates fulfilling the agreement on responsibilities. Each faculty member meets with the department Chair to discuss the results of this evaluation. In addition, each semester, grade distribution reports are collected and given to faculty members so that they can see how their evaluation of student work compares with students’ overall GPAs. These reports are included in faculty members’ dossiers as they are progressing toward tenure and promotion.

Assessments have led to a number of improvements in the program in the past four years. In response to feedback from exit interviews, we added to the number and variety of course offerings. This was just one response to exit interview observations. For several years, students had asked for more “real world” experiences as part of the major. We have featured regular events in recent years where alumni of the program come back and report on their experiences and offer advice to current students. This also led us to offer an internship for credit in English as part of the B.A. curriculum. (Currently this is in the last stages of curriculum review processes and will be offered beginning in Summer 2016.) Students also said they wanted more engagement with activities in the major. One way the program has begun to address this is by joining Associated Writing Programs, which offers a variety of connections to the profession of creative writing. We have also over the past several years increased the number of guest writers invited to campus, both on the large scale (Michael Chabon, Art Spiegelman, and Margaret Atwood have all visited TTU through Center Stage funding) and small (poets and small press fiction writers Joseph Lease, Tom Williams, Alissa Nutting, and Aimee Parkison, through the Bird is the Word! Series). This last initiative supports our mission “to enrich students’ cultural experiences.”

With student learning outcomes now in place for all of the core classes of the English major, we are ready as a department to pilot a program of course-embedded assessments of our program. This will not, however, be the inaugural moment of assessing teaching and learning in our program, but only the most recent initiative and mechanism for continuing to assess how teaching and learning take place in our program, a highly developed activity that has been ongoing for many years.

Strength: Successful Teaching and Learning is monitored and reinforced through a variety of assessment instruments at various stages of the program.

4. Potential Recommendations and Associated Initiatives

Based on the preceding analyses, the department suggests the following initiatives:

- Strengthening the growth area of Creative Writing through an additional tenure-track hire that will improve diversity and coverage of different writing disciplines
- Strengthening the growth area of Professional Communication through an additional tenure-track hire that will allow greater development of this understaffed program
- Adding a full-time faculty member with primary responsibility for teaching PC 2500
- Developing PC and easing bottlenecks within the program
- Improving program students' access to graduate education through our "Fast Track" program
- Creating a new space for faculty reflection on data and implementing ideas for program improvement, including data from ETS major field exam.

5. Matrix of Improvement Initiatives

In conclusion, the program has identified the following strategy and timeline for accomplishing improvements:

Initiative	Objective	Who	Performance Indicator	When
1. Hiring additional full-time instructors to staff PC 2500, ENGL 1010-1020	To give program ability to staff GenEd classes without the need being held against staffing needs in English.	English Chair and program faculty, in cooperation with CAS Dean's office and Provost's Office	The hiring of such a faculty member and cooperation of administration	Fall 2016
2. Implement and publicize "Fast Track" BA-MA initiative	To enable students to enter MA from BA more easily	English Chair and Departmental Advisors	Students making use of initiative and entering our MA program	Fall 2016
3. Begin a tradition of periodic retreats to reflect on issues pertinent to the program.	To focus on larger issues raised by assessment data, outside the pressured environment of the academic year.	English Chair and program faculty, in cooperation with CAS Dean's office and Provost's Office	The beginning of such a tradition.	Summer 2016 or 2017

4. Expanding the credit hour choices within the Professional Communication core of courses	To allow more schedule and topic flexibility for Professional Communication students in the Program	Director of the Professional Communication Program	Approval of proposals introducing these changes	Fall 2017
5. Hiring an Tenure-Track faculty member in multidisciplinary Creative Writing	To develop further course options for students in both the writing and dramatic arts concentrations and to develop faculty diversity in this area	English Chair and program faculty, in cooperation with CAS Dean's office and Provost's Office	The hiring of such a faculty member	Fall 2018
6. Hiring a Tenure-Track faculty member in Professional Communication	To provide additional upper-division variety for students in the Professional Communication concentration	English Chair and program faculty, in cooperation with CAS Dean's office and Provost's Office	The hiring of such a faculty member	Fall 2019

Academic Audit Department of English 2015

Academic Audit Follow-Up Report

The Tennessee Technological University English department completed its first academic audit in 2011. The B.A. program received four commendations, three affirmations, and two recommendations. In the years since the 2011 audit, the department has re-structured (the Communication faculty formed a new department of Communication), hired a new Chair for the department of English (2014), hired a new Writing Center director (2014), hired faculty to fill a new lecturer position (2014, 2015), and all this activity done amidst budget constraints and the adjustment to a new university President (2012) and a new Provost (2013). This follow-up report will first address the 2011 recommendations and the improvement initiatives.

