ENGLISH DEPARTMENT REPORT 2012-2013

Prepared by Elaine Beilin, with assistance from departmental committee chairs, as noted below

1. **New Initiatives**
   a. We began the English major peer mentor program in fall 2012 with ten peer mentors. We met to set goals for the program and I assigned four or five first-year students to each mentor. The plan was that they would meet four times a semester to help students make the transition to university English major. Over the course of the semester, the peer mentors reported that they often had trouble contacting many of their students or that the students didn’t respond. In the spring, we met again to discuss improvements to the program, and the peer mentors suggested connecting with the students at Orientation; matching student and mentor interests; holding an English Department pizza party at the beginning of the semester; organizing a group meeting of first-year students and mentors; and involving English-related clubs. In the second year of the program, we will do all of the above. We will also continue to include peer mentors in Accepted Students Day in April (a resounding success).

   [Academic Plan Priorities 2 b & c]

   b. To start building an Irish Studies program, Kelly Matthews developed a new upper level course, Contemporary Irish Literature, which she will teach in Fall 2013.

   [Academic Plan Priorities 4 a & c]

2. **Assessment**

   Prepared from the Assessment Committee report submitted by the chair, Patty Crouch.

   [Academic Plan Priorities 2 d & e, 3 c]

**Curriculum Mapping Project**

In September 2012, all tenured and tenure-track English faculty members completed surveys indicating the amount of instructional emphasis they placed on each of the department’s goals and objectives in the courses that they taught during the previous three years. Patty Crouch created a curriculum mapping report, showing where goals and learning objectives are being taught in four categories: overall, by literature course, by distribution group designation (A-E), and by course level.

**English Major Portfolio Pilot**

Patty Crouch compiled and summarized data from Assessment Committee members’ evaluation of the English Major Summative Portfolios from the initial Spring 2012 pilot. In response to these findings, some revisions were made to the second iteration of the portfolio used in Patty Crouch’s Fall 2012 section of Seminar in Literature. Most notably, students were instructed to submit “at least two” additional papers written during their time in the major, rather than the “two or three” additional papers required in S12, and they were provided with a revised narrative template breaking down goals 2 and 4 into subcategories emphasizing the breadth and depth of those goals. A revised rubric was created to assess the breadth and depth components separately in the second iteration of the pilot. Results from this pilot will be made available to the English Department in Fall 2013. Portfolio guidelines and materials for instructors teaching Seminar in Literature in Fall 2013, Elaine Beilin and Desmond McCarthy, will be made available shortly after the end of the Spring 2013 semester.
Patty Crouch created a third report aligning the curriculum mapping data with the data from the pilot of English Major Summative Portfolios. After studying this third report, Assessment Committee members realized that we need to revise our five-year assessment plan, so that the combined data from the portfolios and curriculum mapping would determine which goals should be reevaluated first. Accordingly, the committee prioritized Goal 2 and Goal 4 for its next cycle of work and recommended the following steps to continue with assessment and to close the assessment loop in spring 2013 and 2013-2014:

- assess, using the revised rubric instrument, the English major portfolios submitted during the second round of the pilot in Fall 2012, and compile the results. If warranted, we will again revise the student guidelines for the portfolio and the rubric.
- solicit faculty comments on the language of Goal 2, in particular to arrive at an understanding of department conceptions of what it means to “provid[e] . . . texts with appropriate historical and cultural contexts”
- revise the objectives for Goal 2, which have not been reevaluated since first drafted in 2007. Revise and submit for department approval new language for Goal 2 itself, depending on the feedback we receive from faculty.
- work in tandem with the 300-level instructor group convened by the chair to discuss the scaffolding of Goals 4 and 6 within the major (closing the loop), soliciting faculty comments on Goal 4, to arrive at an understanding of department expectations for students’ abilities to “apply” critical theories, approaches, and methodologies to the interpretations of texts.
- revise the objectives for Goal 4, which have not been reevaluated since first drafted in 2007, using the feedback we receive from faculty to guide us.

At the department retreat on May 16, the Assessment Committee updated faculty on the English major portfolio pilot, providing examples of student work and a comparison of summative and formative-summative portfolios (Patty Crouch created the PowerPoint presentation). The committee proposed piloting a formative-summative major portfolio in Literary Study in spring 2014.

**Analysis of Data Collected for Assessing Expository Writing**

The First-Year Writing Committee began discussions of the rubric data we collected over the preceding two years. Based on that data, we will focus on our second goal – Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing – next year. We began those discussions at the end of the year, and a review of the goal and objectives, as well as needs for faculty development, will be on next year’s agenda.

3. **Update on changes made in response to self-study/ program review (2011-12)**

- The First-Year Writing Committee developed a proposal for an award for the best essay written in Expository Writing. The proposal will be finalized in fall 2013
  [Academic Plan Priorities 3 e]
- Our outside reviewer emphasized the importance of additional professional support for the Journalism program and updating writing courses. In Fall 2012, we were able to hire as an FTT Meredith O’Brien-Weiss, a working journalist, author, and media-savvy instructor, to teach writing and to assist Desmond McCarthy with the Journalism program. Meredith’s impact was immediate: she became Assistant Advisor to The Gatepost; Meredith and Desmond developed a new upper-level course, Writing for Online and Social Media, which Meredith taught in spring 2013; Meredith is scheduled to teach Introduction to Journalism in fall 2013. [Academic Plan Priorities 1a, 3b, 6 a]
After an extended discussion, the department voted to change the English major foreign language requirement from Intermediate II level to Elementary II level. We did so to alleviate many students’ difficulties in completing the requirement, but we continue to encourage students to study language and to minor in a foreign language. The new requirement will be extended to all current majors, not just the entering class.

The Department approved a proposal to allow English majors to count one literature course in a foreign language towards the major. We will consult with the Modern Language Department and send the log through governance in the fall.

To begin improving our internship program, Patricia Lynne became the internship advisor and started contacting off-campus internships. [Academic Plan Priorities 3b & 6b]

Our outside reviewer called the change from the Accuplacer writing placement test to our own “expert reader-obvious placement” model a “huge step forward.” See below for developments in writing placement. [Academic Plan Priorities 2 a & d]

As our outside reviewer suggested, we reduced the number of General Education courses we offer (from 18 to 13).

To strengthen English majors’ understanding of the many possibilities open to them after graduation, we held our first English Major Career Night in April, 2013. Five recent graduates returned to campus to discuss their current work (graduate student in English, technical writer, editorial assistant for academic research database, librarian with an MLS degree, editorial assistant for an online medical research database). We will repeat this event in the fall and in every subsequent semester. [Academic Plan Priorities 6 c]

4. Unmet departmental needs / priorities

We canceled the SEI training that we proposed because of the new state requirements.

5. Academic Plan Priorities 1

We searched a tenure-track contemporary world literature position, writing a job ad to emphasize diversity in curriculum and to encourage diverse applicants. Four members of the search committee attended the Modern Language Association convention and interviewed 15 semifinalists. Our semifinalist pool was significantly diverse. Our new hire, Alexander Hartwiger, brings teaching experience in Hong Kong, India, and Lebanon and expertise in African and Asian literature, as well as human rights pedagogy. [1 a]

Three English Department faculty served on the CELTSS Steering Committee—Elaine Beilin, Lynn Parker, and Evelyn Perry—and Claudia Springer serves as Assistant Director [1 c]

The Annual Retreat for Teachers of First-Year Writing was held on August 30, 2012. We invited NTT faculty to join in the planning, and one person who had not previously worked with us in the planning did so. Twenty-four faculty attended the workshop.[1e,c]

The English Department added two extended meetings to its schedule, one on the day before classes started in September (in the CELTSS room) and a retreat (in the 1839 Room) on May 16. We broke bread together, we discussed important departmental issues, and we accomplished a lot. [1 e]

In fall 2012, Kelly Matthews participated for the second time in a Linked-Class Learning Community, teaching Expository Writing in a “Writing China” link with Elementary Chinese I. [1 e]

Sandra Jamieson, one of the lead researchers for The Citation Project visited our campus on October 25, 2012. She gave a workshop for first-year writing instructors and a presentation for the campus on the Citation Project findings thus far. Approximately twelve instructors attended the workshop, and ten people attended the presentation. As a
follow-up to this visit, the Committee has suggested to CELTSS leadership that we host a Citation Project speaker at the January 2014 professional development day. Discussions about this possibility will continue. [1c & e]

➢ The English Department sponsored two faculty seminars. On November 29 in the 1839 Room, Lisa Eck and Bernie Horn talked on cosmopolitanism in teaching and reading, and Bart Brinkman talked on modern poetry scrapbooks and the modern poetry archive. On April 4 in the Honors House, Patty Crouch’s paper was "Sing, Heav'nly Muse': Lucy Hutchinson's Gendering of the Epic Voice in Order and Disorder"; and Claudia Springer’s paper was "The Radioactive West: Where the Western, Science Fiction, and Ecofilms Meet.” [1 e]

6. Academic Plan Priorities 2 a, b, d

From the First-Year Writing Committee 2012-2013 Report, prepared by chair, Patricia Lynne:

New Writing Placement System Update

In Spring 2012, the university implemented our new writing placement test, following guidelines established by the First-Year Writing Committee in Fall 2011. The new placement test resulted in approximately 56% of students placing into the developmental writing course, Introduction to College Writing, for Fall 2012, more than double the number that had been placed in that course in previous years. As a result, we offered eighteen sections of Introduction to College Writing; we hired four new Visiting Lecturers to teach this course and one new VL and a new Full-Time Temporary instructor to teach Expository Writing. Patricia Lynne provided orientations for these new faculty to acquaint them with our courses and our students. Not all students could be placed in Introduction to College Writing during the fall semester, so some did not begin their writing coursework on time.

In Spring 2012, we used Blackboard to implement our new placement system, but there were substantial difficulties with that system. This past year, we prepared for a switch to iMOAT, a system developed by MIT and funded by the Davis Grant. Unfortunately, iMOAT appears to be nearly as unwieldy as Blackboard, so we may not continue its use. Any need for change will be assessed early next year.

For placement this year, the following work was done:

➢ Development of a new writing prompt based on a new essay
➢ Conversion of the test prompts to the iMOAT system
➢ Collaboration with Ben Trapanick to get student information and put that information into the system
➢ Preparation of instructions for students and readers
➢ Email communication with incoming first-year students and transfers during both January and May
➢ Review of placement information and materials for the First-Year Programs website and letters for students
➢ Recruitment of faculty to read the exams.
➢ Collection of assessment data for the placement test. Students and faculty completed surveys, and grade data will be collected with the assistance of Ann Caso. Each fall, we will report on assessment data for the previous year.
Proposal for a C- Requirement for Introduction to College Writing and Expository Writing

The Committee developed a proposal for revising the course descriptions for ENGL 100 and ENGL 110 so that a C- would be required to pass either course. In the case of Introduction to College Writing, a grade of C- would be required before moving onto Expository Writing. In the case of Expository Writing, the General Education requirement would not be fulfilled until students received a C- or better. The changes passed unanimously at the March 25th department meeting, and both passed the University Curriculum Committee on April 26th. However, at the ensuing All University Committee meeting, the log for Expository Writing was referred to the Academic Policies Committee for review next year. Although, the AUC passed the Introduction to College Writing log, without a new description for Expository Writing, the Introduction to College Writing C- prerequisite appears to be in limbo. Research in preparation for the APC review will occur during the summer.

Proposal for Supplemental Reading Instruction

The Committee developed a proposal that would (a) allow ENGL 100 instructors to recommend students for supplemental reading instruction through CASA and (b) allow students who failed the reading test twice but placed into Expository Writing to take this same supplemental instruction in lieu of Introduction to College Writing. The proposal was presented in those two parts, and both measures passed at our April 19th department meeting. Implementation for Fall 2013 is underway.

7. Academic Plan Priorities 3

- In fall 2012, Kelly Matthews taught an honors section of Irish Literature, and invited the Here Comes Everybody Players to come to campus to perform excerpts from works by James Joyce (Ulysses, Dubliners) and Northern Irish playwright Brian Friel (Translations). The performance was followed by a discussion with the students, actors, and their director. The event was cosponsored by English, Communication Arts, and the Honors Program. [3 d]
- In September 2012, the English Department cosponsored with GIG Christina Asquith’s talk based on her book Sisters in War. [3f]
- In February, Lisa Eck invited Peace and Conflict artist-in-residence, Elshafei Dafalla Mohamed, and Professor Elizabeth Goldberg to visit her honors course, Contemporary World Literature by Women. [3 d & f]
- Claudia Springer developed a new course, Studies in Global Cinema, which she will offer in Spring 2014 [3 f]
- The English Department has included 3 courses in the proposal for a Global Studies major, and will propose the addition of Studies in Global Cinema.

8. Academic Plan Priorities 6 d

After voting to bank the M.Ed. with a concentration in English at the April department meeting, at the May 16 department retreat, faculty expressed strong support for moving forward with a plan for the M.A. in English, particularly the 5-year B.A.-M.A. None of the other state universities appears to offer the 5-year program in English. Over the last two years, the Graduate Committee has done much of the research, and two faculty members volunteered to follow up with additional work this summer. We need to identify available resources.