

## **Provost's Comprehensive Program Review Report**

**Institution:** Middle Georgia State University  
**Academic Program Name:** B.A. in English  
**CIP Code:** 230101  
**College or School:** School of Arts and Letters  
**Department:** English

**Date of Last Internal Review:** 6/13/2016

**Outcome of Previous Program Review (brief narrative statement):** No recommendations of improvement plan as the program already showed steady graduation rates.

**Current Date:** 6/10/2021

**Provost Response:** Academic Affairs acknowledges the documented value of the B.A. in English. It is not only a viable and valuable academic program independently, but its faculty serve an essential function within the University supporting the mission of the institution via the core curriculum and in peripheral degree paths. The program's demonstrable commitment to academic strategic planning and innovation have yielded positive enrollment growth that shows promise for years to come as the department focuses on enhancing the professional pathways available to its student body.

**Program Quality and Productivity Improvement Plan:** Following a review of the Chairs Report, the IERB comments, and the Deans appraisal, the Office of the Provost concurs with the findings and supports the documented plan of action. Furthermore.....

- The daily waa093c has been revamped to show if a student is fully online or face-to-face. This will help the department monitor their students more accurately.

### Categorical Summation

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

**☒ Program MEETS Institution's Criteria**

**☒ Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.**

☐ Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.

☐ Program PARTIALLY MEETS Institution's Criteria and will be re-evaluated in \_\_\_\_\_.

☐ Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria

☐ Program will be placed on a monitoring status.


☐ Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.

☐ Program will be deactivated.

☐ Program will be voluntarily terminated.

☐ Other (identify/add text):

Provost or VPAA Signature:



Date:

7/8/2021

## Comprehensive Program Review Report

**Academic Program Name:** BA English

**College or School:** School of Arts & Letters

**Department:** English

**Date of Last Internal Review:** June 13, 2016

**Outcome of Previous Program Review (brief narrative statement, if applicable):**  
Satisfactory

**Current Date:** 4/6/21

**Executive Summary:** *Provide a summary related to the academic program's quality, viability, and productivity of efforts in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution's mission. If this is the initial review of the program address how the program is/is not meeting the enrollment and credit hour projects contained in the original program proposal. Include a statement of plans for action based on the overall categorical summation contained in the next section.*

The BA in English is a viable, high quality academic program with enrollment that has grown 42% since it came under the auspices of the new School of Arts & Letters in 2019. Recent curricular innovations -- including a common core, five career-ready concentrations, and more open electives -- make the program more attractive to students and highly navigable, which should lead to continued enrollment growth and higher graduation yields. Continued development of professional pathways to include internships, education options, and pre-professional credentials will help graduates secure jobs in the future.

### Categorical Summation

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

X Program MEETS Institution's Criteria

X Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.

☐ Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.

☐ Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria

- ☐ Program will be placed on a monitoring status.
- ☐ Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.
- ☐ Program will be deactivated.
- ☐ Program will be voluntarily terminated.
- ☐ Other (identify/add text):

Academic Dean Signature:   
Dean of Graduate Studies Signature (when applicable):

Date: 4/6/21

IERB’s Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation

Program Reviewed: BA English

<b>Contextual Notes:</b> Summarize any demographic or environmental factors described in the introduction that might significantly impact assessment of the program
The BA in English degree has suffered a gradual decrease in enrollment in face to face classes, but a dramatic increase in online enrollment. Even through program changes, moving of students to online, and the COVID crisis; the BA in English program only saw a .45% decrease in enrollment over the 5-year period. FY 2017 saw a decline in graduates from the BA in English program, but this change was explained as being due to program changes between the Education pathways program, BA in English, and BS in Education. The subsequent increase of graduates in FY 2018 seems to support this.

Area of Focus	Exemplary Area	Satisfactory Area	Area of Concern	No Evidence	Notes
Enrollment	<i>This <b>program</b> has significantly positive enrollment trends and robust credit hour production</i>	<i>This <b>program</b> has stable or moderately positive enrollment trends and healthy credit hour production</i>	<i>This <b>program</b> has negative enrollment trends and weak credit hour production</i>		Total enrollment on campus shows a steady decline over the past five years. 5-year growth for programs by locations is -10.90% for Macon and -6.94% for Cochran. The overall 5-year growth regardless of campus is -0.45%. Enrollment in the online program shows a significant increase.
<b>Graduation Trends</b> USG benchmark:  <b>Bachelor’s Degrees:</b> 10 graduates/year  <b>Graduate, Associate’s or Certificates:</b> 5 graduates/year	<i>Three year rolling average greatly exceeds USG minimum benchmark for degrees conferred</i>	<i>Three year rolling average meets or exceeds USG minimum benchmark for degrees conferred</i>	<i>Three year rolling average does not meet USG minimum benchmark for degrees conferred; the program is “low performing” by USG definition</i>		<b>Graduation rate meets the minimum requirement for the USG benchmark with the exception of FY 2017. The program, however, rebounded in 2019 and 2020 when the number of graduates exceeded the USG minimum benchmark. The trend appears to show a mild decline but is overall stable. The three-year rolling average is satisfactory.</b>

IERB’s Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation

Programs falling under these benchmarks are designated as “low performing”					
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Program Strengths of Note:

The Program has a number of strengths that include producing graduates with “work-ready” degrees and delivery of courses via different modes, such as face-to-face, hybrid, and online. In fact, two of the programs are delivered fully online and this has resulted in increased enrollment. In the fall of 2019, the program had an enrollment of 78 students and by the fall of 2020, it was 111. This was a 42% growth. Another strength contributing the growth of the Program is the revision of the curriculum to include 5 different areas of concentration. Changes in curriculum and core pathways have offered students increased flexibility and shows promise in attracting increased enrollment.

