1. Assessment information collected

Material available included final essays/projects from 400-level literature and rhetoric classes for the past two years, and final exams from the literary theory and language classes (English 310, 317, 318, 415, 435, 465, 472, 462).

The committee identified 4 students and reviewed the work of those students across three English Department upper division learning contexts, one rhetoric course, an authors course, a historical period course, and two grammar courses. All of the contexts are required courses for the English major. Christine Coffman separately reviewed the results of 310, our required course for English majors, and submitted a report to us. It is attached. We examined eight essays and twenty-four final exams in total.

We wanted to know how our students were performing across the courses and if and to what extent they were applying their learning about language, texts, and relationships to other courses. By looking at the same students in courses with different kinds of subject matter, we get a more direct look at how individuals develop across our program.

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

- These students may or may not be representative of English majors as a whole. We did not assess any Creative Writing or online courses.
- This is the last assessment cycle prior to our institution of our capstone project, which will allow students to tell us more about their synthesis of what they learned over the course of the degree program.
- Our findings did not differ significantly from those in the previous assessment. Students addressed a wide variety of questions appropriate to the major's stated goals for student outcomes. The most successful were adept at negotiating close reading, discovering new meanings and establishing critical/theoretical positions. The least successful struggled with issues of correctness that hindered their intellectual development.
- Our students are adept at discussing, analyzing, and identifying issues of place-based and gender identities, but they have great difficulty at discussing, analyzing, and identifying issues of racialized and class-based relationships.
- Students who struggle to identify construction problems in the grammar courses carry those struggles into their own writing in the literature courses, while those who
succeed at one tend to succeed at the other.

3. **Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above**
   
   A. Create some shared goals for student outcomes/assignments for the English 310 course, the only required specific course in the major. (There is a choice of courses for all the other requirements of the major). Set up connections between 310 and the other courses in the major.
   
   B. Find ways to address the students’ difficulties discussing, analyzing, and identifying the power structures involved in the operations of racialized and class-based identities.
   
   C. Since there is no prescribed sequence of courses for English majors, we could make no assumptions about what each student brought into each course (nor can instructors make such assumptions). Although we have restricted our 300 and 400 level courses to students with sophomore standing, we still see this as an issue worthy of more discussion.
   
   D. This lack of a predictable sequence could potentially contribute to students seeing their courses as compartmentalized rather than as parts of a larger whole.
   
   E. We recommend discussing the above issues at our department’s annual fall retreat.

4. **Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting**
   
   Sarah Stanley, Eileen Harney, Burns Cooper, Jennifer Schell

   We have attached Chris Coffman’s report on 310.