ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

I. PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT:

The English department plays a key role in any liberal arts education, as our courses develop the fundamental liberal arts skills: critical and creative writing, reading, and thinking. The mission of Wells begins with a mandate "to educate students to think critically, reason wisely, and act humanely as they cultivate meaningful lives," and the courses offered in the English department actively promote each of those goals.

Further, the empathy generated by a deep engagement with literature is invaluable in our efforts to encourage our students to "appreciate complexity and difference," and our creative writing offerings cultivate the aesthetic awareness and dedication required to be creative in considered, ethical, interpersonally engaged ways. We seek to ground our students in a broad and diverse tradition which in turn encourages them to reflect on ways of knowing and being across cultures and time periods.

II. PROGRAM GOALS:

    A. Critical Reading: Students will develop the ability to comprehend and appreciate complex texts of all kinds and forge connections across genres and fields.
    B. Writing: Students will learn to write, both critically and creatively, in clear, compelling, rigorous, and appropriate ways.
    C. Technological Competency: Students will develop proficiency with the technologies available to assist in modern research, scholarship, and writing.
    D. Mastery of Materials: Students will develop a firm grounding in the intertwined disciplines of English and Creative Writing. They will be familiar with canonical texts from Anglophone and global literary traditions. They will develop and retain the vocabulary necessary to contribute meaningfully to literary practice.
    E. Creativity: Students will enrich their creative practice through individual and collaborative explorations of forms, modes, and methods of writing.

III. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

A. Critical Reading
  a. Students will become excellent close readers of a variety of texts.
  b. Students will be able to situate texts in various historical, contextual, and theoretical frameworks.

B. Writing
  a. Students will be able to create sustained, independent essays that indicate an understanding of rhetoric and a mastery of MLA style.
  b. Students will exhibit proficiency with the fundamentals at least one genre of creative writing.

C. Technological Competency
  a. Students will master the library's resources, including online databases, in support of their critical and creative work.
  b. Students will exhibit proficiency in presentational and word-processing software.

D. Mastery of Materials
  a. Students will understand the breadth of Anglophone and global literary traditions.
  b. Students will develop and retain the vocabulary necessary to contribute meaningfully to literary practice.

E. Creativity
  a. Students will develop a more complex and self-aware writing practice.
  b. Students will acquire the skills to participate fruitfully in an artistic community.

IV. MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

A. Critical Reading
   a. Students will become excellent close readers of a variety of texts.
      i. Reading quizzes
      ii. Reading responses
   b. Students will be able to situate texts in various historical, contextual, and theoretical frameworks.
      i. Essays
      ii. Presentations

B. Writing
   a. Students will be able to create sustained, independent essays that indicate an understanding of rhetoric and a mastery of MLA style.
      i. Essays
      ii. Senior theses
   b. Students will exhibit proficiency with the fundamentals of at least one genre of creative writing.
      i. Final portfolios in creative writing classes
      ii. Senior theses in creative writing

C. Technological Competency
   a. Students will master the library's resources, including online databases, in support of their critical and creative work.
      i. Research papers
      ii. Research process documents
   b. Students will exhibit proficiency in presentational and word-processing software.
      i. Presentations
      ii. Properly formatting essays

D. Mastery of Materials
   a. Students will understand the breadth of Anglophone and global literary traditions.
      i. Successfully complete the major course requirements
      ii. Final exams in required courses
   b. Students will develop and retain the vocabulary necessary to contribute meaningfully to literary practice.
      i. Vocabulary quizzes
      ii. Class participation

E. Creativity
   a. Students will develop a more complex and self-aware writing practice.
      i. Drafts
      ii. Self-reflection
   b. Students will acquire the skills to participate fruitfully in an artistic community.
      i. Workshop participation
      ii. Peer editing

