OVERVIEW

The Review Schedule. This report describes our department’s progress in program review since the “2006-2007 Annual Program Review Report” was submitted on September 10, 2007. Our department initially submitted an Assessment Plan on January 14, 2004, based on a department self-study completed in Summer 2000. Our initial five-year reviewing cycle was originally due to be completed in 2006. However, the five-year cycle was expanded by the PRC to a six-year cycle, in view of the constraints placed on faculty time by the effort to prepare for the 2006 WASC Review. The English Department, in view of significant staffing changes during the period now under review, has been scheduled to submit its report late in the reporting cycle. It is scheduled to submit its six-year report in Fall, 2010.

The Focus of Our Program Review in 2007-2008. Formal program review continued in the English Department during the 2007-2008 academic year, but due to a change in department leadership and transitions in staffing, we were compelled to change focus. When the department did address program review, we suspended the kind of pre- and post-testing, information-gathering, and collective paper grading that we reported as progress in the 2006-2007 Annual Update. However, the departmental discussions we had had from 2004-2007, based on the gathering and interpreting of such data, did help to produce two major impacts on our department. First, they altered the focus of our hiring effort in fall
Second, they revealed to us the need to “downshift,” i.e., to push the level of discussion to questions of shared values, directions, and understandings. Pressured by a transition in leadership and staffing, we had to acknowledge that we had been working in a vacuum, without a mission statement. Lacking a mission statement, we lacked the grounding needed for setting goals, naming outcomes, setting standards and measuring our progress in sustainable ways. We needed to articulate our mission so that we could steady our purpose through a time of staffing turnover. And we needed to involve the new members of our English faculty in the process of crafting the mission statement so that we could share a sense of ownership over the result, and so that we could hear some fresh voices in the conversation. Having done that now, we have been able to begin to select a smaller, more manageable set of outcomes to concentrate on in the future, drawing upon the document “What We Want for Our Majors,” which continues to serve as our guide as it has for the past four years. In a sense, we had gotten ahead of ourselves and have spent this year catching up. The discussions of outcomes that we have already had, as reported in the last several annual reports, will serve as useful points of departure as we refocus our program review in the year ahead.

Needless to say, a report of downward or backward steps cannot fit tidily into the prescribed format for these annual reports, which asks for evidence of forward movement toward explicit goals, including interpretation of data. In this report, we will need to describe the staffing changes in the department in relation to our program review, the process of writing a mission statement, the mission statement resulting from our collaborative effort, the selection of outcomes to focus on in the future in light of
the new mission statement, and the schedule for our future steps in program review.

Staffing Changes in Relation to Program Review

Early in this reviewing cycle, our department summarized its goals for English students in the document “What We Want for Our Majors,” which appears on our department website as “Goals for Our Majors” ([http://www.westmont.edu/_academics/departments/english/goals-for-our-majors.html](http://www.westmont.edu/_academics/departments/english/goals-for-our-majors.html)).

The discussion that surrounded that statement, combined with other developments in the college and the profession, influenced our decision in 2005-2006 to devote our two open positions to World Anglophone Literature and Post-Colonial English Literature. We filled one position by hiring Dr. Kathryn Stelmach, and the other position was withdrawn to be reopened in Fall 2006. As reported in our 2006-2007 Annual Program Review Report, we continued intermittently to work on collective paper grading, on pre- and post-testing in our survey course, and on gauging student performance on a bibliographic essay or annotated bibliography in our major authors course. By Fall 2006, however, thanks to the ongoing attention we were paying to the quality of student writing, we had gradually become committed to the idea of hiring a person whose specialty would lie in the area of Composition and Rhetorical Studies. Such a person would be able to give leadership in this area and, by carrying a larger load in composition than in literature, would allow others to carry a proportionally larger load in literature. We were approved for two open positions in Fall 2007, one in World Anglophone Literature and the other in Composition.

The academic year 2007-8, consequently, has marked a time of major transition in the staffing and focus of the English Department, a year at the end of which two full professors
and an adjunct left. In the same year, Prof. Stelmach taught for her first full year here, and Paul Willis was away for the entire year on a sabbatical appointment. In the Fall, we carried out our two national job searches. The winning candidate for a World Anglophone literature position turned down the offer, whereas the winning candidate in Composition, Prof. Sarah Yoder, accepted our offer and has now joined us to begin teaching in the Fall 2008 semester. To fill remaining gaps, we hired Profs. Candace Hull Taylor to teach on a two-year contract beginning in Fall 2008 and Christina Pages to teach half-time during the 2008-9 school year. In addition to the changes in personnel, we also underwent a change in leadership, as Prof. Delaney stepped down as department chair to be replaced by Prof. VanderMey. Delaney and VanderMey, however, both spent a considerable portion of the year preparing to lead off-campus programs beginning in late August, 2008—the England Semester and the Europe Semester, respectively.

