

**Program Level Learning Outcomes Assessment  
Annual Program Assessment Report  
English (AY 2022 – 2023)**

**1. Brief Program Overview (250 words max.)**

The English program encompasses two main components: Composition, consisting of lower-division WRTG courses 090, 110, 111, 211, and 212, and the upper division ENGL course 311; and the Bachelor of Arts in English, consisting of a core of required ENGL courses on the 200 level, and advanced ENGL courses on the 300 and 400 levels in Literature, Literature and the Environment, and Creative Writing. Assessments of student learning outcomes in each of these components serve different goals and embrace separate criteria. The GER-oriented service component of Composition is not an element of the BA in English, though it is delivered by English faculty, one term hire, and one adjunct.

**2. Program Level Learning Outcomes (PLOs).**

- Apply various theoretical approaches and methodologies to the analysis of literature or the craft of writing.
- Critically analyze or explicate literature and writing from diverse, marginalized perspectives.
- Demonstrate advanced reading and writing skills specific to their literary or creative disciplines.
- Reflect on their own writing, demonstrating an awareness of technique, audience, and purpose.
- Demonstrate professional skills through a capstone experience, internship, or senior thesis.

**3. How the data is collected on the PLOs (rubrics, portfolios, etc.)**

The English faculty assesses our work in three primary categories:

- **Program Assessment:** All English B.A. graduates are required to take either the Humanities Capstone course or complete a thesis or internship. In each of these options students reflect in writing on how they've met the course outcomes. The overseeing faculty write a "scorecard" that assesses how our graduating students are meeting the PLOs. With internships typically one faculty assesses them; with a thesis at least two faculty assess them.
- **Course Assessment:** composition, literature, creative writing courses. We assess our upper division and lower division courses on a rotating basis (every other year). We review student work samples, syllabi, assignment sheets, and after this year we'll also be look at peer review/workshop critique samples. Our "scorecard" for this work is the SLOs for each individual class.
- **Additional Assessment:** 110 portfolios. We read mid-term and final portfolios for every student taking 110. We meet to norm as a group and then divide portfolios.
  - **Note:** In responses to the provost's request, we have reformatted this report using the new template. In response to the dean's request, we have included SLOs for each class, the internship, and the thesis. These serve as our "scorecards." We would also like to address the length question: we understand that 3 pages is desirable. However, as writing faculty, our primary means of assessment is not numbers or data, but written reflections, both by students and faculty. In order for us to meet the requirements of the template, we find we cannot keep this report to 3 pages. We ask for your patience in allowing us to share this longer report of how we assess our students, courses, and program.

#### 4. The data collected on the PLOs during the previous academic year (assessment period)

- **Program Assessment:** In AY 22-23 we had 4 internship students. Shaelene Moler, Sienna Chubak, and Olive Brend all completed *Tidal Echoes* internships with Emily Wall. Autumn Daigle completed an internship under the supervision of Jessy Goodman in the Writing Center, with Emily Wall serving as faculty supervisor. We also had one thesis student, Lily Pothier, who worked with Emily Wall and then defended to a group of faculty. We “collected” reflections from the each of the students on how they met the learning outcomes. Then the faculty supervisors evaluated them based on the program learning outcomes. Because we are readers, and writers, we have chosen to gather this “data” in narrative form.
- **Course Assessment:** We collected sample student papers, syllabi, and assignment sheets from each of the courses we were evaluating. We split into two working groups and reviewed the artifacts and compared them to both the SLOs for each course and the PLOs.
- **Additional Assessment:** We read portfolios from 3 semesters: fall, spring, and summer. The following are the stats for AY 2022-2023. We can provide stats for the past 10 years if anyone would like to see them.
  - **Fall 22 Stats: All WRTG 110 Sections**
    - Total students enrolled: 23
    - Total portfolios submitted: 20
    - Total portfolios passing: 20 (90%)
    - Total portfolios failing: 3(%) (no submission)
  - **Spring 23 Stats: All WRTG 110 Sections**
    - Total students enrolled: 26
    - Total portfolios submitted: 20
    - Total portfolios passing: 19 (95%)
    - Total portfolios failing: 3 (5 %) (no submission)
  - **Summer 23 Stats: 1 Juneau section.**
    - Total students enrolled: 3
    - Total portfolios submitted: 2
    - Total portfolios passing: 2(66 %)
    - Total portfolios failing: 1 (33%) (no submission)

