



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 19th Century American Poetry & Prose, ENGL 4100 Shakespeare, ENGL 4400 19th 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.