V. MEANS OF ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES:

Goal	Objective	Outcome	Measuring Method	Measuring Tool	Success Criteria
A: Critical Reading	a) Close reading	Display evidence of reading comprehension	Reading quizzes	Direct grading	80% of students at a C or above; 60% at a B or above, 30% at an A.
		Demonstrate thoughtfulness involving material	Reading responses	Direct grading	80% of students at a C or above; 70% at a B or above, 30% at an A.
	b) Contextualizing texts	Utilize theoretical and historical information	Essays	Rubrics	in the Evidence/Support section of the rubric for the last major essay: 80% of students at a C or above; 60% at a B or above, 20% at an A.
		Communicating relevant information to nonexperts	Presentations	Rubrics	100% of students at a C or above; 60% at a B or above, 20% at an A.
B: Writing	Mastery of essay writing	Employ appropriate rhetoric and disciplinary conventions	Essays	Rubric	80% of students at a C or above; 60% at a B or above, 20% at an A.
		Display higher-order command of disciplinary conventions	Senior theses	Holistic eval by 2 faculty	100% of students at a C or above; 80% at a B or above; 40% at an A.
	Proficiency in creative writing	Explore individual voice	CW final portfolios	Direct grading with attention paid to revision and the students' reflection on their semester-long development	90% of students at a C or above; 70% at a B or above, 30% at an A.
		Develop individual voice	CW senior theses	Holistic eval by 2 faculty	100% of students at a C or above; 80% at a B or above; 40% at an A
C: Tech. Competency	Mastery of library resources	Effective use of resources and support	Research papers	Standard rubric	In the Works Cited section of the rubric for the last major research paper: 80% of students at a C or above; 60% at a B or above, 20% at

					an A.
		Evaluation and integration of research materials as part of a writing plan	Research process docs	Rubrics	for the short-form prospectus in the three survey classes and annotated bibliographies in 300-level classes: 80% of students at a C or above; 60% at a B or above, 30% at an A.
	Proficiency in presentational and word-processing software	Effective visual organization of relevant information	Presentations	Presentation rubrics	80% of students at a C or above; 60% at a B or above, 20% at an A
		Adherence to most recent MLA formatting conventions	Formatting essays	Standard rubric	For the Formatting section of the rubric, 90% of students at a C or above; 80% at a B or above, 40% at an A.
D: Mastery of Materials	Breadth of Anglophone and global traditions	Acquire comprehensive knowledge of core curriculum	Complete major course requirements	A grade distribution among the five required courses after ENGL 104	100% at a D or above; 80% at a C or above; 50% at a B or above; 20% at an A or above.
		Display command of survey materials	Final exams	Direct grading of the final exams in the three survey courses.	70% at a C or above; 40% at a B or above; 20% at an A
	Vocab building	Develop tools necessary for textual analysis	Vocab quizzes	Average of quiz grades	70% at a C or above; 40% at a B or above; 20% at an A.
		Usage of appropriate vocabulary in discussion	Participation	Final participation grades in all classes	70% at a C or above; 50% at a B or above; 30% at an A.
E: Creativity	Complex and self-aware writing practice	Participate in early-stage organization of ideas	Drafts	Draft grade for last essay of each class	70% at a C or above; 50% at a B or above; 20% at an A.
		Metacognate on process	Self-reflection	Portfolio letter grade in cw classes	90% at a C or above; 70% at a B or above; 50% at an A.
	Participate in artistic community	Thoughtfully give and receive verbal feedback	Workshop participation	Participation grades in cw classes	70% at a C or above; 50% at a B or above; 30% at an A.
		Thoughtfully give and receive written feedback	Peer editing	Peer feedback grades in cw classes	70% at a C or above; 50% at a B or above; 30% at an A