Recommendations

(1) “Hire an additional faculty member in technical theater to support a vital General Education program and to provide instruction in stage design.”

In Fall 2014, Nicholas Ryan joined the department of English as a lecturer in technical theater.

In October 2014, the department created two new courses with a technical theater emphasis: THEA 2200 Stagecraft and THEA 3200 Theatrical Design. The addition of a faculty member in technical theater helped to make these new courses possible. Mr. Ryan taught Stagecraft in Spring 2015 and plans to teach it again in Spring 2016. He taught Theatrical Design in Fall 2015, so the courses in technical theater have integrated smoothly into the THEA course offerings.

(2) “Enhance the writing center by working with administration to provide additional space and resources.”

In Fall 2012, the Writing Center moved to a new space in the Volpe Library, affectionately known as the Launch Pad. This space offered two separate rooms for meeting with individual students plus a small conference room for meetings with groups of students. The Launch Pad, located on the east side of the library, offered clear visibility, but also provided privacy so that conferences with students could be held in the enclosed rooms. The Launch Pad had another advantage: it was within a few feet of a row of PCs, a copier, and the technology checkout desk where students and Writing Center staff could check out laptops and iPads or tablets. From the perspective of the English department, as it conducted a search for a Writing Center Director, all was going well.

Unfortunately, a series of miscommunications between the Provost’s office, the Volpe Library, and the English department caused the demise of the Writing Center over the summer of 2014, just as the newly hired Writing Center Director was arriving on campus. During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Provost urged the library to consolidate tutoring services, and writing tutoring was absorbed under the library’s general tutoring umbrella. This apparently occurred at the same time as the department was hiring a new Writing Center Director and its new Chair, neither of whom was informed of this changes until they were already in place. With its newly hired Director having no role in the new

structure, the English department got creative and approached the Provost with a proposal for a new writing support service, a writing studio that would focus not so much on helping students develop basic writing skills but on assisting students with writing projects in upper-division and graduate classes across the campus. W.E.S.T., the Writing Excellence Studio at Tech, began working with students in various academic departments with trainings and assistance on writing projects at the beginning of Spring 2015. By the end of that semester, though, the recently hired Writing Center Director left Tennessee Tech. However, a qualified replacement was found for the job of W.E.S.T. Director in the department's new Lecturer hire. This spring, after clearing away the confusions and obtaining a dedicated space for the studio, W.E.S.T. will be resuming its functions, outfitting the new space with the aid of funding from the Provost's office. There is enthusiasm across campus from chairs and directors of professional programs in the Colleges of Engineering and Business, and conversations have begun regarding the enhancement of technical writing offerings in the PC concentration. The chance to work with upper-division and graduate students on writing projects in different fields, acquiring skills and experience in technical languages, is seen as a long-term advantage for the English department, largely pertaining to our M.A. students (and supporting what we have found with regard to our alumni's career choices), and with benefits likely to augment our B.A. program as well.

Initiatives for Improvement

(1) Broadening learning objectives to include the new concentrations

The current learning objectives for English majors are appropriate for all four concentrations (Literature, Writing/Language/Genre, Dramatic Arts, Professional Communication) in the major. All English majors take the same core courses: ENGL 3000, ENGL 3810, ENGL 3820, ENGL 3910, ENGL 3920, ENGL 4121, ENGL 4995. The program's learning objectives were developed based on this core. Perhaps the program could develop another set of learning objectives that are specific to each concentration.

(2) Comparing the goals of the TTU English B.A. program to those of comparable programs

The department actually found looking at the curricula of comparable English programs to be more helpful than comparing goals. The department has looked at curricula at East Tennessee State University, Middle Tennessee State University, and Austin Peay State University. Of special interest was the role that "author" courses and film studies play in the curricula of other universities. The department did approve a new course in film studies to be effective Fall 2016, with a THEA designation.