#### 5. An evaluation/analysis of the data collected

##### **Program Evaluation/Analysis: Internships & Thesis**

##### **Internships**

##### **ENGL Internship Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

1. Show that he/she can successfully perform the required the tasks required for this specific internship.
2. Demonstrate professional behavior in working with employers or mentors.
3. Demonstrate success and independence in a working situation
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in the project being undertaken.

- **Faculty/Supervisor Internship Scorecard: Professor Emily Wall**

- **Shaelene Moler:** Shaelene is an *outstanding* senior editor. In the seventeen years I've been faculty advisor for the journal I've never seen such creativity, leadership, organization, and editing skills as strong as Shaelene's. She beautifully met each of our program objectives. This year one of our goals with the journal was to lift up LGBTQIA voices and she brought us Chloey Kavanaugh as our featured artist. Chloey is a queer, Indigenous artist from Kake who is living as a working artist in Juneau. Shaelene ran our weekly meetings, worked with local shops selling our books, reached out to the faculty board, and did outstanding work with individuals and businesses in communities across Southeast Alaska. She was also an excellent mentor to Sienna, as this year's Junior Editor.
- **Sienna Chubak:** In her first year of the internship proved to be organized, thoughtful, and a good learner. Early on she made a social media recommendation that was an excellent idea and resulted in better social media coordination and presence. This kind of innovative thinking and confidence in sharing ideas is exactly what we look for in our students. She asked good questions to further her learning, completed all of her tasks well and on time, and never missed a single meeting or assignment. I feel confident she has learned a great deal about editing and the running of a literary journal and is ready to move into the Senior editor slot next year.
- **Olive Brend:** As the fall intern, Olive distinguished themselves as extremely creative. One of the real challenges of this internship is finding creative ways to reach out to traditionally underserved communities, both geographic and demographic. We don't want a journal filled only with cis white folks from Juneau. Olive's ideas resulted in us publishing one of our most diverse journals ever. She also proved to be organized, creative, and extremely hard working.

- **Faculty/Supervisor Internship Scorecard: Jessie Goodman**

- **Autumn Daigle:** As the UAS Juneau Writing Center's spring 2023 intern, Autumn was well prepared by her time as a tutor to translate her writing and editing skills to the internship. One of Autumn's major contributions was helping the layout of our undergraduate research journal, *Summit*, which was her first time working with those tools and software. Without her taking that on and learning along the way, we would have not been able to get the journal out in time. Autumn also collaborated on the beautiful cover art for last year's journal and was the lead artist. Because she was familiar with *Summit* as a tutor, her previous experience was invaluable to the new task she took on.

- **Student Self-Reflections on Learning Outcomes:**

- **Shaelene Moler (Internship)**

*Working with Tidal Echoes over the past couple years has taught me so much about the importance of connections, the unpredictability of being an editor, and what I genuinely love doing the most. Through Tidal Echoes, I enriched myself in multiple communities and built many meaningful relationships with others that led me to a variety of exciting opportunities... including helping me secure work on editing anthologies. My work with Tidal Echoes is what ultimately helped me secure my job as a storytelling and engagement intern for the Sustainable Southeast Partnership— it is the work that impressed them the most on my resumé.*

*The most important skills that Tidal Echoes taught me was to be diligent in completing my work because you don't know what obstacles may come up later on. It also taught me how important it is to invest in the people around you. This is why it was so important in my time as editor to reach out to and support the communities I felt were underserved both geographically and socially, which is exactly what I shared in my editor's note. And, just like I said in my editor's note, I absolutely would not be where I currently am without Tidal Echoes. It has prepared me greatly for my professional opportunities moving forward!*

