Mission/Purpose
The Department of Languages and Literature contributes to the fulfilling of the University’s goals throughout its course offerings. Through its basic curriculum offerings and specialized upper-level courses in literature, languages, and communication, the Department of Languages and Literature provides instruction for both traditional and non-traditional students which enhances their abilities in independent thinking, communication and appreciation of American and other cultures as expressed in literature. Through required courses in composition, speech, and literature and through class formats that encourage discussion, the Department develops skills in writing, public speaking, and critical thinking and respect for the ideas of others.

I. Goals and Student Learning Outcomes, With Any Associations and Related Measures, Achievement Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

A. Goal: Address the major educational issues of the region
Address the major educational, social, cultural, and economic issues of the region and in doing so promote a positive image of the institution

1. Outcome: Majors will demonstrate a sound understanding of English and American literature
   English majors will show a sound understanding of English and American literature.
   
   a. Measure: Improved scores on Exit Exam
      English/Language Arts majors will improve their scores on the Exit Exam in English and American literature between the first and second tests.

Source of Evidence: Comprehensive/end-of-program subject matter exam

1. Achievement Target:
   The scale score mean on the MFT (Major Field Test) will increase by 10 points between students taking it in EH 302 and taking it as graduating seniors.

2. Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Not Met
   Of the eight senior English majors who took the MFT in the Spring of 2011 who had taken the exam in EH 302 (Introduction to Research), their average score rose from 137.125 to 143.125, an average increase of 6 points. The Major Field Test in Literature in English in Spring 2011 yielded the following results (the numbers represent mean percent correct): British Literature Pre-1660 41; British Literature 1660-1900 33; American Literature to 1900 49; British and American Literature 1901-1945 42; Literature in English Since 1945 43; Literary History 37; Identification 39; Literary Theory 33. These scores, predictably enough, reflect the courses that have been offered and that students have taken, most recently. American and contemporary literature have been strengths, while not many students have taken Literary Theory or British Literature, 1660-1900.
3. **Action Plan:**

**Improving MFT results**

There are various ways of looking at these scores. As indicated in the findings, the eight seniors who took the exam raised their scores by an average of 6 points, from 137 to 143. The department would like to see a more dramatic improvement, naturally. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the graduating seniors sense that they have "little to prove" as they take the exam for the second time, and faculty are working on ways to produce better, more reliable results, starting with holding a preparation session with the graduating seniors ahead of time to make sure they understand why they are being tested and to make sure that the exam is scheduled at a reasonable hour. Perhaps some reward or recognition system can be developed to honor notable improvements in scores. Finally, and most significantly, faculty will begin a conversation about offering the 200-level literature courses in British and American literature at the 300-level for majors. Currently, all undergraduate students at UWA take either the British literature sequence (6 hours) or the American literature sequence (6 hours). These courses are designed for the most basic general education purposes and also serve as surveys for English majors. But having dedicated sections for majors would certainly offer more thorough and beneficial courses designed for the English major and would offer a better grounding in British and American literature. The first step in this process will be in September 2011, when the chair holds semi-annual individual conferences with faculty members.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011  
**Implementation Status:** In Progress  
**Priority:** High  
**Implementation Description:** Faculty will meet with the graduating seniors who take the MFT exam. The chair will also meet individually with the faculty members.  
**Responsible Person/Group:** Dr. Kendrick Prewitt, Chair  
**Additional Resources Requested:** none

2. **Outcome:** Students will show enhanced skills in written communication and critical thinking.

Students will show enhanced skills in written communication and critical thinking.

   a. **Measure:** Majors will demonstrate above average written communication and critical thinking skills in upper level coursework

   Majors will demonstrate above average written communication and critical thinking skills in their upper-level coursework.

   **Source of Evidence:** Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

   1. **Achievement Target:**  
      At least 80% of semester grades earned by English majors and minors in upper level English courses will be B's or better.

   2. **Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Not Met**  
      Of the students registered in all 300 and 400-level courses, 74% made B's or better.
3. **Action Plan:**

   **Revisiting the grades as measures**

   While 74% of the grades in upper-level courses were indeed "A" or "B," and while that is not far off of the 80% target, faculty think, based on a hard look at the assessment results--the grade sheets--that an even better measure might be to have an external evaluator review the work of senior English majors. Having an external evaluator review the work of the students would screen out some of the gray areas of semester grading--as semester grades tend to measure not just academic achievement, but attendance, participation, how well students manage their time and resources, how well students are able to avoid or manage inevitable personal crises, etc. All of these are life skills, but not necessarily what this student learning outcome is trying to measure. As an action plan, then, department faculty are negotiating with an outside evaluator who will assess representative samples of student work in 2011-2012.

   **Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011
   **Implementation Status:** Planned
   **Priority:** High
   **Responsible Person/Group:** Dr. Kendrick Prewitt, chair
   **Additional Resources Requested:** Compensation for outside evaluators: $600.00
   **Budget Amount Requested:** $600.00

b. **Measure:** Students in upper-level courses will show proficiency in writing about literature.

   Students in 400-level literature courses will demonstrate the ability to compose an essay about literature that gains the reader's attention with a clear thesis, that supports that thesis with clear supporting paragraphs, and that ends with an effective conclusion.

   Source of Evidence: Writing exam to assure certain proficiency level

   1. **Achievement Target:**
      On final exams with essays that test student ability to compose an essay that shows proficiency in writing about literature, students will score at least 8 points (on a 10-point scale).

   2. **Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Not Met**
      The department has findings from two of the 400-level courses offered in the 2010-2011 academic year. In Shakespeare, EH 422, seven undergraduate students wrote essays on the final exam and scored an average 7.29 on a 10-point scale. In Eighteenth Century British Literature, eight undergraduate students wrote essays on the final exam and scored an average of 7.88 on a 10-point scale. This target was not met, although it was missed by very little.

   3. **Action Plan:**
      **Writing skills workshops**
      As a result of this assessment finding, faculty decided to offer a writing skills workshop in Fall 2011, "Writing with a Plan," which is designed to help advanced students sharpen their writing skills, particularly arguing a thesis and supporting that thesis. Use of other assessment measures will be explored in the 2011-2012 academic year as well.

      **Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011
      **Implementation Status:** In-Progress
      **Priority:** High
Responsible Person/Group: Dr. Kendrick Prewitt, Chair

3. Outcome: General education students will improve their writing ability.
   General education students in composition courses will improve their writing skills, as shown in their knowledge of grammar.
   
   A diagnostic test on English grammar is administered at the beginning and end of each semester.
   
   Source of Evidence: Faculty pre-test / post-test of knowledge mastery

1. Achievement Target:
   Administer a diagnostic exam at the start and finish of the semester in composition courses. The goal is to see a 30% improvement in the test scores in the EH 099 sections between the beginning and ending of the semesters.

2. Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met
   In the EH 099 courses from the 2010-2011 academic year, students scored an average of 21.98 (out of a possible 50 points) at the beginning of the semester, and 29.7 (out of a possible 50 points) at the end of the semester. That constitutes a 34% improvement in their raw scores. Drilling deeper, one finds the following subscore results: sentence sense increased 32%; subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement increased 43% and 40%; apostrophe usage increased 40%, and verb-form usage increased 20%. Although the overall target was met, the verb-form usage scores did not improve as much as the others. This will be addressed in the action plan.

3. Action Plan:
   Revising and updating the composition textbook.
   Now that the textbook Discovering a Voice has been in use for two years, the department will look for ways to revise it to make it even more effective.
   
   Established in Cycle: 2009-2010
   Implementation Status: In Progress
   Priority: High

Address verb-form usage
   Additional online exercises on verb-form usage will be assigned to students who show particular needs in that area.
   
   Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
   Implementation Status: In Progress
   Priority: High
   Implementation Description: Students with the most pronounced weakness in verb-form usage on the pre-test (the original diagnostic) will be flagged and assigned the additional online exercises.
   Responsible Person/Group: Dr. Kendrick Prewitt, Chair

II. Goals and Other Outcomes/Objectives, With Any Associations and Related Measures, Achievement Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

   A. Goal: Address the major educational issues of the region
   Address the major educational, social, cultural, and economic issues of the region and in doing so promote a positive image of the institution
1. **Objective:** The Department of Languages and Literature will develop new outreach activities and programs

   The Department of Languages and Literature will develop a program of outreach activities and new course offerings for English majors.

a. **Measure: Program outreach activities**

   The Department of Languages and Literature will provide at least two outreach activities per year and continue to explore new course possibilities.

   **Source of Evidence:** Activity volume

1. **Achievement Target:**

   The Department of Languages and Literature will provide at least two outreach activities per year and continue to explore new course possibilities.

2. **Findings (2010-2011) - Achievement Target: Met**

   In the 2010-2011 academic year, the department held two poetry readings at Lake LU and hosted the first Callaway Schoolhouse Poetry and Fiction Workshop and Reading. It has also developed new courses, including a popular culture course on Vampires in Literature and two other special topics courses, one on British mystery writers and one on Cormac McCarthy. Additionally, it has added a minor in creative writing and added another writing course on genre writing.

3. **Action Plans:**

   **Expanding program outreach activities.**

   The department will monitor the enrollment of students in the creative writing minor and continue to assess the viability of other minors associated with Languages and Literature. It will also continue to expand its offerings of poetry readings, possibly including a poetry slam competition for students.

   **Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011

   **Implementation Status:** In Progress

   **Priority:** High

   **Responsible Person/Group:** Dr. Kendrick Prewitt, Chair

   **Plan Black Belt Symposium**

   Plan the symposium. Plans are underway to invite author Gin Phillips to speak at the event as well as to ask her to workshop with creative writing students.

   **Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011

   **Implementation Status:** In Progress

   **Priority:** High

   **Implementation Description:** Event planning; travel, lodging, and meal logistics

   **Budget Amount Requested:** $0.00

III. **Other Plans for Improvement**

   A. **Upper-level English course performance, undergraduate**

   The undergraduates taking upper-level English courses will earn the grade of "B" at least 80% of the time.

   **Established in Cycle:** 2009-2010

   **Implementation Status:** Planned

   **Priority:** High

   **Implementation Notes:**

   6/7/2011 This action plan is now part of the ongoing annual assessment plan.
B.  **Add more graduate and undergraduate courses**
Add more courses, both undergraduate and graduate, both on campus and online, to the Languages and Literature offerings.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011  
**Implementation Status:** In Progress  
**Priority:** High  
**Implementation Description:** Encourage junior faculty to develop new courses or to develop their present courses for online distribution.  
**Budget Amount Requested:** $0.00

C.  **Develop an Integrated Marketing Communication major**
Develop an Integrated Marketing Communication major. The research, development of courses, and the writing of the program itself is already in progress by Dr. Amy Jones. Discussions are underway with the College of Business to arrange courses in marketing to join with courses from journalism.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011  
**Implementation Status:** In Progress  
**Priority:** High  
**Implementation Description:** Continue research, development of courses, and writing program; continue discussions with COB; present plan to the University Academic Council and to ACHE  
**Responsible Person/Group:** Dr. Amy Jones  
**Budget Amount Requested:** $0.00

IV. **Analysis Answers**

A.  **What specific strengths did your assessments show? (Strengths)**
Assessments show that the department has a vibrant departmental culture and is looking to expand and improve the experience that it provides for students. It has recently added poetry workshops and competitions and a creative writing minor to go along with a more established reading series and with the traditional curriculum. The assessment also reveals that the department offers a broad curriculum, as evidenced in the balanced MFT scores. The program in composition is also doing well in "bringing students up to speed," especially in grammar and usage.

B.  **What specific weaknesses or challenges did your assessments show? (Weaknesses)**
The department faces challenges. The general education students in composition often come in unprepared for the rigors of college composition, as can be seen in looking at the diagnostic pre-test. The students tend to do better at the end of the semester (84% of them do, according to findings). It also needs to offer stronger British and American literature surveys for its majors, which would give them a better grounding in those literatures.

C.  **What plans were implemented?**
Faculty have begun revising the department’s composition textbook *Discovering a Voice*; it has supplemented classroom composition offerings with online resources; it has offered extracurricular writing workshops for students; it has developed new courses as special studies courses and for distribution areas (such as a popular culture course on vampires in literature); it has made significant strides towards offering an Integrated Marketing Communication major; it has offered more workshops, readings, and competitions for creative writing students; and it has begun to consider upgrading offerings of introductory survey courses for majors.

D.  **What plans were not implemented?**
The department elected not to send out a survey form to alumni English majors, since mail surveys generally do not produce the kind of results that are sought. Instead, it has collected the names of former majors who are still in contact with departmental faculty, and faculty
are working with them to establish an alumni board of advisors. The University has decided
not to hire an ESL Director, but instead to hire an International Student Coordinator, who
might better serve the needs of incoming international students. As for the half-time
instructor for speech and theater, some of those courses can be handled by current faculty,
and some by the newly-hired Technical Director in theater.

E. **How will assessment results be used for continuous improvement?**

These assessment results should generate plenty of ideas and projects to develop for the
coming years. For example, striving to improve scores on the MFT (as objective an
indicator it may be of knowledge of literature in English) will prod faculty to develop the
curriculum to meet students' needs. Working to improve student writing abilities will
challenge faculty in both composition courses and literature courses to engage their students
in the work of thinking and writing and push students to see clear, effective writing as direct
evidence of clear, effective thinking. Providing writing workshops and an improved
composition textbook, as well as pre-tests and post-tests, will call on faculty members to be
more conscious of what they teach and how they teach it. And providing outreach activities
such as poetry workshops, readings, and competitions will draw together students and
faculty members outside the classroom and remind faculty and students alike that the
English degree offers more than classwork, papers, and exams.