(3) Determining the feasibility of offering courses on topics not currently offered

Active hiring in recent years has created the potential for many new courses, moving forward, as a comparison of Appendix A-*List of faculty members' expertise* with the like-titled list from five years ago will show. The program has a topics course with an ENGL prefix, which could be used for topics not included in any of the course blocks. In Spring 2015, a course on Jane Austen was offered as ENGL 4240-Topics in British Literature after 1667. With the hiring of a Lecturer in technical theater, the program was able to expand its course offerings in theater with THEA 3200-Theatrical Design.

Another new faculty member, a soon-to-be Lecturer in English, the spouse of the newly hired Chair (currently on a temporary Instructor line), is teaching a new ENGL 4340-Topics in American Literature course in Spring 2016, American Life Writing. The new Chair has preliminarily identified courses in multi-ethnic literatures and modern and postmodern poetry as among the currently under-represented areas, in addition to tentatively planned hiring in Creative Writing and Professional Communication. The College of Arts & Sciences clearly being shown as very profitable by newly adopted methods of accounting at the university, more course variety is being encouraged, with the allowance of a greater number of courses being offered than in recent years.

(4) Providing more internship opportunities

The program's curriculum committee has approved a revised course description of the ENGL internship to enhance the likelihood that students will take the course. In the past, internship hours could not substitute for required or elective English courses. With the revision, students can use internship hours for ENGL elective hours, and a reflective framework is built in, so that students will be asked to make connections between the work experience and their studies. One internship was offered in the department on this model during Fall 2015. In 2012, the department created an internship course in Dramatic Arts, THEA 4600. In addition, efforts have been made in the past two years to create stronger ties with alumni, who both encourage current students to engage in internships and give the department new leads on internship opportunities.

(5) Bridging the gap between lower-and upper-division courses

The primary approaches the program uses to help students move from lower- to upper-division courses are included in ENGL 3000, which is required of all ENGL majors. The two faculty members who alternate teaching this course have provided descriptions of activities and assignments included in ENGL 3000 that assist students in the transition into upper-level courses. See Appendix C for more detail.

(6) Creating ways to make students aware of the repeat-for-additional-credit option for 4000-level creative writing courses

The catalog course descriptions of 4000-level creative writing courses indicate that the courses can be repeated for credit if the topic is different each time. Also, some instructors of creative writing courses indicate on course syllabi that the course can be repeated as long as the topic is different. The program is continuing its efforts to make this point clear to students. Since the arrival of the new department Chair, Creative Writing offerings have increased, with greater enrollment, and the department has joined the Associated Writing Programs.

(7) Determining the feasibility of hiring an additional creative writing faculty member in playwriting/scriptwriting

Even though a faculty member who taught creative writing retired in Spring 2015, the program had an urgent hiring need in another area (early American literature); this search is currently underway. The department requested and received permission to invite a Lecturer of creative writing for Fall 2016, but has decided not to do this search and try to make the line a tenure-track hire for Fall 2017. The current thinking is that a playwriting/scriptwriting specialization might be rolled into a tenure-track, multi-genre creative writing search.

(8) Learning more from curricula of other programs at other institutions regarding Professional Communication

In 2014, the director of the Professional Communication program, at the suggestion of the department Chair, formed an external Professional Communication Advisory Board. The board received a list of questions designed to elicit feedback on the Professional Communication Program, its courses, areas that could be strengthened, and branding ideas. Some of the feedback received compared the PC program at TTU with other programs and minors, such as programs at East Carolina University, the University of Nevada Las Vegas, Indiana University Purdue University Columbus, and Fairfield University. One of the board members observed that the Professional Communication concentration was unusually robust when compared with the other Professional Communication or Writing concentrations or minors; while most of these required approximately 15 credit hours, TTU's program requires 24 credit hours of core PC courses in addition to 21 credit hours (excluding General Education hours) of English core courses. Students can take an additional 21 credit hours of free electives in addition to those courses. The board member commented, "Your program has set rigorous expectations for student learning." To further brand the program and strengthen it, the board member suggested a list of additional courses/topics that might be considered in the future.

