

## English Department 2011-2012 Annual Assessment Update

### I. Mission Statement, Program Goals, Student Learning Outcomes, Curriculum Map, and Multi-Year Assessment Plan

Locations in on-line Program Review “share”:

- A. Mission Statement and Program Goals:  
smb://myfiles.westmont.edu/program\_review/english/guiding documents/mission-student learning outcomes
- B. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs):  
smb://myfiles.westmont.edu/program\_review/english/Guiding Documents/Program Learning Outcomes
- C. Curriculum Map:  
smb://myfiles.westmont.edu/program\_review/english/Guiding Documents/Curriculum Chart
- D. Multi-Year Assessment Plan:  
smb://myfiles.westmont.edu/program\_review/english/Guiding Documents/Multi-Year Assessment Plans/Multi-Year Assessment Plan 2005-2010; see also  
smb://myfiles.westmont.edu/program\_review/english/Guiding Documents/List of Current Projects with proposed timeline/

### II. Follow up on Action Items identified in previous reports

In our 2010-2011 Annual Assessment Update Report, we named 13 action items, with target dates and person(s) responsible for oversight. In the PRC Memorandum sent out on 10/31/2011 in response to our report, the reviewer, Dr. Nazarenko, commented that our “Next Step” activities sounded too ambitious, given the large number of sizable commitments several department members were expected to be shouldering for the 2011-2012 school year (VanderMey: fall sabbatical; Larsen-Hoeckley: revitalizing Gender Studies Program; Skripsky: coordinating 2011-2012 Institutional/GE level assessment as Lead Assessment Specialist). The reviewer’s recommendations were as follows:

- ❑ ◆ revise your PLOs
- ◆ solicit an outside reviewer’s report
- ◆ begin examining your curriculum in light of its coherence, vitality and sustainability. Consider removing courses not being taught or delisting several WIS courses. Examine the alignment between courses and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs); discuss the program scaffolding (how all the parts progressively build on each other) and consider establishing required prerequisites.
- ◆ post your mission statement, revised PLOs, Curriculum Map and Multi-Year Assessment Plan on the departmental website
- ❑ ◆ choose one outcome per year and one follow-up item for implementation.

We did, in fact, cut back on our plans. We narrowed our focus in the fall to a single SLO and for the rest of the year focused on the biggest task, major curriculum revision. In that task we were thrilled to succeed beyond our expectations, as detailed below.

Accordingly, here are the action items from the 2010-2011 and an update following each:

**Item 1:** Revise SLO statements and decide on SLO emphasis for 2011-2012, drawing conclusions from May 5 departmental discussion. (Target date: September, 2011; Oversight: Interim Chair)

*Action Taken:* The department wrote a new SLO to concentrate on in 2011-2012: **Our graduating senior will be able to recognize literary works that cross a diverse range of literary traditions.**

*Update:* The new SLO was first discussed in department on September 6, 2011. By November 15, 2011, the department produced a draft and then a revised draft of a rationale for this SLO that details how the SLO would be assessed as a collaborative faculty activity (see Appendix 2 for the full “Rationale” and plan for “Measuring Student Learning”). Late in the semester the department recorded in its minutes that it had plans to meet with Dr. Nazarenko to discuss the SLO, but the minutes do not show that such a meeting took place. When the Chair, VanderMey, returned from sabbatical, he turned the department’s attention instead to a couple of larger matters: preparing for a visit from an outside reviewer and staging a department-wide discussion of how we might revise our major curriculum. Given that focus, and a staffing crisis that following an emergency that kept Prof. Cook out of the classroom for about a third of a semester, the department came to agreement with the Dean of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness that we would table the work on the SLO for the remainder of the year. We have not yet returned to the work on the SLO as it stood at the end of the Fall semester, 2011.

**Item 2.** Sponsor another career options workshop for English majors. (Target date: October, 2011; Oversight: to be delegated by Interim Chair.)

*Action Taken:* In December, 2011, according to department minutes, the Interim Chair initiated planning for a “Career and Graduate” workshop to be held in January, 2012.

*Update:* The planned-for workshop did not take place.

**Item 3:** Revisit results of May 5, 2011 assessment exercise—discuss implications for teaching and learning in courses where scholarly use of quoted matter is introduced, developed, and mastered. (Target date: October, 2011; Oversight: Interim Chair)

*Action Taken:* None.

*Update:* the department’s previous findings about students’ ability to incorporate quoted material responsibly and appropriately into their writing—results that were to an extent comforting to us and to an extent cause for concern—factored in the later discussions of major curriculum revision. We may not have produced compelling statistical evidence pointing to specific remedial action, but the results were enough to help produce a consensus that we would do well to require of all majors a sophomore-level course as an “introduction to the discipline,” in which students would be taught more of the nuances of research-based critical writing. Such a course is installed in the major, which will be described below.

**Item 4:** Discuss whether and how to revise pre- and post-tests for ENG-046 and ENG-047 in light of assessment best practices and revised SLOs. (Target date: October, 2011; Oversight: To be delegated by Interim Chair)

*Action Taken:* None.

*Update:* The evaluation of pre-and post-test data for ENG-046 and ENG-047, like several other initiatives, took a back seat to major curriculum revision, though the Interim Chair introduced the topic in a department meeting in October, 2011

**Item 5:** Pursue curriculum review discussion, in light of alumni surveys, “Slouching Toward Bethlehem,” and Summer 2011 survey of English faculty. First, have Skripsky and Friedman weigh in on “Slouching.” (Target date: November, 2011; Oversight: Interim Chair)

*Action Taken:* The department pursued major curriculum revision talks all through the spring semester and well into the summer, in department meetings, in meetings with an outside reviewer, and eventually at an all-day retreat in mid-summer. The talks culminated at the retreat in the department’s unanimously adopting a new design for the major curriculum.

*Update:* The details of the discussion are too many to fit conveniently into this list, so they will be discussed in a separate section below.

**Item 6:** Post new mission statement, SLOs and alignment chart on department website. (Target date: Beginning of Spring Semester, 2012; Oversight: Interim Chair and Eliane Yochum)

*Action Taken:* The new mission statement was posted on the department website in September, 2011. The new SLO for 2011-2012 has also been posted. The alignment chart, as of Sept. 15, 2012, has not yet been posted.

*Update:* The new SLO for 2011-2012 remains posted even though the department has not actively been pursuing assessment activities related to it in the course of this year.

**Item 7:** Render PLOs and Nine SLOs as prose statement. (Target date: February, 2012; Oversight: Kathryn Artuso)

*Action Taken:* None.

*Update:* This labor would probably have been wasted had we undertaken it, since the department still needs to reconsider its Student Learning Outcomes in light of its new major curriculum design.

**Item 8:** Design and complete year-two SLO assessment activity with revised SLO and appropriate instrument (Target date: April, 2012; Oversight: Chair and delegated member of department)

*Action Taken:* None.

*Update:* This task remains to be done but will be subsumed under a more general reconsideration of Student Learning Outcomes in light of the major curriculum revision. The department’s work for Fall, 2012, is expected to address these questions.

**Item 9:** Redesign senior exit interviews with current SLOs grafted in. (Target date: April, 2012; Oversight: To be delegated by Chair)

*Action Taken:* None.

*Update:* This work was ignored in the midst of our entertaining an outside reviewer and focusing on questions of curriculum revision.

**Item 10:** Conduct senior exit interviews (Target date: May, 2012; Responsibility: Department members)

*Action Taken:* No senior exit interviews were conducted.

*Update:* Instead of holding senior exit interviews, we incorporated an extended interview with students into the schedule of our outside reviewer. The following students—Sophie Petti, Caleb Bagdanov, Sean Weidman, Ariel Dyer, Mandi DeVos, Jamie Wells, Stephanie Brooks, and Carrie Steingruber—met with Dr. Susan Felch from Calvin College on Friday, April 27, 2012 and participated in wide-ranging discussions guided by Dr. Felch. They touched on student relations with professors, the content of the curriculum, classroom ethos, faith and learning, and much more.

**Item 11:** Evaluate senior exit interview results in light of November, 2011, curriculum review (Target date: September, 2012; Oversight: To be delegated by Chair)

*Action Taken:* None.

*Update:* Curriculum review had not yet taken place by November, 2011. The meetings between the outside reviewer and the selected students in late April helped to accomplish this goal in spirit.

**Item 12:** Design and Complete year-three SLO assessment activity with revised SLO and appropriate instrument (Target date: April, 2013; Oversight: Chair and delegated member of department)

*Action Taken:* None.

*Update:* This should be taken up in the department in Fall, 2012.

**Item 13:** On-site visit by outside reviewer to evaluate and advise on revision of English curriculum. (Target date: May, 2013; Oversight: Chair and outside reviewer)

*Action Taken:* Prof. Susan Felch of Calvin College was engaged to conduct the campus visit. The visit took place on April 27 and 28. She submitted her detailed report on July 14, 2012. The report was distributed to all members of the department and to the Dean of Assessment, and it factored substantially in the discussion at our department retreat on July 31, where the department hammered out a new design for the major. In the interim, Dr. Felch served voluntarily by phone as an adviser to the chair.

*Update:* The report by Dr. Susan Felch, the outside reviewer, is found below in Appendix 3. Dr. Felch, at the special request of Dean Nazarenko, helped to refine a new instrument for Program Review, an “External Review Summary Sheet,” by filling it out and providing feedback on the instrument. Dr. Felch’s “External Review Summary Sheet” is found below in Appendix 4.

One further issue that factored into the English Department’s 2011-2012 academic year was a re-evaluation of the way the department designates its courses as “W/SI” (i.e., Writing- or Speech-Intensive). Thus,

**Item 14:** Re-evaluation of W/SI designation for courses offered by the English Department.

*Action Taken:* The Department decided in November, 2011, to drop the “W/SI” designation from 18 of the 39 courses we teach. We also developed a list of internal guidelines so that we can continue to offer our majors coursework with rich writing opportunities.

*Update:* This action arose first in response to a suggestion in the Dean of Assessment’s response to the English Department’s Annual Assessment Update for 2010-2011. The W/SI places a heavy stricture on too many of our courses, even though for our own reasons we want nearly all of our courses to be truly writing-

intensive. The data Sarah Skripsky has gathered as Lead Assessment Coordinator suggests that most students fulfill their W/SI outside-the-major requirement with English 6, but we retained other W/SI courses for GE purposes to give students some choice and to meet the needs of our majors. The Department is convinced that fewer WIS courses will help manage workload around paper grading and administrative duties in General Education. The former Interim Chair forwarded the department's request to the Dean of Assessment On July 7, 2012. See the list of courses and internal guidelines in Appendix 5, "W/SI Courses in English."

### III. Major Curriculum Revision

**Preparations.** The Department has been preparing for major curriculum for several years, holding a round-robin e-mail exchange called "Slouching Toward Bethlehem" among all its members, as reported in last year's annual assessment report. Curriculum review was named in our last Six-Year Report (in 2010) as one of our key objectives for the six years ahead. In our Six-Year Timeline in that report, we scheduled a study of the major curriculum and a new curriculum design for 2012-2013. As it turns out, we accomplished a new curriculum design that has been approved by all members of the department in by the middle of summer, 2012—half a year earlier than we were scheduled to begin!

**Discussions.** Discussion of curriculum revision arose in Department meeting on October, 4, 2011. Discussions began in earnest on January 24, 2012, as the department discussed how and when to hire an outside reviewer and how to coordinate curriculum revision with the outside reviewer. The department decided to create a timeline that would bring in the outside reviewer after talks had advanced in the department but before overall design decisions had been made. All members of the Department were engaged in a free-wheeling discussion of our major concerns about curriculum revision at a meeting on January 31. Randy VanderMey and Cheri Larsen Hoeckley, at the February 28 meeting, agreed to talk over the scheduling of curriculum review and did so. At this meeting, members were confronted with three questions regarding curriculum revision: 1) should we increase our unit count? 2) Should we require ENG-046 but require either British or American Lit after 1800 in our major core? And 3) Should we require all majors to take at least one course from World Anglophone, Women Writers, Gender Studies in Literature and Ethnicity and Race in World (or American) literature?

**Focus on key issues.** At our March 6 meeting, a plan for the rest of the semester emerged: we would pair up, and each of four pairs would take one of four core issues in revision: 1) the shape of the core, 2) course sequencing, 3) capstone courses, and 4) total unit count. Each pair was asked to bring a written proposal to the department meeting for the department's consideration. Those discussions took place on 3/20, 3/27, 4/3, 4/17, and 4/17.

**Outside reviewer.** At the March 6, 2012, meeting, we also considered seven names of possible outside reviewers. At the March 27 meeting, members learned that Prof. Susan Felch, a 16<sup>th</sup>-Century English Literature specialist active in many professional capacities had agreed to serve. Plans were made for her visit, and materials were sent out. The Department meeting on April 3 was entirely devoted to major curriculum revision. Dr. Felch came on April 27 and 28, meeting separately with all members of the department, with a panel of articulate students, with members of our Student Literary Society, and with the Dean of Assessment. The Department joined Dr. Felch for a convivial dinner together at a local restaurant toward the end of her stay. Dr. Felch produced her written report on April 14, just in time for Department members to digest it as they prepared for our Department Retreat.

**Department Retreat.** All eight full-time members of the department met for a seven-hour retreat on July 31, 2012, at the home of Jamie Friedman, with Prof. Artuso participating from Woodland Hills via Skype. The day was divided into a series of discussions, first on our passions in teaching, then on the question, “What, if anything, is the common purpose in all we do?” and then on a list of 28 “Questions Needing to Be Resolved,” questions extracted from our discussions over the whole previous semester., in the context of a list of our departmental leanings and a list of larger conceptual questions.

The pivot point of our retreat came when, at Cheri’s prompting, we asked ourselves what the “edge pieces” of this puzzle were. The Chair asked the members what they would insist that every student experience before he or she could graduate with an English major. Everyone was heard from and we composed a list of those things that everyone could agree one. Here is the list, as it stood on August 12 after some minor editing:

### **New English Major Curriculum Design**

Westmont College Department of English

8/12/12

To graduate with a general major in English from Westmont College’s Department of English, a student must meet all of the following requirements, exceptions to which must be approved by the department:

1. Take a lower-division course formally introducing students to literary studies, including vocabulary, close reading, critical writing, critical strategies, research, research writing, and theory.
2. Take at least one major author course.
3. Complete courses in literature from at least two different national traditions
4. Take at least one course in literature written in English prior to 1800.
5. Take at least one course in a historically organized study of literature.
6. Take at least one course dealing with ethnic or gender identity.
7. Have an internship or practicum experience that will formally integrate academic life with some vision of life beyond college (an "experience requirement"). Examples might be work on Horizon, Writers Corner, NYCAMS off-campus program coursework, San Francisco internships, etc.
8. Write a major-length researched paper in the course of the student’s studies.
9. Have a capstone experience in the student’s final semester or fourth year.

(RVM)

When the list had been composed, the department members paused and then were asked: given this list, is there any need for our current major curriculum design? All agreed that there was none, and in that fashion the New Major Curriculum Design was adopted. On August 13, 2012, the Chair circulated a Report on the New Major Curriculum Design, with commentary on each point to spell out implications and challenges that may lie ahead. The Chair’s Report may be found below in Appendix 6, Report on New Major Curriculum Design.

**Further Steps.** Three members of the Department—Delaney, VanderMey, and Artuso—have been appointed as a sub-committee to map our current curricular offerings onto the new design. Delaney has produced a draft of the mapping, but neither the committee nor the Department has yet been able to consider it.

The new design for the curriculum has already guided us in composing the

description for a job opening in our department for someone to replace Prof. Steve Cook following his retirement. The job description is currently in the hands of the Provost and Faculty Senate for consideration. If the position is approved, a great deal of the Fall semester 2012, will necessarily be devoted to conducting a major national search for someone who will be partly responsible for implementing the new curricular design.

### III. Focus for 2012-2013

**Curriculum Revision.** For the year 2012-2013, the Department must keep its momentum on major curriculum revision. That will involve, first, planning the follow-through to the department retreat, then planning to seek approval for the new design, then deciding what the implications may be for new course development and for the adaptation of existing courses, then beginning to redesign courses in time to meet deadlines for submission of new course proposals to the Faculty Senate, and finally designing the four-year roll-out of the new major, if the new design is approved.

#### **Assessment of Student Learning Outcome.**

Since the topic of curriculum revision and the visit of an outside reviewer shouldered others assessment concerns aside, we remain where we were in the middle of Fall semester, 2011, with a single new SLO to assess: **“Our graduating seniors will be able to recognize literary works that cross a diverse range of literary traditions.”**

No data have been collected yet pertaining to this SLO, so the questions in the template under point III. A—concerning size of data set, departmental benchmarks, prompts, instruments, or archived data sets—cannot be answered right now. These must be covered under the next major point, “Next Steps.”

### IV. Next Steps

#### A. Action Items:

**Item #1:** *What:* Post curriculum map and Multi-Year Assessment Plan on departmental website. *When:* ASAP. *Who?* Eliane Yochum, with Chair.

**Item#2:** *What:* Trim from catalog any courses that have outlived their usefulness. See list on p. 12 of the program notes for the July 31, 2012, departmental retreat. *When:* By February 15, 2013. *Who:* Department.

**Item#3:** *What:* Seek approval of GE Committee for proposal to de-list 18 English courses as Writing- or Speech-Intensive. *When:* Fall, 2012. *Who:* Chair with Dean Nazarenko and GE Committee.

**Item#4:** *What:* Examine alignment between existing courses and New Major Curriculum Design. *When:* Sept.-Oct., 2012. *Who:* Delaney, VanderMey, and Artuso, with Department.

**Item#5:** *What:* Examine alignment of New Major Curriculum with Program Learning Outcomes. *When:* Fall, 2012. *Who:* Artuso and other volunteer or appointee from the department, TBD.

**Item#6:** *What:* Proceed with assessment of new SLO for 2012-2013. Design and schedule assessment activities. *When:* Design and schedule in fall, 2012. Implement

in April 2-13. *Who:* Department and selected teachers of seniors in upper-division courses.

**Item#7:** *What:* Consider SLOs in light of New Major Curriculum Design. *When:* Spring, 2012. *Who:* Appointed departmental task force.

**Item#8:** *What:* Devise and schedule 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-year SLOs for assessment in 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015. *When:* Spring, 2012. *Who:* Department.

**Item#9:** *What:* Revisit results of May 5, 2011, assessment exercise on scholarly use of quoted matter. *When:* Fall, 2012. *Who:* Delaney, Artuso, and Skripsky (tentative).

**Item#10:** *What:* Sponsor a Career Options and Graduate School Workshop *When:* January, 2013. *Who:* Friedman, Skripsky, Artuso, and Larsen Hoeckley with Student Literary Society.

**Item#11:** *What:* Redesign senior exit interviews with new SLOs grafted in and conduct senior exit interviews. *When:* April, 2013. *Who:* Selected voluntary or appointed members of the department.

**Item#12:** *What:* Evaluate results of senior exit interviews. *When:* Mayterm, 2013. *Who:* Selected members of department and Chair.

**Item#13:** *What:* “Close the loop” after receiving evaluations of senior exit interviews; propose and implement salient proposals that may emerge. *When:* 2013-2014 school year. *Who:* TBD.

**B. Updated Multi-Year Assessment Plan.**

See Appendix 7

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: PRC Response to 2011 Annual Assessment Update Report

**Date:** 10.31.2011  
**To:** Drs. Randy VanderMey and Cheri Larsen Hoeckley  
**Re:** Annual Assessment Update Report  
**Prepared by:** Program Review Committee /Tatiana Nazarenko

Thank you for the timely submission of your 2012 Annual Assessment Update Report and for downloading it into the Program Review Archives. The Program Review Committee appreciated your time and efforts put into preparing this report and would like to commend your department on making considerable strides in your assessment work. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the following accomplishments:

- revising your mission statement
- acting upon the assessment data as much as feasible
- focusing on assessing one outcome per year
- developing and utilizing new assessment tools

It is obvious that English faculty understand the importance of assessing student learning for building a vigorous and vibrant program. We appreciate your collaborative efforts aimed at improvement of student attainments. This response to your annual report aims to affirm your past year's achievements as well as to assist you in strategizing your 2011-2012 academic year assessment work. It addresses the major items identified by the reviewer. Other assessment-related issues will be discussed during your departmental meeting with the reviewer.

### Departmental Mission Statement

Your revised mission statement is aligned with the college mission statement and expresses your department's values and teaching philosophy in a clear and concise manner, which is laudable. I would ask that you post your mission statement on your departmental website rather than downloading it into the PR Archives, so that your students, their parents, potential donors and other constituencies can see it.

### Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

According to your **Curriculum Map** labeled at the PR Archives as "Program Learning Outcomes" and **2010-2011 Focus** section of the report, your department abandoned the previously developed nine SLOs and focused on a new and narrower one, which reads *Senior English majors integrate borrowed materials successfully into their documented research paper*. I commend you on a work well-done and encourage you to finalize the language of the rest of your few PLOs. Following the PLOs modification, please post them on the departmental assessment website.

**Curriculum Map.** Your Curriculum Map is downloaded into the PR Archives as "Program Learning Outcomes" and is difficult to find. The cell labeled "How they [the outcomes] are assessed" requires listing assessment methods, whether direct or indirect ones, as well as embedded, authentic, etc. Please consult the EE Resource: Assessment resources website

[http://www.westmont.edu/\\_offices/institutional\\_portfolio/program\\_review/eeresources\\_assessment.html](http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/institutional_portfolio/program_review/eeresources_assessment.html)

I would also recommend that you remove the outdated nine SLOs from the Curriculum Map and post this document on departmental website.

### **Multi-Year Assessment Plan**

It is commendable that you are planning to focus on assessing one student learning outcome per year. Is it important to specify which outcomes you will be assessing in the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years and devise appropriate assessment methods.

### **Follow-Up Items**

This interesting and valuable section of your report substantiates concisely and convincingly that the department takes assessment of student learning seriously by creating numerous opportunities for students to learn, grow, and succeed. Following the PRC recommendation, you acted upon the already collected data as much as feasible. It is gratifying to see that the entire department was engaged in the assessment activities and productive discussions leading to the development of strategies for improving student learning. It is also pleasing to see that each individual task was assigned to the faculty and staff most suitable for performing of or interested in undertaking this particular task. Excellent organizational work!

In response to the Item # 3a (you have two items # 3 in your report, ) I would also like to commend you on various curricular and co-curricular activities designed and implemented by the English faculty in response to the alumni survey analysis followed by collegial discussions and strategizing. I would also like to learn more about your plans to explore internship opportunities for students. Have you discussed this issue with Jennifer Taylor, Director of Internships and Practica?

It is laudable that the department collaborated with the academic librarians (item # 8), providing them with a list of “highly recommended” and “essential” titles for acquisition which leads to enhancing students’ research opportunities in growing areas of the English curriculum, and for the interdisciplinary Gender Studies Minor in particular. Keep on doing a good job!

Regarding item # 11, in addition to acting upon the results of the administered questionnaire (kudos to the Chair for designing and administering it) and soliciting an external reviewer’s report, I would also recommend that you take a renewed look at your curriculum and consider eliminating those courses which have not been taught for years, and most likely will not be taught again. I also wonder whether you would consider delisting several courses as writing-intensive courses. It is understandable that this revision may take time, but it is important to keep your curriculum current and cohesive. I also wonder whether you will consider the possibility of developing and incorporating paired courses, and other effective models of learning communities while strengthening the interdisciplinary nature of your course offerings. The curriculum revision may be an opportune time for developing interdisciplinary courses in collaboration with other departments.

### **2020-2011 Focus**

It is praiseworthy that your department has designed and implemented an assessment project which is perceived by all full-time faculty as meaningful and important. Your new instrument, a rating sheet with three ordinal variables (or variables that can be arranged in an order along some dimension) appears to be a helpful and easy-to-use tool.

In the future, you may consider organizing your data in such a way so that you can infer conclusions about your students' strengths and weakness with a high level of confidence, as well as effectually presenting your data to external readers. For instance, you may note that in the response category A n<sub>1</sub> students were rated 0, n<sub>2</sub> students were rated 1, and n<sub>3</sub> students were rated 2; and in the response category B n<sub>1</sub> students were rated 0, n<sub>2</sub> students were rated 1, and n<sub>3</sub> students were rated 2; etc. Then you may organize your data in a table. This task can be completed by an administrative assistant or a student worker under faculty supervision. However, all faculty need to participate in the discussion based on the data analysis, as it happened in your assessment project.

Since you have not provided a data summary, it is challenging for the external reader to understand why half the members of the department were satisfied with the papers they rated while the other half were not. I would also be interested in seeing "ample evidence" that your students are "satisfactorily able to document their borrowings using MLA format" or becoming familiarized with Dr. Cook's rationale for suggesting that more critical thinking and writing should be taught in ENG-006, -044, and -045.

I hope that your discussions about the implications of your assessment project results will cast light on the aforementioned and other related issues. I am pleased to learn that you are already considering sharing your findings the broader community.

### **Next Steps**

In my opinion, your Next Steps activities appear to be a little too ambitious given that Dr. VanderMey, Department Chair, is on sabbatical in fall 2011, Dr. Larsen Hoeckley, Interim Chair, is revitalizing Gender Studies Minor program and yet another faculty member, Dr. Skripsky, is coordinating 2011-2012 institutional/GE level assessment in her capacity of Lead Assessment Specialist. I would recommend that you focus on soliciting an external reviewer's report (#13), pursuing curriculum review discussion in the light of the already collected data (# 5), completing your 2010-2011 assessment project (# 3), revising your PLOs and posting all the required documents on the departmental website (## 1, 6, 7, 8, 12). Then if sufficient resources are available, you may proceed with redesigning, administering, and analyzing senior exit interviews (# 9, 10, 11). It is important for the department to receive the outside reviewer's input and articulate your Program Learning Outcomes before your curriculum revision. While revisiting your PLOs please note that not everything which is being taught has to be assessed. Only the most critical competencies and skills that every student graduating from your program should be attaining must be assessed.

### **Report Organization and Appendices**

Your report focuses predominantly on student learning, which is praiseworthy, and has all the required appendices. The report lacks pagination, which is a detriment.

### **Organization of the PR Archives**

Your 2011 Annual Assessment Update Report follows file-naming conventions and is easy to access. However, Appendix 3 containing your rating sheet is located in the Assessment Data folder and eponymous subfolder and is difficult to locate, especially given that your 2010 Six-Year Program Review Report Appendices are not dated properly. Your Multi-Year Assessment Plan is Located in the Guiding Documents folder. It would be helpful to create a subfolder for the 2011 English Annual Assessment

Report Appendices and download them into the Reports folder together with the 2011 Annual Assessment Update Report file.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you again for continuing assessing student learning and acting upon your evidence. Based on my review of your report and assessment activities conducted by your Department, I would recommend that you focus on the following items in this academic year and report on their progress in your next year report:

- ② ◆ revise your PLOs
- ◆ solicit an outside reviewer's report
- ◆ begin examining your curriculum in light of its coherence, vitality and sustainability. Consider removing courses not being taught or delisting several WIS courses. Examine the alignment between courses and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs); discuss the program scaffolding (how all the parts progressively build on each other) and consider establishing required prerequisites.
- ◆ post your mission statement, revised PLOs, Curriculum Map and Multi-Year Assessment Plan on the departmental website
- ② ◆ choose one outcome per year and one follow-up item for implementation.

I commend you again on the continued improvement of your assessment work and faculty's commitment to creating multiple opportunities for student learning and success. The Program Review Committee looks forward to your curriculum revision and hopes to see progress in this area in future years. Please let me know how I can further assist you in your assessments. Thank you again for your good work!

## **Appendix 2: Revised Draft of SLO for Assessment in 2011-2012**

English Department  
Student Learning Outcome 2011-2012  
(DRAFT 2)

**SLO: Our graduating seniors will be able to recognize literary works that cross a diverse range of literary traditions.**

### **Rationale:**

This outcome will allow us to measure student success holistically within the major as we continue to work on curriculum revision. Not only will we be able to assess student learning across courses, we will also assess as a collaborative faculty activity.

One way that students become learners capable of “reading carefully,” as our department mission statement calls them to, is to better understand the relationships between texts, and to hear allusions to other texts when an author makes them. Breadth of reading, in other words, contributes directly to reading carefully. Furthermore, this learning outcome is in support of the college diversity standard.

We have chosen “recognize” as a verb indicating cognitive skills, according to Bloom’s taxonomy as described on Westmont’s Education Effectiveness website.

We will assess this outcome by gathering English Literature Subject Test scores that our students send us in alumni surveys. (See the department server, and our 2010-2011 annual report for analysis of those surveys). In a faculty discussion we will set a minimal score on the GRE that will indicate competence, and another that will indicate mastery. Because the sample set of our graduates who send GRE scores is both small and self-selecting, we will also measure this outcome through a broader form of embedded assessment.

To develop a larger sample, we will also take an embedded method of assessment that looks at student learning by their in-course reading. Students will have mastered this outcome when they have completed the following reading list:

- Works from more than two national traditions
- Works from both male and female authors
- Works from more than one ethnic minority
- Works from authors from more than one religious tradition
- Works from all four major genre (poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction)
- One work in the context of more than one course
- Works attentive to more than one critical perspective
- 
- Works from more than one Christian denomination

- At least one work of criticism
- At least one work of literary theory
- Works from multiple historical periods

### **Measuring student learning:**

These different categories for literary texts are the result of departmental faculty discussion and agreement.

Using students' completion of major requirements from their WebAdvisor records (or transcripts), and the course syllabi for the term students took a given course, we will compile reading lists for **[a significant and reliable sample—which Tatiana can help us determine]** of our graduating seniors from 2010-2011 and 2011-2012.

Through department discussions we will devise a grid that allows faculty to tally the number of categories that the literary works on their syllabi fill. Many works will count toward fulfilling one or more category (e.g. *Middlemarch* is a work by a woman, a work from the English national tradition and a novel).

Our department assistant will compile the transcripts, WebAdvisor records and a student assistant will help collate syllabi. Each department member will compare the data for [???] students. The chair will compile the data for departmental discussion as part of our on-going process of curriculum review, as well as for records on program review.

*We will also gather GRE subject test scores from recent alumni to use as a further measure of the comprehensiveness of our students' coverage in literary study.*

*Additionally, we will conduct a survey of recent alumni. The survey will ask for their memory of reading works in these categories. For example, "Did you read works from more than one national tradition? Name the traditions." Or "Name one male author and one female author who you remember reading." We can then use this alumni data in conjunction with what we find in students' programs.*

## Appendix 3: Outside Reviewer's Report

To: Randall VanderMey  
From: Susan M. Felch  
Re: Westmont College English Department Review  
Date: 14 July 2012

I very much enjoyed my visit to Westmont College on 27-28 April 2012 and the opportunity to meet members of the English department as well as students and administrators. I joined seven faculty members for lunch and a general discussion on Friday, met with a group of students majoring in English later that afternoon, and conducted individual interviews with all full-time faculty and one part-time faculty member the remainder of Friday and Saturday. I also met with the Tatiana Nazarenko, Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness. These conversations were marked by earnestness and good will, by candidness, and by an evident desire to improve the already excellent education students enjoy at Westmont.