Under the circumstances, program review took the form of addressing more fundamental questions of direction and purpose, questions meant to help our newly reconstituted department maintain its traditional commitments while preparing it to formulate appropriate new goals and outcomes. Our foremost accomplishment was to adopt a new departmental mission statement at the end of Summer 2008, at the first gathering of our present collection of full-time faculty.

The Process of Writing a Mission Statement

In September, 2007, the Chair initiated an envisioning process by sending out an e-mail attachment titled “Slouching Toward Bethlehem . . .” to all members of the department (see appendices A and B). The document listed 13 dimensions of concern for our future welfare as a
department. Members were invited to state the best they could envision for us under each heading and to circulate their comments round-robin-style by hitting “Reply All.” The whole on-line conversation—full of life, wisdom, and good humor—was thus made available to all. At a department meeting on February 4, as offers for the new positions were being sent out, the Chair raised the prospect of working together on a department mission statement, as well as simplifying the statement of “What We Want for Our Majors.” He handed out a worksheet for drafting a mission statement, reminding members of all the different “things we deal with and do.” At the February 12 meeting, the Chair handed out an incomplete draft of a mission statement for the department’s consideration. In the last department meeting of the year, on April 15, 2008, the department met with Prof. Marianne Robins, the interim assessment coordinator, to clarify our place in the program review cycle. Prof. Robins urged the department to meet during the summer to craft a departmental mission statement, to simplify the list of 21 learning outcomes, and to create a schedule for working on mission, curriculum, and goals. On August 11, 2008, all full-time members of the department gathered in Reynolds Hall for a four-hour program review meeting, at which we drafted and revised a mission statement and began to shorten our list of learning outcomes. We did not complete the attempt to shorten the list, nor did we reach the last item on the agenda: “Pull back and name ‘bigger picture’ issues (OPEN DISCUSSION: what’s on a 5-year, 10-year horizon? What legacies to preserve? How to grow, renew or clarify our task as a department; what’s the ‘next level’ for us?) Such a discussion will have to await the return of Delaney and VanderMey from their fall semesters abroad.

Our New Mission Statement
Here is the mission statement crafted by the department and adopted by consensus:

Westmont College Department of English

Our Mission

We strive to glorify God by guiding students toward excellence in the understanding and use of the English language. We view the expressive capacity of English, in all its complexity, as an invaluable gift of which we are to be faithful stewards. By teaching students to think critically, read and write with rhetorical sensitivity, and interpret imaginative literature insightfully we seek to enlarge students’ sympathies and deepen their correspondence with others’ lives. Thus we seek to prepare them to participate more effectively, across a wide array of careers, in a globally interdependent community. Toward that end we teach courses and involve students in a wider culture of literacy, treating English as a medium for the uniquely enjoyable and intellectually demanding acts of creating and interpreting literature; as a language system among other language systems, as a historically embedded and continually evolving vehicle of communication; as a forum for the making of meanings and contesting of values; and as a locus of social, ideological, and spiritual struggle.

Selection of Outcomes

In the time remaining after we adopted the Mission Statement, we took up the document “Goals for Our Majors” and examined the 21 sentence completions pertaining to what our graduating majors should be able to do as “Writers” and “Readers”. Initially, we needed to clarify whether we should write outcomes for our department or outcomes for our
students, and whether we should write outcomes for our majors or outcomes for all the students we serve, including the many non-majors in GE and classes. A call to Marianne Robins over the lunch hour and her visit to the department at the end of the workshop settled the questions. Although program goals are necessary and good, our task in this review cycle is to name outcomes for students and then study whether selected outcomes are being realized. Whether we specify outcomes for majors or for all students who pass through our courses is up to us, depending on our departmental culture and our collective character and leaning.

As we discussed this question, we agreed that the skills, understandings, and commitments we want to cultivate in all of our students are most explicitly articulated in “Goals for our Majors.” So we would draw a limited number of outcomes (6-7) from that statement and phrase them so that they could apply to students more generally wherever appropriate. In follow-up conversation, Prof. Robins proposed that we devote a sub-section of the outcomes to students in our GE courses, since our service to the college at that level is extensive. Here is where we do well to be reminded of the central assessment questions stressed in the Program Review Committee’s October 21, 2005 memo to the faculty: “How do you know students are learning what you want them to learn? What does the evidence you have gathered tell you about the quality of that learning? What do you intend to do differently as a department or program as a result of your joint reflection on that evidence?”

Goals and Outcomes for Readers

With respect to students as readers, we agreed that we would have our hands full in the foreseeable future if we would
derive outcomes from the first three of the “goals for our majors.” They are as follows:

AS READERS our graduating majors should be able to . .