In addition to this feedback, the Professional Communication program director also looked at programs from "sister" institutions, such as Virginia Tech and Texas Tech. Texas Tech has a Technical Communication major and requires 30 credit hours of core courses in the major; however, it includes options to take courses in Composition, Website Design, and Interaction Design, and no additional English courses appear to be required. This program included a special topics course in its course offerings. The Professional and Technical Writing major at Virginia Tech requires 19 credit hours and includes courses similar to the ones in the PC Program at TTU; the Virginia Tech program requires an eportfolio.

The comments received from the advisory board seemed the most helpful when comparing TTU's program to others; as a result, the director would like to offer students a couple of additional course options for students to take within the PC core, based on faculty expertise, as well as a special topics course.

(9) Identifying out-of-class activities that would be useful for Professional Communication students

The director of the Professional Communication program publicizes special events that would be useful to students via email and in-class announcements. Some recent examples of those events are a "Friday Night Hacks" Event sponsored by the Biz Foundry just off campus; students could attend, network with local website developers, and learn design and development skills from scratch. Through the student chapter of the Society for Technical Communication, students created an event named "Cans and Communication," which helped raise awareness and funds for the TTU food pantry and provided service activities for the students and chapter. The director has also continued to develop more internship opportunities for students, including meeting with company representatives when they visit campus, such as employees of the Jackson Financial Group, who visited with the director recently to discuss internship opportunities. These companies are often represented at TTU career fairs, as well, and the director provides contact information to students so that they can attend these career fairs and

greet these representatives by name.

(10) Hiring an additional full-time Theatre faculty member in the area of technical theatre

In Fall 2014, the department hired a lecturer in technical theatre. (See Recommendation One above.)

(11) Learning more from curricula of other programs at other institutions regarding Theatre

See Initiative for Improvement Three above.

(12) Identifying out-of-class activities that would be useful for Theatre students

More out-of-class activities identified include technical internships at the Cookeville Performing Arts Center and summer acting/technical internships at the Knoxville or Nashville Shakespeare Festivals. The program is beginning to introduce students to these.

Appendices

Appendix A

List of faculty members' expertise

I. British

Old & Middle English – Laird, Saya
 Chaucer – Laird
 Shakespeare – Deiter, Laird
 Romanticism – McQuail
 20th Century – McQuail, Saya
 Postmodern/Contemporary – Williams

Renaissance/Early Modern – Deiter, Laird
 Milton – Deiter
 18th Century – Null
 Victorian – McQuail
 Tolkien – Laird
 Postcolonial – Rideout

II. American

Early American – (hiring for 2016-17)
 20th Century Poetry – Burduck, Saya
 Poe – Burduck
 African-American – McQuail
 Comparative Ethnic – Moynihan
 Beat Generation – Pelton

19th Century – Burduck, Williams, Pelton
 Faulkner – Burduck
 Melville – Pelton
 Asian-American – Moynihan
 Contemporary (fiction) – Williams, Pelton

III. Writing

Professional Writing – Fisk, Pickering
 Creative Writing: Poetry – Saya
 CW: Essay/Literary Nonfiction – O'Rourke
 Digital Writing/Design & Presentation – Fisk, Henry

Rhetoric/Composition – Baker, Pickering
 CW: Fiction – O'Rourke, Pelton
 Technical Writing – Fisk, Pickering

IV. Genres

Poetry – McQuail, Saya
 Graphic Novel – Baker
 Autobiography – Moynihan
 Gothic – Burduck

Novel – McQuail, Null, Pelton
 Drama – Eisen
 Children's Literature (Blake) – McQuail
 Folklore – Kash

V. Cultural Studies & Comparative Literature

Global/World Trauma Lit – Williams, Moynihan
 Literature & Psychology – McQuail
 Literature & the Environment – Williams
 Media Studies (Film, Tech) – Creter, Henry
 Postmodern/Contemporary Fiction – Baker, Pelton, Williams
 Women's Studies – McQuail, Moynihan

Non-Western Literature – Null
 Literary Criticism & Theory – Deiter
 Scientific Writing – Henry
 Bible as Literature – Smith

VI. Theory and Methods

Intro to Grad Studies – Baker, Deiter, McQuail
Intro to English Methods – Baker, Deiter, McQuail