VI. CURRICULUM MAP

	Program Goals					College: Content			College: Essential Skills					
Course	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#1	#2	#3	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
ENGL 104 Intro to Literature	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 204 International Prose	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 206 Brt Lit 1100-1660	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 215 Survey of Amer Lit	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 218 International Drama	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 219 International Poetry	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 225 Shakespeare	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 245 Maker's Craft	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 250 Brit Lit 1660-present	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 285/385 SpecTopics	X	X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 301 Reading Translations	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 302 The American Novel	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 304 American Drama	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 349 American Poetry	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 362 The British Novel	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 366 British Poetry	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 367 British Drama	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 380 Literary Criticism	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X
ENGL 401 Senior Thesis	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CREA 271 Short Story Writing	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
CREA 272 Poetry Writing	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
CREA 275 Creative Nonfiction	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
CREA 371 Advanced Fiction	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X

CREA 372 Advanced Poetry	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
CREA 375 Advanced Nonfiction	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X

VII. HOW ASSESSMENT DATA WILL BE UTILIZED

We have developed new benchmarks for a variety of assessment criteria above. When we collect the data for these benchmarks over the next two years we will determine the effectiveness of these modifications and make adjustments accordingly.

As a result of our current assessment work, we have revised our approach to grading critical writing projects to include point values for process work. We are developing new rubrics for prospectuses and drafts to better communicate our expectations to the students.

We are also standardizing expectations across the survey classes and developing ENGL 104 into a collaborative course that prepares our students specifically for the work they will be doing in upper-level courses.

However, for the 2019-2020 year, we intend to modify our approaches to various courses, and our entire curriculum, based in part on the feedback we have already received from our Senior Exit Interviews, as outlined in our Assessment Report.

Further, we intend to focus on sharing both the quantifiable and the unquantifiable elements of assessment in our department through more regular meetings, discussion of specific student needs, and an exchange of grades and evaluations.

ESSAY GRADING RUBRIC

Ideas	Does not reflect a main idea or purpose *0points*	Has a main idea that begins to emerge, but author's direction is unclear *5points*	States or implies a main idea, but is unclear, unfocused, inaccurate, and/or underdeveloped *10points*	Conveys a clear, focused, and accurate main idea with adequate development and/or support *15points*	Conveys a clear, focused, accurate, and complex main idea with convincing development and/or support *20points*	Conveys a clear, focused, accurate, and significant main idea and includes unique, substantial insights that are fully developed and supported *25points*
Organization	Doesn't use identifiable organization; writing lacks a sense of direction *0points*	Contains mostly ineffective organization with only occasional sections or passages that direct the reader *4points*	Has uneven organization that affects the reader's ability to follow text *8points*	Has basic organization that moves the reader through the text logically without confusion *12points*	Reflects smooth and cohesive organization and varied techniques that build smoothly from one idea to the next to create a unified whole *16points*	Uses seamless organization that enhances and showcases central ideas; structures information in a compelling way; shows clear relationships among ideas *20points*

Evidence/Support	No sustained use of evidence; fails to cite sources *0points*	Little development of argument or evidence; little use of sources *4points*	Frequently only narrates; shifts from topic to topic without developing ideas; makes limited use of evidence *8points*	Only partially develops the argument; displays shallow analysis and generalizations; presents underdeveloped or unsupported claims; makes moderate use of evidence *12points*	Consistently focuses on proving thesis; clearly develops a main argument with major points and appropriate evidence and supporting detail; links ideas rather than stacks them *16points*	Skillfully incorporates well-chosen examples and uses persuasive reasoning to develop and support thesis; uses textual or other evidence effectively *20points*
Word Choice	Uses limited vocabulary; attempts to use words to convey meaning are unsuccessful or confusing *0points*	Has flawed or simplistic vocabulary, resulting in impaired meaning; reader has difficulty understanding the message *2points*	Has vocabulary that is understandable yet lacks energy and imagination; some interpretation may be needed to understand parts of the piece *4points*	Uses vocabulary that is functional and achieves purpose, with some unique word choices and/or imagery; author's meaning is easy to understand and fits audience and purpose *6points*	Incorporates precise and appropriate vocabulary; uses imagery and/or figurative language effectively; features writing appropriate to audience and purpose *8points*	Shows a mastery of diction with vivid imagery or powerful and engaging vocabulary; uses precise language and/or figurative language to enhance meaning in natural ways *10points*
Sentence Fluency	Structures	Varies sentences	Has sentences	Has varied	Incorporates	Shows a

	0 points	2 points	4 points	6 points	8 points	10 points
	sentences incorrectly so reader has to reread piece several times and still has difficulty reading without pausing or substituting phrases **0 points**	very little; uses even simple sentence structure incorrectly in places, causing reader to stumble **2 points**	that are technically correct but not varied, creating sing-song patterns or lulling the reader to sleep; sounds mechanical **4 points**	sentences that flow smoothly; tends to be pleasant or businesslike, though may still be mechanical in places **6 points**	some sentences that are rhythmic and flowing, using a variety of correctly structured sentence types; flows well **8 points**	mastery of syntax with sentences that flow, have rhythm and cadence, and display strong, varied structures **10 points**
Conventions (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar/usage, and paragraphing)	Contains errors in conventions that distract the reader, making text difficult to read **0 points**	Has many types of convention errors scattered throughout text **2 points**	Handles conventions well at times but, at others, makes errors that distract the reader and impair readability; displays a lack of skill with particular convention(s) such as comma usage through repeated mistakes **4 points**	Applies conventions accurately on most occasions **6 points**	Shows few errors with only minor editing needed to publish; may stretch, trying more complex tasks in conventions **8 points**	Uses conventions effortlessly without significant errors; may use conventions to creatively enhance message **10 points**
Formatting	Uses presentation or	Often uses presentation or	Has uneven presentation or	Uses presentation or	Creates presentation or	Has professional–

	formatting that makes text confusing or difficult to read *0points*	formatting that makes text confusing *1points*	inconsistent formatting that can impair readability and indicate a lack of attention to detail *2points*	formatting that supports a clear message; piece appears finished and sufficiently polished *3points*	formatting that makes text generally easy to read with a pleasing appearance that enhances understanding *4points*	looking presentation or formatting; makes choices to enhance meaning and clarity *5points*

Peer Review 1: Ideas/Organization

IDEAS

Is the main idea:

   clear, in that no single word in the thesis could possibly be confusing to an intelligent reader?

   focused, in that it addresses a single arguable claim responsive to your chosen topic as opposed to talking about all of the human condition or making broad stereotypes about historical periods?

   accurate, in that a reader won't leave your essay with a reasonable objection you didn't address?

   significant, in that the idea enriches our understanding of the topic in some non-obvious way?

Are the insights involved in that main idea:

   unique, in that they represent the new, creative thinking of the author and are not just the presentation of someone else's ideas?

   substantial, in that they reflect deep, thoughtful engagement with the topic?

   fully developed, in that the author takes the time to really explore and explain these insights over the course of multiple related paragraphs, as opposed to merely gesturing toward each idea in isolation?

   fully supported, in that the author provides appropriate argumentation and evidence from a variety of credible sources?

ORGANIZATION

Does the organization:

   appear **seamless**, in that each transition clearly indicates how each paragraph follows naturally and smoothly from the prior one?

   enhance the central ideas by anticipating the reader's experience and any questions the reader might have at each stage in the argument?

   showcase the central ideas by spending the most time on the most important points for the main argument?

   structure the information in a compelling way, so the reader understands not just *what* the author is saying at each stage, but *why* the author is saying it then?

   show a clear relationship among the ideas instead of bouncing from one point to another without articulating their connections to each other?

Peer Review 2: Evidence/Support

Are your examples skillfully incorporated? To do this you would have to:

integrate your quotes or other kinds of examples seamlessly into your own sentences

set up your examples with any context or background information necessary for them to make sense

help your reader to understand exactly what you want them to get from your examples before you present them or immediately after

analyze the examples by discussing the specific elements of them that are most significant to your argument (the diction, the dramatic situation, the counterargument being presented, etc.)

Are your examples **well chosen**? To do this you would have to:

have reviewed your primary source(s) thoroughly to find the best examples possible for your ideas

have researched creatively to find a range of examples from a variety of sources

have considered ideas from others both in support of your ideas and against them, and sought out the best examples of those arguments

Do you **develop and support the thesis with persuasive reasoning**? To do this you would have to:

make clear how each example, each piece of evidence, directly contributes to your argument

use clear transitions between each idea that showcase not just *that* you're moving on to the next idea, but *why* moving on to that idea in this place serves your overall argument

Do you **use textual or other evidence effectively**? To do this you would have to:

consider carefully what claims need what kind of evidence (e.g., a claim about a critical consensus would require referencing several critics who hold the same view, a claim about a painting may require reproducing the image of the painting as a figure in your essay or a detailed description of it)

understand an educated but uninformed reader's needs and provide the evidence that would persuade such a reader of your ideas

avoid unnecessary plot summaries, overquoting (in which other people's words outnumber your own), and other ways to fill out word counts by misusing evidence

Peer Review 3: Local Issues

WORD CHOICE

Does the author display a **mastery of diction**, in which each word seems appropriate to its context and carefully chosen, by:

   using **vivid imagery or powerful and engaging vocabulary**, as opposed to dry, boring, unimaginative language that communicates a lack of investment or creativity?

   using **precise language and/or figurative language to enhance meaning in natural ways**, meaning that there is no fluff, no pretty but empty language.

SENTENCE FLUENCY

Does the author display a **mastery of syntax**, in which the words in each sentence are arranged not just correctly, but with style, by:

   writing sentences that **flow**, meaning that the transition from one to the next is not choppy, and that it sounds like someone following a train of thought rather than a series of related statements?

   writing sentences that **have rhythm and cadence** meaning that they showing an attention to sonic patterns, the impact of repetition, etc.?

   writing sentences with **strong, varied structures** instead of repeating the same exact type of sentence (e.g., subject-verb-object) over and over?

CONVENTIONS

Does the author **use conventions** (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and paragraphing) **effortlessly** by:

   avoiding **significant errors** by using both the spellchecker and the grammar checker, but more importantly by reading the essay aloud in hard copy and asking someone else to do the same?

   If appropriate, do they **use conventions creatively to enhance their message** by deviating from the standards (using a sentence fragment, an incorrect spelling, etc.) in ways that are clearly both intentional and in service of the goals of the essay?

FORMATTING

Does the author:

   have **professional-looking formatting** that is consistent with current MLA guidelines? The essay should be formatted exactly like the sample MLA paper up on Purdue OWL.

   make choices to enhance meaning and clarity by avoiding any confusing formatting decisions (e.g., inappropriate use of block quotes, inappropriate placement of the Works Cited page, etc.)?

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT EXIT INTERVIEW:

As a graduating senior who has now completed the requirements for the English major at Wells College, we value your responses about the major as we continue to improve our performance. Please answer each question below **as soon as possible** and send these responses to Dan Rosenberg (drosenberg@wells.edu). Everyone in the department will read your responses. These Exit Interviews are very important to the health and growth of our program, so please take the time to give specific and thorough answers to the questions below.

EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Please list your Concentration in English and any double majors or minors you will have upon graduation.

2. What are your plans for after graduation?

3. Do you feel equipped by your major for those plans, or any future jobs, profession, and/or graduate programs you hope to pursue? Please explain.

4.What have been your best courses/experiences in the major and why?

5. Which project/paper/course, etc. was most successful for you and why?

6. How could the Department have done a better job during your undergraduate years (2015-2019)? Please be specific.

7. Which particular skills in writing, reading, editing, and critical thinking were of most value to you while a student here, and how do you see these advancing your career path?

8. What internships or experiential learning opportunities did you pursue, and did those experiences impact your plans or aspirations?

9. Please add any commentary/feedback that you would like to give.

10. Best Contact Information/email after graduation: