NC STATE

Self-Study

English Department
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
North Carolina State University
Strategic Review: October 17-18, 2022

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Department or unit authorized to offer degree programs: **English**
B. College: **Humanities and Social Sciences**
C. Exact title of academic program(s) under review
   - **Bachelor of Arts in English**
   - **Master of Arts in English**
   - **Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing**
   - **Master of Science in Technical Communication**
   - (PhD in Communication, Rhetoric and Digital Media in joint with Department of Communication and reviewed separately.)
D. Exact title of degree granted and SIS code for each plan
   - **English, BA and MA, 230101**
   - **Technical Communication, MS, 231303**
   - **Creative Writing, MFA, 231302**

SUMMARY STATEMENT AND VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Summary of Strengths

Faculty Excellence: Our faculty are our strongest asset. We are an outstanding faculty of skillful teachers and productive researchers who serve students and the public through a wide variety of academic programs and outreach efforts. We regularly win teaching awards, the highest university honors, and prestigious national fellowships and awards. Our tenure-track faculty are uniformly research active, and substantively involved in extension activities that enrich our surrounding communities. Our professional faculty are often engaged in scholarship as well and the majority participate regularly in professional development activities, many of which are organized through the department's First-Year Writing and Professional Writing programs.

Relatively Stable Enrollments: While many English departments across the nation are struggling with dramatic enrollment losses, our enrollment has remained relatively stable, and, if measured since 2015, rather than 2014, when we faced a large downturn due to a change in the General Education Requirements, enrollment has actually increased. Overall student credit hours (SCHs) have gone from 39,792 (2014) to 38,445 (2021), or a loss of 3%, but, if measured from 36,540 (2015) to 38,445 (2021), SCHs are actually up 5%. Fall graduate enrollment is largely stable in the MFA/Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (from 28 to 26) and the MSTC/Master of Science in Technical Communication (from 31 to 32), but has significantly increased in the MA/Master of Arts in English (from 67 to 79), or an 18% increase. Fall undergraduate enrollment in the BA/Bachelor of Arts in English has dropped 9% between

fall 2014 (323) and Fall 2021 (294), but, if measured from fall 2015 (284) to fall 2021 (294), there has been an increase of 4%. Currently, we are more challenged by the loss of faculty, associated with dwindling resources (20 faculty in 8 years), rather than a lack of student demand. Despite these shrinking faculty numbers, the department has remained stable by growing increasingly more efficient at scheduling. In fall 2021, we had a 95% fill rate in our courses, up from 94% in fall 2020. As of 21-22, we are the third largest overall producer of student credit hours in the university, behind the departments of Mathematics in the College of Sciences and Business in the College of Management.

Student Success: The majority of our students express satisfaction with their degrees and go on to productive careers in a variety of fields, including teaching, law, medicine, publishing, and professional writing. The department excels at advising both undergraduate and graduate students. Our undergraduate advisors, in particular, regularly win university advising awards. Our graduate students, who are largely assigned to teach in first-year writing, professional writing, or creative writing, undergo extensive teacher training in both degree years. We have been nationally recognized for our model of mentoring students in the teaching of first-year writing. Both undergraduate and graduate students have multiple opportunities for research experiences.

Commitment to Interdisciplinarity: We have a history of successful collaborations with other departments. We offer a nationally prominent PhD in Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media (CRDM), begun in 2005, in conjunction with the department of Communication. In a time when other humanities doctorates have struggled to find jobs for their students, this program has a high rate of placement. More recently, we have been awarded a NEH/Teagle Foundation planning grant in conjunction with the department of History, intended to expand the University's general education diversity requirement. Faculty participate in research projects across the Triangle with Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill and local HBCUs, including North Carolina Central University, Shaw, and St. Augustine's, and are similarly involved nationally and internationally.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: We are deeply committed to anti-racist initiatives, and recently won the Chancellor's Creating Community award for our curriculum transformation project, completed fall 2020-spring 2022. The fact that this was a bottom-up initiative created by the faculty themselves during the height of the pandemic is a testimony to our department's deep commitment in this area. In addition, departmental faculty have a long history of contributing to the Africana Studies program. We have a similar track record of involvement in gender equity through leadership in the university's 2008-2012 NSF ADVANCE project and ongoing faculty participation in the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program.

Summary of Weaknesses

Overall Resources: Our greatest challenges are related to resources. Particularly in the last year, we have seen a precipitous loss in funding due to changing budget models at all levels of the university. Though the college's new budget model, developed in 21-22, offers us significant future opportunities, its initial phase has been challenging for the department because the college has pulled back all funds from 20-21 retirements and any past one-time commitments. In the past year, the department lost eight TT lines

(equivalent to $610,632) and this year (22-23) has lost $180,000 in one-time funds, or the equivalent of 4.5 lecturer lines. While these lines and funds have been lost permanently, the department was approved to hire in two critical areas during these past two years, Journalism and Creative Writing (with the college contributing $72,000-$75,000 for each salary), and re-invested the first of its reclaimed lines under the new model for a second line in Creative Writing as well. With the new resource allocation model for tenure/tenure track lines in place, it is encouraging that we will be able to retain current and future separating faculty lines and hence hire three tenure-track faculty this year and, hopefully, another two the following year, if we do not need to rely on these funds to cover other losses. Still, the department continues to struggle following this large and sudden loss of $800,000. We have also been negatively impacted by changes originating at the university level regarding compensation for summer course offerings. The extent of our losses is unclear at this point, but it could be in the range of $200,000. All totaled, the department has lost over one million dollars in a two year period. The speed of this change is proving difficult to absorb. We are using overhead funds this year to maintain a minimal level of research support for activities such as travel to conferences and archives, but the majority of our overhead will be spent this year, and it isn't clear where we go from here.

Graduate Stipends: Apart from these losses, our graduate stipends remain woefully inadequate. In our last external review of 2014, reviewers noted the lack of national competitiveness of our stipends and recommended that they be increased. At that time, stipends were $12,000 for the MFA, $11,000 for MSTC, and $9000 for the MA. Eight years later, and despite major cost of living increases in the area, the stipends have not been substantially increased, and, as a result, we have become less competitive for enrollment. The MFA and MSTC stipends remain at $12,000 and $11,000, respectively, and the MA stipends have only risen by $1000, to $10,000. As of 2020, the mean stipend of our peers was $22,875 (MFA), $16,250 (MSTC), and $20,513 (MA). In an effort to remain minimally competitive, we have begun to use our foundation accounts, which were intended for program enhancement rather than program maintenance, to "top off" our stipends with small amounts of $500-$750, but these funds are far from sufficient for our needs. Data has been gathered, and there has been talk of increasing the stipends since spring of 2020, but funding has not materialized.

Low Salaries of Professional Faculty: Our professional faculty salaries also remain inadequate. In 2015, the department began an initiative to raise the minimum salaries of our Lecturers and Senior Lecturers, an effort that was strongly supported by the external review report of our First-Year Writing Program in 2018, which cited our professional faculty's "appalling lack of appropriate compensation." In March of 2020, this initiative was finally successful and the base pay of Lecturers was increased from $32,500 to $40,000 and Senior Lecturers were given a base pay increase to $45,000, though this increase did not reward our most experienced and longest serving Senior Lecturers. Sadly, however, this increase, while only two years old, has not kept up with inflationary pressures. A salary study of FTE lecturer positions that are comparable to those at NC State revealed a significant earnings gap. Among official NC State peer institutions plus 4 yr universities in North Carolina, our base salary for lecturers is approximately $6,000 below average. Compared with just 4 yr institutions in North Carolina, our base salary is still $2,000 below average. When comparing NC State to official NC State peer institutions, our salaries are $9,000 below average. Although these salary comparisons reflect differences in base compensation for positions similar to those at NC State, there are some differences in local labor and administrative organization that make these comparisons less than perfect. This study indicates that NC State base pay

should be more in the range of $45,000 for Lecturers and $50,000 for Senior Lecturers, with an additional adjustment for experienced Senior Lecturers. Last year, 20% of our professional faculty resigned, citing low salaries as their main reason for leaving.

New University Initiatives: A specific new challenge for us is the university's Engineering Enrollment Initiative, designed to bring in an additional 2000 undergraduates into the College of Engineering in a five year period. This initiative necessitates the expansion of our general education offerings, most significantly in first-year writing and professional writing, but also in other areas such as literature, creative writing, and film. We were not appropriately funded for this initiative in its first year, and it now threatens resources for our major and graduate programs. Future funding levels are unclear and that adversely affects our ability to plan. Given our current, low salaries, it is also not clear how we will be able to hire enough instructors to meet student demand.

Summary of Action Plan and Results from Last Program Review

Our department seriously engaged with the recommendations of the external review report of 2014 and has undertaken to complete many of its suggestions.

Curriculum: The department did complete a thorough revision of its undergraduate literature concentration and reviewed all the department's literature courses. This was largely completed in 2017, but course revision has continued over the past five years. The department did not undertake a "major overhaul" of its MA program, but significant changes have been made in intervening years, including broadening options for fulfilling the past foreign language requirement in the MA-Lit concentration and rethinking the number of literature requirements across all the concentrations. In addition we have taken other significant steps, such as lowering barriers to admission and developing robust extra-curricular programming. Details are elaborated in the sections on undergraduate and graduate curriculum.

Hiring: Though the department has only been able to replace five of its fifteen retiring TT faculty in the past five years, the department has responded to the increasing enrollments in the English major's Rhetoric and Professional Writing concentration, as well as in the MSTC program, with a hire in professional writing. The department also followed the suggestion of the external review report of a hire in journalism and non-fiction writing that would create synergies with the Creative Writing program. In keeping with the report's general approach on hiring in high enrollment areas and in developing connections between programs, the department has replaced two retiring faculty with three lines in creative writing, two of which are also intended to support literature and address student demand for greater diversity in our literature offerings.

Assessment: The department has now improved its feedback loops in all its programs. When student performance issues are identified during the yearly assessment exercise, the department addresses them with faculty workshops the following year or, if the problem is related to curriculum, with action in either the Undergraduate Program Committee or the Graduate Program Committee.

One major area of disagreement: The external review report suggested that Film Studies integrate with literature, but the Film Studies program has found a new trajectory through increasingly strong ties with the department of Communication's media programs, and is now one of the core areas of the CRDM doctoral program. The department will be hiring in film and media next year, in part because of the needs of CRDM.

Departmental Strategic Plan and Vision for the Future

Strategic Plan: The department's strategic plan has not proven to be a particularly useful guiding document, perhaps because of its silo approach to individual programs and its lack of clear priorities. It was developed in 2012 and is now outdated. A new plan is needed. The department has not undertaken a new strategic plan in recent years because we were waiting for the university to finish its ten-year strategic plan, begun in 2019 and finished in 2021. The college then proceeded with its strategic plan last year, in 21-22. In 23-24, we will have a new department head who will be able to initiate a new strategic plan guided by university and college directives, as well as this year's external review report. In the meantime, the department has had a Long-Range Planning Committee, focused largely on hiring, in operation since fall 2017.

Moving Forward: The English department has grown more integrative and collaborative in the past eight years. More faculty are participating in and making positive contributions toward the MFA and the interdisciplinary CRDM doctoral program. Our last three lines (Journalism-Creative Writing and two in Creative Writing-Literature) have been, at the faculty's direction, shared between programs. This would seem to be a productive direction for the future, but some of our programs necessarily have specific issues that need addressing:

- *Linguistics*: One of the disappointments of this period was the termination in 2019 of the PhD in Sociolinguistics, a collaboration between the department of Sociology and English, begun in 2013. Our linguistics faculty are a stellar group of researchers who excel in working with students and need an outlet for working with doctoral students. What other opportunities might they have? Could joining the CRDM program be such an outlet?
- *Film Studies*: The program currently has two undergraduate degrees (English and Interdisciplinary Studies), an MA concentration, and makes substantial contributions toward CRDM. Program faculty are interested in further collaborations, particularly at the Master's level, with the department of Communication and the College of Design. How might they consolidate programs and move forward? And how might the student credit hours be distributed so as not to damage the home departments of Communication and English?
- *Literature:* How might the program move forward with its strengths and interest in digital humanities and yet simultaneously address student demand for a greater diversity of its faculty and its offerings?

Future Growth: The department clearly has more capacity for growth, particularly with respect to its graduate programs, but that future will need to be balanced with growth in the general education

program necessitated by the Engineering Enrollment Initiative and the new diversity requirement, where planning is proceeding with the recently awarded NEH/Teagle planning grant. A positive future scenario is that these general education credit hours might support development at the graduate level, but, at this point, it is unclear how those general education initiatives will be funded.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN ENGLISH

There are 333 majors enrolled in the English BA, across six concentrations. All majors complete a common English Core, including a course in each of the following: American Literature, British Literature, World Literature, Film, Linguistics, and Rhetoric. The English Core provides majors broad exposure to the department's areas of faculty expertise, but retirements and other resignations since 2014 have diminished the department's capacity to offer many course options. Furthermore, the English Core does not represent Creative Writing, which is an increasingly significant presence in the department. The core was last revised in 2010.

Program Description and History

Among the six concentrations are: Creative Writing (CRW), Film (FLM), Linguistics (LIN), Literature (LLT), Rhetoric and Professional Writing (LWR), and Teacher Education (TED). The concentrations are specialized areas of study within English. Most have a significant amount of elective hours, enabling students to change concentrations as needed.

Creative Writing (CRW) has grown to be one of the largest concentrations in the English Department. Currently, 111 majors are pursuing this concentration, which specializes in workshop-based instruction in poetry and fiction and also creative non-fiction.

Majors in the CRW concentration benefit from the guidance of acclaimed creative writers, a robust speaker series, poetry and creative writing contests, and an active student community who pursue and workshop creative pieces. Retirements have strained the faculty's ability to meet undergraduate demand for courses. However, recent hires in fiction and poetry (3 lines) as well as an anticipated additional hire in fiction will help relieve some of this pressure.

Film (FLM) is a concentration with a dual identity. In 2005, the FLM concentration was created by splitting off from the Arts Studies degree, whose concentration in Film Studies emphasized film production. In the English Department, the FLM concentration focuses on film history, criticism, and analysis. Currently, 25 majors are in the FLM concentration.

Majors in the FLM concentration have benefited from locally-organized film events. Chief among the challenges facing the FLM concentration is diminishing faculty capacity, but the department anticipates hiring a tenure track position in the 2022-2023 academic year. Additionally, because FLM faculty teach in English and Arts Studies, the full size of their combined major cohort is not readily apparent.

Linguistics (LIN) was established in 2019 and has been recruiting majors with interests in the scientific study of language and culture. Linguistics courses had previously been offered in the Language, Writing, and Rhetoric concentration but the linguistics faculty recognized a demand for dedicated specialization.

Currently, the concentration has 38 majors. Students in this concentration may take courses in sociolinguistics, speech science and pathology, language analysis, and language history.

Majors in the LIN concentration benefit from instruction by nationally and internationally recognized faculty involved in grant-funded research projects; an acclaimed non-profit initiative in the Language and Life Project to study the varied dialects, languages, and cultures of the United States; and lab facilities for language analysis and phonological research.

Literature (LLT) was revised in 2017. Its current form foregrounds diverse and interdisciplinary groupings of literature while still allowing intensive study of individual authors as well as literatures from varied places and time periods. This concentration change came about in response to recommendations from the 2014 external review. The concentration currently enrolls 53 majors.

Majors in the LLT concentration have benefited from instruction by faculty who have garnered national and university honors for their innovative teaching and research. Majors have also benefited from new course creation in the areas of digital humanities, which builds on faculty strengths in media and digital culture. As the size of the literature faculty has decreased, it has become difficult to offer a range of diverse course options meeting the stringent concentration requirements.

Rhetoric and Professional Writing (LWR) was revised in 2020. Its current form emphasizes oral, written, and visual communication in professional settings, including journalism. Prior to 2020, the LWR concentration included linguistics. When LIN became a concentration in 2019, LWR was revised to focus on communication and the practical application of communication skills in a rhetorical framework. This concentration currently has 84 students enrolled.

Majors in the LWR concentration benefit from instruction by faculty with strong national reputations and industry connections. Majors also benefit from a practice-oriented curriculum that emphasizes completion of an internship. The primary challenge for this concentration is a shortage of teaching capacity in rhetoric.

Teacher Education (TED) combines instruction in language, literature, and educational theory to prepare students for teaching certification in English Language Arts at the high school level. Although the concentration sees fluctuation in enrollment, interest has been building and the concentration has 22 students enrolled.

Majors in the TED concentration benefit from a streamlined curriculum that builds in both English coursework and coursework in education, resulting in an official teaching certification within a typical 120-hour degree.

English Minors

Students may earn a minor in: American Literature, Creative Writing, English, Film Studies, Journalism, Linguistics, Rhetoric and Professional Communication, or World Cultural Literacy. Although English majors may add an English minor, some restrictions apply, to prevent major/minor duplication. Since 2014, the World Cultural Literacy, Linguistics, Rhetoric and Professional Communication, and Journalism minors have been revised to heighten their appeal and to facilitate degree completion.

Undergraduate Advising

Advising duties are shared by six concentration advisors. Advisors maintain an advising load ranging between 40 - 60 students. These numbers fluctuate during the year, reflecting outgoing and incoming transfers as well as Fall and Spring term graduations.

Advising work runs in cycles throughout the semester. At the beginning of the semester, advisors work with seniors to clear them for graduation. At least once per semester, advisors meet with all of their students to review degree audits and to plan for future classes.

Over the summer months advisement duties are redirected to the Director of Undergraduate Advising (Swarts) who handles any advising questions from continuing students. The Director of Undergraduate Advising (DUA) is also the primary contact for all incoming transfer (internal and external) and first year students over the summer months. The DUA reviews transferring course and exam credits, updates degree audits, reviews courses for transfer equivalency, and establishes all incoming students with a fall-semester schedule of courses.

Training for department advisors is through an apprenticeship model, where incoming advisors are mentored for a semester by an out-going advisor from the same concentration. The DUA also participates in training and scaffolds new advisors during their first semester in the position. The University provides additional, formal training for advisors via various training courses and through the Advisor Development Institute, and the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA).

Enrollment Trends, Student Diversity, and Retention

Overall enrollment has been relatively consistent since 2014 with total enrollments between a low of 284 as of the start of Fall 2015 and a high of 333 in Fall 2022. Since 2014, the English Department typically enrolls between 30-35 first year students and 30-35 external transfer students per year. The department also gains a substantial number of majors via internal transfer. Internal transfers account for approximately 40% of all new English majors in a given year.

The racial and ethnic diversity of English majors is similar to the overall numbers for the university but different on a couple of measures. University enrollment for students identifying as white has gradually ebbed downward from approximately 75% in 2014 to 68% currently. The English Department's enrollment of white-identifying students has fluctuated but has stayed at or slightly higher than the university trends. At the same time, the English Department has a higher rate of enrollment for students identifying as Black or African American, at around 8% (compared to 6% at the university level). Also compared to the university, the English Department enrolls fewer students identifying as Asian. On other measures of diversity enrollment, the English Department parallels the University with recruitment in the low single digit percentages.

These numbers can and should be improved. As one step toward improving these numbers, the Director of Undergraduate Programs (Swarts) has scheduled two focus groups: one with current majors and one with alumni of the English major. The focus groups are designed to investigate questions of student support, access, and inclusion and decide on support options.

In terms of gender diversity, the English Department has increasingly enrolled more women than men, from a low of 62.2% in Fall 2014 to the high of 75.5% in Fall 2021. This trend is the inverse of the university which commonly enrolls more men (~54%) than women (~46%).

The retention rates for English majors continues to be strong and getting stronger. Since 2014, when the retention rate of English majors was only 84.5%, the figure has increased each year, breaking the 90% mark in Fall 2015 (Table 1)

Semester Entering Degree	Retention Rate
Fall 2014	86.5%
Fall 2015	90.3%
Fall 2016	90.5%
Fall 2017	93.3%
Fall 2018	96.9%
Fall 2019	97.1%
Fall 2020	100.0%

Table 1: Retention rate based on semester entering the major

Alumni Data and Student Experience

Student perception about the quality of instruction in the major remains high. Since 2014, nearly 90% of alumni either agreed or strongly agreed that their instructors were effective in the classroom. Alumni were more mixed on their perceptions about preparation for their future career path, however. Most felt prepared or somewhat prepared (see Appendix 1 - on FPS "prepared for future path"), but after 2015, some doubt appeared to emerge with nearly 20% of students feeling "somewhat" or "very unprepared" in the 2019-2020 survey. A review of open-ended comments from the alumni survey reflect the same with "jobs and job preparation" being among those most common areas of focus that majors recommend for the English Department. The most common response after "jobs" was "writing and feedback on writing" which may be related, given that alumni trends suggest that graduates are finding positions in teaching, writing, and editing fields.

The percentage of alumni who are working full time or part time has remained somewhat steady since 2014. As measured every three years in the alumni survey, the rates of employment in the 1st year after graduating are:
- 2015: Full Time: 58.8% of respondents; Part Time: 23.7% of respondents
- 2018: Full Time: 60.3% of respondents; Part Time: 25.1% of respondents
- 2021: Full Time: 58.6% of respondents; Part Time: 22.2% of respondents

On the question of preparation, alumni report that their preparation was more often "Excellent" or "Good" than anything else:
- 2014-2015: Excellent (26.7%), Good (33.3%), Average (24.4%), Fair (4.4%), Poor (11.1%)
- 2017-2018: Excellent (25.5%), Good (47.1%), Average (21.6%), Fair (3.9%), Poor (1.9%)
- 2020-2021: Excellent (27.5%), Good (40.0%), Average (25.0%), Fair (5.0%), Poor (2.5%)

Professional Development Opportunities

The Internship Program is a long-standing English Department fixture. English majors across all concentrations (indeed any CHASS major) is encouraged to apply to join the program. Eligible students must be a junior or a senior, keep a 3.0 GPA in the major and 2.5 GPA overall. The Director of the Internship Program works with applicants to identify a writing and editing internship. Students then commit to a 120-hour internship, work over the course of a 15-week semester and attend ENG 350, which meets once per week to discuss workplace issues, culture, ethics, and issues pertaining to writing and editing. Students generate a portfolio of writing and an updated resume and cover letter.

Although the Internship Program offers substantial benefit to students, the enrollment for the course has been declining. In the academic years between 2014 and 2017, approximately 20-25 students were doing an internship each semester. That number has fallen to the low single digits, with only 8 students doing an internship in the 2022 semester. Covid-19 is a factor, but another is the strain on teaching capacity among the Rhetoric and Professional Writing faculty, members of which typically direct the Internship program and teach ENG 350. With the revision to the LWR concentration, adding a practical experience co-requisite, we anticipate that the Internship program will see higher enrollment.

Another offering that benefits English majors' professional experience is the Provost Professional Experience (PPE) program, which supplies up to $2000 of research funding per student. These funds are awarded to departments to support faculty/student research or project experiences (e.g., data collection and analysis, professional writing and editing projects, and other research duties). The purpose is to provide a way for faculty and students to connect and also provide students with hands-on experiences across a variety of professional domains.

Similar to the PPE program is the Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) Federal Work Study Research Assistant Program. Like the PPE program the OUR program uses federal work study funds to build research relationships between faculty across the university and students who are eligible to receive such funds. Faculty with research projects apply to this program and are matched with an undergraduate matching that skill set. The OUR then pays students a stipend.

One persistent comment from majors in the Graduating Senior Survey is the desire to have stronger connections with the faculty. Although the OUR and the PPE program provide mechanisms for building working, professional relationships between faculty and students, the students also want more social and academic interactions. With the department's slow climb back to levels of social engagement that we enjoyed pre-Covid, we should be able to use units like the English Club to help faculty meet with students. We will need to seek out other means of connecting, including readings and film screenings.

Program Assessment

The English Department assesses the undergraduate programs using two sets of data: rubric-based, qualitative assessment of student writing, and survey data from graduating seniors and alumni.

The department's plan for academic program assessment consists of five objectives and their associated outcomes. This plan was revised in 2018 based on feedback from the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC). As a result, the original six objectives and outcomes were revised to five (merging two) and outcome statements were re-mapped to the objectives. The objectives and outcomes include:
1. Students will analyze and/or demonstrate the relationship between form, content, and meaning.

- Students summarize, analyze, interpret, and create language-based, digital and visual texts with an evident understanding of form, including but not limited to structure, diction/voice, syntax, rhetorical situation, point of view, and other pertinent formal elements, depending upon the genre under consideration (assessed in 2015-2016; 2018-2019; 2022-2023).
2. Students will create well-constructed arguments.
   - Students construct disciplinary arguments about texts (e.g. literature, film, speech, etc.) by relying on their knowledge of literature, language, film, and/or digital media (assessed in 2017-2018; 2019-2020).
3. Students will interpret a variety of texts from a well-defined critical perspective or perspectives.
   - Students interpret a variety of language-based, visual, and digital texts for different audiences and purposes, demonstrating their knowledge of different critical perspectives (assessed in 2020-2021).
4. Students will demonstrate their proficiency as writers.
   - Students will master clear, grammatical writing in expository prose using fluent and varied sentences, coherent organization, and standard grammar and mechanics. For creative genres such as poetry and prose fiction, students will demonstrate their mastery of the formal and aesthetic features of creative texts (assessed in 2014-2015; 2020-2021).
5. Students will incorporate critical and/or informative research into course projects.
   - Students demonstrate research skills by engaging in research that draws on their understanding of literature, language, film and/or digital media and relies on associated interpreted contexts, including but not limited to historical, biographical, rhetorical, cultural, and philosophical (assessed in 2016-2017; 2021-2022).

Annually, the USC selects at least one objective/outcome for assessment and collects sample papers from graduating seniors, who are asked to select a paper that represents their best work produced in a 400-level course taken in their concentration. Instructions specify selecting a paper that best matches the focus of the objective/outcome (e.g., a research paper when assessing the use of research)

The USC builds a rubric describing qualities expected of student papers that would indicate fulfillment of the selected objective/outcome. Each quality is assessed on a 4-point scale: 1 = "unsatisfactory," 2 = "inadequate," 3 = "sufficient," and 4 = "exemplary." The USC tests the rubric against a set of sample papers and refines the rubric descriptions.

Using the revised rubric, the USC assesses a stratified sample of submitted papers (strata defined by concentration). Each student paper is read, independently, by two USC members. As a group, the USC discusses the ratings of the papers to identify strengths and weaknesses.

A summary of the assessment scores since 2014 is in Table 2

	1st Measurement	2nd Measurement
Objective 1	91% > 2 and 28% > 3	2.9
Objective 2	3.2	2.9
Objective 3	2.9	--
Objective 4	3.2	3.2
Objective 5	2.4	2.9

Table 2: Summary of average score per objective

On the basis of these assessments, the USC recommends steps for faculty to support the development of student writing. Over the years, the department has taken specific steps to support this work:
- Workshop on incorporating revision in upper-level courses (2014-2015; 2018-2019)
- Resource on revision strategies for faculty (2018-2019)
- Workshop for planning and modeling effective writing and revision (2020-2021)

The USC is currently revising the assessment plan objectives/outcomes to be better capable of assessing creative works, which accounts for much of what majors produce in the CRW concentration.

On the Graduating Senior Survey, the department generally receives high marks. Some questions providing overall assessments (scores from 2015 – 2021[1]):
- "Overall, English was a good major for me" // Agree or Strongly Agree: 93%; 98%; 96%; 93%; 96%; 98%
- "My teachers were effective in the classroom" // Agree or Strongly Agree: 95%; 99%; 85%; 96%; 98%; 93%
- "My advisors were accessible and helpful" // Agree or Strongly Agree: 90%; 93%; 86%; 92%; 88%; 93%

Degrees Awarded

Graduation rates in English have held steady. Although the 4-year graduation rate has fluctuated, from a low of 59.4% for students entering in 2012 to a high of 74.2% for students entering in Fall 2015, the 6-year graduation rate has been climbing to its current high of 80.7% for students who entered the university in 2015. In absolute numbers, overall completions have decreased but the completion rate remains high; see Appendix 1 (completions).

In 2022, the USC reviewed and revised catalog entries for all ENG offerings to determine if the schedule of offerings matched the reality of the faculty's ability to offer those courses. Where needed, published schedules were adjusted. Advisors report that the department is able to offer just enough courses and seats/sections to accommodate majors with careful planning. However, the proliferation of the English Honors program and the growing interest in the Accelerated Bachelor's to Master's program is straining our ability to offer enough advanced undergraduate courses and graduate seats to accommodate. Overall enrollment in ENG-prefix courses remains strong with 90%+ fill rate in recent years.

Undergraduate Program Administrative Structure

Undergraduate programs in English are overseen by the Director of Undergraduate Programs (DUP), who reports to the Department Head and serves as the Associate Head as well as the Director of Undergraduate Advising. The DUP chairs the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) which consists of 7 members, including the chair. 1 representative from each concentration serves a 2-year term. USC members are elected by members of their disciplinary group.

The USC's mission is to review and facilitate approval of changes to courses and curricula in the English major. This work includes reviewing proposals for new courses or changes to existing courses; reviewing new curricula or changes to existing curricula; reviewing courses for adherence to university and college

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[1] No English Department data in 2019

curriculum requirements; recommending changes to department policy regarding undergraduate education; directing program assessment; reviewing and selecting English Honors courses; and awarding English Department scholarships.

Changes to department policy or to the English core are made within the USC and submitted to the department Advisory Committee for consultation with the Department Head. Recommendations endorsed by the Advisory Committee go to the Department Voting Faculty for review and approval.

Changes to courses and curricula begin in the USC. The DUP and the appropriate concentration representative consults with disciplinary faculty to develop and review the changes. Changes endorsed by the USC are routed to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS) curriculum committee for review and endorsement. As appropriate, course and curricular changes approved by the CHASS curriculum committee are circulated to the Undergraduate Courses, and Curricula Committee (UCCC) and/or the Council on Undergraduate Education (CUE) for final approval.

General Education Program Contributions

The English department contributes to a large number of the university's general education requirements. The most important, and the one for which we are solely responsible, is the 4 credit hour First-Year Writing requirement. We offer two courses, ENG 101 Academic Writing and Research (4 credit hours) and ENG 202 Disciplinary Perspectives in Writing (3 credit hours). The majority of our students take ENG 101, the requirement intended for students with no transfer writing credit.

This fall we will offer 93 sections of 20 students in fall and spring. ENG 202 is intended for those transfer students who enter the university having only partially completed the 4 credit hour requirement. We offer 4-6 sections of ENG 202 in fall and spring.

In the recent past, we offered a 1 credit hour course (ENG 105) to complete the 4 credit hour requirement, but this course was not providing students with sufficient writing instruction. We have since developed the 3 credit hour course (202), which appears more successful, and ENG 105 has been phased out.

In addition, we offer around 20 sections per semester of 200-level literature for the 6-hour Humanities requirement. Although courses at the 300 and 400 levels can also be taken to fulfill this requirement, the majority of students fill this requirement with our 200-level courses.

We have been steadily cutting back on literature sections in order to meet student demand in the writing requirements, where precise numbers of sections are needed, but we could easily fill more sections of 200-level literature if we had the funds.

We offer at least five sections per semester of Intro to Film that meets the Visual Arts requirement, once located under the Additional Breadth category and now under Humanities. Film Studies courses at the 300 and 400 levels fill this requirement as well. Many of our sections in literature and film also meet the U.S. Diversity, Global Knowledge, and Interdisciplinary Perspectives requirements.

While professional writing is not a general education requirement per se, we offer ENG 331 Communication for Engineering and Technology (23 sections per semester), ENG 332 Communication for Business Management (24 sections per semester), and ENG 333 Communication for Science and Research (12 sections per semester) for departments in the Colleges of Engineering, Management, and

Sciences that require one of those courses to fulfill an Advanced Writing requirement. Creative writing can sometimes be used to fulfill this advanced writing requirement as well.

The majority of our sections at the 100 and 200 levels are offered to meet the general education program, and general education students form a substantive part of our enrollment at the 300 and 400 levels as well, particularly in the areas of literature and Film Studies.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN ENGLISH

NC State's English department has three graduate programs: a Master of Arts (MA), Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (MFA), and Master of Science in Technical Communication (MSTC). There are currently 125 students enrolled in three English graduate degree programs, with the MA degree (75 students) as the largest and the MFA (26 students) and MSTC (24 students) of smaller size. The programs are a mix of non-thesis capstone programs (MA, MS) and a thesis program (MFA) and are intended to be completed in four semesters by full-time students.

The MFA is an extremely competitive program that draws nationally and internationally. The MSTC is largely regional and international, often geared towards a professional industry audience. The MA is largely a local/regional program with primarily North Carolina residents. The MFA is highly selective, while the MA and MS are less selective. All MFA students are funded as teaching assistants while the MA and the MS have correspondingly lower percentages of funding (approximately 50% and 22% of all enrolled students, respectively).

Since our previous external review in 2014, each program has revised their goals and program objectives. But shared among all of the degree programs has been a commitment to diversity of the student population, innovations in course delivery in line with desired student outcomes, and improvement of the student experience, especially in regard to professional development outside of the curriculum.

The department's most significant accomplishment of the past decade was diversifying its student body. Departmental data shows that since 2009, the English department has tripled the number of non-white students enrolled (from 13 to 39), and these students have become a more visible part of programs (from 9.6% of students in 2009 to 28% in 2021). The department has improved its virtual recruitment to prospective applicants by streamlining websites, producing promotional materials (including a social media campaign for all three degree programs and a recruiting video for the MA, featured on the graduate program website). The DGP has sought out partnerships with institutions in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands to create a pipeline for student diversity. The department has devoted resources to supplement Graduate School diversity funds and has eliminated the GRE as a criterion for admission once it was determined the GRE was a barrier to entry. The department has formalized an Accelerated Bachelor's-Master's Degree program for the MA and the MSTC (utilized to retain the most promising NC State English undergraduates) and implemented and administered a Digital Humanities graduate certificate (utilized by 14 students since inception, 4 of which were English students) to offer new professional opportunities.

The department's most challenging continuing issue relates to funding for teaching assistants. All three of our programs have uncompetitive graduate stipends whose amounts have not changed significantly since 2014. Two of our three programs include stipends judged to be 50% below the mean of our peer group (MA, MFA). Uncompetitive stipends have harmed recruitment, reduced opportunities for diversity, and impacted student and faculty morale.

Despite this challenge, all three graduate programs have focused on ways to improve diversity among student populations, respond to student desires for targeted professional development, increase program profile, and improve the student experience by focusing in particular on inclusion, student wellbeing, and professional development. These goals have been implemented in different ways for each program, which raises larger questions for the next decade: what relationship should exist amongst our three graduate degree programs? How should the graduate programs interact with the department, the college, and the university?

MA Program Description, History, Trends, and Objectives

The Master of Arts in English was started in 1968 as a degree in American and English literature, with a goal of educating students "particularly to teach in secondary schools or junior colleges" and "those who intend to continue graduate studies toward the doctorate at another institution."[2] The program shifted from a thesis to an "option B" program in 2008, meaning the department eliminated its thesis requirement and replaced it with a capstone, which brought the culminating master's project under the auspices of the department rather than the Graduate School. This is indicative of a larger shift away from focusing on teacher training or PhD applications and toward a range of career ambitions, especially in industries involved in writing, editing, and media.

There have been four broad goals of the MA program since 2014:

- Increase recruitment, enrollment, retention, and graduation;
- Diversify the graduate student population;
- Revise the graduate curriculum to bring it in line with students' career ambitions, and
- Offer professionalization that aligns with those multifarious career ambitions.

In response to our external review in 2014, the MA program has undergone curricular reevaluation and overhaul, especially in the Literature concentration, to add new courses and revise existing ones, to open up the capstone experience, change degree program requirements, and offer more professional opportunities, efforts which are detailed subsequently. Ongoing questions involve how we continue to align the curriculum with rapidly changing career ambitions of students while maintaining academic rigor and how to orient toward public humanities and writing, editing, and media with a faculty professionalized in academic study.

Graduate Student Experience and Programmatic Change

What is apparent from our assessments is that the department teaches valuable skills and has been slowly making progress to bring it in line with shifting careers. Exit surveys of students and teaching assistants show that there are three primary career tracks for graduating students: matriculating into PhD programs; teaching at community and two-year residential colleges; and industry (primarily writing, editing, media, content creation).

How the curriculum aligns with these differing career paths is an ongoing discussion. The English Graduate Studies Committee has begun to discuss ways to facilitate student capstones that allow for

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[2] From the first announcement of the MA program's existence, cited in the English department 2006 program review self-study.

other publication outputs, including multimedia, community outreach, and public humanities. In line with the changing professional outcomes of our students, we have eliminated the foreign language requirement for the MA and replaced it, for MA-Literature students only, with a [Global Perspectives co-requirement](). We have also eliminated the World Literature track. Recent curricular actions include a revision of ENG 669 to introduce theory and methods specific to students in the Literature Concentration (Spring 2018), the introduction of a discipline-specific research methods requirement in the Rhetoric/Composition Concentration (effective Fall 2017), and the introduction of a special topics course in Media Studies methods for Film Studies students (effective Fall 2018). In Fall 2021, the Graduate Studies Committee altered the MA's distribution requirements, removing the singular focus on literature courses and expanding the distribution requirement to include courses from the other MA concentrations (linguistics; rhetoric and composition; film) to be implemented in Fall 2023. The goal of this curricular change was to encourage MA students to design degrees that fit their career goals.

As part of the student experience, MA students can become members in our Association of English Graduate Students (AEGS), which organized social events and between 2014-2019 put on an in-person graduate student conference. These events were virtual in 2020 and 2021, and since then AEGS has looked for other ways to contribute to community building.

Enrollment Trends, Student Diversity, and Retention

Since 2014, enrollment in the MA program has followed a U-shaped pattern. Applications reached a nadir of 53 in Fall 2018 before steadily climbing to 99 in Fall 2021. Total enrollments reached a nadir between Fall 2016 (53 students) and Fall 2019 (52 students), but have increased strongly to 79 (Fall 2021).

Applicants are evaluated using an application dashboard, personal statement, short writing sample (10+ pages), and letters of recommendation. After 2020, the MA program eliminated the GRE. Starting in 2023, the MA program will reduce the number of letters of recommendation required (2 rather than the current 3).

Yields have fluctuated within a narrow band between 60% - 75% (with one outlier of 85%). Admit rates have also been extremely steady, varying between 53% - 66% (with an outlier of 73% in Fall 2016). Enrollments are generally ⅔ women and ⅓ men. Retention has been strong: between 92% and 95% for Fall 2016 - Fall 2020 (no data for Fall 2021), though the rate among men is lower than for women (80% - 87%).

Sustained efforts have been made to improve the diversity of the MA degree in line with department priorities. In addition to the efforts described in previous sections detailed in "Graduate Programs in English," the department has revised graduate landing pages to make application information more accessible and has created prospecting campaigns in Slate (Customer Resource Management software).

As a result, the proportion of the MA program that is non-white has grown substantially from 12% (Fall 2014) to 32% (Fall 2021). These are real increases, with the MA program showing strong improvement in the total number of non-white and non-resident alien students (nearly all of whom are non-white) between Fall 2014 (8 students) and Fall 2021 (19 students). The proportion of applications from non-white applicants compared to all applicants has remained around 15%, but the largest number of non-white applicants appeared in 2020 (14 applicants, or 21% of total applicants) and 2021 (15 applicants or 15% of total applicants).

Increasing applicant pools while maintaining admit rates and yields have led to larger MA enrollments, validating the sense that the MA program has reached new applicants and converted them into students without a loss of selectivity. Focusing on recruitment has also led to more diverse student cohorts. Enrolling more students without increasing course offerings has led to greater optimization of course registration and efficiency in faculty teaching. One challenge of the department will be to sustain this new size with fewer faculty (from 56 tenured and tenure-track faculty in 2014 to 43 in 2021).

Program Connections, Instructional Support, and Teaching Responsibilities

The majority of MA teaching assistants are employed in the First-Year Writing Program (FYWP) and fulfill the FYWP TA training sequence. The Film program and the Linguistics program each have two teaching assistants who are dedicated to their concentration. Linguistics TAs serve as assistants for undergraduate linguistics courses. In their first academic year, the Film TAs act as assistants for film faculty members in sections of ENG 282, Introduction to Film, and then serve as instructors of record for a section of ENG 282 in their second year. Members of MA graduate faculty also teach courses within the multi-departmental Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media (CRDM) PhD program.

Graduate Student Funding and Supervision

Between 2014 - 2021, there have been 316 students in the MA program. 51% of the students in the MA program were funded: 161 students were funded through teaching assistantship, research assistantships, and fellowships, and 155 students were self-funded. Of these 161 funded students, 145 of them were funded with teaching assistantships and 12 with a mix of teaching assistantships and fellowships (primarily the Graduate School's Diversity Enhancement fellowship). Only 4 students were funded exclusively with fellowships.

Each of our teaching assistant students generally spends 4 semesters in their TA, supported by the Graduate Student Support Plan (GSSP). Total eligibility for a master's student GSSP is four semesters, and includes a stipend, tuition remission, and a fully paid health care plan. A student's program application is used to assess their eligibility for a teaching assistantship; there is no separate application for a TA.

Stipends for MA teaching assistants were raised from $9000 to $10,000 in 2014, partly in response to concerns raised in our previous external review. TA stipends have remained at that level since then. Our stipends are uncompetitive when compared with our peer group and aspirational institutions. A 2019 department study showed us to be nearly 50% below our peers–while NC State's MA stipends are $10,000, Purdue's are $18,000, Michigan State's are $17,0000, and VATech's are $22,000. A 2020 CHASS study showed us to be $10,513 dollars below the mean of NC State peer institutions and $6000 below the mean of Oklahoma Study institutions. Stipend levels have had an impact on student recruitment, especially among students of color. The most competitive students of color are simply getting better offers from other programs; they appreciate our program and our faculty, but our stipends are not sufficient to recruit them.

Graduate student supervision is dispersed among the MA program coordinators. Each newly admitted MA student is assigned the program coordinator as their advisor. (The MA-Literature concentration has two program advisors due to size.) Students meet with their advisor during each semester before course registration but also have access to their advisor and to the DGP by appointment. In addition to their program advisor, each student secures a capstone advisor, typically during their third semester when

they conclude their capstone proposal. The capstone advisor works with them on their culminating capstone project and presentation in ENG 676. Capstone supervision is reserved for [Graduate Faculty](#), and capstone service is spread fairly evenly across the MA program, with faculty serving on one or two capstones each year. Capstone advising is by invitation of students and is not assigned by the department.

Teaching assistants in the MA program receive additional supervision. Most MA teaching assistants are employed in the First-Year Writing Program (FYWP) and are supervised by the Associate Director of First-Year Writing. Teacher preparation for the FYWP includes regular workshops, an in-depth course shadowing experience, ongoing professional development opportunities, a week-long May Pedagogy Workshop, and two required graduate courses (ENG 511 and ENG 624). It is a robust and supportive program dedicated to making sure GTAs enter the classroom in their second year with a substantial knowledge base concerning theories and empirical research in composition studies and with hands-on experience with various dimensions of teaching. Teaching assistants in linguistics and film are supervised by the program coordinators.

Professional Development Opportunities

After the previous external review, the department and the DGP's office endeavored to make professional development a larger part of the student experience beyond office hours or the classroom. MA students have also taken advantage of internship programs via ENG 522. With some fluctuation, each spring semester section of ENG 522, the internship class, has had between 5 and 8 students; these internships have been an important part of the department's expanding professional opportunities.

Because many of our students end up in teaching positions, MA students who are not TAs can take advantage of the [Guest Teacher Program](#), which allows students to teach a unit of an undergraduate section with an experienced instructor. Since Spring 2015, 63 students have participated, averaging about 5 students/semester. This program is run in both fall and spring semesters.

The MA program began offering professionalization events in 2014, and it has been transformed into a colloquium series labeled "ThinkTank," consisting of 2 - 6 sessions per year with faculty, alumni, and area professionals on career directions in education, in writing/editing/media, applying to PhD programs, proposing conference papers, international exchanges, managing the job search, as well as issues in diversity, inclusion, and institutional change. Attendance at these workshops has been volatile, running from 20-25 students to single digits, depending on the topic and time of year. Virtual sessions post-COVID on issues of diversity and inclusion seem to have spurred interest, but an ongoing question is how to integrate professional events into crowded student schedules.

Program Assessment

The MA program has three primary objectives in its assessment plan. Each objective is assessed on a three-year cycle. Those objectives include:

1. To teach students to read, think, and research critically and creatively in their chosen field(s) of English studies.

   - Students are expected to think and write critically and creatively.
   - Students are expected to read and research skillfully.
   - Students are expected to present their work effectively to pertinent professional or public audiences.

- Students are expected to develop knowledge of disciplinary content, theory and method.

2. To prepare students for their post-MA pursuits, whether teaching, further graduate training, or another professional path.

   - Program should provide professionalization opportunities and mentorship for students pursuing alternative career paths.
   - Program faculty are expected to provide teaching assistants rigorous training and mentoring for teaching in their fields.
   - Program faculty are expected to help students who seek further graduate study to become competitive candidates.

3. To maintain and improve the program's success.

   - The program is expected to graduate full-time students within two years of their enrollment.
   - The department is expected to recruit and retain diverse and nationally competitive graduate faculty.
   - The department is expected to recruit and retain a diverse and qualified graduate cohort.
   - The department aims to fund enough graduate assistantships to maintain and improve program enrollments.

Assessment data is drawn from a mix of exit surveys with students, surveys of faculty, application and enrollment data, GPA data, and data on teaching assistantships. Surveys from 2014 have used both percentages and a Likert scale of 1 - 5 (5 = strongly agree) and have included qualitative questions. In response to these three objectives, students report that they were trained within their discipline with improved analytical and argumentative tools. Data shows:

- Over 90% of students and faculty advisors agreed students learned the history of their discipline, to analyze texts, and to develop argumentative skills.
- High levels of confidence among teaching assistants (4.0 or higher) in nearly all elements of designing syllabi, managing class activities, and assessing/grading.
- 92% - 96% of students (2019 and 2020) agreed or strongly agreed they became skillful and independent editors, to write effectively, and possess speaking skills.
- 79% - 84% of faculty agreed or strongly agreed (2019 and 2020) students learned to become skillful and independent editors, to write effectively, and helped develop their speaking skills.

The divergence between faculty and perceptions of student speaking and editing skills led to the introduction of a Capstone Presentation Rubric in Spring 2021 to assess these skills, and the results will guide the department's next steps. But overall, assessment data shows that the MA program has recruited competitive, diverse graduate students, maintained selectivity, and sustained a rigorous TA training program with stable numbers of assistantships. Students are educated in disciplinary knowledge and acquire skills in writing, editing, and argumentation. The ENG department continues to provide an exemplary teaching and mentoring experience for TAs. Reported student interest in pursuing PhDs has declined consistently (from 28% of graduates in 2015 to 11% in 2018), but industry careers have become more prominent as a desirable student outcome.

Degrees Awarded and Outcomes

Total number of degrees completed has fluctuated between 23 - 30 between 2015 and 2021, with a nadir in 2016-17. Retention has been strong, with one-year retention rates averaging between 87% and 96% since 2014, with slightly lower retention for men. Time to degree has been extremely steady at approximately 1.7 years (about 4 academic semesters) and is similar for all genders and ethnicities.

Between 2018 and 2021, students reported improvement in response to the question "How Well Prepared for Future Path" with 69% (2019-20) and 57% (2020-21) reporting to be "very prepared" as compared to 43% in 2018-19. Only one student reported to be "unprepared" between 2019-21. There is limited data from our Future Plans Survey on student satisfaction after 2019, but response rates and increases in the number of students who responded that the "quality of teaching by faculty" was "fair" or "good" rather than excellent may be explained by COVID, but is also something to monitor.

MA Program Administrative Structure

The MA program is overseen by the Director of Graduate Programs (DGP), who reports to the Department Head and is assisted by the Graduate Services Coordinator (GSC). The DGP also chairs the Graduate Studies Committee and liaises with other departmental committees that affect graduate programs (such as the Literature Program Committee) on an "as needed" basis. All of the program advisors for the four MA concentrations are members of the Graduate Studies Committee.

The DGP represents the department at the college's Graduate Programs Committee. Since 2020, James Mulholland, the departmental DGP, has also been the CHASS faculty representative to the Administrative Board of the Graduate School.

Program or curricular actions are typically initiated by the faculty, which are then discussed in the Graduate Studies Committee in consultation with faculty and students from affected programs or units. Some curricular and program actions must be approved by the university, which necessitates consideration by the college Graduate Programs Committee and then by the Administrative Board of the Graduate School before they are implemented.

MFA Program Description, History, Trends, and Objectives

The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing began accepting students in 2005. It builds on a history of teaching creative writing in the English department under the Master of Arts degree (MA), when its faculty included Gerald Barrax, Angela Davis-Gardner, Guy Owen, and Lee Smith. It is the first and only MFA in Creative Writing in the Triangle area of North Carolina. Its mission is to offer MFA students individual attention from faculty to help them create a work of literary value and publishable quality. The primary goal is to prepare a student for a life as a working writer. To that end, the MFA offers workshops with renowned permanent faculty and visiting faculty, and provides students a reading series which brings nationally awarded, published writers for classroom visits.

There are three primary trends since our last program review in 2014 that are meaningful for the program:
- improved selectivity,
- increased diversity of faculty and students, and
- diminishing competitiveness of teaching assistant funding packages

The MFA program was already highly selective in 2014, but program faculty and new digital tools, especially targeted social media and email newsletter campaigns, have improved program visibility–the MFA has grown its applicant pool and become even more selective (AY2021 admit rate = 5%). The size of its applicant pool has allowed the program faculty to commit itself to diverse student cohorts, which has meant increases in underrepresented groups and non-resident alien students. It has also successfully hired diverse faculty who are established in their careers. Yet, even as the program has improved selectivity and become more diverse, it has struggled to recruit the most competitive and qualified students, especially among underrepresented groups.

The MFA program has a coherent identity, a young and competitive faculty, a national and international reputation, and alumni who have won highly visible awards. To sustain the program's goal of producing creative writers who can sustain careers as artists, and to increase the standing of the MFA program, the program must recruit the most qualified faculty and remain financially competitive with its peers.

Graduate Student Experience and Programmatic Change

The primary structure of the MFA degree requirements consists of workshop courses in students' subject area (ENG 588 and ENG 589, fiction and poetry workshop), literature courses, and electives courses that satisfy student interests. Many students also use ENG 636, Directed Readings (one-on-one independent study with faculty) to expand their course offerings. After the 2014 external review identified the requirement for literature courses as worthy of discussion, the number of required literature courses for MFA students was reduced from 3 to 2. Students use ENG 695, a research course, to compose their theses.

Workshop courses are offered regularly, and each student is required to take a workshop course each semester. The MFA program has been working with the MA literature faculty to offer courses with a larger range of diverse authors to satisfy the desires of MFA students, and faculty hiring in the department has attempted to address this program and student desire.

In response to the external review and assessment plans, the Creative Writing program has made substantial changes. It has hired Belle Boggs (2015) and Maya Kapoor (2021), who both have expertise in creative nonfiction, as well as Cadwell Turnbull (2020) and Eduardo Corral (2015). The MFA program has prioritized racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity, enrolling significantly more students of color and non-resident aliens since 2014. This has been helped by the MFA modernizing its admissions requirements, eliminating the GRE from consideration and reducing the required number of letters of recommendation (from 3 to 2) to be implemented in 2023.

Enrollment Trends, Student Diversity, and Retention

The MFA program has nationalized and internationalized its reputation, making it one of the most competitive programs at NC State. At the same time it has diversified its enrollment in terms of racial and national diversity. In the most recent years since 2014, the program has increased the number of total applicants (272 in 2021, 296 in 2022). Of particular note is the growth of applications to the MFA-Poetry track (44 in 2017 but 102 in 2021). The proportion of applications from non-white applicants compared to all applicants has fluctuated, with the lowest proportion in 2019 (9% of total applicants) and the highest in 2020 (22% of total applicants), but since 2014 applicants who identified as non-white have increased in real terms, with the largest number of non-white applicants appearing in 2020 (37 applicants) and 2021 (31 applicants).

Applicants are evaluated using an application, personal statement, lengthy writing sample of critical and creative work, and letters of recommendation. After 2020, the MFA program eliminated the GRE and starting in 2023, reduced the number of letters of recommendation required. All program faculty are involved in admitting new students for their specific writing track (poetry or fiction).

The declining admit rate for the MFA program (from 9% in 2014 to 5% in 2021) shows how the program has become even more selective. Improvements in selectivity have been met with attention to the importance of gender balance and ethnic diversity. It is noteworthy that in AY20 and AY21 the MFA program had identical numbers of men and women (13 each) and over half of its students in AY21 (14 out of 26) identified as non-white, two or more races, or non-resident alien (see Appendix 1), an improvement from 2014 when only 4 out of 28 students were classified as non-white or non-resident alien.

Graduate Student Funding and Supervision

Between 2014 - 2021, there have been 124 students in the Creative Writing program. 95% of the students in the MFA program were funded: 118 students were funded through teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and fellowships, and 6 students were self-funded. Of those funded students, 109 were funded with assistantships and 9 were funded with a mix of assistantships and fellowships (primarily the Diversity Enhancement fellowship).

Each of our students generally spends 4 semesters in their TA, supported by the Graduate Student Support Plan (GSSP). Total eligibility for a master's student GSSP is four semesters, and includes a stipend, tuition remission, and a fully paid health care plan. A student's program application is used to assess their eligibility for a teaching assistantship; there is no separate application for a TA.

Stipends for MFA teaching assistants are $12,000. The stipend is uncompetitive when compared with our peer group and aspirational institutions. A 2019 department study showed us to be nearly 55% below our peers–while NC State's MFA stipends are $12,000, Purdue's are $18,000, UVA's are $20,000, University of Texas-Austin's are $29,500, and University of Wisconsin-Madison's are $24,000. A 2020 college study showed the MFA stipend to be $10,875 dollars below the mean of NC State peer institutions and $4,034 below the mean of Oklahoma Study institutions. Moreover, some peer institutions offer three years of funding to complete their MFA, compared to NC State's two years, a distinct disadvantage for our program.

To mitigate some of these impacts, students in 2020 and 2021 have received financial awards from the Kathryn Eskew Brown Creative Writing Endowment Fund. These awards have been used to recruit diverse students based in the US and internationally.

Students are supervised by the Director of Creative Writing and the Assistant Director of Creative Writing before they form a thesis committee, which contains a thesis director, another member of their CW track, and a third member drawn from the departmental faculty outside the CW program. MFA students teaching in the FYWP are also supervised by the Associate Director of First-Year Writing.

The faculty have maintained their relatively unusual (for MFA programs) essay exam as part of the master's thesis process (which asks students in poetry to analyze 31 works, and those in fiction to analyze 20 works in relation to an aspect of their own craft, such as dialogue or narration). In 2017, the MFA program reduced the number of literature courses required from 3 to 2.

Program Connections, Instructional Support, and Teaching Responsibilities

Teaching assistants are split evenly between teaching in the First-Year Writing Program (FYWP) and undergraduate Creative Writing courses (such as ENG 287). Decisions about teaching assignments are made by the creative writing faculty. MFA teaching assistants employed in the FYWP fulfill its TA training sequence, which includes ENG 511 (Theory and Research in Composition), ENG 624 (Teaching College Composition), and a shadowing experience with an experienced first-year writing program instructor. The MFA students teaching in creative writing support the undergraduate degree in English, especially the Creative Writing concentration.

The program also has relationships with the College's Development Office to engage alumni and manage Brown endowment funds. The program also involves other departments, colleges, the African American Cultural Center, and especially University Libraries on Creative Writing events. Faculty and students work closely with the [North Carolina Book Festival](#).

Professional Development Opportunities

There has been an increased focus on professional development since the last external review. Faculty increased student interaction with publishing-industry professionals to facilitate improved networking and understanding of the publishing process, and have devoted additional attention to professional development practices in special class sessions, panel presentations with guest speakers, and in individual conferences. Endowment funds from donors, Kathy Eskew Brown and Tony Brown, have been used to organize internships with Blair/Carolina Wren Press (Durham, NC).

The Creative Writing program has hosted virtual panels with published alumni and faculty, organized virtual seminars about submitting work, applying for grants, residencies, and contests, and publishing first books. The program has sought to improve student submission of publishable works and has instituted a small monetary award from endowment funds for any student who does submit publishable work, which has caused a noticeable increase in student submissions. (70% of MFA students in Fall 2021 [n=26] reported "lack of money" is what inhibited them from submitting their work to prizes and journals.)

In 2019-2020, the MFA program began a one-week visitorship program for fiction and poetry. Each program invites a fiction writer and a poet to stay on campus for one week, during which the writer reads, teaches classes, and meets with second-year students in consultation over their thesis manuscripts. In previous years, the MFA faculty invited a visiting writer for a semester.

Faculty have made a concerted effort to involve alumni and track their publication success, but improving student outcomes would require more consistent and better information about student publishing results.

Program Assessment

The MFA program has two primary objectives in its assessment plan. THe program is assessed annually alternating between the two objectives on a two-year cycle. Those objectives, with corresponding outcomes, include:

1. To prepare students for successful careers in poetry or fiction writing

- Students will create a work of original accomplishment in their thesis (i.e., a novel, a collection of short stories, or a collection of poetry) that will attract editors and agents, resulting in publication.
- Students will critically read and analyze published works of fiction and poetry and their own peers' work in progress.
- Students will demonstrate a knowledge of their respective profession (poetry or fiction) in traditional terms as well as the contemporary scene.

2. To enhance the quality and national standing of the MFA program in creative writing

- Program faculty are expected to draw a student clientele from a wide geographic area.
- Program faculty are expected to have a consistent slate of visiting writers of visible accomplishment.
- Program faculty are expected to have a good application/acceptance ratio.
- The department is expected to maintain a well-and-currently publishing faculty that is serious about its teaching.

The MFA program has focused on professional development in publication, hosting workshops on getting published, for example a workshop in spring 2021 that was attended by 23 out of 26 students. Since 2018, graduates of our MFA program have published five books of poetry, nine novels, a novella, as well as numerous short stories, poems, and articles. Recent MFA alumni have recorded a wide variety of artistic achievements, including: three NEA fellowships, two Whiting awards, the Alice James award, the VCU Larry Levis Prize, and have been longlisted for the PEN Open Book Award and the National Book Award, and named a best poetry book of the year by the *New York Times*. The most recent external review, completed in 2014, noted that to continue to grow, the MFA should expand journalism-related offerings to undergraduate and graduate students and add faculty specializing in creative nonfiction (accomplished with the hire of Maya Kapoor in 2021).

The MFA program has improved the visibility and the selectivity of the program and adjusted its master's defense to ensure that students maintain their knowledge of the profession and the contemporary scene.

Degrees Awarded and Outcomes

Since the last program review, the MFA program has stabilized its program size (at 26) and sought to regularize its time to degree while also assisting all students to complete their degree. Times to degree have dropped from an average of 2.38 years in AY13-14, resting at approximately 1.75 years (AY20-21). Recent years (AY19, AY20) have shown slightly lower retention rates than in previous years, but degree completions have varied tightly between 11 -14 students since 2014.

Although attrition has not been increasing, the Future Plans Survey data show that students want more attention to professionalization as part of their degree, and the program has sought to create additional opportunities, professional internship experiences, and innovative programs to promote student publication. These programs have improved the student experience, as indicated by the shift from AY18-19, when no students reported publishing a creative or critical work, to AY19 and AY20-21 30%-45% of students reported publishing 2 or more creative or critical works.

MFA Program Administrative Structure

The MFA has a program Director and an Assistant Director. The MFA Director attends the departmental Graduate Studies Committee and the collegiate Graduate Programs Committee (the assistant director

does not). The program director and assistant director also serve on department and college committees as needed.

Curricular changes are typically started by the program director and assistant director and/or the director of graduate programs. Curricular changes are approved either by the Graduate Studies Committee or they are approved by the university, which necessitates additional approvals by the college Graduate Programs Committee and then by the Administrative Board of the Graduate School before they are implemented.

MS Program in Technical Communication Description, History, Trends, and Objectives

Inaugurated in the fall semester of 1988, the [Master of Science in Technical Communication](#) (MSTC) was designed to prepare professional communicators for a variety of careers that involve the relationships among people, scientific research, and technical systems. Such careers include computer documentation, medical, environmental, security, and software engineering communication, information development, content management, technical and marketing writing, data analysis, and project management.

One of the primary elements of this MSTC program is its commitment to in-person instruction as part of its curriculum, even as competing regional programs involve online distance learning. While enrolled in the program, about half the students are employed full-time. Others seek part-time work, internships, and cooperative education assignments with local organizations such as IBM, GlaxoSmithKline, SAS, and other Research Triangle Park companies. A few students are offered teaching assistantships and are trained to teach classes in technical, business, and scientific communication. All students must complete at least one semester of work experience in a field related to technical communication.

The MSTC matches with the historical mission of the land-grant university. It enjoys a strong connection with local industry and Research Triangle Park. Its enrollment and placement are excellent. Its faculty continues a tradition of achieving national and international recognition for faculty research and program development with the numerous publications, awards, and grants obtained by the program's five MSTC faculty in the last three years. It has steadily increased applications and enrollments and gradually improved diversity of students. The program has established industry partnerships and has created a regional network of professionals. It is well poised to maximize NC State's focus on interdisciplinary research and grow its faculty and students as it pursues its mission.

Enrollment Trends, Student Diversity, and Retention

Between 2012 and 2021, applications to and enrollment in the MSTC program has been u-shaped. Applications reached a nadir in Fall 2014 at 14, but have grown progressively until Fall 2021 (26 applicants). Enrollments reached a nadir of Fall 2017 (24 total enrollments), but have increased to 32 in Fall 2021, nearly the exact same number as 2012. One goal will be to sustain these higher numbers.

Internationalizing and diversifying the student population has been a goal for the MSTC program, with success. The proportion of applications from non-white applicants compared to all applicants has bounced between 13% (2016) and 38% (2014), but the largest number of non-white applicants appeared in 2020 (7 applicants, 29% of total applicants) and 2021 (8 applicants, 30% of total applicants). In 2021, 11 out of 32 students reported themselves to be non-white or non-resident aliens (that majority of

whom are non-white), making them 34% of total enrollment. The gender makeup of the student population has been stable across the past decade with approximately ⅔ of students reporting to be female and ⅓ reporting to be male.

Yields have remained high across the past decade, ranging between 72% and 100% (in Fall 2018). The admit rate has varied between 66% and 80% since 2014, with the second lowest admit rate in the past decade occurring in Fall 2021 (69%). Retention has fluctuated as well, with a rate as low as 66% in Fall 2013 but, more recently, retention rates above 80% (84%: 2018; 90%: 2019; 100%: 2020; 2021: no data yet). Though the numbers can be relatively small, there is a notable divergence in retention between non-white students (nearly 100% retention since 2012) and white students, whose retention rate fluctuates between 66% (Fall 2016) and 100% (Fall 2020). Applications, enrollments, and retention to the MSTC program seem to be sensitive to macroeconomic factors.

Aggressive efforts have been made to internationalize the program with two ongoing 3+2 (bachelor's-master's degree) partnerships with Chinese universities, but those partnerships have not yielded any 3+2 bachelor's-master's students, partly due to the impacts of COVID-19, though we have recruited successfully from Asia, including countries such as China, India, Thailand, and Pakistan.

These trends in applications, enrollment, and retention indicate that the MSTC program needs additional resources to attract the best students while at the same time thinking about its dual identity as an academic program that sends excellent students to PhD programs, while also acting as an attractive program that builds skills and establishes networks with regional industry partners and that retrains students for career change and advancement.

Graduate Student Experience and Programmatic Change

There have been three primary issues of attention for the MSTC since our last external review in 2014:

- replacing retiring faculty;
- assessing course content, especially the MSTC capstone sequence, ENG 675, to make it relevant to industry partners;
- diversifying the student population.

With the retirement of four central MSTC faculty by 2017 (Miller, Dicks, Covington, Katz), the MSTC program has experienced a generational shift. New faculty have been hired, and, though the program faculty are slightly reduced, the faculty have sought to diversify the student body and to update continuously and actively MSTC course content. These updates have occurred in response to market and student demands for new skills and industry experience.

The MSTC program has revived its student organization, Technical Communication Association (TCA). All MSTC students are considered TCA members and five student officers actively organize professional and networking activities. Since 2016, TCA has been organizing a SpeedCon Unconference that consists of student presentations and industry partnerships, frequently with 100+ participants.

Adjusting the MSTC capstone experience (ENG 675) to be more responsive to industry has been a central program focus. MSTC faculty sought to create a more "scaffolded" experience for students. To achieve this they experimented with creating a two-semester capstone experience, but found it to be too impractical with the program and faculty size.

Given the practitioner-oriented nature of the MSTC degree–over 90% of students used the MS as a terminal degree and moved to industry positions–the faculty still have sought to emphasize research and theory in core MSTC courses (ENG 512, 515, 675). MSTC has incorporated client-based projects, a revision that works well at NC State given our ready access to STEM programs. The MSTC faculty have been working actively with alumni, students, and employers to build informal partnerships and provide professionalization and networking opportunities.

Graduate Student Funding and Supervision

Between 2014 - 2021, there have been 140 students in the Technical Communication program. 22% of the students in the MSTC program were funded: 31 students were funded through teaching assistantship, research assistantships, and fellowships, and 109 students were self-funded. Of those 31 funded students, 24 received teaching assistantships and 7 received a mix of teaching assistantships and fellowships (primarily the Diversity Enhancement fellowships from the Graduate School). Many students attend part-time as working professionals. The students who are not employed or TAs frequently engage in internships, and demand for MSTC students as interns is strong, especially among other NC State units, such as the Office of Information Technology or Data Analytics.

Stipends for MSTC teaching assistants are $11,000, which is below those of our competitors. A 2019 department study showed our stipends to be smaller than our peers, such as Clemson ($12,000), Texas Tech ($14,000), and Purdue ($19,000). A 2020 CHASS study showed MSTC stipends to be $5,250 dollars below the mean of NC State peer institutions and $7,222 below the mean of Oklahoma Study institutions.

As with other graduate programs, uncompetitive stipends make it challenging to attract highly regarded students, especially students of color. The regional and international draw of the MSTC helps, but students from first-generation and under-represented groups often receive more financially remunerative offers from other institutions.

Program Connections, Instructional Support, and Teaching Responsibilities

Members of MSTC teach courses within the multi-departmental Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media (CRDM) PhD program. Members of the MSTC faculty are also active participants in the Leadership in Public Science Cluster.

100% of MSTC course SCHs are taught by tenured and tenure-track English department faculty and the teaching assistants for the MSTC are employed in the Professional Writing program, which is administered by MSTC faculty (currently Pigg).

Professional Development Opportunities

MSTC has been building strong and sustainable relationships with domestic professional organizations, employers, non-profit organizations, and governmental agencies to help meet their communication needs. Faculty collaborate closely with professional organizations such as the Society of Technical Communication Carolina Chapter, Association of Usability Professionals, Code for America, Code for Orlando, Downtown User Experience (DUX), Triangle UXPA, Association of Computational Machinery (ACM), IBM, Red Hat, and Ladies that UX.

Many of our students who are not already working professionals or teaching assistants are interns at local businesses, most prominently the IBM Pathfinder program, and with on-campus partners, such as NC State's Office Of InformationTechnology, which provides 3 - 4 year-long internships annually to MS students.

Program Assessment

The MSTC program has three objectives that are assessed on a three-year cycle. Those objectives include:

1. To guide students in their development as professionals in their chosen fields in technical communication

   - Students will demonstrate a conceptual inventory, a theoretical framework for a variety of genres and media, including visual, verbal, multimedia, and interactive modes.
   - Students will demonstrate an awareness of what writing technologies do to our understanding of text, its invention, and its use.
   - Students will demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of scientific and technological discourse and where they came from.
   - Students will demonstrate conceptual and critical understanding of the role of communication in science and technology and of the broad social effects of such communication.

2. To prepare students to be effective theoreticians and practitioners in technical communication

   - Students will demonstrate an active participation as professionals in technical communication, including membership in professional organizations and leadership roles in the field.
   - Students will demonstrate the ability to apply theory to real tasks, using a problem-solving approach.
   - Students will demonstrate the ability to locate and evaluate critically relevant research and to apply it to both theoretical and practical uses.
   - Students will demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively or independently and to work successfully with technological and scientific colleagues.
   - Students will demonstrate the capacity to be reflective practitioners, who understand rhetorical situations and strategies, including diverse strategies for gathering information about audiences.

3. To continue to be perceived as a highly successful graduate program that achieves local, national, and international visibility

   - Program faculty are expected to attract and recruit a diverse group of students locally, nationally, and internationally.
   - Program faculty are expected to encourage students and alumni to participate in activities leading to scholarships, recognition in honorary societies, and publishing in professional journals.
   - Program faculty are expected to interact with professional organizations, corporations, non-profit organizations, and governmental agencies to assess their communication needs, to provide opportunities for cooperative and internship experiences, and to enhance employment prospects for students and alumni.
   - The program is expected to seek and maintain faculty with diverse expertise and with significant scholarly contributions in the discipline.

Assessment data is drawn from a mix of exit surveys with students, surveys of faculty, analysis of course materials from core MSTC courses (ENG 515, 517, 518), and faculty evaluation rubrics. Surveys use a Likert scale of 1 - 5 (5 = strongly agree) and included qualitative questions.

Students report that they were trained within their discipline but also prepared for industry. They perceived:

- "Very strongly" that they were prepared for their careers (4.63 btw. 2019-21)
- Sophisticated ability to find and assess research (4.41 btw. 2019-21)
- Improved understanding of communication in science and technology (4.5 btw. 2019-21, up from the previous cycle of 4.29 in 2016-18).
- Strong understanding of communication in science and technology (4.5)
- Increased ability to work collaboratively or independently (4.5 between 2019-21 as compared with 4.38 for 2016-18)

These results are driven by the intellectual rigor of MSTC courses and the industry relationships fostered by the program. The many standing internships and mentoring arrangements built with on-campus partners and local employers (such as IBM, RedHat, and RPI) have put students in cross-functional teams that helped them to develop strong independent and collaborative work skills. MSTC seminars and the capstone experience asked students to work on intensive individual projects.

During COVID, some students seemed less confident in these skills, and qualitative comments on student exit surveys identified multiple issues related to the pandemic: lack of interaction with faculty and peers and a sense of isolation when taking classes and working on internships online during the lockdown.

But assessment data between 2014 and 2021 show the program's strengths are faculty's continuous efforts to update courses to present real-world problems and incorporate client-based or service-learning projects that give students opportunities to work in the community and learn about design, user research, accessibility, and content strategy.

Degrees Awarded and Outcomes

Degree completion has varied by program size, with between 10 and 20 per year for most years since AY2013-14 (11 in AY2020-21). Retention has been strong (over 80%), with particularly high retention among non-white students. Time to degree has gradually decreased from nearly 3 years (2.96 in AY2012-13) to 2.3 years in AY2021-22. Time to degree is similar for men and women.

As noted previously, MSTC students tend toward industry rather than academe or teaching (nearly 90% pursue industry careers). Students are extensively involved in internships, practicums, and co-ops. Students have historically reported to be "somewhat prepared" or "very prepared" for future careers, with the exception of AY2020-21, in which some students reported being "somewhat unprepared."

Placement rates are excellent, with reports of high job placement (over 90%), in high-quality positions upon graduation. Exit surveys show that in the last three years, graduates were hired in full-time positions at large corporations such as SAS, RedHat, Allscripts, Wells Fargo, Okta, and IBM, as well as employers from the public sectors such as West Virginia University (median salary between $60,000 and $90,000). A few students each year attend highly prestigious PhD programs: Purdue, Auburn, Texas Tech.

Many students moved from interns to full-time employees in the same companies, which demonstrates the importance of having internship experiences for MSTC students.

Within core MSTC courses, faculty have included new topics and skills in digital media literacy, data analysis, public science communication, content strategy, project management. Though gaps remain in faculty expertise, assessment reports since 2014 show student and faculty satisfaction with these changes. In addition overall satisfaction with the program has been strong between AY2018-20, with 75% - 100% of reporting students claiming to be satisfied or very satisfied (Future Plans Survey: "Overall Satisfaction in Program"). Internal exit surveys support this sentiment, though COVID impacts may be seen in future plans surveys that show some students in AY2020-21 reporting to feel "somewhat unprepared" (Future Plans Survey: "How Prepared for Future Path") or "neutral" about their job (Future Plans Survey: "Overall Satisfaction with Job"), the first time that has been reported.

MSTC Program Administrative Structure

The MSTC program has a program director who works in concert with the Director of Graduate Programs and the Graduate Services Coordinator. It's noteworthy that four out of our five faculty in MSTC have administrative responsibilities as directors of the MSTC (Ding), internship program (Walls), the professional writing program (Pigg), and associate head of English (Swarts).

Curricular changes are typically started by the program director and/or the director of graduate programs. Curricular changes are approved either by the Graduate Studies Committee or they are approved by the university, which necessitates additional approvals by the college Graduate Programs Committee, and then by the Administrative Board of the Graduate School before they are implemented.

FACULTY

Faculty CVs appear in Appendix 2. Note that our faculty work plans (Statements of Faculty Responsibility) only require research of tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty, and teaching professors. Nevertheless, many of our lecturers and senior lecturers are research active as well, which contributes to our excellent teaching at the undergraduate level.

Faculty Size and Diversity

In the period of 2014 to 2021, the departmental faculty has decreased from 118 to 98, or a loss of 20 faculty: 13 tenure-track faculty and 7 professional faculty. The percentage of tenure-track faculty has also fallen from 47% of the department faculty in 2014 to 43% in 2021. See Appendix 1).

While the department has grown more diverse since 2014 (see Appendix 1), the department is experiencing difficulties in hiring and retaining faculty of color, particularly at the assistant professor level. A combination of factors seem to be at work: family issues, a lack of diverse community, and low pay.

Faculty Distribution, Workload, and Coverage

At the 100 level (First Year Writing's English 101), the overall percentage of sections has increased from 31% to 33%, reflecting the increasing size in the incoming first-year class. Percentages at the 300-400 level have also increased from 30% to 37%, due to an increase in the number of students taking professional writing requirements in the Colleges of Business, Management, and Sciences. At the 200-level, the department has had to decrease its sections in creative writing, film studies, journalism, and literature to sustain the above increases (24% down to 19%). The situation is similar at the graduate level, where the department has also decreased sections (15% down to 12%). These data demonstrate that the department has been increasingly impacted by our growing general education commitments in First-Year Writing and Professional Writing, to the detriment of our other general education offerings and our graduate program. This trend also has a negative impact on our student credit hours, since our First-Year Writing and Professional Writing classes are necessarily small (20-23), as opposed to our offerings at the 200-level, where classes are larger, generally 30-35.

The department has a long tradition of maintaining relatively small class sizes in order to promote student success, faculty research productivity, and appropriate working conditions for professional faculty. Graduate classes are capped at 15 students; 300-400 level caps vary between 15 for small seminars, 22 for writing classes, and 35 for less writing intensive classes, 200 level classes are capped at 30-35, and the 100-level First-Year Writing class (ENG 101) at 20. First-Year Writing sections were lowered from 22 to 18 in 2015-2016 through special funding from the Provost's office, but increased to 19 in spring 2019 and, most recently, to 20 in 2022-2023, due to the Engineering Enrollment Initiative. Increasing enrollment here threatens the small section size in our First-Year Writing program.

Due to shrinking funding, the department is no longer able to meet student demand in some key areas: screenwriting, journalism, upper-level creative writing (fiction), online literature at the 200-level, and graduate courses for non-degree students in the STEM colleges.

Faculty Mentoring and Evaluation

The department has recently completed a mentoring document. ([Appendix 2](#).) Tenure-track assistant professors choose two mentors in conjunction with the department head at the time of hire. These mentors remain with the assistant professor through the tenure decision. The department head has mentored associate professors through a series of informal events, a pre-pandemic luncheon and coffees or informal meetings. Teaching professors are also assigned a mentor in their field of research. Lecturers are largely mentored within their home programs. This approach has been effective with large programs like First-Year Writing and Professional Writing, but has not been as effective in other programs with less structure and few lecturers. The mentoring document proposed solutions, but Covid and dwindling faculty numbers have forestalled progress.

The English department is proud to maintain thorough and robust evaluation processes, designed to support and mentor faculty of all ranks across their careers. Assistant professors engage in a classroom observation every year and are reviewed annually, a process that takes into account student evaluations, peer evaluation of teaching, publications, and service. Tenured faculty are reviewed annually and are

required to undergo post-tenure review every five years, at which time they complete a classroom observation. The tenured faculty have recently developed guidelines for evaluation of research production over this five-year period ([Appendix 2](#)). Professional faculty are reviewed every year by a combination of program directors and the department head, but also receive a more thorough review from a faculty committee every three years. Teaching Assistant Professors complete a classroom observation every year, while all other professional faculty are observed in their first and third years, and every three years thereafter.

RESEARCH

The English department's strengths in funded research are in Digital Humanities, Linguistics, and Rhetoric. The Creative Writing, Film Studies, and Literature faculty excel in fellowship funding. Graduate students are regularly included in funded research projects and benefit from faculty fellowships, particularly in Creative Writing, where faculty mentorship has led to a similarly excellent fellowship track record with our MFA students. See faculty research profiles in [Appendix 2](#) for details. Faculty research productivity remains high, but dwindling resources threaten research support, such as travel, equipment, summer research support for assistant professors, leaves, and special, targeted support for individual faculty, including the National Humanities Center Summer Fellowships and the Faculty Success program through the National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development.

Departmental research already covers a wide variety of fields and topics, but we have more capacity for funded research in Digital Humanities and Professional Writing. Both programs could benefit from greater cooperation with other units. Though the Linguistics program is already a productive research area, a stable new doctoral program in this area has the potential to increase grant funding.

English department faculty regularly win prestigious fellowships and national awards and are highly competitive with faculty in peer institutions. Refer to [Appendix 2](#).

External funding has remained largely stable until the past two years under Covid. Hopefully, this downturn is related to the pandemic and will be temporary. See [Appendix 2](#).

SERVICE/OUTREACH/EXTENSION

As a humanities department, our tradition is one of sharing information, rather than traditional consulting. However, we do have a few faculty involved in consulting work, such as Dr. Anson, who regularly does workshops for other institutions on Campus Writing and Speaking, and Dr. Wolfram, who sometimes consults on legal cases.

We generally describe our outreach to the community in terms of service rather than as extension, but every one of our programs is committed to the university's land grant tradition of service to the community:

- *Creative Writing*: The program offers an annual speakers' series that is open to all and also organizes two writing competitions, one in fall (fiction) and one in spring (poetry), that are open to the public. In addition, we offer the Young and Teen Writers summer camp, which provides creative writing instruction in multiple genres to grade school and high school students.
- *Film Studies*: The program offers a film series each semester, organized by Dr. Stadler and the Film Studies graduate students, that is open to the public. Individual faculty members also frequently introduce films or lecture on films at a wide variety of public venues.
- *Linguistics*: Linguistics has one of the most highly active outreach programs in the department. The majority of our faculty in linguistics are sociolinguists who gather data from surrounding communities and are committed in return to benefitting these communities. Every year, our linguists and their graduate students teach a week-long program on the language of Ocracoke to the middle school students of Ocracoke Island. Another yearly event is the program's booth at the State Fair on the language of North Carolina. The program also has a new project focused on Chatham County and is pairing with the local historical society to document linguistic variation and change. The Language and Life project has developed a series of award-winning films on North Carolina language that are available to the public at nominal cost. Dr. Wolfram regularly does hundreds of yearly appearances on the diversity of North Carolina language to local civic organizations.
- *Literature*: While community outreach is variable in this program, several faculty are deeply involved in community work. In particular, Dr. Miller's projects that trace the North Carolina connections between Langston Hughes, Dr. Martin Luther King and Nina Simone have created close community ties and great public affection in cities such as Raleigh and Rocky Mount. Dr. Dudley served as an expert speaker in the Ken Burns/PBS national production on Ernest Hemingway and is also frequently involved with local community organizations around his work on Hemingway and James Baldwin.
- *Rhetoric/Professional Writing*: Our undergraduate internship program, directed by Dr. McMullin, offers our students important professional experience, but this program also benefits local non-profit institutions, in particular, by providing labor for important community projects. We also have a graduate internship program, directed by Dr. Pigg, which operates in a similar fashion. Several faculty are paired as well with non-profit institutions on communication studies. Dr. Ding's research on infectious diseases, as well as the labor market, has additionally generated ties with local and national media.