Areas of Serious Concern:

Enrollment in face to face courses on campus appears to be showing a steady decline. Although the short-term data shows that overall the program has a healthy enrollment and that the enrollment rebounded in the fall of 2019 and fall 2020; there has been, according the Chair’s Report, a sharp decline of 21.5% in English Language and Literature degree completions. There is a need to find ways of recruiting for all programs with low enrollments. The Program has 5 different areas of concentration, and the enrollments figures should be expected to be higher than what they currently are.

**IERB’s Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation**

**Other Comments:**

Needs data to support job market opportunities for students. What is the demand and growth in that area? In general, the BA Program in English looks healthy and promising.



## Comprehensive Program Review

**FY 2020 – 2021**

**Institution:** Middle Georgia State University

**Academic Program:** BA English

**College or School:** School of Arts and Letters

**Department:** English

**CIP Code:** 230101

**Date of Last Internal Review:** June 13, 2016

**Faculty Completing Report:** Chip Rogers

**Current Date:**

### 5 Year Enrollment by Campus and Graduation Trends

**Enrollment:** 5 year growth for programs by locations is -10.90% for Macon and -6.94% for Cochran. The overall 5 year growth regardless of campus is -0.45%.

Campus	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	5 YR Growth	Fall 2016 compared to Fall 2020 only
Macon	73	61	59	45	46	-10.90%	-37%
Cochran	24	23	18	21	18	-6.94%	-25%
Warner Robins	4	6	9	2	2		
Dublin	3	5	3	1	4		
Eastman	0	0	0	0	0		
Online	9	14	12	9	41		
Off Campus	0	0	0	0	0		
Total	113	109	101	78	111	-0.45%	-2%

### Graduates

- For data consistency, the fiscal year is in which the degree was awarded. For example, fiscal year 2019 includes degrees conferred in Summer 2018, Fall 2018, and Spring 2019.



FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	5 YR Growth	FY16 compared to FY20 only
16	8	15	12	12	-6.94%	-25%

## **B. A. in English, Comprehensive Program Review**

### **FY 2020-2021**

#### **Purpose and Mission Alignment**

The mission of the Bachelor of Arts in English program is preparing graduates to be reflective professionals with an exceptionally strong content knowledge in English, a commitment to their chosen profession, a willingness to engage in professional development long after they graduate, and a desire to use their expertise to provide service within diverse communities. The B.A. in English clearly serves the departmental mission of developing students' critical thinking, writing, research, and communication skills as they explore and investigate major works of Western literature as well as world literature and global culture.

In developing students' skills in critical thinking and close reading of great literature and in creative, effective communication, the English degree offers a cornerstone in the School of Arts and Letters mission of providing access to education in the humanities that promotes creativity, elevates culture, and prepares intellectually agile citizens to serve our communities and the creative economy of Georgia. The success of English graduates in a wide range of fields—from business and law to education, the arts, and advanced graduate studies—certainly advances Middle Georgia State's mission of educating and graduating “inspired, lifelong learners whose scholarship and careers enhance the region through professional leadership, innovative partnerships, and community engagement.”

#### **Program Age, Changes since Last Review, Concentrations**

The B.A. in English has undergone major curriculum revision since the 2016 Comprehensive Program Review. From its creation in 2006 through summer 2017, the program included a Traditional English track and a Teacher Certification track approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. In fall 2017, the B.A. in English dropped the Teacher Certification track. In fall 2019, the English Department's Curriculum Committee revised and updated the English program substantially for wider

appeal and greater sustainability with more “work-ready” concentrations in the degree. As of fall 2020, the B.A. in English now includes five available concentrations:

- Professional Writing
- Creative Writing
- Pre-Law
- Literature
- Teacher Certification.

Students electing not to pursue one of these concentrations earn a “Generalist” English B.A. degree.

## **Accreditation**

Like most English undergraduate programs, ours operates under no external discipline-specific accreditation process. Upon admission to the Secondary Education Certification program, students pursuing the Teacher Certification concentration follow English (ENGL) and Education (EDUC) curricula, with the Education component of their studies conducted according to Georgia Professional Standards Commission accreditation requirements.

## **Delivery Methods**

On the Macon and Cochran campuses, we deliver program courses face-to-face, hybrid, and online. The twenty-one hour upper-division English B.A. core curriculum is available fully online (English 3010 Gateway to Literary Studies, ENGL 3500 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Poetry & Prose, ENGL 4100 Shakespeare, ENGL 4400 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Poetry & Prose, ENGL 4430 Topics in World Literature, and ENGL 4600 History of the English Language). Students pursuing the Generalist option or the Professional Writing or Creative Writing concentration can complete their entire programs fully online. Currently the Literature, Pre-Law, and Teacher Certification concentrations require some coursework face-to-face and some online.