1. Summarize, analyze, and evaluate any piece of writing in any genre: to be able to articulate what the writer is saying (content), how he or she has chosen to present the message (techniques and strategies), and why he or she might have chosen to do it that way (effects and purposes). (critical-interdisciplinary thinking)

2. Recognize how contexts (historical, cultural, biographical, literary) frame the work and shape its meaning. This includes both the context in which the writer produced the work and the context in which the reader reads it. (active societal and intellectual engagement and diversity)

3. Access scholarly material using appropriate online bibliographic tools (e.g., MLA International Bibliography, World Shakespeare Bibliography, JSTOR, Humanities Index, Article First) (research and technology)

With respect to students as writers, we agreed to derive outcomes from goals # 2, 5, and 7:

AS WRITERS our graduating majors should be able to . .

2. Write correct, clear, readable, persuasive and lively prose. This includes mastering the basics of grammar and mechanics, and basic grammatical terms. (written and oral communication)

5. Move comfortably among the various modes of writing—expository, argumentative, descriptive, narrative, and lyrical—with awareness of their strategies and purposes. (written and oral communication)
7. Incorporate the voices of others into their writing, skillfully acknowledging their indebtedness to the thinking and research of others while providing appropriate documentation in MLA or Chicago Manual of Style format. (research and technology)

We see all six of these goals as cutting across the many types of students, subjects, and classes we deal with in our department. We see them as being compatible, perhaps even redundant, in emphasis—see, for example, # 3 and #7 above. We recognize that they touch on the majority of our seven college-wide learning standards, and so lend themselves to assessment of student learning in GE courses. We see them as capable of being specified in the form of specific and measurable outcomes.

Some of these goals align with steps we have already taken to assess students’ work. We have a department document—tantamount to a grading rubric— included as Appendix B in last year’s annual report and attached again here as Appendix C, which sets forth criteria for “mastery, proficiency, competency, and unsatisfactory performance” in 1) Research, 2) Use of Quotations, 3) Documentation, 4) Writing Correct, Clear, Readable, Persuasive Prose, and 5) Analysis. These correspond to all of the six goals we have selected except for Reading #2 and Writing #5.

**Future steps**

1) The most obvious step for the department to take in the 2008 fall semester is to turn the “rubric” into concrete, observable outcomes and to specify how we wish to observe the quality of students’ work in each of the five designated areas.
2) A next reasonable step would be to set a standard for each of the five and set a benchmark we would like to attain by the end of a specific period of time.

3) A more challenging and thus subsequent step will be to turn the goals for Reading #2 and Writing #5 similarly into observable outcomes with benchmarks and targets in time.

4) A more extended project would be to articulate a set of goals for Thinking, parallel with our goals for Reading and Writing, since we all agree that Thinking, Reading, and Writing are the three legs of the triangle in our department’s mission, even though we have never yet explicitly set down our goals for improving our students’ thinking.

These prescribed steps are an effort to make measurable progress of our own in the year ahead before we summarize our achievements in a six-year report. They pass over the fact that there are many wishes and plans we have offered in the past that have not come to pass. And there are bigger questions facing us concerning our focus as a department, our staffing, and our relation to the rest of the institution. We face larger questions such as these:

1) What will be our staffing needs in the future, in terms of diversity, area of specialization, and the character of those we hire?

2) How will we define and balance our commitments to students in the currently more marginal areas of creative writing, journalism, film studies, world literature, and student internships?

3) How will we prepare students specifically for careers in teaching in the English literature and language areas?

4) How will we shape and staff the England Semester so that it thrives and meets our goals in the years
ahead? How will we be involved as a department in other off-campus programs?

5) How will we improve our program in its address to questions of faith and learning, especially in view of the changing professional, political, and religious landscape in the world around us?

What we wish to avoid is allowing our immersion in the minutiae of assessment of student learning outcomes to crowd out time for these larger conversations. Adopting a mission statement and selecting limited goals to turn into student learning outcomes, while being a modest achievement for one year, is at least a balanced sort of progress toward both the technical side of assessment and the larger questions of vision.
APPENDIX A

Use the spaces below to record your best (or first) thoughts on the subject named. What is the best you can realistically envision for us as a department in ten years with respect to:

The Department’s reputation (local, regional, national, international)

Quality of our graduates

Teaching prowess (power, range, versatility, craft, conviction, intensity…)

Collegiality (mutual support, mutual regard)

Professional development (publications, new ventures, presentations, performances)

Off-campus programs (variety, quality, focus, strength, tradition, financial strength)

Hiring

Endowed chair

Diversity (faculty, students, courses, methods)

Curriculum (preservation, innovation)

