

Indiana State University

2006 - 2007 Academic Annual Report

Department of English

Vision Statement

[View/Modify Vision](#)

Below is your vision statement from previous years. Please take this opportunity to review it and if necessary update it.

The discipline of English is uniquely situated to provide students both professional skills and a humanistic education. In other words, the study of English can make a student a better human being while also helping him or her to get a job. The Department's "vision" begins with a recognition of its role in providing an essential academic foundation for all students at Indiana State University through its General Education offerings. The Department's courses in literature, writing, and language are fundamental to the University's General Education program-representing the majority of Basic Studies courses, as well as elective courses in three of the five core areas of Liberal Studies: Social and Behavioral Studies; Literary, Artistic, and Philosophical Studies; and Multicultural Studies: U.S. Diversity and International Cultures. In General Education English courses, students from all disciplines engage in the analysis of American, English, and world literature; the practice of rhetorical, expository, and creative writing; and the study of the history, structure, and function of the English language. The Department's vision also includes a recognition of its responsibility to its undergraduate and graduate majors to provide a curriculum that challenges them and addresses their diverse personal and professional needs. For majors, as well as General Education students, the Department's courses offer exposure to enriching humanistic experiences and enhancement of essential academic skills. Outside of the classroom, the Department supports the activity of its faculty and students in the production and dissemination of scholarship and creative work through public readings, competitions, conference presentations, and publication-recognizing the value of our discipline not only to the academy but also to society. The discipline of English faces several developments in the future: expanding the definition of "text", embracing an increasing multiplicity of critical approaches to literary analysis, and exploring new ways to read the word and read the world. At the same time, there is an increased acknowledgment from the world of work that the study of English provides the essential skills that employers in all disciplines demand. Similarly, the Department itself looks forward to development in the future. Based on the past several years of steady growth, we anticipate a continued increase in the number of students declaring the English major. We will also enhance our recruitment efforts in attracting minors. An English minor can benefit students in any discipline by enhancing the critical thinking and analytical skills employers seek. Furthermore, the addition of a humanities-based minor such as English to a business, science, or technical-based major supports the University's commitment to interdisciplinary education. Finally, we agree with the literature that recognizes that "the study of English is vitally important to students seeking academic and professional success" (The Relevance of English: Teaching that Matters in Students' Lives, ed. Robert P. Yagelski and Scott A. Leonart: 2002).

Year in Review

[Accomplishments](#)

As you have heard, increasing public awareness of Indiana State University's accomplishments is crucial to building student enrollment, influencing policy makers, and developing a place of pre-eminence in the Midwest. What do you consider to be your department's accomplishments for the 2006-2007 year that will contribute to this effort?

[Please list in priority order and limit to no more than 8.]

1. Scholarly Activity. Members of the English faculty continue to be productive, being recognized in local, regional, national, and even international contexts; by association, ISU's reputation is enhanced. 2. Teaching Effectiveness. Members of the English faculty are recognized for the quality of their teaching; comparative data on SIRs show that they perform above the ISU average; even Rateyourteacher.com shows our faculty in a good light. 3. Student Performance. Students in all strands of our curriculum show measures of success, whether they include this year's three 2007 Hines Medal winners, graduate students heading to doctoral programs, student teachers receiving high ratings, or high percentages of students making the Dean's List. 4. Faculty-Student Engagement. One of our strengths is the active connection between faculty and students. Faculty and students collaborate on projects, attend conferences together, work together on some committees, and work together on publications. All of these suggest the closeness that exists among those who work in the Department. 5. Program Development. We have continued our work to enhance the programs in the Department. We are not reconfiguring the curriculum because the basic structure and sequence are good; however, we are working toward creating stronger sequencing of content within the courses and finding ways to avoid the repetition of experiences. Further, we are creating more—and more varied—General Education offerings (i.e., Literature and Life courses addressing new topics of interest).

Research and Scholarship

What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of research and scholarship that is focused primarily on contributions to practice and discipline-based scholarship? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?

Books and monographs published Byerman, K. E., and B. TuSmith. *Critical Essays on John Edgar Wideman*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 2006. Goldbort, R. *Writing for Science*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2006. Perrin, R. *Pocket Guide to APA*. 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. Shelden, M. *Orwell: The Authorized Biography*. London: Politico=s/Methuen Publishing, 2006. Chapters published Brennan, M. *AThe Landscape of Grief in Frankenstein*.@ *Frankenstein: Bloom=s Major Literary Character*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2006. 117-127. Brennan, M. *AWilliam Gilmore Simms*.@ *Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Poets and Poetry*. Ed. Jeffrey Gray. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. 1474-76. Byerman, K. E.. *After the Pain: Critical Essays on Gayl Jones* New York: Peter Lang, 2006. 259-62. Byerman, K. E. *James Baldwin and Toni Morrison*. New York: Palgrave, 2006. 187-204. Carino, P. A. *ANo Hotdogs in the Bleachers: Baseball in Italy*. @ *Baseball Without Borders: The International Pastime*. Ed. George Gmelch. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2006. McEntire, N. C. *AInternational Considerations of the April Fool*.@ *The Ritual Year Publications*. Malta: U of Malta P, 2006. 382-95. Articles published Brennan, J. *ASimms, Hawthorne, and >The Inutile Pursuit= of >The Artist of the Beautiful*.=@ *Simms Review* 14.2 (2006): 14-21. Martin, D., *AEssay: Snow in the Prose Poem*.@ *Snowvigate* 1 (10 May 2006). [online] Martin, D., *ALooking and Smelling Just like a Present Participle: An Interview with Kim Chinquee*.@ *Snowvigate* 1 (10 May 2006). [online] Creative works published Brennan, M. C. *AWatching the Sun Set from the Mount St. Francis Cemetery*.@ *Blue Unicorn* 29.2 (2006): 18. Brennan, M. *ANight-Piece in Cork at the Ambassador Hotel*.@ *Westview* 25.2 (2006): 45. Brennan, M. *AOn the Beara Peninsula*.@ *Westview* 25.2 (2006): 44. Brennan, M. *AThe House with a Mansard Roof*.@ *South Dakota Review* 44.1 (2006): 58. Brennan, M. *AReprise*.@ *Poet Lore* 101.3-4 (2006): 43. Brennan, M. *AFair Oaks Apartments Revisited*.@ *Iambs & Trochees* 5.1 (2006): 72. Brennan, M. *AJuly in Indiana*.@ *Iambs & Trochees* 5.1 (2006): 73. Brennan, M. *ATwilight, May*.@ *Iambs & Trochees* 5.1 (2006): 74. Martin, D. *AA Brief History of Predicting Sooner Weather*.@ *elimae* 7 (2006). [online] Martin, D. *AEarwitnesses to the Crime*.@ *elimae* 7

(2006). [online] Martin, D. AOur New Folklore Lives.@ elimae 1 (2006). [online] Martin, D. AThe Hair Death.@ elimae 7 (2006). [online] Martin, D. AProzac with Banjo Girl in Marsh,@ ASnowtalk.@ Sleepingfish, .875 (2006). [online] Books and journals edited Bates, L. R., ed. Indiana English, Indiana Council of Teachers of English, Indiana. (2000-present). Byerman, K. E., assoc. ed. African American Review. St. Louis University, St. Louis. (January 1, 2006 - Present). McEntire, N. C., ed. The Folklore Historian. American Folklore Society and Hoosier Folklore Society. Volume 22 (2005). [delayed publication] Reviews published Carino, P. A. Review of Jean Hastings Ardell's Breaking into Baseball: Women and the National Pastime. Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture 15.1 (2006): 127-28. Carino, P. A. Review of Stuart Cohen's The Lean Years of the Yankees. Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture. 15.1 (2006): 126-27. Kincade, K., Review of Writing British Infanticide: Child-Murder, Gender, and Print 1722-1859. U of Delaware P, 2003. McEntire, N. C. Review of Waltz the Hall: The American Play-Party. The Journal of Southern History 72.2 (2006): 496-97. Shelden, M. New Fiction. Baltimore Sun . 2006. [multiple reviews] Other contributions to published works Lewandowski, M. R. "Moving Chairs.@ Mochila Review 8 (2006): 71-79. Shelden, M. "Mel, Mayans and Madness" [London] Daily Telegraph. 2006. 21. Shelden, M. AHow the World Caught Up with Pynchon.@ [London] Daily Telegraph 7 Dec. 2006: 20. Shelden, M. AGreater Heights@ [London] The Daily Telegraph Magazine 4 Nov. 2006: 54-57. Shelden, M. News Review Interview with John Grisham (Oct. 14, 2006, pp. 21-22). [London]The Daily Telegraph. Shelden, M. AMeet the Textbook Revolutionary.@ [London] Daily Telegraph 16 Sept. 2006: 11. Shelden, M. "News Features Interview with Isabella Rossellini." [London] Daily Telegraph. 2006. Shelden, M. AIt=s Art, Not Life@ [London] Daily Telegraph Magazine 20 May 2006: 34-35. Shelden, M. "News Review Interview with Shirin Ebadi" (pp. News 21-22). [London] Daily Telegraph. 2006.

Grants, Contracts & Off Campus Professional Service

What is your assessment of accomplishments in the area of grants, contracts, and off campus professional service? Are you satisfied overall? In which areas do you feel your department does particularly well? In which areas do you feel your department needs to improve?

In recent years, we have made minor strides in grant-getting (which is no surprise since the fine arts and humanities do not have the money allotted in the sciences). More faculty are learning to navigate grant-getting waters and are, increasingly, becoming more ambitious. I have encouraged grant writing, and some faculty have proved successful in their efforts. This year's grants were relatively substantial by departmental standards, and two were funded by agencies other than ISU: Brennan, M. APoetry of William Gilmore Simms,@ Indiana State U, University Research Committee, \$4,400.00, Intramural, Funded. (Award: December 2006, completion: June 2008). Byerman, K. E., ARace and Politics in African American Studies,@ African American Literature and Culture Society and Japan Black Studies Assn., Japan Foundation, \$4900, Funded. (Sub: February 2006, award: April 2006, completion: June 2006). Evans, S. R., AFreedom of Expression: A Middle School and University Project,@ Center for Public Service and Community Engagement, Indiana State University, \$2700, Combination, student involvement, Undergraduate, 265 student hours, Funded. (Sub: October 19, 2006, award: November 28, 2006, completion: May 2007). Martin, D., Project Director. Grant for Grasslands Review, Arts Illiana. September 15, 2006. Office of Sponsored Programs University Arts Endowment Grant. Summer 2006.

Teaching

We would like to highlight innovative approaches to teaching. Has your department developed any pedagogies or practices you'd like to share with us? Please describe briefly.

We are, at heart, a text-based discipline with rather traditional teaching methods—made even more traditional by the demands placed on teachers by class sizes. Teachers try collaborative work, for

example, but find that forming groups when the class has forty-five students in a not-so-spacious room is sometimes unproductive. That said, more and more English faculty are exploring ways to use technology with their classes—when they can get their classes scheduled in the “smart rooms” allotted to us. This has been helped by the addition of several newly enhanced rooms. Further, as more faculty experiment with online technologies—using Web-based “prof-paks” and presenting materials through BlackBoard—they share their experiences with colleagues. This, in turn, creates a context in which experimentation is more likely than it was in the past.

Course Scheduling/Enrollment Management

How is the department making sure that students are able to get the classes they need to graduate in a timely manner?

Because of strong enrollments in both strands of our undergraduate major and the sheer number of Basic Studies courses we need to offer, the very process of aligning the schedule is a challenge. In the last several semesters, however, our enrollments have been irregular, and that has resulted in last-minute changes to the schedule—collapsing sections, canceling sections, and (very infrequently) creating sections. Our recruitment efforts have been three-fold. First, we have prepared better recruitment materials (new brochures and posters) to highlight the strongest features of our programs (undergraduate and graduate). Second, we’ve corresponded more individually with students (individualized letters to potential Presidential Scholarship students in our discipline, notes from SAC members to all prospective majors, announcements of scholarship opportunities, and so on). Third, we generated some wholly new materials—including a brochure for parents of admitted students with an FAQ format. We have found over the years that students’ positive experiences in English 239 and 338 (the Literature and Life strands) have led to enrollment in other English courses—providing us with something like an internal “recruitment” experience. The most complicated and frustrating challenge, however, is the staffing of classes (typically Basic Studies courses in composition) with insufficient funds. We have a suitable number of able temporary staff, but we cannot fully predict whether we will be able to cover the classes that are currently unassigned (for instance, most sections of freshman writing classes are, at present, unstaffed; if we get no more funding for adjuncts, I’ll simply have to merge sections up to enrollment limits or cancel some of those sections). This element of enrollment management is, without question, the greatest challenge. With a fairly small graduate program, it has also been challenging to provide programmatic course coverage, while at the same time providing a teaching rotation among faculty with graduate standing.

Outreach

What are the outreach opportunities for your discipline? (non-traditional modes of delivery and timing, etc)

The Department carries the majority of courses offered in the Correctional Education Program’s bachelor degree curriculum and also offers several General Education literature and writing courses through Web-based and Distance Education technology. See above.

Assessment

Please share your stated student learning outcomes.

Our overall outcome is student improvement in all of the language arts; reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking.

Strategic Initiatives

Community Engagement I

Please summarize your faculty's efforts in community engagement this year.

Current activities have been strongest in two areas: creative writing and internships. The Creative writing program offers regular readings—at local restaurants, at Cunningham Memorial Library, at the Swope Gallery, and other venues—which traditionally include members from the community. Contests for local creative writers have been an even more direct approach to engaging the community. Our internship opportunities within the community have also created useful associations—with businesses and associations through the region and state. However, other activities have taken English faculty into the community. Aaron Morales goes out to talk to students in creative writing classes, and I do regular presentations at faculty in-service meetings in Vigo, Clay, Parke, and Vermillion Counties. In another way, our Department's publications—Indiana English and The Folklore Historian—serve the regional community in a special way.

Experiential Learning

What is your vision for experiential learning in your department?

Within their traditional classroom contexts, faculty have created many experience-based learning opportunities. In some classes, instructors are now encouraging original research (most often based on field research, interviews, questionnaires, reviews of archival materials, and so on); we are making better use of the computer classroom as a means to provide simultaneous instruction while students produce technical, computer-generated texts; for class projects, some faculty are focusing on local contexts within national issues; some faculty are promoting a professional model for class work; some faculty are working in tandem to ensure that their courses enhance each other (while this is not team teaching in the traditional sense of several faculty delivering shared instruction, it does provide benefits as work from one class supports and enhances another).

Fundraising Activities

What steps have you taken to support fundraising activities in your department? How can your efforts be supported?

I have worked to support Tom Sauer and the representatives of the Foundation Office in their campaign efforts, providing tables regarding selected scholarships, previous winners, dollar amounts, current activities for winners, and so on. Further, I will be joining Foundation staff in some of their meetings with benefactors and potential benefactors—to show them the level of support they will receive from the Department and, perhaps, to suggest ways in which gifts can be used.

Quality

Quality

Please provide 1-2 suggestions to increase the ability of your department or the University to meet the criteria above.

Additional financial resources to cover basic instruction is always a place to start. Before we can invest time in specialized programs, we need to cover basic classroom instruction. To do otherwise compromises the basic integrity of our program.