## **Benchmarks of Progress**

**Enrollment:** Although the program enrollment table above indicates fluctuations from year to year—most notably the dip in enrollment between fall 2018 and fall 2019—over the five-year period the program shows remarkable consistency with an overall -0.45% growth rate across all campuses.

The program enrollment by campus appears concerning in some respects, with a 37% drop in Macon between Fall 2016 and Fall 2020 (or five year growth rate of -10.90%) and a 25% drop in growth in Cochran enrollment in the same period (with five-year growth rate of -6.94%). At the same time, our “online” program enrollment shows a whopping 456% growth over 2016-2020 (154% five-year growth rate). In simple matter of fact, the Macon, Cochran, and Online data here are skewed because the home campus designation is often inaccurate—students are designated as “online” according to the proportion of classes they take online, not by physical campus location. Most students designated “online” above are in actual fact Macon and Cochran students.

One obvious factor in the dramatic increase of online enrollment in fall 2020 was the COVID pandemic, as many students opted for the greater safety of online classes in this stressful time. Perhaps an even greater factor in the rise of online enrollment was the rollout of our newly revised curriculum in fall 2020, with the English B.A. Upper-Division Core and the concentrations in Professional Writing and Creative Writing now offering fully online pathways. To progress through the program with efficiency, English majors now take a broader mix of online and face-to-face classes in Macon and Cochran than in years past. Before fall 2020, the English degree was not available as a fully online program, so even students listed as “online” in 2016-2019 had no choice but to take many face-to-face classes in Macon or Cochran.

**Graduation:** Program graduation rates dropped precipitously between 2016 and 2017—it was somewhat alarming to have 2017 graduates number only in the single digits—but we rebounded strongly in the three years since with a steady average of 13 graduates per year (-6.94% in five-year-growth from the five-year high of 16 graduates in 2016). At the high point in the program’s earlier years, we enjoyed a larger number of English B.A. graduates with enrollment in the now-defunct Teacher Education track of the old English B.A. (we had nine Teacher Certification track graduates in 2012, e.g.). The Teacher Education track ended in summer 2017 after several years of decline—perhaps not coincidentally, our lowest number of English graduates was in that very year of 2017, as noted above (eight in total). As the Education pathway was replaced by the B.S. in Education degree (with specialization in English), some students who might previously have been English majors became Education majors. With the revision of the degree bringing those Secondary Education students back to English and attracting more students to the other new concentrations, we are confident that our graduation and enrollment rates will not only maintain the stability of the most recent years but trend upward as well.

We have no long-term data yet for the revamped English B.A., but early indications in short-term data suggest a healthy enrollment rebound in its first semester, rising from 78 students in fall 2019 to 111 in fall 2020 (142% growth). The overall consistency of our program enrollment over the last five years is especially heartening in the context of a sharp decline of 21.5% in English Language and Literature degree completions

nationwide from peak levels in 2012 to the most recent levels recorded in 2018 (nces.gov/IPEDS).

## **Plans for action**

Our revised B.A. in English curriculum is in only its second semester of implementation. Our primary action items in continuing to roll out the new concentrations include:

- targeted scheduling of courses in the concentrations ensuring timely progression and clear pathways to graduation
- persistent marketing and recruitment efforts, both through cost-effective print and digital promotion and through campus events showcasing the concentrations and involving successful alumni
- expanding marketing specifically for the fully online offerings in the Creative Writing and Professional Writing concentrations, seeking to attract students from beyond MGA's typical geographical footprint
- sustaining and growing our partnership with Secondary Education colleagues and offering more leadership and structural support for timely progression of Teacher Certification students—ensuring their understanding of processes in applying to the program and in meeting admission requirements (including such matters as timing of GACE testing and effective preparation).

## **Trends and Market Forces Impacting Program Demand**

We believe we are responding effectively to market pressures for “career-ready” undergraduate programs even in such “old school” Liberal Arts programs as English. We will of course always have great demand for teachers of English. As we have seen in the explosive growth of our English graduate programs—the Certificate in Technical Writing and Digital Communication and the M.A. in Technical and Professional Writing—the growing demand for graduates in our Professional Writing concentration is substantial and trending up long-term, as virtually all fields need workers who can communicate effectively across a variety of digital platforms. We certainly expect the demand for qualified lawyers to remain constant, and in recognizing a steady stream of graduates of our former English program to Georgia law schools over recent years, we believe that in formalizing the new Pre-Law concentration we will attract even more law-minded undergraduates. Lastly, while the demand for creative writers is probably neither waning nor waxing in the 2020s, we do anticipate attracting more students with the Creative Writing concentration as it can indeed offer students deeply interested in pursuing creative writing the relatively greater reliability and work-ready benefits of the English B.A. as compared to a B.A. in Creative Writing *per se*. In short, we are confident

that our degree program is now better poised than ever to meet rising demand for graduates with work-ready undergraduate degrees.