Facilities

Balance of reading, writing, theorizing, engaging in action

Service to the institution

Suggest another category . . .
APPENDIX B

Use the spaces below to record your best (or first) thoughts on the subject named. What is the best you can realistically envision for us as a department in ten years with respect to:

The Department’s reputation (local, regional, national, international)

KS: I would like to see the department and college ranked as highly as Wheaton—if not higher.
CLH: This issue is less compelling to me than most of the others here.
JS: I don’t know how to envision this apart from the realities of individuals’ enterprises, both pedagogical and scholarly.
RVM: A recognizable and respected profile nationally visible based on the accomplishments, character, and professional involvements of members of the dept.
MM: I think we’ve done a lot to clarify our unique niche in higher education. I think we already have a very strong regional and fairly strong national reputation among Christian colleges, and would like to see Gayle et al continue to try to position us on the map with schools like Pomona, Carleton, Davidson, Amherst, and similar top liberal arts schools.
PJW: I resonate with Cheri and John on this one. If we dedicate ourselves to our students and to our writing and to our larger community, our reputation will take care of itself.

Quality of our graduates

KS: Due to the breadth of our liberal arts education, they should be well-rounded Christians, well-prepared for a variety of career options and for lifelong learning. Alas! I would strongly discourage them from attending graduate school in English literature until the job market normalizes.

CLH: A small portion of our graduates will be attending the top graduate programs in the country. More will be serving in public and private organizations across a range of professions. The quality of our graduates will be highest when they engage in the widest variety of vocations after Westmont.

JS: Many (more than now?) capable of grad. School; many exerting influence as writers; all well fitted for more than one (many, actually) calling and avocations.

RVM: Placing small numbers annually in top grad schools; seeing them through degree programs into
teaching positions and other appropriate careers. Others show versatility and effectiveness based on language skills in a wide variety of occupations.

**MM:** Some of this depends on California public schools, since we draw so heavily from them. I continue to feel that we’re doing what might even ten years ago have been considered somewhat “remedial” work with first-year students who, though bright, are underprepared. It may be that some non-credit or one-credit transition training in key skills would be a helpful addition to the curriculum. // I think we do a good job, and should continue to focus our energies on depth rather than breadth of curriculum, working the brightest as hard as we can in honors courses, honors theses, and preparation for comprehensive exams (which I think would benefit all gradates, and should be required for those aiming at grad school), globalizing students’ perspectives. Toward this last end, I think we should require foreign language competency.

**PJW:** I want our graduates to have a deep love for language and to have an intelligent and aesthetic sense of how to use it. Words are a gift and a sacred trust.

**Teaching prowess (power, range, versatility, craft, conviction, intensity...)**

**KS:** This should continue to be our strongest suit.

**CLH:** Our range of expertise should expand—internationally, theoretically, historically—but we should always be able to find common ground among our colleagues in the department. // We are a strong teaching department; we can build on that.

**JS:** [Ranks as follows: (1) Versatility, (2) power, craft, conviction, intensity, (3) range. (1) Important in a dept. of eight only. (2) Highly desirable. (3) Range of knowledge outside the discipline: broad and various (and deep) as possible.

**RVM:** Reputation for teaching unmatched in the college and renowned among peer schools.

**MM:** I think we’ll serve students best if we capitalize on our individual gifts, avoid pressure to standardize, and keep the teaching relational. I do think faculty development is key. We need to model scholarly life, the writing life, lives of reflection for them. I think they benefit from the range of teaching styles represented in this dept.

**PJW:** I resonate with Marilyn here. We need to be counter-cultural, and to model not the “corporate-time” life, but the reflective life.
I have appreciated the diversity of teaching styles in our department. Lately I have been learning how to be a little quieter in the classroom.

**Collegiality (mutual support, mutual regard)**

**KS:** I have been so impressed by the collegiality of Christian scholars and colleagues here, and I would like to continue community-building activities through parties, potlucks, and poetry readings.

**CLH:** Collegiality will thrive when we are united in a clear mission to teach and to serve our students and to engage in our favorite professional activities. When we can support each other in that mission, we will be best supporting each other. // It would be helpful for mutual support and regard to have some department processes more clearly articulated, especially as we have new faculty joining us. I think of processes for how England Semester is staffed, or for the rotations of honors or upper-division seminars, or for decisions about hiring student assistants.

**JS:** Promote this by substantive scholarly exchange: both within dept and w/o

**RVM:** Relations marked by healthy candor and active mutual support toward promotion, tenure, and professional and personal growth. Increased sharing of fruits of scholarly labors.

**MM:** Seems to me we do pretty well at this. More potlucks! Restore the practice of brown-bag lunches now and then, or the Reynolds Tea at a time most people can get there. I like having bi-weekly dept. meetings at lunchtime.

