

2007 MASTER PLAN/PROGRESS REPORT

Academic Program: MA English

Person Responsible: Keagan LeJeune

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Mission: The Master of Arts degree will prepare graduate students for further graduate study and/or for the practice of their discipline by providing them with skills in advanced scholarly research; in clear, concise, and persuasive writing; in the analysis and evaluation of literature, with emphasis on the cannon of great works in the English language; and in effective teaching.

Institutional Mission Reference: The foundation of the MA in English program is a faculty committed to excellence in teaching (EPO2), research (EPO3), and creative and scholarly research (EPO4). By modeling best practices and professionalism, the M.A. in English faculty prepares graduates who will pursue further degrees or who will go directly into teaching jobs or other kinds of work by providing them with discipline-specific knowledge and with skills in advanced scholarly research and in critical thinking (SLO1) and effective expressions (SLO2). Our graduates who become teachers are directly involved, therefore, in enhancing cultural growth in this region and beyond and will help to further spread McNeese's core values of lifelong learning, ethical responsibility (EPO5), and civic engagement (EPO6).

Assessment Methods Utilized:

- Standardized Exam (nationally normed)
- Standardized Exam (state-normed)
- Major Field Examination
- Internally-developed Examination
- Student Opinion Survey (SOS)
- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- Employer Survey
- Graduate Survey
- Alumni Survey
- Exit Survey/Interview/Exam
- Program-specific Survey
- Scoring of Essay
- Portfolio Evaluation
- Capstone Project
- Presentation
- Research Paper
- Research Project
- Course Summary
- Excel Spreadsheet
- Access Database
- Other - Please describe: _____

Data Repository Location:

Faculty/Staff office files
Faculty/Staff office files

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Student Learning Outcome 1: Graduates apply critical thinking in academic and professional environments. M.A. students must synthesize and evaluate existing research on various topics and produce their own scholarly works.

<u>Expected Level of Achievement</u>	<u>Actual Data From Assessment</u>	<u>Actions/Decisions</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% of MA students will complete the graduate exit survey, including content-specific and career-specific questions. 75% of these students should rank their newly acquired background as “(3) good.” 2. 100% of MA students will be informed of the Graduate Activity Report (GAR). Students will be required to submit at the end of each academic year an activity report in which they catalog activities they have participated in and professional work they have completed (e.g., seminar papers, creative work, review of others’ creative work, awards, attendance or participation in conferences, etc.). 3. Benchmarking aggregated data on Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form. 4. 100% of ENGL 601 students should score “average proficiency” on SLO 1, 2, and 3. All program graduates will have earned a grade of B or above in English 601: Bibliography and Literary Research. (Any graduate student whose GPA falls below a B average or who receives more than 2 C’s is placed on academic probation). The professor who teaches the course supplied the following course objectives: <p><u>ENGL 601: Student Learner Outcomes</u></p> <p>On completion of this course students will be able to do the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand nature and practice of various scholarly pursuits. 2. Locate relevant research material. 3. Analyze, interpret, and evaluate critical literature of the profession. 4. Demonstrate an understanding of the profession through the production of scholarly work. 5. Articulate and negotiate the “problems” that face scholars, including the changes in traditional research issues that have resulted 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In Spring 2007, 9 candidates completed the M.A. program. 3 received the M.F.A. as well. Since 3 M.F.A. candidates completed the survey for the M.F.A. program, those scores will not be included for this review. 6/6 M.A. candidates completed the survey for the M.A. program. Students can answer questions using a scale from 0 (completely inadequate)-4 (excellent). 3/6 ranked their current background as a reader and critic after completing the program as “(3) good” and 2/6 ranked it as “(4) excellent.” One did not answer the question. 2. M.A. students have not been required to submit GAR in the past. Students will submit first GAR in Spring 2008. 3. M.A. faculty members have not been required to complete the Comprehensive Exam review sheet. The new exam process was under review in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007. Faculty members will submit the Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form Fall 2007. 4. Data from 601 was pulled from the fourth assessment (seminar paper and symposium) since it is the most rigorous and the culminating assessment in the course. A rubric is used to evaluate how students’ presentations and papers demonstrate SLO 1, 2, and 3. 17 students’ presentations and papers were ranked as “above average proficiency,” “average proficiency,” or “below average proficiency” for each SLO. For SLO 1, 17/17 scored “above average proficiency” on the presentation, and 17/17 scored “above average proficiency” on the paper. For SLO 2, 17/17 scored “above average proficiency” on the presentation, and 17/17 scored “above average proficiency,” on the paper. For SLO 3, 15/17 scored “above average proficiency” and 2/17 scored “average proficiency” 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A graduate survey specific to M.A. candidates is being considered. Though the scores about this topic received are high, the best change here seems to be a better exit survey that asks fewer but more detailed questions. 2. Contacting M.A. students about the GAR has been problematic. A specific process will be developed to contact all M.A. students and inform them of the GAR. For M.A. students, GAR data will evaluate the scholarly activity of the students and their participation in professional development. 3. The new director of the M.A. program has tried to engage the graduate faculty in order to develop a means of evaluating students throughout the program. Meetings and electronic correspondences have worked towards developing new assessment methods. For instance, one change that will begin in Fall 2008 is the addition of a new portfolio requirement to the current comprehensive exams. One portion of the portfolio will be a revised essay from a graduate course. Also, the professors administering comprehensive exams will be required to complete more detailed responses about student performance. This information will be entered on the new Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form. One section of the form will evaluate students’ critical thinking ability; another response will evaluate research ability. 4. The professor who teaches the course supplied response: Since students scored satisfactory or above on the first three SLOs, the professor will continue using these two assessments and will continue to emphasize these skills throughout the course. The professor considers the design and implementation of the course to be successful.

