External Review of the Department of English

August 17, 2012

Prepared by
Stephen Bernhardt, David Doerfert, Greta Gorsuch,
Barry Maid, Anna Nardo, and Patricia Pelley (Chair)
(Committee Appointed by the Graduate School)

At the request of Dr. Clifford Fedler, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, the six members of the External Review Committee prepared for the on-site visit by reading the English Department’s self-study (“Graduate Program Review, 2005-2011”). They also examined the English Department’s Graduate Student Handbook and TTU’s 2011-2012 Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog. On April 5-6, 2012, five members of the committee met with students and faculty in eight sessions that were organized according to position (graduate student, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor) and in recognition of the English Department’s two halves—Technical Communication [TCR], on the one hand, and English (Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics), on the other. We also met privately with faculty who requested to do so. At the beginning and end of the two days of interviews, we also met with Chair Sam Dragga. Following the on-site visit, the members of the committee also received email messages from a number of students and faculty. To the extent possible, this report synthesizes our impressions that stem from these multiple forms of contact with graduate students and faculty. Reflecting the external reviewers’ areas of expertise and the unique structure of the English Department, our comments are divided into three sections: Technical Communication, English (Literature and Creative Writing), and Linguistics.

I. Technical Communication

Overview and Mission
Committee Assessment: Very Good

The division of the department into two units has clearly benefited TCR. This part of the department is flourishing, even though it is understaffed. On the whole, the TCR faculty members appear to support each other and to share a vision of how to improve and expand the graduate program. Individual faculty members obviously contribute to the apparent harmony,
but the administrative decision that allows them to devise their own curriculum, hire new faculty whom they choose, and establish their own criteria for tenure and promotion has undoubtedly contributed as well. The solid reputation of faculty, their collegial rapport, and their shared vision are probably the driving force in TCR’s ability to attract students of a high caliber. Once these students have completed their graduate degrees, they fare exceptionally well in a competitive job market.

**Curriculum and Programs of Study**

Committee Assessment: Very Good

The MA in Technical Communications [MATC] and the PhD in Technical Communication and Rhetoric have the same five areas of emphasis:

- Rhetoric, Composition, and Technology
- Technical Communication
- Rhetoric of Science and Healthcare
- Technology, Culture, and Rhetoric
- Visual Rhetoric, New Media, and User-Centered Design

These areas of emphasis appear to be well conceived. They reflect the expertise of the faculty. They meet the needs of MATC students preparing for applied writing careers and of those aiming for PhD programs. The areas of emphasis also serve the PhD students training for academic careers. The exceptionally high number of PhD graduates who move into tenure-track jobs reflects the conditions of the marketplace, but it also underscores the point that the TCR program is soundly structured.

The only area of concern is that there appears to be no sustained attempt to foster internships in industry, government, and non-profit organizations. Because students in the graduate program—both at the MA and PhD level—benefit from these kinds of internships, faculty should try to cultivate potential hosts and to assist students find appropriate positions. Additionally, the faculty are encouraged to define the expectations, processes, and best practices to help ensure that all parties have a positive experience.

**Faculty**

Committee Assessment: Very Good

In both the self-study and the interviews, faculty members make it clear: the teaching load is too onerous. It is true that Texas requires nine hours of teaching, research, and service every term. Given the number of departments
in the College of Arts and Sciences that have figured out how to manage a uniform two-two load, there is no compelling reason for the teaching load in the Department of English to remain so high. Texas Tech’s ability to reposition itself among tier-one institutions may be compromised if the heavy teaching loads remain in place.

Despite the heavy teaching load and the large number of graduate students they supervise, TCR faculty members are productive scholars. They publish regularly, even though the number of journals in technical communication is limited. To disseminate their work more widely, they have also edited collections of essays that have been published by the established presses in technical communication.

While members of the TCR faculty are productive in terms of publications, most of them do not present their research at professional meetings as often as one would expect. In the past six years, fewer than half averaged one presentation per year. Undoubtedly the insufficient amount of travel money plays an important role in their inability to attend conferences. If administrators want to expand the size of the graduate program, it makes sense to provide more funding—at least double the current amount—for the travel budget because faculty members who present their work at professional meetings are in the best position to recruit new students.

TCR faculty members serve on an extraordinary number of MA and PhD committees; it is also evident that they take their responsibility to students seriously. The members of the External Review Committee unanimously agree: the members of the TCR faculty are stretched to the limit. They cannot afford to lose anyone; nor can they admit more students than they already have without diminishing the quality of the program. Indeed, even to sustain the current level of productivity, the number of full-time faculty lines should be increased at least to twenty. An expansion of the graduate program would require additional lines.

**Graduate Students**

Committee Assessment: Excellent

Over the past six years the number of graduate students in TCR has grown from around 80 to around 100. It appears that the increase has been primarily in the PhD program whereas the number of students in the MA program has actually decreased. In 2005-2006 approximately 30% of the
students in TCR were MATC; in 2010-2011 that percentage dropped to twenty.

The reduction in the number of MATC students is puzzling because most MA programs in technical communication are thriving. Is the program deliberately reducing the number of MATC students in order to increase the number of PhD students? If so, this strategy may be short sighted in the following way. A thriving MATC that maintains contact with its alumni—many of whom take jobs in industry—can strengthen both the MATC and the PhD in TCR. For example, over the past six years, the department granted the MATC to 45 students. Of these, 28 either took full-time jobs or entered PhD programs. Several of the graduates who took full-time jobs are working in technical industries in Texas. Why not cultivate a rapport with these alumni as a way of building partnerships between the MA program and industry? One caveat: the number of students in the MA program should not be increased until more tenure-track faculty have been hired.

Of the 44 students who completed PhDs in this six-year period, all have found full-time employment. Some of the PhDs, especially those in the online program, already had full-time jobs and either continued in those same positions or used the degree to qualify for better jobs. Twenty-four of the students who received PhDs apparently took tenure-track assistant professorships.

Like their faculty mentors, graduate students commented on the department’s heavy teaching load. They also remarked that a greater degree of financial support would allow them to present their research at national and international conferences. A number of graduate students expressed concerns about the rigidity of the composition program. Specifically, they would like to have a voice in how the syllabus for the courses they teach is constructed and in the selection of required texts. They recognized that new graduate students may need the structure that currently exists and reasoned that more experienced ones should be preparing to design their own classes, which they will be obliged to do once they have jobs.

Facilities and Resources
Committee Assessment:
Facilities: Excellent
Resources: Poor
No doubt: the English Department’s facilities are impressive. The building is beautiful; the foyer where receptions are held is stunning; and from the classrooms and offices the views of the landscaping and sculptures are superb. But it doesn’t appear that the faculty members’ basic technological needs are being met. This problem may stem from the impression that faculty in English do not need up-to-date technologies. Therefore, instead of getting new computers every three or four years, faculty members are forced to use old computers that other academic units have discarded.

As noted above, the travel budget is severely constrained: each faculty member receives only $500 a year for travel expenses! The limited amount of funding for travel is a powerful disincentive to faculty who, in a more normal environment, would eagerly seek opportunities to present their research and to network with colleagues from other universities in the US and in other countries. Faculty members who are expected to be nationally competitive have good reason to expect more support for attending professional conferences.

The members of the committee received little information on the budget. We know that the total unit operations budget is $217,001, which means $3,807 per full-time faculty and staff member. But the second figure doesn’t tell us much since we must assume that the operations budget supports part-time instructors and graduate students as well. It is clear that the level of funding must be increased if TCR is even to sustain its current level of productivity. The possibility of expanding the graduate program clearly depends on a still greater increase in resources.

**Recommendations**

1. If the current number of graduate students in TCR (100) is to be maintained, the number of tenure track faculty should be increased at least to twenty. An expansion of the graduate program will require more than twenty tenure-track lines.

2. The department should engage in a needs assessment exercise to determine what level of operations funding is reasonable for the unit to sustain its current level of productivity and to expand beyond this level. This assessment should not only include the day-to-day needs of faculty and students but also funds for the timely replacement of computers and for travel to conferences.
3. TCR should make a concerted effort to develop external partners. Other programs in technical communications begin this process by partnering with the institutions where their graduates find jobs. These partnerships offer innumerable benefits, including internships and job opportunities for graduates and consulting opportunities for faculty. Some of these institutions are also able to contribute funds for student fellowships. Because healthcare is such an important industry in Lubbock and one of TCR’s areas of emphasis, it seems like a natural fit for partnerships. It may be more complicated to develop partnerships with industries that are not based in Lubbock, but the successful distance program in TCR may present some possibilities.

II. English

Preface
Market realities should frame all discussions of mission, curriculum, faculty, students, and resources in English (meaning Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics). The description of the Professional Development Curriculum in the self-study opens by acknowledging that nationally “just 35% of new PhD recipients in English find tenure-track jobs.” At TTU the percentage is even lower. The placement data for 2006-2011 reveal that only five of 42 students with PhDs (12%) found tenure-track jobs. These are sobering statistics and must be taken into account in an assessment of the program as it now stands and of its ability to expand.

Overview and Mission
Committee Assessment: Satisfactory

According to the English Department’s self-study, the MA in English produces “sophisticated users of research” whereas the PhD produces “effective creators of research.” The program in English, which combines Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics, specifically identifies teaching the “fundamentals of research” and “encouraging the use of scholarly methods” as major facets of its mission. But survey data as well as discussions with faculty and students reveal sharp disagreements about the centrality of research, the kinds of research methods that students should learn, and which kinds of publications are relevant. The tensions that surfaced in our interviews, especially between Literature and Creative Writing, indicate the absence of a unified vision.
As we have noted, the MA and PhD students in English concentrate in Literature, Creative Writing, or Linguistics. Students concentrating in Literature may further specialize in Comparative Literature; Nineteenth-century Studies; Book History; Film and Media; and Literature, Social Justice, and the Environment. These three concentrations and five sub-fields suggest that faculty specialization and teaching preferences—not the needs of students—have shaped the graduate program in English.

All planning for the future hinges on clarifying the mission of the MA and PhD degrees in English. Bridging the current impasse will require turning attention away from internal disputes and focusing instead on how best to prepare students for an unforgiving market. What exactly do students need to do in order to compete successfully for a limited number of jobs? If they manage to land a job, what do they need to do to keep it? Moving beyond the current impasse will also mean a greater emphasis on data. One of the English Department’s goals is to develop a database that incorporates the experiences of program graduates. This database could and should include information about teaching and publication requirements of recent graduates. On the surface, the placement data cited above suggest that graduates must be able to teach a broad range of composition and literature courses, with the occasional opportunity to teach in the student’s area of specialization. But this assumption should be verified by data.

In addition, data on Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics concentrations might be gathered from programs listed in the English Department’s self-study, especially Auburn University, Iowa State University, and Virginia Tech University, since their programs are comparable in size. PhD programs in Creative Writing at the University of Denver, Florida State, Ohio University, University of Houston, University of Utah-Salt Lake, University of Illinois-Chicago, USC, University of Cincinnati, University of Missouri-Columbia, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and University of Georgia should also be considered. Once this information has been gathered and discussed, faculty should make use of it to restructure the MA and PhD programs. The following questions might frame these discussions:

- Is there a market for a PhD in Creative Writing? If there is not, is it possible to train students more broadly in Composition and Literature, with Creative Writing as a specialization?
- Is there a market for an MA with an emphasis on teaching?
- Is there a market for online graduate courses in Literature and
Linguistics?
- Given the job market, is an increase in the number of students in MA and PhD programs in English warranted?

Curriculum and Programs of Study
Committee Rating: Good

At both the MA and PhD level, the concentrations in Literature, Creating Writing, and Linguistics share a common core of required courses.

MA students have four areas of concentration: British and American Literature, Comparative Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics. The core consists of these courses:
- History and Theory of College Composition (3 hrs)
- Research Methods or Critical Methods
- Writing for Publication

PhD students have three areas of concentration: Creative Writing, Linguistics, and Literature. The core consists of these courses:
- History and Theory of College Composition (1 hr)
- Research Methods
- Critical Methods
- Writing for Publication
- Teaching College Literature
- English as a Profession (2 hrs)

In surveys and discussions, both faculty and students highly praised the required Professional Development Program (taught as “English as a Profession”). This two-year program, organized by the Associate Director of Graduate Studies, offers a sequenced series of specific workshops and presentations that guide students toward the timely completion of their degrees and a successful entrance into the profession. The charts of average time-to-degree (MAs—2 yrs.; PhDs—6 yrs.) and the success this year in placing graduates suggest that the Professional Development Program is having a positive effect.

Three of the core courses, however, are the subject of unending controversy.

Writing for Publication. This course is described in the TTU catalogue as “Designed to teach students in graduate programs how to write clear and
effective articles for professional journals in their field.” Some faculty believe that students in Creative Writing need a course that helps them prepare manuscripts for submission to professional journals, agents, and/or publishers in their genre. They have designed a syllabus for such a course (and provided members of the external review committee with a copy). To members of the committee it seems that two versions of this required course (the existing one and another designed specifically for students in Creative Writing) will eliminate an important source of tension between Literature and Creative Writing.

**Research Methods.** This course is described in the TTU catalogue as a “Survey of research methods in literature and languages, providing experience with enumerative and analytical bibliography, bibliographic theory, and textual criticism.” A number of faculty and students in both the Creative Writing and Linguistics concentrations believe that this course emphasizes the history of the book and textual editing more than the research competencies needed for graduate study in Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics.

**History and Theory of Composition.** This course is required for all new MA students; new PhD students, however, take a one-hour version of it. Some faculty and students report that the course is not clearly related to their teaching and grading in the required first-year composition courses.

The members of the committee believe that leaving the core courses as they are guarantees a high degree of unnecessary tension. We hope that the process of revising the mission statement will prompt a thorough review and revision of the core courses because their purpose is to equip students with the skills they need to compete successfully on the job market and flourish in their careers. Writing for Publication and Research Methods should respond to the actual needs of students and not simply reflect the special interests and expertise of faculty members. Likewise, if most graduates will be expected to teach composition and design composition courses, the curriculum and their teaching assignments should prepare them to understand the relationship between history, theory, and practice in the teaching of composition.

In addition to these core courses, the Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics programs require a range of courses in British and American Literature. The courses entitled Studies in Multicultural American
Literatures and Studies in Post Colonial Literature, both of which may be repeated when topics vary, can be used to satisfy these requirements. With these substitutions, the literature curriculum offers a broad range of courses, with one notable exception, which graduates need in order to teach the increasingly diverse student populations in American high schools, colleges, and universities. The exception: neither the Department of English nor the Women’s Studies Program offers graduate courses focused either on the representation of women in literature or literature written by women. Furthermore, English does not offer any cross-listed courses, and, aside from Comparative Literature and Linguistics, faculty members do not teach in interdisciplinary programs. These apparent shortcomings in the literature curriculum should be addressed so that graduates are better prepared to teach diverse student populations.

The self-study demonstrates that the MA and PhD programs in English (with concentrations in Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics) have established clear timetables. From the beginning students know by what point they should have chosen the faculty member who will chair their committee and those who will serve as members. The timetable also lays out a reasonable schedule for advising, for exams, and for defenses. Both students and faculty, however, report that, in practice, the timetable is not always followed. Some students described advisors who fail to answer emails promptly, are not available for conferences, and delay returning written drafts. Faculty members, in turn, identify heavy workloads (the combination of teaching and advising MA and PhD students) as the source of the problem. This is particularly the case for those who serve on graduate committees but do not chair them. (TTU’s OP on workload recognizes the labor of those who direct theses and dissertations but not of those faculty members who also read and comment on drafts of chapters but do not chair the committees.)

The MA thesis and the PhD dissertation for students who concentrate in Creative Writing is an original work in the genre chosen by the student. This manuscript is also supposed to include one chapter that contextualizes the student’s work. Perhaps because faculty members do not agree on the purpose of this chapter, it is not described in *The Graduate Student Handbook*. Is it based on research? Is it a “craft essay”? There also appears to be some disagreement about the quality of recent examples of this chapter. The members of the committee conclude that the purpose of this chapter and the criteria for evaluating it should be made explicit.
The graduate program in English also offers two certificates—one in Linguistics (12 hours) and one in Publishing and Editing (15 hours). Some PhD students who hope to increase their employment opportunities by getting a certificate in Publishing and Editing report that the courses are not offered frequently enough for them to complete the requirements in a timely manner.

**Faculty Committee Assessment: Very Good**

With only a few exceptions, the faculty in Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics are admirably productive. They publish in appropriate scholarly journals (e.g. *English Literary Renaissance*), important reviews and magazines (e.g. *The Iowa Review*), and with well-known university and trade presses (e.g. University of Florida Press and Routledge). Despite a very small travel budget, they regularly make presentations at national conferences (e.g. Modern Language Association of America) and read their work at venues that increase the national visibility of TTU (e.g. Brooklyn Book Festival). In order to support its productive faculty, the Department of English has decided to replace expensive telephones with email and SKYPE, and to dedicate the resulting savings to faculty travel. An increase in the departmental travel budget would have a significant impact on the national visibility of the TTU graduate program, allowing faculty to make contacts that enable future publication and the placement of graduate students in tenure-track jobs.

The number and prestige of prizes (e.g. John Ciardi Poetry Prize) and fellowships (e.g. National Endowment for the Humanities) awarded to the faculty testifies to the quality of faculty research and creative writing. One professor has been named to the university’s highest honor, the Horn Professorship.

In addition to sustaining their productivity as scholars, poets, and novelists, faculty also have heavy teaching loads. Often serving on multiple MA and/or PhD committees, faculty must conduct annual reviews of every graduate student, read preliminary and final prospectuses, prepare and read exams often in multiple areas for each student, read MA theses and portfolios and PhD dissertations, and conduct oral exams and defenses. At the same time, they also serve on numerous departmental committees (peer review, tenure...
and promotion, undergraduate studies, graduate studies, and so forth). Faculty also serve on committees assembled by the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School, the Provost’s Office, Texas Tech University Press, and so forth.

The yearly 18-hour workload required of all professors is calculated by an elaborate formula that assigns different weights to undergraduate and graduate teaching, directing theses and dissertations, serving in administrative or editorial positions, etc. In discussions and in the self-study, faculty members express their concern that the workload is too heavy and that it is not divided equitably. More transparency might dispel some of the suspicion. If the inequities do exist, they will be visible to all. For example, each semester TTU officials calculate the workload of each member of the faculty. If English faculty were directed to this workload calculation each term, they would have the opportunity to see whether their own workload has been calculated correctly. (Frequently there are mistakes.) They would also gain a sense of workloads throughout the department.

The current policy that allows new assistant professors to teach a two-two load for two years is excellent. Administrators and faculty can explore ways to reduce teaching loads across the board (and not only for new assistant professors or for those who direct theses and dissertations). For example, the self-study identifies the goal of having a greater number of large classes with 101 students (or even more if the classrooms are available). Professors would lecture in these classes and graduate students would lead groups of 25-30 students in discussions. To members of the committee, it appears that this arrangement would benefit everyone involved. At present, undergrads in literature courses seldom encounter professors. And grads are often in the position of teaching introductory courses before they are sufficiently prepared to do so. If more large lecture courses were offered, beginning graduate students could see how their professors teach the skills of reading and writing about literature to undergrads—before they have to do so on their own. And this arrangement would benefit faculty because according to the OP on workload, a lecture course with 101 students counts as 4.5 hours. If each member of the faculty teaches one large course and one graduate course (which also counts as 4.5 hours) per year, the teaching load would be reduced to two-three. Additional measures for getting the load down to two-two should also be explored.

Graduate Students
Committee Assessment: Good

The self-study reports that the graduate student applicant pool has become large in recent years, the acceptance rate is low, and the quality of students admitted is high (average GRE verbal scores are in the 560s; average GPA is over 3.5). Despite these impressive figures, once they finished their degrees only five took tenure-track positions (at Abraham Baldwin College, Amarillo College, Murray State University, TTU, and University of Montana). Sixteen took full-time or part-time non-tenure track positions (including three such positions at TTU). Five took tenure-track jobs in high schools and seven took jobs in other settings (sales, publishing, media, including three at TTU). Unless the program develops new strategies for placing graduates, perhaps by targeting specific markets, no increase in the size of the MA and PhD in Literature, Creative Writing, or Linguistics seems warranted at this time.

Discussions with faculty and survey data revealed tensions over graduate admissions procedures. It was unclear whether or not there exists an admissions quota for students concentrating in Literature and students concentrating in Creative Writing. Greater transparency on how admissions decisions are being made might ease some of these tensions.

The self-study reports that “The diversity of the student body is high, drawing from a large pool of applicants from around the country and the world, with highly varied experiences and backgrounds.” But the 2005-11 data for the “Demographics of Enrolled Graduate Students” in the MA and PhD programs in Literature, Creating Writing, and Linguistics reports little ethnic diversity. Among all students (totals ranging from 81 to 97), 1-2 per year have been Asian; 1-2 per year have been Black; 3-8 per year have been Hispanic. One professor who specializes in Latino/a literature and who expressed an interest in recruiting more Hispanic graduate students should be supported, as should other faculty members who contribute to efforts to diversify the student population.

According to the latest data published on the web site, “All students holding a TA or GPTI appointment in the Department of English have substantial portions of their tuition and fees waived. In addition, graduate assistants receive a stipend and other benefits as nine-month employees of the University. During 2008-2009, the stipend for TAs is $13,200, for GPTIs at the M.A. level $13,700, and for GPTIs at the Ph.D. level $15,100.” These
stipends seem low when compared to comparable programs, but perhaps waivers and cost-of-living adjustments make these stipends more competitive than they seem. The web site further states, “The Department of English is proud to have stipends among the highest in the Big XII.” In the past, graduate student stipends have been supplemented by a variety of TTU fellowships and summer dissertation fellowships. But both students and faculty reported that some of these fellowships are being phased out. PhD students currently receive some minimal travel funds. Supplementing these funds would help students compete more successfully in the current job market.

Teaching assignments for graduate students in Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics officially require 20 hours of work per week. They begin by teaching the first-year writing courses—serving as Document Instructors who evaluate the work of 70 students per semester and/or Classroom Instructors, who meet one or two sections once a week. In discussions and in the self-study, both students and faculty expressed their concern that the current system students are not sufficiently trained in the art of linking composition theory to the practice of teaching composition. It is likely that all students with degrees in English will be required to teach composition courses and to design them. For this reason, faculty should involve graduate students to a greater degree in designing the courses that they teach.

According to The Graduate Student Handbook, all PhD students teach in the writing program for at least one year before teaching a sophomore level literature or creative writing course. In discussions and in the self-study, however, students commented that this schedule of teaching assignments is not consistently followed. In addition to fairness, the concern is that students who by-pass teaching in the first-year program are insufficiently prepared to evaluate the writing required in the sophomore level literature courses.

Facilities and Resources
Committee Assessment:
   Facilities: Excellent
   Resources: Satisfactory/Good

The Department of English is housed in a beautiful, new building that contains administrative offices, individual offices for faculty, shared office space for graduate teaching assistants, a LetterPress Lab, a Multiple Literacy Lab, a Usability Research Lab, its own computer servers, and multi-media
classrooms.

Library resources that support the programs in Literature, Creative Writing, and Linguistics include full-text databases of important resources such as America’s Magazines and NINES, Nineteenth-century Scholarship Online; specialized bibliographies such as Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts; and digital archives of scholarly articles such as JStor and Project Muse. The library web page for English students learning to conduct research is user-friendly.

During discussions, no faculty member or graduate student mentioned deficiency in library resources, and a faculty member specializing in Book History has worked with the library to develop its online collections. The Department employs one full-time employee to manage all computer hardware and software, as well as the web site. The web site is often, however, out of date (e.g. the latest Graduate English Society page refers to events in 2008, the graduate student stipend information is for 2008-9, and the announcements on the Graduate Study in English page lists placements for 2009).

Recommendations

1. Gather data on the teaching and publications required of recent graduates who secured tenure-track positions. Make the distinction between the experiences of MAs and PhDs and between the concentrations in Literature and Creative Writing. (In the material available to the External Review Committee, the data on placement are presented in an aggregated form.)

Use the data to clarify the mission statement of the MA and PhD in English. The participation of an unbiased third party, perhaps the Graduate Dean or Associate Dean, may be useful in these discussions. The result may be separate degrees in Literature and Creative Writing.

Review the core courses, the range and diversity of courses, and specifications for the dissertation in light of the revised mission statement.

2. Gather data on whether or not there is a market for an MA with a teaching emphasis and for online Literature and Linguistic courses.
3. Increase transparency in faculty workload, graduate student teaching assignments, and admission decisions.

4. Reduce teaching loads by offering a few large sections of undergraduate courses every term. Professors lecture in these large courses; teaching assistants lead discussion sections.

5. Increase travel funds for faculty and graduate students. Faculty members need to have more support for presenting their work at professional conferences and for conducting research. Some MA and PhD students cannot complete their degrees unless they do archival research.

**III. Linguistics**

**Faculty Committee Assessment: Very Good**

The two faculty members in linguistics are both productive scholars. They publish regularly in refereed venues and are visible members of their scholarly communities. They have contributed significantly to thesis and dissertations committees of students with a concentration in Linguistics and of students with concentrations in Literature or Creative Writing. Despite being stretched beyond their limits in terms of teaching, research, and service, the two linguists in the department mentor their students very capably.

**Curriculum and Programs of Study Committee Assessment:**

- MA: Good
- PhD: Satisfactory

Only two members of the Department of English are linguists. Nevertheless, the MA in English with a concentration in Linguistics, which is a two-year program, provides an adequate range of courses. In addition to doing coursework in literature, students are able to take courses in theoretical and descriptive linguistics. For students earning doctoral degrees in English with a concentration in Linguistics, however, the curriculum is too limited. This problem is compounded by the fact that only one of the two faculty members teaches graduate courses on a regular basis. To remedy this situation, both
linguists must teach at the graduate level; and the Department of English needs to hire at least one more linguist who can offer a variety of courses.

The program needs to develop more courses that deal with language at the larger-than-sentence level, such as stylistics, discourse analysis, and textual analysis (although see one course on stylistics offered in 2011). Such courses are not regularly available in other departments, unfortunately. Offering such courses, OR including elements of such courses to current core courses such as Research Methods, could bridge an apparent conceptual gap between literature-driven Research Methods and linguistics, more broadly conceived.

Both MA and PhD students need more courses that focus on contemporary language studies. For example, graduates with expertise in the logistics of multilingualism in our own society and in others are likely to be in demand. Graduates with expertise in related issues, such as the acquisition of second languages, are also likely to have a distinct advantage. Courses in language studies are particularly important for students concentrating in Linguistics, but they are also valuable for students with concentrations in Literature and Creative Writing. For the benefit of all students, it would make sense to include topics in linguistics in Research Methods. An additional hire specializing in stylistics or discourse or textual analysis would benefit the Linguistics concentration and the Department of English overall. This new hire would also strengthen a new, interdepartmental doctorate in language and cognition studies.

Graduate Students
Committee Assessment: Very Good

The students who concentrate in Linguistics constitute a small part of the student population in the Department of English. Currently there are two students in the MA program and two in the PhD program. Over the period of seven years covered in this assessment, only 102 students were enrolled in the three linguistics courses that were offered. (We should add that two of these three courses are topics courses that vary from one semester to the next.) Because students take four courses (12 credit hours) to satisfy the requirement of the concentration in Linguistics, we can assume that around 25 students have done concentrations in Linguistics. But the number may actually be lower because students from other concentrations in the department or from other departments may have enrolled in these courses. If
this is the case, we must conclude that the concentration in Linguistics benefits students from other parts of campus who are interested in syntax and semantics.

The members of the committee were unable to determine how well the MA and PhD students with a concentration in Linguistics have fared on the job market.

Recommendations

1. To strengthen the PhD in English with a concentration in Linguistics, it is essential to hire at least one additional tenure-track faculty.

2. More courses in Linguistics focusing on contemporary languages and working beyond the level of the sentence should be developed and offered on a regular basis.

3. A Basic Needs Analysis should be conducted to determine what students with a concentration in Linguistics need to compete on the job market. Is coursework in linguistics sufficient? Do they need to supplement their training with expertise in other areas?

Members of the External Review Committee:

Stephen Bernardt, Technical Communication and Rhetoric (U Delaware)

David Doerfert, Agricultural Education and Communication (TTU)

Greta Gorsuch, Classical and Modern Language and Literatures (TTU)

Barry Maid, Technical Communication and Rhetoric (Arizona State U)

Anna Nardo, English (Louisiana State U)

Patricia Pelley, History (TTU)