**PJW:** Maybe we could do a better job of reading one another’s work. When I have done this, I have felt a deeper sense of connection with my colleagues. But I have all too often been remiss.

**Professional development (publications, new ventures, presentations, performances)**

**KS:** I would like to see a stronger emphasis on research and scholarship as criteria for tenure.

**CLH:** The variety of professional activities we engage in should continue. We’ve got a strong community for fostering “public Christian intellectuals.” We should be encouraging each other to attend at least one professional conference [per] year, even if we aren’t presenting.

**JS:** Quality foremost; then the more the better.

**RVM:** More active contributions to national professional organizations, both Christian and non-, in writing and literature.
MM: Perhaps the dept. should have Lori Call in for a review of resources? I think simply to keep encouraging one another to apply for grants (which takes a lot of time, and I’ve tended to let it slide) and to seek out exhilarating professional development possibilities that really revitalize would be a good idea.

PJW: I agree with Cheri and Randy that we need to encourage each other to stay connected with the larger scholarly world. I also agree with John that quality trumps quantity.

Off-campus programs (variety, quality, focus, strength, tradition, financial strength)

KS: It would be great to have a central location for the England and Europe semesters.

CLH: England Semester should continue. As other international and domestic off-campus programs become more available to our students, we should be willing to retool England Semester to best fit their needs. I would like to see more of our students go off campus to work on second-language fluency.

JS: ?

RVM: Continue England Semester; continue to be active in Europe Semester. Consider off-campus program within the U.S. or Caribbean.

MM: I’m glad we have them. I wish I’d managed to go. England Semester is obviously a long-term success. Europe semester is going in interesting directions. Perhaps a semester every 5 years or so in some other English-speaking country, focusing on Anglophone literature?

PJW: “In the mountains, there you feel free.” T.S. Eliot

Hiring

KS: I would like to see us increase our hires in Composition and move towards the creation of a Writing Program that would include not only Composition classes, but also creative writing, journalism, screenwriting, and media studies.

CLH: I would hope to have hired at least two new people, hopefully three, and to have entered a season where we don’t have to put energy into hiring for awhile.

JS: As much diversity as is consonant with habitual consensus in dept. as to aims and means.

RVM: I would like to see greater range and more coherence in programming in the writing/composition area. I would like to see more racial and/or cultural diversity. I
particularly want to see hires of unusual maturity of outlook, wisdom, and social tactfulness.

MM: I certainly think John, Steve, and I should be fully replaced. I also continue to think a strength of small colleges is to hire “generalists” who also have an area of special interest, since I think they remain somewhat more exploratory, on the whole. Having said that, though, it’s probably a matter of balance. Good to have a few people who accent depth over breadth.

PJW: Whatever works! Always a crapshoot. All we can do is estimate potential in any given candidate. That’s how I got hired, as I recall.

Endowed chair

KS: This would be great. How about Roger Lundin in 19th-century American literature? (But I’d prefer to see funding for a Writing Program rather than for an endowed chair.)

CLH: An endowed chair in writing would be lovely, and seems like something we are poised for. It’s also worth considering how an interdisciplinary endowed chair—in International Studies or Gender Studies, for instance—would serve the needs of this department.

JS: Not clear on either aims or means.

RVM: This would have to be tied to the realization of other aims, such as raising the profile of our writing program or increasing our teaching range and depth.

MM: Yes. Good idea. I like the rotating endowed chair; Mills had several. People held them for 3-5 years. This gave them course releases, opportunities to develop in particular ways, and also spread the wealth around.

PJW: I used to dislike the idea of endowed chairs. The administration started us down this path without really consulting the faculty, and I believed that endowed chairs could disrupt a very important egalitarian ethos among the faculty. My attitude changed after watching a recent endowed chair use his platform to do great things for his department and to make new connections for the college in Santa Barbara and beyond. So, now I would be open to an endowed chair in literature or writing. If in writing, it should probably be called a “Writer in Residence” position. If the position were used to attract an outsider, it would probably need to be permanent. If the position were granted to a current member of the department, it could probably be passed around.

Diversity (faculty, students, courses, methods)
KS: Let’s strive to increase this, but first to clarify our criteria. Let’s increase the percentage of students drawn from out-of-state. If the majority of our faculty members come from mainline denominations, should we strive for greater diversity along denominational lines? Would the trustees consider the inclusion of Catholic faculty as a mark of increased diversity, as well as an alleviation of the double standard perceived by Catholic students?

CLH: There’s no reason not to think that we might not have at least two faculty of color, and at least fifty percent female faculty ten years from now. Our informal advising will be stronger when our demographics more closely match those of our students.

JS: (1) See “Hiring” (2) Something analogous to (1) (3) As diverse as diverse competencies permit. (4) Ditto—though not to diversity of method as end in itself.

RVM: Have a natural inclination toward, a collective “taste” for, diversity of many kinds. Develop patiently but purposefully in this direction.

MM: Rather than try to accomplish this entirely by curricular diversification, I think it’s good simply to assume that in any course where it’s at all appropriate—even the most traditional—we routinely raise questions about the perspectives of the “other” people(s) whose voices are underrepresented.

PJW: In regards to hiring, I welcome diversity in our midst and appreciate its benefits. However, I also believe that no candidate should be excluded from our serious consideration simply because that candidate is white or male. In regards to students, I have noticed that greater ethnic and religious diversity in the classroom has changed my awareness of literary texts and what I say about them.

Curriculum (preservation, innovation)

KS: Let’s have the freedom to create new courses, especially interdisciplinary ones and ones that implement new technology such as interactive elements and hypertext.

CLH: Much should be preserved; much can be changed.

JS: (Preservation: ) All of what we have. (Innovation: ) More, and more diverse seminar offerings.

RVM: Stay strong in literature, reading, criticism, appreciation; contribute to Christian theory of literature (writing, reading, . . .)

MM: I’d love to see us restore either History of English or linguistics. I think we have a strong
curriculum. Perhaps more single-author or paired-author seminars. Those are good experiences in themselves. And I continue to think the Comp. Exam is a valuable experience.

PJW: “That which we are, we are.” No, wait a minute. Wrong line. I would like to see us continue to be literature-based, but also to offer an increasing diversity of creative writing classes.

Facilities

KS: Let’s avoid teaching in the Math Building. ☺

CLH: I hope we’ll still be in Reynolds Hall in ten years. In addition to all the virtues of Reynolds, staying here will keep energy from going toward a new environment while we clarify some of these other elements of departmental identity that you raise.

JS: 

MM: I love Reynolds. I’d hate to see the department give it up; we’d lose a lot in terms of its character. But the day may come.

PJW: Reynolds is nice, but I hear there are some nice trails on campus on which we might employ the peripatetic method.

Balance of reading, writing, theorizing, engaging in action

KS: Yes

CLH: The only change I see here is a more purposeful path to internships for our majors, helping them make connections between what they are doing in the classroom and their calling.

JS: [re. theorizing: ] Best uses incidental to ([reading] and [writing].)

MM: No substitute for time spent reading and writing. I think it’s good to urge them to action and give them opportunities for community service. But I do think we’re primarily about equipping them to do that more effectively by enabling them to use language more competently.

PJW: College students, even English majors, are increasingly alliterate. They do their assignments, then plug back into media megalith. Sustained reading and writing is our core task, now more necessary than ever. I’ve been pleased to see this emphasis on reading enhanced in our “Reading in the Community” program.

Service to the institution

KS: Yes
CLH: We’ll think about our relationship to the college as a whole in terms of the metaphor “a rising tide carries all ships.”

JS: Eagerness (not just resignation) about diverse tasks.

RVM: Sense of contribution to the college ultimately supercedes sense of contribution to the department, but contribution to the department is seen as contribution to the college.

MM: We do a lot of service by taking on students’ writing skills. I’m not sure exactly what you mean here beyond the individual forms of service we tend to undertake as a matter of course.

PJW: I like the way you put that, Randy. Ever thought of being chair?

Suggest another category . . .

RVM: Program Review and Assessment
Christian Orientation (or) Faith and Learning

MM: Connections with our counterparts at other Christian colleges? Student conferences?

PJW: Not sure where to put this, but I’d like to see: 1) An endowed reading series for guest writers, and 2) An endowed annual prize from the Academy of American Poets for one of our students. This has good currency in the larger writing world and will help our best student writers toward publication and good MFA programs.
APPENDIX C
Departmental criteria for mastery, proficiency, and competence in the bibliographic essay required in major authors courses:

**Research**

**Mastery**
- The paper relies on sources that are all clearly related to the same central topic.
- The paper incorporates at least eight appropriately scholarly sources from refereed journals or scholarly books.
- The paper relies on at least four scholarly articles from refereed journals in addition to any chapters or essays from book sources.
- The student indicates the bibliographic tools—including some online bibliographic tools (e.g., MLA International Bibliography, World Shakespeare Bibliography, JSTOR)—used to identify each source.
- The essay includes at least five scholarly sources from the last 10 years with no sources more than 20 years old.

**Proficiency**
- The paper incorporates at least eight sources most of which are from scholarly books or refereed journals, though a few may consist of less substantial sources such as book reviews, dissertation abstracts, or newsletter articles.
- The critical sources may not always be clearly related to the same topic.
- The student has obtained appropriate sources but failed to indicate the bibliographic tools used to identify each source.
- The essay includes at least five scholarly sources from the last 15 years with no sources more than 30 years old.

**Competence**
- The paper incorporates at least eight sources but some may not be appropriately scholarly.
- The student relies exclusively on sources from books or exclusively on sources from journals rather than
demonstrating the bibliographic skill necessary to access both books and journals.

- The essay includes at least five scholarly sources from the last 20 years with no sources more than 40 years old.

Unsatisfactory

- Many of the student’s sources rely on non-scholarly material such as popular magazines or non-refereed web sites.

- Several of the student’s sources are more than 30 years old.
Use of Quotations

Mastery

- All quotations are skillfully incorporated into the writer’s prose either by being woven smoothly into the flow of a sentence or by being provided with an appropriate introduction followed by a colon.

- The writer analyzes each quotation, telling readers explicitly how the passage serves as evidence for a point the writer is making.

Proficiency

- All quotations are attached to the writer’s prose grammatically, with enough context to indicate how the passage serves as evidence for a point the writer is making.

- Although quotations are well integrated into sentences, the writer may tend to rely solely on direct quotes rather than paraphrase or summary.

Competence

- All quotations are attached to the writer’s prose grammatically but sometimes with rudimentary phrases that just consist of “the author says.”

- The writer sometimes fails to explain what he or she sees in a quotation, seeming to expect that readers will automatically see whatever the writer sees.

- Quotations may be poorly integrated into sentences, or they may be offered with analysis which does little more than to restate the quotation.

Unsatisfactory

- Quotations do not fit together grammatically with the writer’s prose.

- Some quotations are included without any attempt to connect them to the writer’s prose.

- The paper fails to include any quotations as evidence, or consists largely of quotations that go unanalyzed.

- The writer has committed plagiarism, offering direct quotations as if they were paraphrase.
Mastery

- Every quotation or paraphrase has parenthetical documentation in MLA format.
- Every author referred to in the text is listed in the List of Works Cited.
- All entries in the List of Works Cited are alphabetized by author (as opposed to being alphabetized by the name of an editor or a title).
- Each journal article is listed with the title of the essay, title of the journal, volume number, date, and page numbers—with all items punctuated in MLA style.
- Each book is listed with the author, title, place of publication, publisher, and date—with all items punctuated in MLA style.

Proficiency

- All information that MLA style calls for is provided, but some entries are not properly punctuated.
- Sometimes the writer uses abbreviations like “vol.” or “no.” rather than following MLA style.

Competency

- Most of the information that MLA style calls for is provided, but sometimes in incorrect order.
- Page numbers are provided for journal articles but not for items that appeared in collections of essays.
- Bibliographic information is provided for reprinted essays but without full information regarding where and when the essay first appeared.
- Full bibliographic information is provided but without proper use of quotation marks for article titles or of italics for the titles of books, plays and journals.

Unsatisfactory

- Entries are not alphabetized.
- Necessary information is omitted.
- There is no indication of the bibliographic tools used to identify each source.
• Some authors cited in the text do not appear in the List of Works Cited.

• Some authors mentioned in the List of Works Cited are not, in fact, cited in the text.

• The writer has committed plagiarism, offering some other person’s analysis of a source without fully documenting the source of documentation.
Writing Correct, Clear, Readable, Persuasive Prose

Mastery

- The paper gives a strong sense of the writer’s voice and holds the readers’ interest.
- The writer seems always to keep in mind a lively, literate audience.
- The paper is well organized with elegant transitions.
- The essay’s vigorous language pleases readers. The writer has taken some risks and gotten away from formulas in writing.
- The writer supports generalizations effectively, using vivid examples, quoting critical sources effectively, and paraphrasing when useful.
- The writer completely avoids sentence fragments, run-on sentences and comma splices.

Proficiency

- The paper shows a strong sense of writing to an interested audience.
- Language is sometimes used colorfully or imaginatively.
- The writer’s voice or personality comes through in prose that has few errors in usage, spelling, or syntax.
- The writer completely avoids sentence fragments, but may uncharacteristically lapse into occasional comma splices.

Competence

- The paper restates what critical sources have said but without stimulating insight into the work being discussed.
- Though the writer has generally used language correctly, there are a few distracting errors in usage, spelling, syntax, or punctuation.
- The paper may have several run-on sentences or comma splices.

Unsatisfactory

- The paper has major problems in sentence structure, grammar and diction.
- The paper shows a poor sense of audience and purpose.
• The content largely consists of unsupported generalizations about critical sources.
• Points are inadequately developed and sometimes erroneous.
• The paper is poorly organized with ideas jumbled together so that it is difficult to follow.
• The paper contains sentence fragments, run-on sentences, or frequent comma splices.
Analysis

Mastery

• Clearly and convincingly provides a framework in which readers are able to grasp the distinctive strengths of each critical perspective.

• Identifies crucial similarities and differences among the various sources.

• Offers fresh, original ways to think about the critical landscape.

• Demonstrates clear grasp of the questions posed by the critical sources being examined.

• Clearly and accurately summarizes the contributions or limitations of each critical source.

Proficiency

• Generally explains the central contribution of each source, offering a clear account of its arguments.

• On the whole grasps the strengths and limitations of each critical source.

Competence

• Provides an accurate account of what each source says, but without a clear delineation of the differences among the critical perspectives.

• Sometimes recognizes the contributions but may not be able to address the limitations of critical sources under discussion.

• Tends to make points that are left undeveloped—or just reiterated.

Unsatisfactory

• Fails to recognize the central idea of each critical source.

• Mistakenly offers an incidental point as if it were the main thrust of a critic’s argument.

• Just repeats the words of the author without sufficient understanding to paraphrase clearly.
• Commits plagiarism by offering someone else’s analysis of a source as if it were the writer’s own.
APPENDIX D

Goals for our Majors

AS READERS our graduating majors should be able to . . .

1. Summarize, analyze, and evaluate any piece of writing in any genre: to be able to articulate what the writer is saying (content), how he or she has chosen to present the message (techniques and strategies), and why he or she might have chosen to do it that way (effects and purposes). (critical-interdisciplinary thinking)

2. Recognize how contexts (historical, cultural, biographical, literary) frame the work and shape its meaning. This includes both the context in which the writer produced the work and the context in which the reader reads it. (active societal and intellectual engagement and diversity)

3. Access scholarly material using appropriate online bibliographic tools (e.g., MLA International Bibliography, World Shakespeare Bibliography, JSTOR, Humanities Index, Article First) (research and technology)

4. Understand a variety of theoretical approaches to literature, and be conversant with a wide variety of literary critical terms now in use. (critical-interdisciplinary thinking)

5. Recognize how the skills involved in literary criticism pertain directly to the skills needed for participation in community life-being able to: (1) hear how words are being used or abused (2) raise pertinent questions (3) understand point of view (4) listen for subtexts and for significant omissions. (active societal and intellectual engagement and diversity)

6. Bring a wide repertoire of questions from other disciplines to bear upon literary texts-asking how a work raises political, psychological, sociological, or theological questions, how it challenges accepted ideas, how it reframes conventional notions. (active societal and intellectual engagement and critical-interdisciplinary thinking)

7. Be familiar with the “map” of literary history, and be able to compare and contrast the work of writers from different periods and understand the continuities that
shape what we call a literary tradition. (active societal and intellectual engagement)

8. Understand the characteristics of different genres, and the ways in which a given work can fulfill or play off of those expectations. Discern what poems do that prose can’t, what novels do that films can’t, what drama does that prose can’t, and vice versa. (critical-interdisciplinary thinking)

9. Recognize and employ the power of metaphor, analogy, allusion, allegory, and symbol in shaping argument. (written and oral communication)

10. Understand how poetic devices and figures of speech work to particular ends in shaping what a writer delivers and a reader receives. (written and oral communication)

11. Be able to account for their own tastes and evaluations of the merits of literary texts. (active societal and intellectual engagement)

12. Read generously, prepared to do what good writers require to get the gift they’re offering. This includes taking their own cultural assumptions into account and recognizing how those might limit their angle of vision. (Christian orientation and active societal and intellectual engagement)

13. Practice negative capability-tolerance for ambiguity or paradox that doesn’t demand simple resolution. Honor the complexities of language and human situations and character when they read. (active societal and intellectual engagement)

14. Connect their reading habits and practices with their life of faith (as readers of scripture), with their lives as citizens (as readers of public media and participants in public discourse) and their growth in spiritual and intellectual discernment. (Christian orientation)

AS WRITERS our graduating majors should be able to . . .

1. Value language, and to understand that using language with care and precision is a good stewardship of a great gift. (written and oral communication)

2. Write correct, clear, readable, persuasive and lively prose. This includes mastering the basics of grammar and mechanics, and basic grammatical terms. (written and oral
3. Make deliberate and effective use of poetic devices. (written and oral communication)

4. Honor the complexities of the issues and situations they represent, avoiding oversimplification and overgeneralization. (critical-interdisciplinary thinking and diversity)

5. Move comfortably among the various modes of writing—expository, argumentative, descriptive, narrative, and lyrical—with awareness of their strategies and purposes. (written and oral communication)

6. Find and develop their own voices as writers, cultivate their creative imaginations, and bring them to bear any time they work with words. (Christian orientation and written and oral communication)

7. Incorporate the voices of others into their writing, skillfully acknowledging their indebtedness to the thinking and research of others while providing appropriate documentation in MLA or Chicago Manual of Style format. (research and technology)