<p>from literary theory and cultural studies.</p> <p>6. Engage in practical professional activities such as applying to doctoral programs, submitting work for presentation/publication, and entering the job market.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Assessments/Requirements</u></p> <p>Expect several (six or so) “smallish” library assignments. In addition to the library assignments, you will complete the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Editing assignment2) Book/Critical Literature Review3) Annotated Bibliography of Criticism4) Seminar paper and Symposium (which will also include an abstract of your own paper and written responses to other papers).	<p>on the presentation, and 16/17 scored “above average proficiency” and 1/17 scored “average proficiency” on the paper.</p>	
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Student Learning Outcome 2: Graduates formulate and express ideas effectively through oral, written, and/or technological communications in academic and professional environments. M.A. students will also demonstrate an ability to write about their analysis and evaluation of literature.

<u>Expected Level of Achievement</u>	<u>Actual Data From Assessment</u>	<u>Actions/Decisions</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% of program graduates will pass the comprehensive exams. The current Master's comprehensive examination, which at present consists of essay exams on primarily literary topics, will evaluate students' abilities to express ideas effectively through oral and written communications. 2. 100% of ENGL 601 students should score "average proficiency" on SLO 4. In ENGL 601: Bibliography and Literary Research, Objective 4 (Professional knowledge through production of scholarly work) is linked to effective writing. In the portion evaluating Objective 4 on the rubric for the scholarly paper, 100% of students in English 601 will score at least a "(2) average proficiency." 3. Benchmarking aggregated data on Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% of our M.A. candidates passed their exams in 2006. Professors used the old form, which only indicates if a student passes or fails. 2. 17 students' presentations and papers were ranked as "above average proficiency," "average proficiency," or "below average proficiency" for each SLO. For SLO 4, 15/17 scored "above average proficiency" and 2/15 scored "average proficiency" on the paper. 3. M.A. faculty members have not been required to complete the Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form. The new exam process was under review in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007. Faculty members will submit the Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form Fall 2007. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Even though the current comprehensive exam does a good job of evaluating a student's ability to express ideas effectively through oral and written communications, faculty members saw the limitations of the exams in evaluating general knowledge of the discipline. Also, a departmental form, Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form, were created to ensure consistent evaluation of these exams and to facilitate record keeping. 2. The professor who teaches the course supplied response: Since students scored satisfactory or above on the fourth SLO, the professor will continue using this assessment and will continue to emphasize writing skills throughout the course. The professor considers the design and implementation of the course to be successful. 3. One portion of the portfolio will be a revised essay from a graduate course. Professors administering comprehensive exams will be required to complete more detailed responses about student performance, which will include writing skills and research skills. 4. The department plans to enhance this emphasis by requiring a final essay from each MA candidate about his or her experience in the Master's degree program in English pointing out both strengths and weaknesses; the essay should explain what the student feels is lasting, meaningful, or beneficial about the experience. These essays will be evaluated by a committee made up of members of the graduate faculty in English using the Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form. Faculty members will address with a means toward correction whatever weaknesses that might be pointed out.

Student Learning Outcome 3: Graduates analyze the global community to make sound judgments in academic and professional environments. For M.A. students, they must be exposed to world literature and existing research on and/or critical approaches to the literature.

<u>Expected Level of Achievement</u>	<u>Actual Data From Assessment</u>	<u>Actions/Decisions</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% of program graduates will have earned a grade of B or above in a course in World literature. (Any graduate student whose GPA falls below a B average or who receives more than 2 C's is placed on academic probation). The Department of English and Foreign Language has designated these courses as fulfilling World literature requirements: 502, 506, 534, 537, 538, 579, 661, 663, 665 2. Benchmarking aggregated data on Departmental Comprehensive Objective Exam. 3. 100% of MA students will complete the graduate exit survey, including content-specific and career-specific questions concerning their background in World literature and their knowledge of the global academic community. 4. 100% of program graduates will earn B or better in ENGL 601: Bibliography and Literary Research. In this course, students will analyze and implement the international MLA rules and procedures for research and documentation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 9/9 M.A. program graduates completed a World literature course. 1/9 completed ENGL 537. 1/9 completed ENGL 538. 4/9 completed ENGL 579. 1/9 completed ENGL 663. 2/9 completed ENGL 665. All of them earned a B or better. 2. Students have not been required to complete the Departmental Preliminary Objective Exam. Students will complete the Departmental Comprehensive Objective Exam Fall 2007. Specific questions on the exam will assess students' knowledge of World literature. 3. 6/6 M.A. candidates completed the survey for the M.A. program. Students can answer questions using a scale from (no, not at all)-4 (tremendous improvement). One question asked the student to rank how his/her "background in literature improved." 3/6 ranked it as "(4) tremendous improvement." 3/6 ranked it as "(3) significant improvement." 4. 9/9 program completers completed ENGL 601 with a B or better. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All program graduates continue to be exposed to the global community through its literature and art. . 2. The department plans to change its kind of Master's exams and its methods for administering them. In our current system students select a committee of three professors from the Graduate English faculty, and the students are then examined in areas of the professors' expertise. We plan to add to this by incorporating a departmentally administered, objective style MA exam which would ensure that our graduates have a certain amount of core knowledge from the areas we require them to take courses in: (1) Literary criticism and linguistics; (2) World literature, (3) Medieval and Renaissance, (4) Restoration and 18th Century, (5) 19th Century British, (6) American and 20th century. Specific questions on the exam will determine their ability to demonstrate their knowledge of World literature and their ability to analyze it. 3. A graduate survey specific to M.A. candidates is being considered. Though the scores about this topic received are high, the best change here seems to be a better exit survey that asks fewer but more detailed questions. Questions about World literature and the global academic community need to be developed. 4. Though program graduates are exposed to this information in ENGL 601, a more specific method of assessing this will be developed.

Student Learning Outcome 4: Graduates students demonstrate a familiarity with the canon of great works of literature.

<u>Expected Level of Achievement</u>	<u>Actual Data From Assessment</u>	<u>Actions/Decisions</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% of M.A. students will complete the graduate exit survey, including content-specific questions. 75% of these students should rank their level of improvement as “(3) significant improvement.” 2. Benchmarking aggregated data on Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form. 3. Benchmarking aggregated data on Departmental Preliminary Objective Exam. 4. Benchmarking aggregated data on Departmental Comprehensive Objective Exam. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6/6 M.A. candidates completed the survey for the M.A. program. Students can answer questions using a scale from (no, not at all)-4 (tremendous improvement). One question asked the student to rank how his/her “background in literature improved.” 3/6 ranked it as “(4) tremendous improvement.’ 3/6 ranked it as “(3) significant improvement.” 2. M.A. faculty members have not been required to complete the Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form. The new exam process was under review in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007. Faculty members will submit the Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form Fall 2007. 3. Students have not been required to complete the Departmental Preliminary Objective Exam. Students will complete the Departmental Preliminary Objective Exam Fall 2007. 4. Students have not been required to complete the Departmental Preliminary Objective Exam. Students will complete the Departmental Comprehensive Objective Exam Fall 2007. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Though the scores are not low, other measures of assessment are being developed (as noted below). Also, a better exit survey that asks fewer but more specific questions will be developed 2. The professors administering comprehensive exams will be required to complete more detailed responses about student performance. One section of this review sheet will consider a student’s knowledge of the field. 3. The department plans to change its kind of Master’s exams and its methods for administering them. In our current system students select a committee of three professors from the Graduate English faculty, and the students are then examined in areas of the professors’ expertise. We plan to add to this by incorporating a departmentally administered, objective style MA exam which would ensure that our graduates have a certain amount of core knowledge from the areas we require them to take courses in: (1) Literary criticism and linguistics; (2) World literature, (3) Medieval and Renaissance, (4) Restoration and 18th Century, (5) 19th Century British, (6) American and 20th century. (Most students will have taken courses in all of these areas, but the exams will be arranged so that a weakness in one or two areas would not keep a student from passing the test). This would be a way to measure student learning outcomes, but more importantly, it would ascertain that our graduates will have a broad and well-rounded knowledge of literature, “with emphasis on the canon of great works of literature.” 4. Based on previous scores, a poll that determined that several members of faculty were not sufficiently familiar with the exam, and comments about the exam from a few faculty members, the objective exam was tabled and revised during Fall 2006 and Spring 2007. It was also decided that preliminary and comprehensive objective exams be given. This

		<p>new stage of the process will begin Fall 2007</p> <p>5. In addition, the department has solicited faculty members about compiling a reading list. Meetings were held to discuss the reading list and suggestions were made about the nature of the list. The new reading list will be distributed at the start of the Fall 2007 semester.</p>
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Student Learning Outcome 5: Graduates analyze the academic community to position themselves to make sound judgments about career development and the professional environment.

<u>Expected Level of Achievement</u>	<u>Actual Data From Assessment</u>	<u>Actions/Decisions</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% of M.A. program graduates will complete the graduate exit survey. 75% of these students should rank the advice they have received about the career as “(3) adequate.” 2. Benchmarking aggregated data on Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form. 3. 100% of M.A. students will be informed of the Graduate Activity Report (GAR). Students will be required to submit at the end of each academic year an activity report in which they catalog activities they have participated in and professional work they have completed (e.g., seminar papers, creative work, review of others’ creative work, awards, attendance or participation in conferences, etc.). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 6/6 M.A. candidates completed the survey for the M.A. program. Students can answer questions using a scale from (completely inadequate)-4 (excellent). One question asked students to rank advice they received about preparing “to compete in the academic job market.” 1/6 left the question blank. 2/6 ranked it as “(4) excellent.” 1/6 ranked it as “(3) adequate.” 2/6 ranked it as “(2) somewhat inadequate.” 2. M.A. faculty members have not been required to complete the Comprehensive Exam review sheet. The new exam process was under review in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007. Faculty members will submit the Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form Fall 2007. 3. M.A. students have not been required to submit GAR in the past. Students will submit first GAR in Spring 2008. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Though the scores are not low, it is obvious that students need more advice about the academic career, including some direction in developing vitae. Many faculty members have expressed their awareness that professional development seminars should be added to the students’ progression through the program. Also, a better exit survey that asks fewer but more specific questions will be developed. 2. The professors administering comprehensive exams will be required to complete more detailed responses about student performance. One section of the Comprehensive Exam/Portfolio Review Form will consider a student’s C.V. and academic preparedness. The review of the C.V. and questions concerning academic preparedness should relate directly to this outcome. 3. For M.A. students, GAR data will evaluate the scholarly activity of the students and their participation in professional development. Review of students’ professional development should motivate students to become engaged in the academic and professional community. Also, it should give faculty members some indication of how involved students have been in professional development and of their weakness and/or questions concerning the field. Many faculty members have expressed their awareness that professional development seminars should be added to the students’ progression through the program. Data from the GAR should help to direct the creation of these seminars.

Resources Allocated: The advisor for the M.A. program does receive some release time, and a graduate assistant is appointed to the M.A. and M.F.A. programs to perform some basic office work. A new travel fund for graduate students was recently created.