- **Siena Chubak (Internship)**

*Being the Tidal Echoes Junior Editor for the first time was quite disorienting. In many ways, this internship is entirely different from any classes I have taken before. However, throughout the semester, after talking with the Senior Editor, I learned that with each task the best thing to do is dive in. Throughout the semester, I completed all of my assigned tasks for Tidal Echoes, learning to ask questions when needed, such as clarifying how to begin the galley proofs, score the collection of pieces, and create a visually appealing flyer.*

*Communicating with people on a weekly basis was a major part of this role. Due to COVID, communication with companies, UAS staff, and those who assisted with the journal happened in several ways— emails, zoom calls, phone calls, text messages, and in-person meetings. I learned how to manage successful communication with multiple platforms and delivery methods.*

*Much of the internship was individual tasks to create a large collaborative project— Tidal Echoes. I learned that efficient and accurate completion of my individual tasks was vital, as each person's part relied on others. In order for books to be delivered on time, I had to call bookstores ahead of time and make sure the invoices were completed by a certain date.*

*Finally, the Tidal Echoes internship gave me several opportunities to explore my own creative ideas and problem-solving abilities. Since many of the tasks were on the individual level, I was able to continuously try new ways to do things until I received the results I wanted. When advertising for the launch began, I was able to create multiple drafts of the flyer and explore ways to promote the launch on social media.*

- **Olive Brend (Internship)**

*During my time as the Fall Intern for Tidal Echoes, I met and exceeded the Student Learning Objectives. The SLOs for ENGL 491 are as follows: Students successfully completing this course will be able to:*

- *Show that they can successfully perform the required tasks for this specific internship.*
- *Demonstrate professional behavior in working with employers or mentors.*
- *Demonstrate success and independence in a working situation.*
- *Demonstrate critical thinking skills in the project being undertaken.*

*Tasks for the Fall Internship include creating submission guidelines, creating media to publicize, conducting interviews with a featured artist and writer, and compiling the manuscript. I successfully completed all tasks during the 150 hours required for this internship. We received 354 submissions (250 of poetry or prose and 104 of artwork)*

*The Tidal Echoes internship required me to work with multiple personnel around Southeast Alaska, including library directors, teachers, and radio hosts. I engaged in professional behavior and successfully marketed the journal and discussed submission requirements with all of these individuals, which helped us reach a wider audience. I also demonstrated independence and critical thinking skills by working through previous issues to come up with new solutions. For instance, the numbering system used to anonymously judge submissions was cumbersome, and I devised a new system that worked within Google Docs and Google Sheets to make the judging process easier on the Senior Editor, the Junior Editor, and the Board Committee of judges.*

- **Autumn Daigle (Internship)**

*Through my enrollment in the Writing Center Internship, I was able to develop skills integral to my future career. I was given more responsibility in the working environment, which caused me to develop more professional work relationships. I also attended meetings with UAS faculty to learn about new programs and projects, and I self-facilitated the learning of an entirely new program in order to create the manuscript for Summit, the UAS publication for Undergraduate student writers. All of these experiences have helped me gain confidence in my work field, as well as new skills that will translate seamlessly into my graduate education and career field.*

*The goals of this internship were to prepare myself for the next steps of my education, a Masters in Secondary Education, and I believe this experience has absolutely accomplished that goal. I feel comfortable assisting students with their academic and creative work, and I understand how to access resources when my scope of knowledge is not sufficient for a given project. While I had tutored students before the beginning of this Internship, part of my responsibilities this semester have included explaining tutoring techniques to other new tutors, which has been wonderful preparation for teaching in the future. I have been encouraged to find new and interesting ways to explain English concepts, and I have broadened my knowledge base on APA/MLA formatting, citations and generalized grammar and writing styles.*

*I am so thankful for this opportunity, as I feel much more prepared for the next phase of my life, whether that is graduate school or entering the workforce. I have learned so much about time management, professional etiquette and maintaining confidence in my own ideas. The largest measurable growth in my experience has absolutely been my own assuredness in my own ideas and my contributions to a work environment. I am so appreciative of this training, and I cannot wait to continue to develop the skills that I began to develop over the course of this internship.*

- **Faculty/Supervisor Thesis Scorecards for Lily Pothier: Emily Wall, Forest Wagner, Math Trafton**

**ENGL Thesis Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:*

1. Produce a manuscript in a specific genre or discipline.
2. Demonstrate professional behavior in working with faculty mentor.
3. Demonstrate independent working skills.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in the project being undertaken.
5. Defend his/her work to an evaluation committee.

**Professor Emily Wall (thesis advisor)**

<b>Creative Writing Courses Assessment Rubric -- The work of successful creative writing students will generally demonstrate the following traits:</b>	
1. Whether written in prose or in verse, writing exhibits a proficient grammar and mechanics. Creative deviations from Standard English are welcomed when intentional and done for effect.	Lily demonstrates mastery of grammar and some interesting play in syntactical structures.
2. The language—on the level of the word, sentence, and paragraph—reveals attention to detail with both precision and effective word economy.	She has excellent economy and precision but struggles with clarity; it’s something she’s aware of and that she will continue to work on.
3. The writing is rich with vivid detail in depicted objects, actions, and/or thoughts. Images or events are written in such a way that appeal to the reader and encourage identification with the experience.	Absolutely. She’s particularly strong with sight images, and in bringing the reader into the body experience.
4. The piece somehow reflects on a meaningful theme.	This is perhaps her strongest gift—she explores themes of the body, relationships, sex, and motherhood in fresh and deeply honest ways.
5. The writing generally avoids cliché, formulas, and hackneyed patterns.	Yes.
6. Specific to Fiction/Non-Fiction Work: a. The writing maintains appropriate use of a variety of modes (such as action, dialogue, description, thought, and exposition). The writing can also transition smoothly between modes.	N/A
b. The narrative is cohesive with an adequate balance between the beginning, middle, and end.	
c. Characters are developed as unique individuals that can interact with the imagined environment in a provocative and meaningful way.	

**Professor Forest Wagner**

<b>Creative Writing Courses Assessment Rubric -- The work of successful creative writing students will generally demonstrate the following traits:</b>	
1. Whether written in prose or in verse, writing exhibits a proficient grammar and mechanics. Creative deviations from Standard English are welcomed when intentional and done for effect.	Yes, absolutely. Clear mastery of grammar and mechanics.
2. The language—on the level of the word, sentence, and paragraph—reveals attention to detail with both precision and effective word economy.	Again, yes.
3. The writing is rich with vivid detail in depicted objects, actions, and/or thoughts. Images or events are written in such a way that appeal to the reader and encourage identification with the experience.	Rich detail and vivid imagery seem central to Ms. Pothier’s style. If again, the detail is so intimate the reader (me) is left feeling almost voyeuristic as a participant.
4. The piece somehow reflects on a meaningful theme.	Again, yes. Romance. Betrayal. Childbirth. Adulthood. Deeply Meaningful.
5. The writing generally avoids cliché, formulas, and hackneyed patterns.	It seems to, though I am not as trained as some in this regard. The work seems both original and carefully polished in various forms. It is not, to quote Kevin Maier, “gorgeous babble.”
6. Specific to Fiction/Non-Fiction Work: a. The writing maintains appropriate use of a variety of modes (such as action, dialogue, description, thought, and exposition). The writing can also transition smoothly between modes.	Yes, mostly villanelles, mostly smooth in transition.
b. The narrative is cohesive with an adequate balance between the beginning, middle, and end.	This one is harder. Cohesive yes, but the story of Lilly is scaffolded by her experiences and also still unfolding.
c. Characters are developed as unique individuals that can interact with the imagined environment in a provocative and meaningful way.	I think so. Certainly the narrator, maybe her lover. Since the narrator is the primary character, their interactions with the imagined environment are both provocative and meaningful.

