Saint Louis University
Program Assessment Annual Reporting

It is recommended program assessment results be used to celebrate achievements of student learning as well as to identify potential areas for future curriculum improvement.

Please email this completed form as an attachment to thatcherk@slu.edu

CAS PROGRAMS: Please email this completed form by July 1 to Donna LaVoie lavoiedj@slu.edu

1. Degree Program(s) included in this report:
2. Department: English
3. School/Center/College: College of Arts and Sciences
4. Name(s): Toby R. Benis
5. Email: benistr@slu.edu
6. Phone: 977-3010

Instructions: Please answer the following five questions to the best of your ability for each degree program offered within your department.

1. Summarize your assessment activities during the past year for each degree program and how this work relates to the established assessment plan (e.g. what program outcomes were assessed, faculty discussions, new survey design, data collection, revised assessment plans or learning outcomes, etc.). Please include how Madrid courses/program were involved.

This past year we developed learning outcomes for our major degree programs (B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.). The Madrid Campus was included in the development of our learning outcomes. The departmental Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment, composed of the associate chair and two faculty members, then assessed the following outcomes in Spring 2016:

Assessed OUTCOME 1 (Undergraduate): English honors students, or students in the Research Intensive English program, should demonstrate an advanced awareness of theoretical, historical and interpretive contexts in sustained discipline appropriate written arguments.

Assessment methods:
Direct Assessment. Senior Honors projects were collected, ranging from Spring 2013 to Spring 2016. The Ad Hoc Assessment Committee assessed these projects according to a rubric specific to the RIE track.

Indirect Assessment. The Associate Chair conducted a survey, on March 5, 2016, with 6 students in a Research Intensive Seminar.

Data Collection:
The Ad-hoc Assessment Committee assessed 15 Senior Honors Projects stored from 2013-2016. In May she sent a report on the results of that survey to the Undergraduate Committee.
Faculty Discussions:

Indirect Assessment:

*Student Discussions.* All 6 students taking the survey agreed that the RIE seminars provide excellent theoretical, historical, and interpretive contexts for the literature they are studying. They also believed fairly strongly that the reading and writing they were doing in class was good preparation for crafting sustained and scholarly written arguments. They agreed that the administrative structure of the program as a whole could be made clearer to RIE students. They strongly recommended retaining small class sizes since it was very conducive to their development as critical thinkers and writers.

**Assessed OUTCOME 2 (Graduate/M.A.):** Master’s candidates should demonstrate a foundational knowledge of literary/rhetorical histories, aesthetics, cultures, and emerging areas of inquiry, including an awareness of cultural diversity within literary traditions.

Assessment Methods/Data Collection:

*Direct assessment:* Results of the MA oral exams

*Indirect assessment:* Feedback on MA student performance in graduate classes.

Faculty Discussions:

In May 2016 the Director of Graduate Studies collected, and the Associate Chair aggregated, the ratings of student performance on the MA oral exams, looking for patterns of overall success as well as specific areas of relative strength or weakness.

At the same time, the Director of Graduate Studies collected, and the Associate Chair aggregated, 3 progress reports from faculty mentors reviewing MA students’ progress toward successful degree completion. All 3 were compliant with all progression standards.

**Assessed OUTCOME 3 (Graduate/Ph.D.):** Advanced doctoral students should demonstrate an ability to generate degree-appropriate job search materials.

Assessment Methods/Data Collection:

Doctoral students going on the job market created portfolios. The Associate Chair collected the portfolios in May 2016. The Ad-Hoc Assessment Committee will evaluate those portfolios in October 2016 using a rubric created by the Graduate Committee for that purpose.
2. Describe specific **assessment findings** related to the **learning outcomes** assessed for each degree program, including any pertinent context surrounding the findings. Please include the **learning outcomes themselves**. (e.g. Our goal was that 75% of students performed at the “proficient” level of competency in problem solving, using a new scoring rubric. 81% of students performed at the “proficient” level in problem solving, exceeding our expectations.) Do not include student-level data. Data included in this report should be in aggregate. Please include how Madrid courses/program were involved.

**Undergraduate SLO 1**: English honors students, or students in the RIE program, should demonstrate an advanced awareness of theoretical, historical and interpretive contexts in sustained discipline appropriate written arguments.

Assessment findings show RIE students working at competency in all cases given that the average rating was 2.5 (in between proficiency and competency) for 15 projects, on a scale of 1-5, with 4 being the highest and 0 being the lowest.

Some of the projects that scored lowest included Creative Writing projects and New Media projects that did not document any research.

The Madrid campus was not involved in assessing this outcome since the RIE program only exists on the St. Louis campus.

**Graduate SLO 1**: Master’s candidates should demonstrate a foundational knowledge of literary/rhetorical histories, aesthetics, cultures, and emerging areas of inquiry, including an awareness of cultural diversity within literary traditions.

Master’s candidates were judged compliant, based on the results of the master’s oral examinations.

**Graduate SLO2**: Advanced doctoral students should demonstrate an ability to generate degree-appropriate job search materials.

These portfolios will be assessed by the Ad Hoc Committee in Fall 2016.

There is no English doctoral program on the Madrid campus, so they were not included in this round of this process.

*Please attach any tables, graphics, or charts to the end of this report.

3. Describe how assessment **feedback** has been provided to students, faculty, and staff. (e.g. report for faculty, executive summary for the dean, web page for students, alumni newsletter, discussion with students in class or club event, etc.)

In August 2016, the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Graduate Studies will report these results to the department during the annual departmental retreat and will make further recommendations for action.

In August 2016 the Associate Chair will send a preliminary report to the Director of Graduate Studies on placement portfolios. In October 2016 the Ad Hoc Assessment Committee will assess all portfolios received to date using the assessment form. The Associate Chair will report the
aggregated results to the Director of Graduate Studies who in turn will report on it to the faculty at one of the department’s monthly meetings.

The Director of Graduate Studies, together with the Graduate Committee, will decide if the results warrant changes to the doctoral program.

4. In what ways have you used assessment findings to celebrate student achievements and/or to improve the curriculum this past year? (e.g. prizes to students, hosting student parties, changes to curriculum, student projects, learning goals, assessment strategies, etc.)

At the undergraduate level, we may need more precise guidelines for faculty mentors of RIE projects and more specific guidelines for Creative and New Media projects in particular. Going forward, the Assessment Committee has recommended that either such projects be modified to fit the current evaluative rubrics or that those rubrics be expanded to allow for differences between projects in different areas of study.

At the graduate level, master’s candidates are demonstrating a grasp of the foundational knowledge for the discipline that we would expect, given their coursework, training and professional ambitions.

5. Describe any changes to your assessment plans, or any challenges or educational experiences with the assessment process this past year that you would like to share.

Getting graduate students (doctoral candidates) to submit portfolios of job materials was a challenge. The response rate was low, despite repeated reminders to submit portfolios. This makes the analysis of this outcome difficult.

Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.