Teaching Composition – Baker

VII. Language

Advanced Grammar – Laird
General Linguistics – Bounds
Dialectology/Sociolinguistics/American Language – Bounds
History of English Language – Bounds

Appendix B

Undergraduate Graduation Rates for the Department of English (Fall 2011 through Fall 2015)

Semester	Literature	Professional Communication	Writing	Theatre
Fall 2011	0	0	0	0
Spring 2012	3	1	3	1
Summer 2012	0	0	0	0
Fall 2012	0	1	3	0
Spring 2013	8	3	3	0
Summer 2013	0	0	1	0
Fall 2013	5	1	2	1
Spring 2014	1	3	1	0
Summer 2014	1	0	1	0
Fall 2014	6	0	0	0
Spring 2015	8	2	0	1
Summer 2015	0	0	0	0
Fall 2015	5	0	1	1

Appendix C

ENGL 3000

The list below indicates some of the ways that ENGL 3000 provides a link between lower-and upper-division ENGL courses:

1. In upper-division classes, students are required to follow the *MLA Handbook* without much direct instruction on MLA style. In ENGL 3000, students read the entire *MLA Handbook* and discuss every chapter and extensively practice accurate MLA style.

2. In upper-division classes, students usually write 8-15 page essays that frequently make use of some critical approach to literature. In ENGL 3000, students write two papers: one five-page group paper on a short story, as a scaffolding technique for students who are learning literary theory for the first time. Then they write another five-page paper on their own, analyzing a Shakespearean play from any critical approach other than the one used in the first essay.
3. In ENGL 3000, in the weeks before the first paper is due, each student presents, in class, a 15-minute analysis of a poem from any critical approach. Presenting, and watching their classmates present, gives the students additional practice with the critical approaches and helps build their confidence in their literary analysis skills.
4. In upper-division classes, students usually read and analyze book-length works of literary scholarship, usually with each student leading the discussion and analysis of a chapter. In ENGL 3000, students read an introduction to literary analysis textbook and, with a partner and/or as a whole class, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of many sample critical essays by former students (used with permission).
5. In ENGL 3000, students are expected to develop their literary vocabulary by looking up terms in a literary dictionary.

Appendix D

ENGL 4995 – Senior Colloquium

Rubric for Assessing Students' Oral Presentations in Capstone

ENGL 4995 is offered each Spring and seniors in all concentrations are required to take it. An oral presentation is required, which is scaled on a ten-category rubric - (5) Excellent / (4) Very Good / (3) Good / (2) Fair / (1) Poor

Organization/Content

1. Student presented a clear thesis statement at the beginning of the presentation.
2. The presentation contained well-organized main points related to the thesis.
3. Student developed the main points using effective rhetorical strategies.
4. Sources used were appropriate to the purpose of the presentation and were managed well.
5. Technical/audience-specific terms were explained; topic was appropriate for designated audience.

Visual Aid

6. The visual aid was visible, easily readable, and presented in a non-distracting manner using appropriate technological media.

Presentation Quality

7. Student presented using correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.
8. Student used few fillers and maintained an extemporaneous style.
9. Speaker dynamics, eye contact, and attire were appropriate for the purpose and context of the presentation.
10. Student created a welcoming environment for audience interaction, including dialogue and questions, where appropriate.

2013 results indicated that over half of our majors scored either (5) “Excellent” or (4) “Very Good.” Use of sources and development of main points are the areas that needed most improvement. Over 70% of the students scored either “Excellent” or “Very Good” in the presentation categories.

2014 results indicated that over half of our majors again scored either (5) “Excellent” or (4) “Very Good” overall. No areas were clearly better or worse than others, as a rule.

In 2015, owing to a change in departmental leadership in 2014-15 and an ensuing communication mix-up regarding use of the rubric in the Senior Colloquium, no data was gathered. The presentation assignment and rubric will again be used in Spring 2016.

Appendix E

Tennessee Technological University Department of English

Survey for graduating English BA students

Name:

Email address: (address to be used after you graduate):

Graduation date (circle one): December - May - August _____ (year)

Concentration: ___ Literature ___ Writing ___ PC ___ Thea

Address after graduation:

Plans immediately following graduation:

For the following questions you may continue on the back of the sheet:

1. What factors led you to major in English at TTU?
2. What aspects of the BA program do you consider its strengths?
3. In what areas do you think the program might be improved?
4. Are you satisfied with the quality of advisement and other support you received?
5. Has the English BA program helped you clarify your career goals?
6. Review the learning outcomes (below) of the English BA program. Do you feel that your work in the program has enabled you to meet any or all of these outcomes? Please explain.

Students will demonstrate

- * the capacity to write and speak clearly, read perceptively, and think critically;
- * understanding of historical traditions in British and American literature;
- * understanding of how written and spoken language expresses diverse cultural experiences;
- * understanding of the functions and historical development of the English language.

Appendix F

Results of Survey of Graduating English BA Students

21 respondents. Multiple responses by some individuals account for extra responses and totals over 100% in some categories.

1. What factors led you to major in English at TTU?

Passion for reading & writing (12)	57%
Dissatisfactions with previous major (5)	24%
Enjoyed classes in English program (2)	10%
Passion for theatre (2)	10%
Desire to teach (2)	10%

2. What aspects of the BA program do you consider its strengths?

Caring & knowledgeable professors (14)	67%
Quality of classes/classic English education (4)	19%
Small classes (3)	14%
Development of empathy; ability to listen without judgment (3)	14%

Also mentioned: Creative writing; theatre; professional communication; general writing emphasis

3. In what areas do you think the program might be improved?

Number of class options (6)	29%
Outreach to other majors; welcoming programs (3)	14%
No weaknesses (3)	14%
Emphasis on diversity (2)	10%
Info on degree requirements (2)	10%
More contemporary literature (2)	10%
Some faculty unfair (2)	10%

Also mentioned: better computer classroom access; more creative writing opportunities (compared to art & music programs); more help for transfer student transitioning; more MLA citation instruction; more passionate professors

4. Are you satisfied with the quality of advisement and other support you received?

Yes (20)	95%
No (1)	5%

5. Has the English BA program helped you clarify your career goals?

Yes (14)	67%
Yes & no; more tools could be provided (5)	24%
No (2)	10%

6. Review the learning outcomes of the English BA program. Do you feel that your work in the program has enabled you to meet any or all of these outcomes?

All met (15)	71%
Deficient in development of English language (4)	19%
Deficient in expressing diverse cultural experiences (2)	10%

Appendix G

Tennessee Technological University Department of English

Alumni Survey

After each question below, except for the last two, please enter the number that most closely expresses your response: 4 = strongly agree; 3 = somewhat agree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 1 = strongly disagree.

1. Have you pursued a career related to your major?
2. Did the courses you took in English at Tech help prepare you for that career?
3. Did the English major provide you with diverse cultural experiences?
4. Did the English major provide you with effective experience communicating orally and in writing?
5. Do you feel you were mentored adequately as you transitioned from your university career to the workplace?
6. In your opinion, what were some strengths and weaknesses of your major program?

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

7. What was your area of concentration or course specialty and what year did you graduate? :

We are also interested in finding out more about our graduates. Please take a moment, if you'd like, to tell us where you are these days, what you're doing, and if there is a better email (or phone number) at which to contact you. (It is entirely up to you what you choose to share, and we only will use the information you give us within the English department.) We are looking to keep better connections with our alums, and hope in time to develop a newsletter, in which we may pass on your news to other alumni, as well as keeping you informed about events in English at TTU. English and Communications became two separate departments about three years ago, and I joined Tech as Chair at the beginning of last year. Since then, we've had some events where we've invited alums back to campus to talk about their experiences with our current students, and we are hoping one day to stage

an alumni reunion, if we can connect with enough folks who would be interested. (You can also just answer these questions and choose to remain anonymous.)

(*Voluntary*) What's your name & what are you up to?

Appendix H

Alumni Survey Results

Question	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	No response
1. Career related to major?	10 67%	2 14%	3 20%	0 0%	0 0%
2. English courses prepare you for career?	8 53%	6 40%	1 7%	0 0%	0 0%
3. English major provide diverse cultural experiences?	6 40%	4 27%	4 27%	1 7%	0 0%
4. English major provide effective communicating orally and in writing?	12 80%	2 14%	0 0%	0 0%	1 7%
5. Mentored adequately from university career to the workplace?	2 14%	6 40%	4 27%	3 20%	0 0%

Strengths:

- More than half (8 of 14) mentioned enthusiastic, caring, knowledgeable professors who had a focus on teaching;
- Roughly a third of responses (4 of 14) singled out the emphasis on strong writing, research, and written communication skills;
- While hard to separate from praise for faculty, several (3 of 14) responses singled out the strong curriculum that established a strong foundation in canonical authors.

Weaknesses:

- Roughly a third of responses (4 of 14) noted the lack of career counseling, appropriate direction, and/or understanding of real world applicability of the English degree, beyond “pushing” students to go to grad school in English;
- A number of different facets received mention, but to put some like responses together, several (4 of 14) mentioned the English department as in one way or another being poorly connected to opportunities and realities outside the department; for some this was reflected in a lack of diversity or “the new” in literature, including critical theory; for others, this presented as insularity, or lack of connection to the life of the university.

Respondents to the survey were distributed as follows:

<u>Year</u>			
2010-14	6	1995-99	2
2005-09	3	pre-1995	2 (earliest grad, 1986)
2000-04	3		

Specialization

Literature	7	Professional Communication	1
M.A. program	4	Dramatic Arts	1
Writing/Genre/Language	3		

Twelve alumni volunteered to tell us about their current careers or after-TTU activities; they represent a range of recent grads to TTU students from as far back as thirty years ago. Together they give a snapshot of the wide variety of career trajectories taken by graduates of our English major, and how English prepares students for a variety of professions -- “real world” stories we are passing along to our current students.

- I’m currently pursuing a PhD in literature at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.
- I graduated law school at U of Memphis Law this past May at #2 in my class of 110 law students. I passed the July bar exam, and recently started my first job as a JAG lawyer for the Air Force at Cannon AFB, NM.

- I'm a 15-year full-time lecturer of English at MTSU and the Poetry Editor for *2nd & Church*, a literary magazine based in Nashville.
- Since graduating in 2012, I have gone on to earn my MBA. I am now in the process of seeking my doctoral degree in higher education administration. I am currently employed as a territory manager and enrollment counselor at King University.
- I'm a Technical Writer for a Department of Defense contractor in the Nashville area (L-3 ForceX). I write documentation for software used in military applications.
- I am a freelance marketing writer for Amazon. I write promotional text copy for books (ie: the back covers of books, the author biographies and book descriptions on Amazon.com, etc.).
- I am a Legislative Auditor for the Comptroller of the Treasury of the State of Tennessee. Though I later went back and received an accounting degree, I found that the skills I learned as an English major are far more valuable in my career.
- I am working with Chattanooga State Community College in a college-readiness program. I am looking at beginning grad school in the fall, continuing my English Literature education, with the ultimate goal of teaching at the university level.
- I received my MA, and completed coursework and part of a dissertation before starting a career in 2009 with a labor union. I am now the communications director for the American Federation of Teachers-Wisconsin.
- I am the Communications Program Coordinator for the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center in Nashville, a nonprofit research organization serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. In my free time, I am a professional and community theatre actor and director.
- I currently work in Admissions/Records for the Cookeville Higher Education Campus (previously the satellite campus of Nashville State Community College).
- I am a national chess consultant and work with educators across the country to help them connect chess to the development of literacy, math, critical thinking, and life skills. In 2015 I was given the UT Dallas Chess Educator of the year award.

Appendix I

Sources of Evidence Available

Type of Evidence	Where Evidence Is Available
Undergraduate Survey	Appendices E
Alumni Survey	Appendix G
Survey Responses	Appendix F and H
Assessment Data	https://www.tntech.edu/assessment/assessment-tools/
Enrollment Numbers	Self-Study Introduction Also, see https://tennesseetechuniversity.sharepoint.com/sites/research/techsource/Shared%20Documents/Enrollment/Fall/Program%20and%20Concentration/ALL_Program%20and%20Concentration%20Fall%202015.pdf .

Course Syllabi	The English Office
Graduation Requirements	Degree Works (available for demonstration in The English Office)
Undergraduate Online Catalog	http://catalog.tntech.edu/index.php
General Education Core	http://catalog.tntech.edu/content.php?navoid=3465&catoid=19#TTU_Courses_Recommended_for_the_TBR_General_Education_Core
Faculty Vitae	The English Office
Annual Reports	The English Office