**Dr. Math Trafton**

<b>Creative Writing Courses Assessment Rubric -- The work of successful creative writing students will generally demonstrate the following traits:</b>	
1. Whether written in prose or in verse, writing exhibits a proficient grammar and mechanics. Creative deviations from Standard English are welcomed when intentional and done for effect.	The use of language was very consistent, but it was also engaging, detailed, and rich; through both the manuscript and the Artistic Statement, I found essentially no language errors. I also found the defense highly professional, and I was impressed by Lily's ability to speak about her manuscript professionally and by her approach to writing in an unscripted yet deep manner.
2. The language—on the level of the word, sentence, and paragraph—reveals attention to detail with both precision and effective word economy.	Yes! (Same as above.)
3. The writing is rich with vivid detail in depicted objects, actions, and/or thoughts. Images or events are written in such a way that appeal to the reader and encourage identification with the experience.	Yes! (Same as above.)
4. The piece somehow reflects on a meaningful theme.	The manuscript is very rich in its theoretical exploration of such themes as loss, grief, mourning (and melancholia), selfhood with particular regard to outward/inward identities and concepts of wholeness, and motherhood. The manuscript's engagement with these themes is rich and shows an advanced understanding of the way poetry can navigate these explorations without reducing them under a totalizing system.
5. The writing generally avoids cliché, formulas, and hackneyed patterns.	Yes! The writing is very original, and the poetic use of language produces many thoughtful surprises and turns that engage the reader.
6. Specific to Fiction/Non-Fiction Work: a. The writing maintains appropriate use of a variety of modes (such as action, dialogue, description, thought, and exposition). The writing can also transition smoothly between modes.	N/A
b. The narrative is cohesive with an adequate balance between the beginning, middle, and end.	This is less relevant for poetry, but the arrangements of the poems definitely create an arc that traces the speakers' struggles with finding comfort in the body and as a self in relation to others (and a self merely unto itself), resulting ultimately in a deeper and richer understanding of self-identity.
c. Characters are developed as unique individuals that can interact with the imagined environment in a provocative and meaningful way.	Yes! The speakers throughout the poems together make up a multifaceted self, rich and layered. There are also occasional references to consistent side characters (lovers, ex-lovers, father, and son) that



blend, blur, and make a complex web of relationship dynamics between self and other, particularly along gender identities.

- **Apply various theoretical approaches and methodologies to the analysis of literature or the craft of writing**
  - The manuscript is very rich in its theoretical exploration of such themes as loss, grief, mourning (and melancholia), selfhood with particular regard to outward/inward identities and concepts of wholeness, and motherhood. The manuscript's engagement with these themes is rich and shows an advanced understanding of the way poetry can navigate these explorations without reducing them under a totalizing system.
- **Critically analyze or explicate literature and writing from diverse, marginalized perspectives**
  - Lily's Artistic Statement articulates her ability to closely examine written works, whether others' or her own, and a thoughtful analytical approach specifically to making meaning and building images of selfhood in the wake of loss and trauma, especially from a marginalized perspective.
- **Demonstrate advanced reading and writing skills specific to their literary or creative disciplines**
  - The manuscript demonstrates an advanced use of language with complex structures that prove exemplary in both creative and analytical frameworks. In addition, the Artistic Statement indicates a deep engagement with the reading material that helped inform Lily's approach to her own manuscript.
- **Reflect on their own writing, demonstrating an awareness of technique, audience, and purpose.**
  - Lily's Artistic Statement thoroughly reflects on her own writing process and frames her writing—and her writing process—as deliberate and attentive.
- **Demonstrate professional skills through a capstone experience, internship, or senior thesis.**
  - The defense was highly professional, and I was impressed by her ability to speak about her manuscript and her approach to writing in an unscripted yet deep manner.

- **Student Reflection: Lily Pothier (thesis):**

*Here I will briefly address the ways in which, at the conclusion of this Thesis project, I have satisfied the Student Learning Outcomes outlined in the course syllabus.*

- 1. I have produced a chapbook of poems. Chapbooks are a specific genre in the discipline of poetry. Chapbooks are shorter than a full book of poetry, and are characterized by notable thematic continuity. The cover art is also generally closely linked to the contents of a chapbook – since a chapbook is so short, the cover feels like a continuation of the work, more seamlessly and intentionally than with full-length books of poetry or fiction. The chapbook I produced this semester is titled *This Is Why Your Sugar-Water Won't Sustain Me*.*
- 2. This semester, I had the privilege of working closely with my Faculty Thesis Mentor, Professor Emily Wall. Our weekly Thesis meetings formed the basis of a professional relationship, one in which I demonstrated professional behavior. I also had professional thesis-related interactions with my other committee members, related to my initial Thesis proposal, and planning the date for my defense.*
- 3. I worked independently to write, revise, and arrange the poems contained in *This Is Why Your Sugar-Water Won't Sustain Me*. I also arranged printing of the chapbook, which taught me about the process of working with a press, and pushed me to consider layout and pagination in the constraints of a real-life setting. The cover art for the chapbook is my own, which I collaged and had scanned for printing. I also independently explicated books of poetry throughout the semester, and applied the techniques to my writing, learning from other authors by deconstructing their methods.*
- 4. Critical thinking was an integral skill I used throughout the semester, in contemplation and application of the feedback I received from Professor Wall, and also while explicating texts by other poets. Critical thinking certainly informed final decisions about which poems to include in the complete chapbook, and was also essential during my Thesis defense.*
- 5. I had the opportunity to defend my chapbook of poetry to a committee, comprised of Professor Math Trafton, Professor Forest Wagner, Professor Kevin Maier, and Professor Emily Wall. It was a challenging culminating experience in this thesis process, and my committee determined that I had successfully completed my Thesis project.*

## Course Evaluation/Analysis: WRTG Course sequence

- **Writing 090/110: James Ryan (chair), Geoff Kirsch, Jessy Goodman**

### **WRTG 090 Writing and Reading Strategies**

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:*

1. Produce thoughtful responses and accurate summaries of academic texts.
2. Use metacognitive strategies to enhance critical reading and comprehension of academic texts.
3. Write well-developed, coherent paragraphs and short essays to respond to specific rhetorical contexts.

### **WRTG 110 Introduction to College Writing**

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:*

1. Critically interpret and evaluate their own and others' texts.
2. Apply appropriate reading processes to assigned readings and individualized research for use in basic academic essays.
3. Write brief academic essays shaped by effective writing processes and appropriately supported by texts to achieve specific purposes.

Two years ago, the conversation about 090 and 110 revolved around a perceived need to shift away from narrative and descriptive assignments and toward thesis-driven writing that responds to academic texts, as the SLOs indicate. This year our conversation ranged over a wide number of topics, including:

- The needs and preparedness of our 090 students
- Methods of presenting decolonial values in our syllabi
- The merits of different policies related to assignment deadlines
- The definition of the phrase “academic texts” as it appears in the SLOs for these two courses
- The advantages of using short films as a subject of analysis for short papers
- The relationship between 090 and 110, and how the former prepares students for the latter
- The question of peer-reviewed sources as important but also intimidating for students and where in the sequence of writing classes would students be best introduced to them

Though the report from two years ago encouraged a conversation about moving away from narrative and description, these modes continue to be taught in 110, and some of us are thinking of them in decolonial terms (for example, adapting Oscar Kawagley’s meditation/observation exercise from *Stop Talking* for the purposes of a descriptive writing assignment). As always with writing courses, there appears to be a tension among the values of various stakeholders (i.e., Should we continue to promote descriptive writing because we think of it as suited to indigenous ways of knowing as described in *Stop Talking*? Or should we move away from this mode and emphasize thesis-driven engagement with peer-reviewed sources because those skills are valued in other courses, and in academia more broadly?). For the time being at least, it seems that narrative and observation will remain an important feature of 090 and 110.

○ **Writing 111: Jay Szczepanski (chair) & Kevin Maier**

**WRTG 111 Writing Across Contexts**

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:*

1. Establish credibility and persuasive power for an audience
2. Interpret the meaning of a text based on its features, context, design, and relationship to other texts.
3. Respond purposefully to specific rhetorical situations.
4. Demonstrate a critical engagement with the cultures and environments of Southeast Alaska.

In the last cycle's assessment report, faculty were concerned about SLO 4 ("demonstrate a critical engagement with the cultures and environments of Southeast Alaska"). Specifically, there was concern about the degree to which faculty were assigning material and projects to fulfill this goal; therefore, our primary focus during this meeting was to evaluate the extent to which the artifacts (WRTG 111 syllabus, essay assignment sheet, student self-grading) contributed to this outcome.

Our analysis of Dr. Trafton's WRTG 111 syllabus indicates that, yes, at least in this case, his syllabus is "proof of concept." He provides students with a variety of texts related to SE Alaska and structures writing exercises around them (reflection corner, writing talk) that ensure students are "critically" engaging with the material and its implications. Given this, we believe that we should retain SLO 4 for the foreseeable future.

Regarding the essay assignment sheet provided to us—it might be over-scaffolded were it an in-person or synchronous class; however, given that the syllabus we reviewed was for an asynchronous online section of WRTG 111, the robust instructions seem appropriate. We base this judgment on our reading of the sample student essay: it employs the rhetorical skills as outlined on the assignment sheet. It's hard to argue with success.

We had an additional discussion about SLO 3 ("respond purposefully to specific rhetorical situations"). We wondered whether we should revise it so that it is clearer to students and instructors that an additional goal of this SLO is for students to engage with their instructor and their peers in the classroom as a community and as model that develops and sustains our identities as citizens in a diverse democracy. At this point, and in furtherance of this goal, we think there may be room in WRTG 111 for instructors to provide more opportunities for shared discussions on common topics, and one way that might happen is to assign the same articles or readings to all students rather than having them make individual choices: common readings can provoke uncommon conversations.

Of special note, the four-week check-ins are phenomenal and a great way to poll students about issue or struggles they are having with the course or its content. WRTG 111, overall, seems to be meeting its goals and serving our students well. No changes recommended.

○ **Writing 211 & 212: Math Trafton (chair) & Emily Wall**

**WRTG 211 Writing and the Humanities**

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:*

1. Frame an issue to an established audience, engage divergent perspectives on that issue, and contribute to an ongoing conversation in the humanities.
2. Interpret texts and data by applying theoretical frameworks from the humanities.
3. Demonstrate consistent use of a broad range of conventions and genres that conform to the goals of writing in the humanities.
4. Demonstrate a critical engagement with the cultures and environments of Southeast Alaska.

**WRTG 212 Writing and the Professions**

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:*

1. Frame an issue to an established audience, engage divergent perspectives on that issue, and contribute to an ongoing conversation in the professions.
2. Interpret texts and data by applying professional frameworks.
3. Demonstrate consistent use of a broad range of conventions and genres that conform to the goals of writing in the professions.
4. Demonstrate a critical engagement with the cultures and environments of Southeast Alaska.

At the start of the Spring 2023 semester, on Thursday 2/9, the WRTG 211 & 212 Assessment Workgroup met to assess some artifacts taken from sample student writing. This group was comprised of Emily Wall and Math Trafton.

In our assessment, we found many successes in our WRTG 211 (Writing and the Humanities) and WRTG 212 (Writing and the Professions) courses. From both our assessment samples and from our committee members' experiences in these classes, we have found that both courses effectively encourage students to push their comfort levels and incorporate a variety of writing practices into different aspects of their lives. Though each course presents its own challenges, the committee has found that these challenges are relatively minor within the greater context of the student experience at UAS. Nevertheless, as noted below, our WRTG 211 and WRTG 212 instructors continue to reflect on their courses and innovate new approaches accordingly.

In the first place, **WRTG 211 (Writing and the Humanities)** often empowers students to feel included in the literary analysis process, and by the end of the semester, most students reflect that they feel more confident and they no longer find literary analysis so scary. One of the sample essays reviewed by the committee reflected an especially rich engagement with a short story and its complex socio-cultural explorations. The committee later learned that the student who wrote this essay had experienced a significant mid-semester transformation as the material suddenly started to make sense for them, and they discovered a new passion for literary analysis, which was clearly evident in the student's writing. Students in WRTG 211 also often comment that they appreciate the exposure to course material they would not have chosen to read on their own. We found that our WRTG 211 courses tend to offer a diverse range reading material, encouraging students to consider perspectives beyond their own. While WRTG 211 instructors are of course limited in the number of short stories, poems, and films they can include in any one semester, which can be challenging, our instructors do still seem to manage to continually reassess the value of all included works. The committee applauds the continued efforts of the instructors in

continuing to seek out gaps in the demographics of included authors and then, in turn, to fill them with new samples—the committee also encourages UAS writing faculty to continue to share their course materials with each other to keep this exploration active. Furthermore, the committee celebrates the WRTG 211 sections that print all course materials into a packet and provide that packet to students at no charge, which makes the course more equitable and accessible to all students.

The assessment committee did also observe some challenges facing our WRTG 211 sections. In some cases, and perhaps even more with online asynchronous courses, the transition into the course at the start of the semester can seem overwhelming to some students, especially those who already feel intimidated by literature or literary analysis. Generally speaking, WRTG 211 sections in particular tend to have higher attrition rates than we would like to see. To address this issue, the committee agreed that it might be better to take more time at the start of the semester to start slow with an especially active presence and, instead of immediately delving into more complex material, assign more relatable and/or straightforward opening readings and writing assignments that can build students' confidence levels. Students can also benefit from more reflective exercises, especially early in the semester, where they must take the time to consider their own experiences in a more deliberate fashion. Furthermore, and this is relevant to all WRTG courses, our instructors can continue to explore our course's approach to assessment and perhaps move away—at least in part—from rubrics and grades for larger assignments. Instead, we can emphasize qualitative feedback while deemphasizing quantitative component; this can help students feel less intimidated and feel more willing to explore without anxiety. Finally, while asynchronous online discussion boards often offer students a safer space to carry out a class conversation (given that students can take more time to compose their written responses), sometimes in-person discussions on literature can feel especially intimidating, leaving students feeling more anxious or less engaged in conversation. To address this challenge, the committee agrees that it would be useful to explore ways to integrate online discussion tools into at least part of in-person courses to see if that makes students more comfortable holding challenging conversations.

As for **WRTG 212 (Writing and the Professions)**, the committee found that this course specifically empowers students to express themselves with more confidence in a variety of contexts. Some assignments, such as the recipe reviewed by the committee for this assessment, offer students opportunities to refine their writing and organization skills in a creative and personal fashion, which helps to humanize the students' experience with the course material. Other course assignments, like a cover letter and application to get into the class during the first week of the semester, offer students a concrete context for their work, providing transparency and clear expectations for how their work on class assignments will have relevance in their lives outside of academia. Over the years, our writing faculty have noticed that WRTG 212 students sometimes have relatively limited audience awareness; however, maintaining a strong focus in a variety of activities and projects that reflect “real-life” experiences has helped to challenge students to understand the implications of varying situational contexts and audiences.

Anecdotally, we understand that some students tend to think that WRTG 212 is an easier or lighter class than, for example, WRTG 211, and this impression can build unrealistic expectations for students as they enroll and enter the class. Our WRTG 212 faculty are aware of this conception and have been actively seeking—and continue to seek—ways to incorporate assignments that challenge students to analyze work to the same level as they would in WRTG 211. With this regard, we are fortunate to have faculty who teach both WRTG 211 and WRTG 212 so that they can provide accurate comparative perspectives to ensure that the rigor is consistent across courses. WRTG 212 instructors can also

incorporate more transparent language to identify the purpose, relevance, and workload expectation of each assignment.

Lastly, though this is not unique to WRTG 212, the committee did note that course delivery methods can sometimes be inconsistent across different instructors who teach at different tiers of the WRTG sequence. For example, some instructors may provide very detailed instruction guidelines for projects and assignments, whereas others may not. We acknowledge that such inconsistencies can be confusing for students who progress through the WRTG sequence with different instructors. At the same time, however, so long as students are supported through their transition into the course, especially in the first few weeks of the semester, there is a lot to be gained when students are challenged to observe these differences and in turn adapt to different environments. The committee therefore recommends even more attentiveness to student needs in the first weeks of class—even providing surveys or questionnaires to gauge students' experiences, when relevant.

Overall, the committee to assess WRTG 211 and WRTG 212 was very impressed with this year's student artifacts and with the overall reflections on student experiences in these courses. We believe that, with the writing program's focus on introspection and continuous improvement, our program is on a good trajectory in its service to students.

## **6. Conclusions and plans for program improvement**

The English program is not making any changes to our writing sequence. This year we have been focusing on making changes to our literature and creative writing courses. We will assess those in AY 23-24.