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FROM: Cindy Taylor, English Graduate Studies Coordinator
DATE: May 30, 2018
SUBJECT: English MA Assessment Update

Due to the loss of faculty lines in the 2014 budget cuts, and the reassignment of two faculty members who were Principal Investigators on federal grants (Ted Taylor 50% on the Merit Grant and Donna Souder 100% on the Maestro Grant) the English MA Program did not accept applications from fall 2014 to fall 2017. During that period, graduate faculty offered independent study courses, directed theses and served on thesis committees to make sure that students admitted prior to 2014 could complete their degrees. Currently, only one student admitted before 2014 is still working to complete her degree. During that period, we continued to assess the MA Program, using our assessment rubric, which is keyed to the English MA student learning outcomes, to evaluate theses and oral defenses. We submitted an assessment report in 2015-16, but in 2016-17, when only two students completed their degrees, we did not submit a report, since that number seemed too small to give us an accurate assessment of our program.

Recent changes in the English Program and a demonstrable need for credentialed college-level English instructors prompted us to reassess our ability to offer a Master's degree in English again. We were able to hire a visiting Assistant Professor to teach courses that Donna Souder would have taught and the Merit Grant concluded in 2017. A needs assessment conducted in spring-summer 2017 surveyed CSU-Pueblo English majors and English Program Directors at regional community colleges and the results showed strong student interest and a regional need for our English MA. