

**ASSESSMENT RECORD FOR  
DEPARTMENT  
OF**

**Department of English**

(Academic Department Name)

August 2007-May 2008

(Assessment Period Covered)

October 15 2008

(Date Submitted)

**Includes Assessment Reports for those Instructional Programs listed below:**

Title of Instructional Degree Program

Degree Level

(Associate, Bachelors,  
Master's, etc.)

English

Bachelor of Arts

Submitted By: Dr. David Mulry

(Departmental Chair or Faculty Assessment Representative)

# ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

**English**

(Instructional Degree Program)

**Bachelor of Arts**

(Degree Level)

**Aug 2007-May 2008**

(Assessment Period Covered)

**Oct 15 2008**

(Date Submitted)

## Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose Linkage:

### **Institutional Mission Reference:**

As a university committed to the liberal arts as fundamental to education and committed to our affiliation with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Schreiner is dedicated to excellence in preparing students to live purposeful, humane and productive lives in their work, faith groups, families and communities.

### **College/University Goal(s) Supported:**

The English program supports the tenets of liberal arts education expressed in the philosophy of the University. English courses prepare students for careers in foreign and public service, law, the ministry, communications, teaching, and research. Both the major and minor prepare students for related graduate studies.

## Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes:

**1.**

Upon completion of the BA in English, students will proficiently explore and communicate ideas, in an effective and professional format.

**2.**

Upon completion of a BA in English, students will demonstrate the ability to analyze a passage without recourse to information exterior to the text.

**3.**

Upon completion of a BA in English, students will demonstrate the ability to relate a text to external textual issues, ideas, and analytical schema.

**4.** Upon completion of the BA in English, students will demonstrate the ability to recognize the contributions of major literary figures and the importance of genres and periods of literary history.

# ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

English

(Instructional Degree Program)

Aug 2007-May 2008

(Assessment Period Covered)

Bachelor of Arts

(Degree Level)

Oct 15 2008

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## Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:

*NOTE: There should be one form C for each intended outcome listed on form B. Intended outcome should be restated in the box immediately below and the intended outcome number entered in the blank spaces.*

1.

Upon completion of the BA in English, students will proficiently explore and communicate ideas, in an effective and professional format.

## First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:

### a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:

The above outcome is assessed using student portfolios comprised of four or five critical papers from a variety of English courses completed while enrolled at Schreiner University. The portfolios are presented to the Department during the semester of graduation. The criteria for success in this area entails a critical assessment of the student's ability to a) gather, analyze, summarize, and synthesize research; and b) use correct, professional format (MLA).

**Scoring Key: 5=Excellent, 4=Good, 3=Average, 2=Below Average, 1=Poor**

**a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:** Of the six graduating seniors, three submitted portfolios for assessment. Based on independent assessments by two faculty members of the English Department, the portfolios demonstrate that our students' ability to a) gather, analyze, summarize, and synthesize research and b) to present research in correct MLA form is good.

**Average scores for part a): 4**

**Average scores for part b): 4.16**

**a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:** The outcome for parts a) and b) is good. To move the program into the excellent range we have 1) implemented a department instructional package for critical paper assignments. 2) lobbied for and received improved research facilities via library databases (the department now has access to JSTOR and Project Muse) to enhance student research projects. 3) Faculty regularly encourage and provide students with mentor relationships and help in research/dissemination—with students presenting at local, national and international conferences to offer a wider audience and diverse feedback on research projects.

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## Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:

*NOTE: There should be one form C for each intended outcome listed on form B. Intended outcome should be restated in the box immediately below and the intended outcome number entered in the blank spaces.*

1.

Upon completion of a BA in English, students will demonstrate the ability to analyze a passage without recourse to information exterior to the text.

## First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:

### b. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:

The above outcome is assessed using student portfolios comprised of four or five critical papers from a variety of English courses completed while enrolled at Schreiner University. The portfolios are presented to the Department during the semester of graduation. Success in this area is measured by a critical assessment of the student's ability to a) analyze passages effectively and b) use quotations skillfully.

**Scoring Key: 5=Excellent, 4=Good, 3=Fair, 2=Below Average, 1=Poor**

**a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:** Of the six graduating seniors, three submitted portfolios for assessment. Based on independent assessments by two faculty members of the English Department, the portfolios demonstrate that our students' ability to a) analyze passages effectively and b) use quotations skillfully is Fair.

**Average scores for part a): 3.75**

**Average scores for part b): 3.41**

**a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:** The outcome for parts a) and b) is Fair. In part this reflects a problem with the low sample group to establish any kind of statistical average—there were only three portfolios to examine. One of those might be considered a statistical outlier because of its relative low scores. Another issue that may have influenced the outcomes here is the choice of papers which were relatively light in terms of textual criticism. To move the program into the good range we need to 1) find a mechanism to ensure a better completion rate of the portfolio assessment system, and 2) encourage a broader sampling from the portfolios to ensure that we have papers that reflect the various outcomes assessment criteria—to this end we have amended the portfolio statement/instructions that seniors receive.

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## Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:

*NOTE: There should be one form C for each intended outcome listed on form B. Intended outcome should be restated in the box immediately below and the intended outcome number entered in the blank spaces.*

3.

Upon completion of a BA in English, students will demonstrate the ability to relate a text to external textual issues, ideas, and analytical schema.

## First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:

### c. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:

The above outcome is assessed using student portfolios comprised of four or five critical papers from a variety of English courses completed while enrolled at Schreiner University. The portfolios are presented to the Department during the semester of graduation. Success in this area is measured by a critical assessment of the student's ability to a) relate works to broader issues and b) use critical theories/paradigms effectively.

**Scoring Key: 5=Excellent, 4=Good, 3=Fair, 2=Below Average, 1=Poor**

**a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:** Of the six graduating seniors, three submitted portfolios for assessment. Based on independent assessments by two faculty members of the English Department, the portfolios demonstrate that our students' ability to a) relate works to broader issues and b) use critical theories/paradigms effectively is Fair.

**Average scores for part a): 3.66**

**Average scores for part b): 3.25**

**a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:** The outcome for parts a) and b) is Fair. In part this reflects a problem with the low sample group to establish any kind of statistical average—there were only three portfolios to examine. One of those might be considered a statistical outlier because of its relative low scores. Another issue that may have influenced the outcomes here is the choice of papers which were not necessarily the best examples of theoretical approaches. To move the program into the good range we need to 1) find a mechanism to ensure a better completion rate of the portfolio assessment system, and 2) encourage a broader sampling from the portfolios to ensure that we have papers that reflect the various outcomes assessment criteria—to this end we have amended the portfolio statement/instructions that seniors receive and may need to continue to look at the guidance seniors receive in setting up their portfolio.

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## Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:

*NOTE: There should be one form C for each intended outcome listed on form B. Intended outcome should be restated in the box immediately below and the intended outcome number entered in the blank spaces.*

4.

Upon completion of the BA in English, students will demonstrate the ability to recognize the contributions of major literary figures and the importance of genres and periods of literary history.

## First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:

### d. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:

The above outcome is assessed using student portfolios comprised of four or five critical papers from a variety of English courses completed while enrolled at Schreiner University. The portfolios are presented to the Department during the semester of graduation. Success in this area is measured by a critical assessment of the student's ability to a) recognize, evaluate, and contextualize the contributions of major literary figures, b) use literary and rhetorical terms, c) draw on the principles of literary genre, and d) draw on literary history and traditions.

**Scoring Key: 5=Excellent, 4=Good, 3=Fair, 2=Below Average, 1=Poor**

**a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:** Of the six graduating seniors, three submitted portfolios for assessment. Based on independent assessments by two faculty members of the English Department, the portfolios demonstrate that our students' ability to a) relate works to broader issues and b) use critical theories/paradigms effectively is Fair.

**Average scores for part a): 3.5**

**Average scores for part b): 3.33**

**Average scores for part c): 3.33**

**Average scores for part d): 3.16**

**a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:** The average outcome for parts a), b), c) and d) is Fair. While, as a department, we might be disappointed in this, we can also take heart that our self-assessment has been stringent and demanding. In an age of grade-inflation it isn't difficult to give oneself outstanding scores, but we have remained rigorous and critical of student outcomes. There are problems in the low sample group before us to establish a true indicator of a statistical average—there were only three portfolios to examine. One of those might be considered a statistical outlier because of its relative low scores brought about by some poor portfolio choices.

Also, one of the reasons that student scores were attenuated here was—in another light—a strength. Some of the weaknesses in covering major figures in the canon under this outcomes assessment was brought about by a selection of essay choices that reflected an interestingly diverse and multi-cultural approach—but it meant that figures like Keats, Shakespeare, and co. were conspicuously missing, and if this is a continuing trend, we might need to find a way to reflect it in our outcomes—so that it may more properly be noted as a strength rather than a weakness. But there are lessons to learn here too. To move the program into the good range we need to 1) find a mechanism to ensure a better completion rate of the portfolio assessment system, 2) encourage a broader sampling in the portfolios to ensure that we have papers that reflect the various outcomes assessment criteria—to this end we have amended the portfolio statement/instructions that seniors receive and may need to continue to look at the guidance seniors get in setting up their portfolio, and 3), look again at the basics—even down to the kinds of questions we are asking as a department.

We have looked at program reinforcement (newly designed classes) in the near past as a possible improvement option—and are certainly interested in pursuing that line of approach in the future—but recent institutional successes within the Department (one of our faculty was elected to the Deanship, and one, with a reduced load was selected Atkission Professor) has left the department somewhat under-manned, and waiting on a new hire in the future before we can be that ambitious--given current already stretched load/rotation requirements.

However, it must also be noted that the outcomes are positive. While there are a few individual weaknesses in the portfolios, there are no real systemic weaknesses. Even given a statistically problematic average, the scores trended well above Fair as a whole—if we accept that the average successful score must be somewhere in the 3-5 range over the four assessment areas, and left the program as a whole on a 3.6 high Fair average.