According to the *Six-Year Program Review Report, 2004-2010*, the chief goal of the English department for the next six years is revision of the major curriculum. Consequently, my interviews and the following report will focus on that concern.

The English department at Westmont College appears to house a healthy and well-functioning body of professors, committed to the mission of the college and, most noticeably, to the growth and wellbeing of their students. In my conversation with students, what was most striking was their spontaneously expressed and passionate loyalty to members of the department. That they felt both cherished and challenged was evident in nearly every comment they made. They repeatedly told stories of one-on-one encounters with faculty outside of class, vibrant discussions in the classrooms, writing assignments that pushed them to think more clearly and carefully, and the sense of camaraderie within the department, although they noted that, unlike the sciences, English majors don't bond as a cohort. On the other hand, they liked the variety of students they meet in English classes. Not unexpectedly, some of the students expressed an interest in having more writing courses and perhaps a writing major. Students appreciated the emphasis on older literature; they freely admitted that they probably wouldn't take courses in pre-1800 literature without being compelled to do so, but that once in these classes they "convert," due largely to the passion of their teachers.

Historically, the department has focused on the study of literature, particularly British literature from within the Christian tradition, with writing folded into the literature curriculum. The key qualities faculty hope to develop in students are a love of literature and the liberal arts, Christian citizenship, discerning minds, and graceful writing. Currently, the primary task facing the department is the review and restructuring of its curriculum. This task is made more difficult by the fact that no one in the department has previously participated in curriculum revision, undoubtedly one of the most fraught processes in which faculty are asked to engage. There is also considerable ambivalence about the curriculum itself and the need for review and revision. On the one hand, the current curricular structure dates from the late 1960s, so there is a general feeling that "we need to revise it." This expectation for revision is further motivated by the interests and training of the new faculty who have

been hired in the last five years; by college expectations for more diversity, interdisciplinarity, and active learning in the curriculum; and by the accretion of certain courses and emphases (such as courses on Irish literature) that reflect the interests of particular faculty rather than principled curricular decisions. On the other hand, when pressed as to why they are contemplating curriculum revision, many faculty confess that they are unsure that substantive changes would actually improve student learning; furthermore, even among those who would like to see curriculum revision, there seems to be no consensus either as to what is “broken” and needs to be fixed or what is “lacking” and needs to be added. Most faculty like the flexibility of the current curriculum and would be hesitant to force students into a rigid structure, even though they may prefer a more sequenced set of courses in principle. More than one department member noted that the ethos of the department encourages students to gravitate to those topics and teachers that most interest them and that they would not support curriculum revision that appears too rigid or that forces students merely to “check off the boxes.”

This general state of ambivalence about curriculum change suggests that the department would be well advised to spend time talking about departmental, professional, pedagogical, and all-college goals before discussing alternative curricular models and proceeding to actual revision. This larger conversation is one in which we engaged during my visit and that the department intends to continue with its all-day retreat on 31 July 2012. It may well be that the department should continue to schedule longer meetings in the 2012-2013 academic year in order to foster such conversations; several faculty noted their frustration at the brief amount of time devoted to curricular discussion at the regular, hourly department meetings. It takes time to discern together those issues on which there is substantive agreement (if varied ways of expression) and those issues on which there are deep differences, but from such discernment the department will be able to articulate a more organic mission, mission statement, and curriculum revision.

It is also important for the department to remember that curricular revision affects not only English majors, but also the general education students. Although there is a sense that more students are now taking AP courses and, therefore, are testing out of composition and literature requirements (this is an intuition that could be verified with the registrar), it is still the case that English courses serve both majors and general education students. For instance, several faculty mentioned the freshman honors seminar as a course that works well, but for too few students, leading them to wonder if its structure and content could be extended to other, non-honors students, as well.

Throughout the two days of conversation, department members agreed that their current curriculum most resembles a tasty, eclectic smorgasbord, served on a traditional table. The major itself is small (nine courses), with only three required courses, all in British literature. Both size and the number and nature of the requirements raise three issues on which the department needs to come to some clarity and consensus.

First, size. There are distinct advantages to a small major, as both faculty and students were quick to point out, chief among them the feasibility of students double majoring in English and another subject. On the other hand, the small number of courses means that, at best, students are introduced to a narrow swath of literature and writing genres. Here are some questions that the department might consider:

What evidence can be collected as to the feasibility of enlarging the major? While both faculty and students made the claim that “a larger major would mean a loss of double-major students,” this

claim appears to be based mainly on intuition. How many current students are double majors? Would an additional course fit into their schedules (this could be determined through a course-audit of their programs)? Might the department consider a larger major for English-only students and a slightly smaller set of requirements for double majors? Should there be a required graduate-school track?

As it considers the size and composition of its major, the department might want to take a systematic look at majors in peer institutions and arrange follow-up conversations with colleagues from selected schools, particularly those that have recently revised their own curriculum. Asking not only what have you changed, but also why, and on the basis of what information (i.e., assessment) would provide the Westmont department with a grid against which to compare its own curriculum and proposed changes. In addition, the department might want to assemble, from its own curriculum and that of peer institutions, a set of best practices that could guide both overall curricular revision and individual pedagogical practices.

Second, the three British-only requirements ensure that students are grounded in a traditional curriculum, that they understand the roots of English literature, including contemporary texts, and that they share common reading experiences. Most students, however, lack a wider exposure to both American and world literatures, as well as to courses in language/linguistics and advanced writing. As the department addresses the benefits and shortcomings of British-only requirements, it will be worthwhile for the members to take considerable care and sufficient time to discuss this question thoroughly. The temptation will be to polarize too quickly, by arguing that the current curriculum continues to serve students well (as indicated by high student satisfaction) or by countering that twenty-first century graduates need a more globalized, language-enriched curriculum. Here the department may be well-served by articulating the *telos* it envisions for its graduates. What exactly does it wish for its students? What would be the 5-7 characteristics it would most like to see exemplified by the Westmont English Department alum? What required courses, then, are most likely to develop those characteristics in students? To what extent should the departmental offerings, particularly in the major, reflect Westmont's heritage as a small, elite, evangelical liberal arts college and its location in Southern California?

In addition, I believe that the department should think very carefully about the consequences of the traditional British curriculum in relation to its Christian mission. It was striking to me that when I posed the question, "do you talk in the department about what it means to teach as a Christian or at a Christian institution," the universal response was first a pause, and then some version of "not much, but we probably should." Given the fact that current students and alums speak passionately and freely about how the English faculty model Christian living, enlarge their moral imaginations, and even transform their faith, it seems obvious that members of the department do, in fact, communicate their Christian practices and beliefs both inside and outside the classroom.

At least three reasons for the apparent reticence to engage in communal discussions about the nature and practice of Christian higher education come to mind. First, the evangelical heritage of the college, with its emphasis on the language of piety, conversion, testimony, and doctrine, may elicit from English professors the counter claim that indirection and allusion, the coin of the realm in literary works, is more powerfully persuasive than overt forms of communication. Faculty used language like "osmosis," "presentational not propositional," "embedded," "modeling," "non-artificial," "silent witness," "implicit," "private Anglican aesthetic," and "individual" as they talked about the relation of

faith to their own teaching. Second, the emphasis on individualism within the same evangelical tradition, aided and abetted by the still prevalent sense in Western societies that religion belongs to the private realm, may foster an ethos that encourages faculty to think of their faith in personal rather than communal, pedagogical, or academic ways. Third, the emphasis in the curriculum on British literature that is steeped in Christian culture and language lends itself to teaching that is already saturated with theological content. To anyone with half an ear for theological resonances, it is impossible to wade into Shakespeare, Spenser, Donne, or Dickens, – or into Faulkner or lesser known writers of the 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries – without encountering and indeed wrestling with questions of God, ultimate meaning, skepticism, the life of the church, theological debates, and the like. Similarly, Westmont students who take writing courses in poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction will likely gravitate toward topics that engage the Christian faith, either in an embrace or agonistically. In other words, the current curriculum “naturally” or perhaps even “unconsciously” invites Christian pedagogy. It is worth considering, therefore, just how a change in curriculum might change the balance of Christian teaching in the classroom as well as how more deliberately structured conversations in the department about Christian identity, practice, belief, and pedagogy – perhaps held in conjunction with the preparation of college-mandated faith and learning statements – might open the door for even better and stronger engagements with students. Such conversations might also encourage faculty to consider ways in which to engage the Academy at large as intentional Christian scholar-teachers.

Third, the department needs to have a careful, thorough discussion of the semester in England. This program, while not a requirement, is seen alternatively (and sometimes by the same faculty member) as a key component of the department, a sacred cow, a fitting capstone to the major, an impediment to having a senior capstone course, a talent drain from the campus, a significant community-builder for students, and a distinctive of the Westmont English major. The department must grapple with these other questions: What is the purpose of the semester and has that purpose morphed over time? Because of the multiple venues, the semester does encourage bonding among the participants, but provide less of a cultural immersion than other off-campus programs; is that okay? What are the advantage and disadvantages of relocating the semester to the sophomore year?

A fourth issue, unrelated to the current size and course composition of the major, is the number of students enrolled in English classes. Although department members at first unanimously declared that their classes filled promptly and completely, later comments indicated a persistent and widely-held worry that enrollments are declining. Here an analysis of student numbers would be useful; certainly the department should think carefully about the patterns of enrollment that any change in the curriculum would foster.

In the course of my conversations with the department, a number of other concrete issues arose regarding the curriculum. In no particular order of priority, here they are:

- Apart from Irish literature, students receive little exposure to world Anglophone literature; on a related note, very little literature in translation is taught. American literature is also not emphasized in the curriculum, and there is little exposure to AHANA (African-American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American) literatures. As the department talks about the possibility of enlarging and globalizing the curriculum, it will be important to articulate why it should do so (beyond keeping up with curricular change in other schools). Why ought Westmont students to study world and AHANA literatures? In addition, although some current faculty could pick up courses in world and American literature, if the department decides to add these courses, a shift in curriculum would also likely have implications for future hires.

- With the emphasis on literature in the department, there has been relatively little serious discussion about the composition courses, and little training for faculty who teach those classes. There is some perception that the burden of teaching composition falls disproportionately on the junior faculty. On a related note, the department is to be commended for recently adding a rhetorician to the faculty, but one of the challenges now is to make room for and integrate a rhetorical perspective into the department, given the long-standing and dominant literature emphasis. Rhetoricians tend to see and frame issues differently from literary scholars and have a greater interest in the history and theory of writing, as well as in its practical applications and pedagogical challenges. Developing a sustainable writing program for both majors and non-majors is one issue that needs considerable attention in the curriculum revision.
- Another question regarding faculty load comes from those who routinely supervise or help students prepare work for publication or contests, organize co-curricular events, and supervise internships and honors projects. The department should be attentive to sharing the load for these unpaid, but often time consuming, activities.
- A third issue relating to faculty load was raised by both senior and junior members of the department, namely a concern that non-tenured faculty were not being given sufficient opportunity to design and teach courses related to their major interests and expertise. Although curriculum change should be driven by the desire to create a comprehensive, coherent program for students, this goal must include opportunities for faculty to teach what they are most passionate about; students learn from engaged teachers and teachers are engaged when they are set free within the areas of their expertise.
- A number of faculty worry about whether research skills and writing are being taught well and reinforced.
- There is some sense that the small size of the major prevents students from engaging in a fully-rounded English major, hampers their maturation, and encourages them to graduate early. The lack of a fully-rounded major may be exacerbated by the semester in England. A census of recent graduates' courses (how many did they take? how many major courses were taken in England? did they graduate early?) would be helpful here in order to confirm or revise these intuitions.
- Some faculty would like to add a senior capstone course and/or a writing portfolio, perhaps as part of a more tightly sequenced curriculum that develops a repertoire of reading, research, and writing skills and that moves from close reading to contextual foundations to theory. Several faculty mentioned the need for students to have a more coherent experience in the major, one that builds from foundational to more nuanced and sophisticated skills.
- Traditionally, the department has cultivated an ethos of immersion in the experience of literature and has believed that sustained encounters with literature will be transformative for students; there is a certain worry that demanding more breadth and more theoretical sophistication may inoculate students against a taste and capacity for slower immersion in literary works.

- There is concern that the curriculum, as it has evolved, has become atomized. Courses are autonomous; composition and general education courses are siloed off from the dominant literature paradigm. What does the department want each course to do, not just in and of itself, but in relation to a student's major and general education classes?
- There is a division of opinion on whether courses in understanding film or writing screenplays are central to the mission of the department. Similar questions arise regarding courses in theory and additional courses in creative writing. Rather than simply thinking of these courses as atomistic additions, it will be important for the department to fold them into the larger developing plan of a coherent curriculum.
- The English department might be more conscious of its role in developing leadership skills in its students. Although faculty were reluctant to admit that Westmont students are an elite group, in fact they are. Perhaps there are ways in which the department in general and a curriculum revision in particular can help students become more self-aware of their gifts, more confident in their ability to navigate new and difficult terrain, more coherent and articulate about their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual commitments, and more deliberate in their habits (particularly those habits that will sustain them in demanding vocations).
- Younger faculty are conscious of their vocation as Christian scholars in the larger Academy. The department could do more to articulate expectations for scholarship, to encourage conversations about scholarly projects, and to encourage conference attendance, research, and scholarly publications.

As a result of curriculum revision and the expected retirement of faculty in the next few years, the department will face the prospect of making new hires. After curriculum change, hiring is the second most difficult and contentious challenge departments face. It would seem wise for the English department to hold robust (and lengthy) conversations to clarify its purpose and direction and to complete its curriculum revision before embarking on the task of selecting, interviewing, and hiring new tenure-track faculty.

Additionally, as the department continues the process of curriculum review and revision, it is worth stopping for a moment to consider the word "consensus" and the potential benefits and difficulties such a concept evokes. It was a word that arose often in the course of the interviews, but that also evoked ambiguous feelings when I probed it. Because the department is small, it naturally and rightly prides itself on holding open discussions in which everyone participates and in which decisions are reached by consensus. Two problems, however, emerge on closer reflection.

One is that there is an imbalance of power and implicit memory in the department, which consists of five long-time tenured professors (four of whom are male) and three untenured female professors, one of whom holds a rhetoric rather than literature Ph.D., a major shift for the department. Everyone, of course, is well aware of these dynamics, and everyone makes a conscientious effort to "level the playing field" in their deliberations and decisions. However, the imbalance of power cannot simply be wished away; every untenured member to whom I spoke was aware of the need to monitor and edit her comments in department meetings and each also expressed uncertainty as to what was actually expected or valued both in department discussions and in the reappointment and tenure process. It would seem that the implicit memory of the five long-time professors often results in a kind of

shorthand communication that inadvertently leaves too much unsaid and which, consequently, jeopardizes true consensus. Explicit conversations regarding expectations for teaching, scholarship and publication, and that catchall term “collegiality” should be held regularly in the department. Similarly, the tenured faculty should regularly ask whether topics, terms, or allusions that arise in department conversations need to be explicated and expanded. It might be helpful here to remember that collegiality is best fostered not simply by spending time together, but rather by regularly learning about and participating in one another’s teaching and scholarship.

Second, the question arises as to what issues are actually available for discussion and subsequently for a consensus decision, particularly because the curriculum itself has gradually formed around beloved classes designed to highlight the strengths of individual faculty members. It will be important, in a curriculum review, to disentangle beloved courses and beloved professors from what will benefit future students and, at the same time, to recognize the impossibility of such disentanglement. Consensus will undoubtedly come only through arduous discussion, reflective “time-outs,” and compromise. One practical concern that surfaced in my interviews is that in the curricular discussions thus far, there were different perceptions regarding the thought experiments, model curricula, and proposed revisions that have been presented in department meetings. Some faculty saw these as “what if” exercises, designed simply to get a large number of ideas out on the table; others saw them as firm positions to be accepted or countered; still others felt that least some of the presentations represented decisions that have already been made. It will be crucial in subsequent meetings to make room for discussions of multiple scenarios, some of which may be ideal (if we had 15 courses in the curriculum, if I had my own university, etc.) and some of which may be constrained (given a nine-course major, the most important areas to cover are . . . ).

Another thorny issue encountered by the department, not unexpectedly, is that of assessment, with pressures both internal and external being brought to bear on the need for data gathering, analysis, and action. Here the department has been somewhat hampered by the changing leadership in the upper administration of the college. In particular, the department has received conflicted messages about what it ought to be assessing or how it should attempt this work. The starts and stops have proved frustrating both to department members and to administrators and colleagues outside the department.

The most important outcome of any assessment activity is the conversation it generates within the department about goals and the best means to reach those goals, followed by the confirmation or change of actual practices. It is therefore important for the department itself, in consultation with the larger college community, to set its own priorities, to establish how those priorities can be quantitatively and qualitatively assessed, and to insure sufficient conversation and feedback among department members regarding the information gained in the assessment activity. It is understandably frustrating for faculty to work on gathering data or generating a report that does not result in any genuine conversation or pedagogical change. The *Six-Year Program Review Report, 2004-2010*, however, provides a good start for assessment with its nine Student Learning Outcomes, which themselves are open to revision. The following notes from a November 2010 department memo offer a sensible roadmap for implementation:

- We need to make reasonable and useful assessment processes a part of our everyday lives;
- We need to assess student work in ways that are always ultimately for the benefit of students;
- We must not try to assess everything;
- We must use sampling techniques rather than blanket data gathering.

To these wise words, I would simply add that assessment activities cannot take so much time as to detract from class preparation, teaching, mentoring students, and grading. Wherever possible, they should be folded organically into pedagogical projects such as evaluating writing portfolios or senior essays.

Furthermore, it is critical in assessment to focus on *telos*: what is the goal of the major? of this particular course? of this particular assignment? how will I know if I have reached this goal? Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are simply statements of goals toward which both teachers and students must strive. Keeping the focus on *telos* helps to circumnavigate unhelpful dichotomies such as whether classes and curricula should be student-centered or faculty-centered, discussion or lecture, traditional or “flipped,” and the like.

One set of assessment data that the college might provide to help the department think through curricular change is an audit, detailing who has taken which English classes in the last 5-7 years. This data could answer such questions as these: which classes beyond the requirements enroll the most English majors? which classes show many non-English majors take a writing course? a literature course? how have patterns of enrollment changed over the course of several years? is the number of double majors declining? and the like.

We did not focus on the general education or education curricula in the interviews I conducted, but these are both significant areas that should be considered along with the review and revision of the English major. It may be wise to talk with colleagues from other departments about their expectations for general education courses in literature and writing and to forge additional cooperative relationships with faculty in other disciplines.

In conclusion, the Westmont English Department appears to be well positioned to undertake a comprehensive review and revision of its curriculum. The *Six-Year Program Review Report, 2004-2010* is a model document that fairly and comprehensively lays out the history of the department and plans for further development; it should continue to be used as a map for the future. The faculty are competent, dedicated to their students, collegial with one another, and committed to the college. To a person, they were thoughtful and articulate about the strengths of the department and challenges for the future. It remains for them to continue and enlarge this conversation with one another.

## Appendix 4: External Review Summary Sheet

### External Review Summary Sheet

**Program: English Department, Westmont College**

**Date of Review: May, 2012**

**Guidance:** Please complete this summary sheet at the end of your site visit and email it to: [tnazarenko@westmont.edu](mailto:tnazarenko@westmont.edu) and the Department Chair prior to departing Westmont. This sheet will assist you with identifying key areas (strengths and improvements needed) to address in your final report.

**Please rate the following program review criteria using the following:**

**E** = Exemplary **S**=Satisfactory **N**=Needs Improvement **U**=Unclear/need more information

<b>1. PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS (PLGS) AND OUTCOMES (PLOs)</b>		<b>Evaluation: E, S, N, or U</b>
1.1	The PLOs reflect the most important skills, knowledge, and values of the discipline/profession.	N/A
1.2	The criteria and standards of achievement for the PLOs adequately match disciplinary/professional standards.	N/A
1.3	Based on your review of student work samples and annual learning results reports, student achievement of the PLOs is adequate for the degree and discipline/profession.	N/A
1.4	The assessment practices are yielding the needed information to determine how well students are learning the PLOs.	N/A
1.5	Do you recommend any changes to enhance student achievement or program assessment of the PLOs? If so, please explain and advise.  Please see attached narrative.	
<b>2. CURRICULUM</b>		<b>Evaluation: E, S, N, or U</b>
2.1	The current curriculum <i>content</i> is appropriate to the level and purpose of the program.	E
2.2	The <i>design</i> of the curriculum is adequate (required depth and breadth of study, flow of courses, frequency of course offerings, overall coherence, alignment with desired learning outcomes, etc.) to enable students to develop the skills and attain the outcomes needed for graduates of this program.	S—but the department recognizes need for revision
2.3	The program clearly outlines program requirements and offers courses	E

	regularly to ensure timely completion of the program.	
2.4	Do you recommend any changes to enhance the curriculum (content, design, course availability, etc.)? If so, please explain and advise.  Please see attached narrative.	
<b>3. STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b>		<b>Evaluation: E, S, N, or U</b>
3.1	Students are satisfied with the overall quality of their learning experience.	E
3.2	Students are adequately supported through the curriculum and advising to ensure their learning success.	E
3.3	Admissions criteria and performance standards for continuing students clearly stated (e.g. Catalogue, program materials) and consistently applied.	N/A
3.4	Class size levels are sufficient to ensure the critical mass of students necessary for productive learning.	N/A
3.5	The program provides adequate opportunities for internships, practica, professional development, and/or field experiences, as appropriate.	N/A
3.6	Student support services are adequate and supportive.	N/A
3.7	Do you recommend any changes to improve student experiences and learning environment? If so, please explain and advise.  Please see attached narrative.	
<b>4. FACULTY QUALITY</b>		<b>Evaluation: E, S, N, or U</b>
4.1	Faculty competencies/credentials are appropriate for the discipline and degree.	E
4.2	Faculty specialties correspond to program needs and to the concentrations in which they teach.	S
4.3	The system for evaluating teaching practices facilitates continuous improvement of teaching and learning throughout the program (core and adjuncts).	N/A
4.4	Faculty are adequately supported and engaged in ongoing professional development.	E
4.5	Do you recommend faculty changes (qualifications, expertise, teaching practices, professional development, etc.) to enhance program quality and student learning? If so, please explain and advise.  Please see attached narrative.	

<b>5. DIVERSITY</b>		<b>Evaluation: E, S, N, or U</b>
5.1	The Program demonstrates a commitment to diversity in its curriculum, student and faculty composition.	S
5.2	Do you recommend changes to the commitment of diversity? If so, please explain and advise.  Please see attached narrative.	
<b>6. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT</b>		<b>Evaluation: E, S, N, or U</b>
6.1	The department chair receives adequate release time to carry out administrative duties.	U
6.2	The library and student support resources are current and adequate to meet student and faculty needs.	U
6.3	Considering current budget constraints, the program has accurately identified and prioritized the program's most pressing resource needs.	E
6.4	The program's student recruitment and retention processes are adequate.	U
6.5	Overall program administration is efficient, effective and meets professional standards.	E
6.6	Do you recommend any changes to strengthen the program's current administration, support, and resources (including possible reallocations of resources from current program operations to fund new budgetary needs)?	
<b>7. PROPOSED CHANGES</b>		<b>Evaluation: E, S, N, or U</b>
7.1	What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the program? Please identify the evidence that supports your answer.  Please see attached narrative.	
7.2	What goals would you suggest the program set for the next five years (please list in order of priority, the most important goal first) and how do these comport with those identified in the most current Six-Year Program Review report? Please identify the evidence that supports your answer.  Curriculum Review and Revision; please see attached narrative.	
7.3	Considering budget constraints, what are the most realistic and important strategies the program can use to achieve the highest priority goals?	N/A
7.4	Considering budget constraints, what are the most realistic and important	N/A

	strategies the program can use to achieve the highest priority goals?	
<b>8. OVERALL PROGRAM SUMMARY</b>		
8.1	<p>What are the major strengths and weaknesses of the program? Please identify the evidence that supports your answer.</p> <p>Please see attached narrative.</p>	
8.2	<p>What goals would you suggest the program set for the next five years (please list in order of priority, the most important goal first) and how do these comport with those identified in the most Current Six Year Program Review report ?</p> <p>Please identify the evidence that supports your answer.</p> <p>Please see attached narrative.</p>	
8.3	<p>Considering budget constraints, what are the most realistic and important strategies the program can use to achieve the highest priority goals?</p>	
8.4	<p>What goals would require additional resources? What level of resources would these goals require?</p> <p>How might the program secure these resources?</p>	

## Appendix 5: W/SI Courses in English

### W/SI Courses in English

#### Current W/SI Designations:

“ENG- All ENG courses except: ENG 44, 46, 47, 105, 106, 168, 169, 191SS, 197”

Retain the W/SI designation in 17 courses:

ENG 006 Studies in Literature  
 ENG 006H First-Year Honors Seminar in Literature  
 ENG 090 Literary Critical Strategies

#### Writing Courses:

ENG 087 Introduction to Journalism  
 ENG 104 Modern Grammar and Advanced Composition  
 ENG 111 Screenwriting I  
 ENG 112 Screenwriting II  
 ENG 113 Screenwriting III  
 ENG 141 Creative Writing  
 ENG 142 Workshop in Creative Writing  
 ENG 167 Writers' Corner Practicum

#### Major Author Courses:

ENG 117 Shakespeare  
 ENG 151 Milton and the Early 17th Century  
 ENG 152 Chaucer and Medieval Literature

#### Also in:

ENG 045 Studies in Classic Literature  
 ENG 101 Film Studies  
 ENG 134 Ethnicity and Race in American Literature  
 ENG 160 Women Writers  
 ENG 165 Topics in World Literature  
 ENG 186 British and Irish Theatre I  
 ENG 187 British and Irish Theatre II

Drop the W/SI Designation in the following 22 courses:

ENG 121 Romantic Literature 1798-1832\*  
 ENG 122 Victorian Literature 1832-1900 \*  
 ENG 130 Major American Writers to 1865\*  
 ENG 131 Major American Writers 1865-1914\*  
 ENG 132 Major American Writers 1914-1945\*  
 ENG 136 Jewish-American Literature\*  
 ENG 158 Literature of the English Renaissance 1485-1600\*  
 ENG 164 Topics in Classic Literature\*  
 ENG 166 Neoclassic Literature 1660-1798\*  
 ENG 133 Major American Writers: Special Topics  
 ENG 135 Faulkner\*  
 ENG 170 British Novel 1700-Present

ENG 181 Twentieth-Century Poetry  
ENG 182 Twentieth-Century Fiction  
ENG 183 Twentieth-Century Drama\*  
ENG 185 Twentieth-Century Irish Literature\*  
ENG 190 Practicum  
ENG 195 Seminar

All English courses without W/SI designation (except 191SS) will follow the departmental guidelines for teaching writing:

- Assign 3,750 words (roughly 15 pages of writing)
- Page length can be negotiated at instructor's discretion when enrollment reaches 20 students
- In addition, courses will assign at least three papers

## Appendix 6: Report on New Major Curriculum Design

Report  
Westmont College Department of English  
**New English Major Curriculum Design**  
w/ Commentary (RVM)

August 13, 2012

**ACTION TAKEN:** At a department retreat on July 31, 2012, the English Department decided to replace its traditional structure for the major with a set of nine criteria that each English major must meet.

**BACKGROUND:** Our traditional major used a set of three required courses from a small set of options to assure that all majors would receive a solid grounding in the historical study of English literature. Each student needed to take one course (“survey” or “period”) in English literature prior to 1800, one course in English literature post-1800, and one course in a “major” English author (Chaucer, Milton, or Shakespeare). In addition, each major needed to take three other electives in literature and three electives in either literature or writing. Each student was required to complete a minimum of 9 courses for 36 units of credit.

In Spring, 2012, the Department reviewed its major curriculum with an eye to revising it. Weekly noontime discussions focused on the required core, course sequencing, the nature of a possible capstone experience, and total unit count. At the end of the semester, we were visited by an outside reviewer, Dr. Susan Felch from Calvin College, who issued her report in mid-July, based on interviews with all members of the department, selected students, and selected administrators, as well as all recent annual reports and other relevant documents such as department minutes.

The department retreat on July 31, 2012, involved all full-time members of the English Department faculty, meeting for seven hours at the home of Jamie and Sid Friedman, with Kathryn Artuso “Skyped in” from her home in Woodland Hills. All members received a 12-page packet of materials, including an agenda, prompts for five separate discussions, and a summary of prior discussions of Major Curriculum Revision. The summary included a list of “Departmental Leanings,” a brief list of points on which consensus seems close, a list of 28 questions needing to be resolved, a list of 10 larger conceptual questions, and a list of courses to consider eliminating.

The major revision discussion reached a critical turning point just before it began to take up the list of 28 questions needing to be resolved. One member (CLH) asked what were the “edge pieces”—i.e., framing goals or principles that would create the context for any practical choices we might wish to make. Recognizing that the practical questions would inevitably lead back to the framing concepts anyway, we asked ourselves what we could unanimously agree every major ought to do or experience before being approved for graduation. The result was a list of nine criteria for completion of the major. When we had drawn up the list, the whole department agreed that the existing framework no longer served a necessary purpose, so, collectively, we jettisoned it.

**REVISED PLAN FOR THE ENGLISH MAJOR:** Here below are the nine criteria that were approved.

To graduate with a general major in English from Westmont College's Department of English, a student must meet all of the following requirements, exceptions to which must be approved by the department:

1. Take a lower-division course formally introducing students to literary studies, including vocabulary, close reading, critical writing, critical strategies, research, research writing, and theory.
2. Take at least one major author course.
3. Complete courses in literature from at least two different national traditions
4. Take at least one course in literature written in English prior to 1800.
5. Take at least one course in a historically organized study of literature.
6. Take at least one course dealing with ethnic or gender identity.
7. Have an internship or practicum experience that will formally integrate academic life with some vision of life beyond college (an "experience requirement"). Examples might be work on Horizon, Writers Corner, NYCAMS off-campus program coursework, San Francisco internships, etc.
8. Write a major-length researched paper in the course of the student's studies.
9. Have a capstone experience in the student's final semester or fourth year.

#### **COMMENTARY ON THE REVISED PLAN:**

*Each English major must meet all of the following criteria, unless an alternative is approved by the department:*

- By replacing structured requirements with a set of criteria, we introduce flexibility into the system and put the onus on the student to devise his or her own pathway through the major.
  - The criteria assure that each student's program matches all the parameters that we regard as essential for majors.
  - According to our usual practice, any student may submit a petition for a "major substitution" or exception to the policy; beyond routine matters that can easily be decided by the chair, all such petitions would be decided by vote of the whole department; no such decision would be considered a determinative precedent, but each petition would be decided on a case-by-case basis.
1. *Take a lower-division course formally introducing students to literary studies, including close reading, critical vocabulary, critical writing, critical strategies, research, research writing, and theory.*
    - This course is conceived as a lower-division course that would be mandatory for all English majors; ideally, the student would take it before taking any others toward the major. It could be designated as a precedent, or gateway, for all other courses in the major curriculum.
    - We currently have a course called ENG-090, Literary Analysis, in the catalog, but in the last two years, we have modified the course by incorporating more literary theory and more conscious instruction in an array of literary critical strategies. We have begun to subtitle the course "Literary Critical Strategies." The proposed course would be built on that model, but more broadly as an introduction to the basic disciplines of study in English, including all those things mentioned above. This is where all English majors would learn the basic crafts of reading carefully, thinking critically, and writing with rhetorical sensitivity, to borrow language from our mission statement. Here is where students would be schooled in the particulars of writing well-argued and well-researched papers focused on the critical analysis and interpretation of literature. This is where students would learn standards for borrowing from other

scholarly writing, citing properly, and incorporating the thoughts of others into their own arguments.

- This foundations course would be the place where students would come into contact with theoretical issues of major importance in the field, in the context of the study of works of literature. Here they would not be expected to master advanced theory vocabulary or to master large bodies of writing in the field of theory.
- The department would have to decide whether ENG-006, Studies in Literature, which meets RIL requirements under “Common Inquiries” in the GE program, would continue to be allowed to count toward the major, and similarly, whether ENG-044 would continue to count toward the major. A strong case can be made for placing them on the same plane as ENG-002, a basic composition course that does not count toward the major.
- The department would have to decide whether the First-Year Honors Literature Seminar would be allowed to substitute routinely for the foundations course. If so, the seminar might need to be altered to assure that it covers at least as much ground as the standard foundations course.

2. *Take at least one major author course.*

- Currently, majors are required to take at least one course in literature by one of three major English authors: Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Milton. If a second course is taken from this list, it is allowed to count for the current English Literature Before 1800 requirement.
- The proposed criterion does not specify Milton, Shakespeare, or Chaucer. Thus, it opens the door to courses focused on other authors who have written particularly large and particularly distinguished bodies of work, not specifying whether British, American, or World Anglophone.
- The purpose of the proposed “major author” criterion is to make the requirement a little less Anglo-centric, a little less tied to the traditional “canon,” and to lay emphasis on understanding literary works within the context of a single author’s historical/cultural context, biography, and complete oeuvre.
- We still wish our students to have substantial encounters with writers such as Shakespeare, Milton, and Chaucer. To overcome their possible reluctance to take up the challenge, we as a department could allow a course in Shakespeare, say, to count as both a “major author” course and as a course in literature before 1800. We could require all major author courses to include the writing of a substantial researched paper, thus meeting the 8<sup>th</sup> criterion above. In short, we can use course prerequisites and “double- or triple-dipping” to pressure students toward taking courses in Shakespeare, Milton, or Chaucer, as we so choose.

3. *Complete courses in literature from at least two different national traditions*

- This stipulation is meant to increase our emphasis on the student’s encounter with diversity of ethnicity, religion, culture, geography, and national tradition in literature.
- This criterion would be designed to be met by whole courses in the literature in English of a country other than England or the United States, not simply by a single book or project touching on another national literature within the context of a course whose focus remains on English or American literature. Courses designed as even splits between, say, English literature and literature from another country would have to be weighed carefully before being approved. The literature of Ireland or Wales, or one of the British Commonwealth nations, such as Canada or Australia, could be approved by action of the department.
- The department would have to decide how it would treat literature written by the

diaspora of another nation within the context of British or American literature, such as Jewish-American, African-American, Asian-American, or Anglo-Arabic literature. Courses focused on such bodies of literature would also meet the criterion in #6 above.

4. *Take at least one course in literature written in English prior to 1800.*
  - Our emphasis here is on literature written in English that is sufficiently “old” that it will sound “other” to the modern ear. That would include Shakespeare, Milton, and Chaucer, as well as, say, 16<sup>th</sup>-century, 17<sup>th</sup>-century, or British Neoclassic literature. But it might also include American literature before 1800, an area listed in our catalog but not often included in our course offerings.
  - Our survey course, ENG-046, could remain and continue to meet this requirement in the historical study of literature for most majors.
  - The department would have to decide whether to allow a major author course in an author who wrote in English before 1800 to meet this criterion. As mentioned above, we could use the “double-dipping” feature as a structural encouragement for students to take courses in Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Milton.
  -
  
5. *Take at least one course in a historically organized study of literature.*
  - The department reaffirmed its wish for students to keep the study of literature grounded in awareness of historical context.
  - This criterion gives the department an incentive for continuing to offer “period” and “survey” courses in English and American literature while not demanding that all major periods in either national tradition be systematically covered. A department our size can hardly muster the resources to cover all of American and all of British literature in a systematic way.
  -
  
6. *Take at least one course dealing with ethnic or gender identity.*
  - Currently, we have no such requirement in our major, so this criterion would formalize a growing commitment in our department to literature and theory of literature pertaining to underrepresented groups. We’ve witnessed the sustained popularity of the Women Writers class, the successful launch of a Gender Studies program with branches in literary study, and the continuing demand for courses in Ethnicity and Race in American literature.
  - This criterion invites course concentrations on world post-colonial literature, on feminisms, LGBT studies, on ethnicity and race in world Anglophone literature, the literature of various diasporas, and gender issues, not confining them to American literature.
  -
  
7. *Have an experience that will formally integrate their academic life with some vision of their life beyond college (an “experience requirement”).*
  - This would be an entirely new requirement in our major, adding a new dimension to the student’s overall experience. Our emphasis here is on practical experience that integrates classroom learning with real-life experience, typically in an off-campus or on-campus internship.
  - We have not yet spelled out what such an experience might be, though we seem generally agreed that practicums on the Horizon, Writers Corner, NYCAMS off-campus program coursework, San Francisco internships, etc., are the models of

what we want.

- We may have no guarantees at the moment that we will be able to find suitable internship experiences for all of our upper-division majors—about 40-50 junior/senior majors per year. To carry out this plan, we would most likely need to appoint someone in the department to oversee this aspect of our program.
- We have been offering ENG-191SS, Reading in the Community, as a zero-unit practicum each semester. In ENG-191SS, students arrange to have 12 hours of contact time with clients in local retirement communities and nursing homes for the purpose of reading literature aloud. This practicum could be allowed to satisfy the “experience requirement.” We would have to revisit the question of how many units of credit this and other internships should receive.
- The answer to the question of units for the internship would impact the total unit count in the major. The department seems content to keep the total unit count at 36 or to increase it to 40 (one class equivalent). It seems uneasy raising the total unit count above 40, unless it is necessary to work in internship requirements.
- 

8. *Write a major-length researched paper in the course of their studies.*

- The department will need to decide what constitutes a major-length research paper—10 pp? 20? 30?—and in what courses the major paper will be assigned. Certainly it wouldn’t be fitting for all courses to require major papers. Currently, students write lengthy documented research papers in Shakespeare, British historical period courses, and major honors projects. It might be fitting for all major author courses to assign research papers, since major authors are those around whose work a large body of criticism has accumulated.
- The department would need to devise a method of tracking and record-keeping to demonstrate in each student’s case that the criterion has been met. There might be other records to deposit in the portfolio, such as internship evaluations, essays of reflection and self-evaluations, etc. Perhaps a portfolio that would revert to the student after graduation, accompanied by a statistical summary that would remain in the department, would satisfy the need.
- The research paper requirement would not require an additional course or a higher unit count in the major but should be enfolded within existing courses. It would require careful attention from the academic advisers of all students.
- 

9. *Have a capstone experience in their final semester or fourth year.*

- Normally, one thinks of a capstone “course,” but we have adopted the word “experience” deliberately to indicate that in some way or another, not necessarily only in a course, the student should undergo a final year (or for early graduates, final semester) activity that will demonstrate how the student is able to synthesize the skills, knowledge, motives, perspectives, and attitudes that have been developed in him or her over the course of the student’s previous studies.
- The standard way of fulfilling this requirement would be to take a senior level seminar designed to be a capstone experience. Not all seminars would necessarily qualify as capstone experiences. But the department has yet to stipulate what specifically differentiates a capstone seminar from an “ordinary” seminar. For example, would all students in a capstone course be allowed to choose their own emphasis in literature, so that students can deepen their areas of specialization? Would special types of writing, presentation, or interaction with other students be required? Perhaps all capstone courses should be organized around major themes

- or modes, rather than genres, authors, or historical periods.
- What would be a suitably challenging and comprehensive “experience” outside of but equal to the capstone seminar? Would a comprehensive exam such as we’ve given in years past qualify? Would a particular kind of public presentation such as a public lecture, participation in a conference, or other activity count? Such matters would still need to be decided.
  - How would the capstone experience be counted in terms of academic units, and would it add to the total unit count? Would we be satisfied with a capstone experience that qualified for only 2 units of credit? Would those 2 units be added on top of the 36 or 40 total units of the major? Such issues have still to be decided.
  - The department should meet to decide exactly what is the rationale for having a capstone course and what our goals for all students who take them must be. We should decide how the capstone experience relates to matters of faith and learning, including for those students who do not share the faith of their Christian peers.
  -

#### **ADDITIONAL REMARKS:**

- From Tatiana Nazarenko we’ve received the word that revising our major this way will require that we also redesign our program learning outcomes. She suggests that we do that before removing or adding courses to our curriculum.
- The nine requirements we’ve drawn up are focused on what students must do or experience in order to complete the major. However, there are other values and traditions we hold to that are not named in this scheme. These values and traditions will have much to do with the kinds of courses we offer, the way we teach, and the kinds of faculty we hire. For example, we are committed personally, and in the very terms of our hiring, to teach at the intersection of faith and learning. Neither a single course nor the structure of our curriculum can guarantee that our graduating majors will be glorifying Christ and living in obedience to him in their reading, writing, and thinking. Yet when our students graduate, we would hope to see evidence that such things are happening. Further, we affirm that for all students the major will be literature-based and saturated in close critical reading. This is the same for those who specialize in writing or who prepare to be teachers or who aim at careers in film or journalism. We also affirm that we want our majors to be thoroughly practiced in writing, whatever their concentration, and that all but a few of our major courses in the catalog will require a substantial load of writing. The writing emphasis remains whether or not the courses are designated in the GE program as “Writing-Intensive.” In fact, we have already taken steps to reduce the number of courses designated as GE “writing-intensive” while assuring one another that we will continue to emphasize writing in most courses anyway. I’m naming a few of these value-laden traditions here, but we should discuss them among ourselves and find a way to make them a matter of record.
- We will need someone in the department—or, a “major oversight” (☺) group—to assure that in its course offerings and course designs the department honors its commitments to our general values and traditions and to our nine stipulations for all majors. If we grow lax in either the course offerings or the course contents, our majors will respect the requirements in letter only but not in spirit. We need to do for ourselves what the GE Program Committee does for the GE program.
- By structuring our major with nine requirements, and doing away with a relatively large British literature core, and creating opportunities for one course to meet more than one major requirement, we increase the number of our students’ options. This change has a number of ramifications: 1) the grid we use to show what courses we’ve taught over the past ten years will need to show a higher level of detail; one course with the same number and course title as another might not meet a major requirement where the other does; 2) we must provide more careful and detailed academic advising to help our majors make the most of the options available to them; formerly, the structure of the major did more of the thinking for us; 3) we will have to create new instruments—checklists, condensed descriptions of the major, more detailed course descriptions—to help our majors plot their own

- courses through the major.
- When we have hired, we have traditionally given priority to the caliber of the person and teacher over the area of specialization, even though we have had to keep an eye on the distribution of specializations among us. That tradition has put a premium on individual strengths and interests. The revised major does not plainly reverse that custom, but it does place a new emphasis on a departmental consensus of goals for our majors. Thus it may ask each of us from time to time to sacrifice individual wants to departmental goals and needs and to relate to one another always in that spirit. It will require that we all monitor the goals themselves and, if they need to be altered, to work communally toward that end.
  - We can do both ourselves and a handful of our better and brighter students a professional favor by including students in the process of revising our major. Students will have a valuable on-the-ground imagination of the way the revised major will play out in their lives. They may have a greater variety of perspectives on other colleges' English majors than we have. And they may have feelings toward the old major that we could not anticipate. If we pull together a panel of students to critique our plan, or include students in our department's deliberations, the brighter and more experienced they are, the better. But I would propose that we include some who are aspiring writers, some who are double majors, some who are graduate school bound in literature, some who are bound for medical or law school, some who aspire to careers in education, and some who are headed for non-academic careers.

**NEXT STEPS:** At the retreat, we formed a team of Paul Delaney, Kathryn Artuso, and me to map our present courses onto the set of requirements and to propose alterations to our list. We will be looking for potential hitches in the system, potential ways for students to economize, and for any "dead wood" in the list. Paul D. has already drafted such a "map". The committee will be considering it before offering any refined version of it to the department for comment and critique. Expect that action early in the fall semester.

The department urgently needs to consider what student learning outcomes will best serve us and our students over the next five years. Perhaps our present outcomes will serve well or could be easily adapted. Perhaps, as is likely, we will need to write more strategically effective and appropriate ones. That action, too, should take place early in the semester, so that we can begin to alter our course designs and catalog offerings in time for them to be considered and approved before catalog revisions are due in the spring.

With Steve Cook's impending retirement at the end of this year, we must imagine that a season of hiring will be coming soon. However, we will not be in prime condition to hire if we cannot tell a candidate what we our planning to do with our major.

The pressure is on us to move the major revision forward, yet in the fall semester we will be without the on-campus services of both Cheri and Jamie. The others will have to bear a commensurately larger burden, and we will need to work to keep the lines of communication open so that those who are gone are still sufficiently heard in the process.

If you have any corrections, additions, queries, or quibbles about anything written here, please funnel them to me at [vanderme@westmont.edu](mailto:vanderme@westmont.edu).

It has been pleasurable working with all of you in the department on this sizable project, and I look forward to the interactions we will have in the future.

In Christ's service as reader, writer, teacher, and your colleague,

Randy

## Appendix 7: Assessment of Written Communication Outcome

Please fill in the template and append it to your 2012 annual or six-year reports as the very last appendix.

Department ENGLISH

APPENDIX 7 Assessment of the Written Communication Outcome

Inquiry		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>To uncheck a box, right click and select properties.</i>
<p>Does your department have a PLO focused on written communication? If yes, please provide the exact language of the outcome in the box below. If your department does not have the written communication outcome, you do not need to answer the questions below. Thank you.</p>		
<p>PLO: 7. Students will write correct, clear, comprehensible, persuasive, and engaging prose. This includes mastering the basics of <b>grammar</b>, style, and mechanics.</p> <p>8. Students will move skillfully among various <b>modes</b> of writing—<b>especially explication, argument, and research essays</b>—with awareness of their strategies and purposes.</p> <p>9. Students will incorporate the voices of others into their writing by accessing scholarly material with online bibliographic tools, smoothly weaving <b>quotations</b> within their own prose, and appropriately <b>documenting</b> their contributions in MLA style format.</p>		
1a	<p>Have you assessed student learning in relation to this outcome within the past three years?</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If not, please provide a brief explanation as to why not in the box below</i>

1b	If you have not assessed your student learning in relation to this outcome within the past three years, will you plan to assess this outcome in the 2012-2013 academic year?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>If yes, please explain in the box below.</i>
2	In the boxes below describe briefly the utilized instrument for	<i>Assessment data</i>
2a	<p>direct assessment of student learning (tests, essays, portfolios, embedded assessments , etc.)                      Whole department used elaborate rubric (specifying 4 levels of quality) to assess student bibliographic essays by letter grade on six criteria and to give summary letter grade to each.                      Calibrated 6 raters the first week by rating and discussing ratings for 3 student essays. The next week administered same rating scale to 12 student bibliographic essays. Analyzed the results in department meeting the following week.</p>	<p><i>n*=12</i>  <i>Results:</i>  <i>In calibrations, ratings were suitably consistent for 2 of 3 students. For 3<sup>rd</sup> student, overall grades ranged from C- to B+, with 4 of 6 falling in B/B+ range.</i>  <i>In the assessment of 12 students, 87% of them proved to be performing at “proficiency” level and above (B-A range. Their relative weaknesses were in the areas of integrating quoted material into their own writing and devising strong arguments.</i></p>
2b	<p>Indirect assessment (surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.)                      We administered and analyzed the results of four senior exit interviews and two alumni surveys: 1) Survey #1 administered by Sarah Skripsky to high-profile graduates from the past decade, asking for</p>	<p><i>n*=Exit intv =4; Svy #1</i>  <i>Results:</i>  <i>We were gratified at the level of respect and appreciation the seniors and alumni surveyed bore for the department. We were</i></p>

	<p>responses to 15 prompts; 2) Survey #2 designed by the Chair (RVM), asked all English majors 2003-2010 to respond to a battery of prompts re. GRE scores, reading practices, long-term influences, etc.</p>	<p>= ?; Svy #2 = 74</p>	<p><i>confirmed in our sense that our grads go into a wide variety of professional fields, and not usually into college teaching of English. We saw that our grads fare just as well on the GRE Quantitative as they do on the GRE Verbal tests, and on the basis of Verbal scores our best are well above average for those entering an array of fine graduate schools. We do not know as much about the experience of our middle-range and GE students as about the higher-achieving ones.</i></p>
<p>3</p>	<p>What pertinent information did your assessment uncover? <i>Provide your answer in the box below</i></p> <p><i>We are coming close to our benchmarks for teaching students to perform at at least proficiency level in the 6 writing criteria we assessed. We would like to see more attain proficiency and mastery in the areas of integrating quoted matter into the flow of their own thoughts. Our surveys gave evidence that we are achieving a positive long-term impact on the lives of our graduated majors in terms of their reading choices, tastes, and abilities, their empathy with others, and their critical thinking abilities.</i></p>		
<p>4</p>	<p>What conclusions did you come to and what recommendations made? <i>Provide your answer in the box below. Our conclusions are broad: 1) we need simpler, more pointed assessment instruments; 2) Our students are largely achieving what we hope for them in scholarly writing competencies with relatively greater need for improvement in the area</i></p>		

	<p><i>of assessing and integrating the thoughts of others into the flow of their own and framing strong arguments; we should revisit this assessment in two years; 3) We should redesign our senior exit interviews with our revised SLOs in mind; 4) Some of our goals may be better met through redesign of our major curriculum; 5) when we do redesign our curriculum, our SLOs should be revised accordingly; 6) we moved up the visit by an outside reviewer and at a department retreat drew up a plan for a revision of the major based on a new statement of nine overall requirements. We also decided to devise a new SLO for 2012-2013: : <b>“Our graduating seniors will be able to recognize literary works that cross a diverse range of literary traditions.”</b></i></p>			
5	<p>What changes will be incorporated as a result of the departmental data analysis?</p>			
	<p><i>Closing the loop</i></p>	<p><i>When</i></p>	<p><i>Who is in charge</i></p>	<p><i>Resources required</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our new major design includes a sophomore level course that will be an introduction to the major, in which more attention will be paid to critical writing and theory; we hope to instruct students earlier on ways to respect the critical arguments of others and to work their thoughts appropriately into their texts.</li> <li>• We want to refine our revision of our curriculum and align it with a reconsidered set of SLOs</li> </ul>	<p>By 2013 - 2014 school year By 2013 - 2014</p>	<p>Chair and selected professors  Whole department led by chair</p>	<p>Time and support for course development</p>

n = number of student samples or participants

**ENGLISH Department  
MULTI-YEAR PLAN**

Outcomes	2012 - 2013	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 - 2016	20XX - 20XX	20XX - 20XX	Means of Assessment, Benchmark	Who is in charge?	How the loop will be closed /has been closed?
1. Integrate borrowed material successfully	X						Evaluate Bibliographic Essays from Senior Seminar	TBD	Collect models of excellence; hold 0-credit workshops
2. Recognize literary works across range of lit. traditions	X						Gather GRE English Literature Subject Test Scores; also, embedded assessment by analysis of students' in-course reading, measured against a dept.-created grid; also, survey of recent alumni	Departmental assistant and student assistant, with Chair	Strategic adjustment of syllabi
3. SLO #3		X							
4. SLO #4			X						
5. SLOs 1-4 (revisit)				X					
<b>GE Projects</b>									
6.									
7.									
8.									

**Comments/Reflections:**

1. Adjust the Multi-Year Assessment Plan to your department six-year assessment cycle.
2. Align your program-level assessment with the [Institutional-level assessment](#) whenever possible: e.g., if your department has the Effective Communication/Writing outcome among your Program Learning Outcomes, this outcome should be assessed in 2011-2012 academic year unless your department assessed this particular outcome in 2010-2011. If your department has the outcome aligned with the Christian Understanding/ Practices /Affections ILO it should be assessed in 2012-2013 academic year, etc.

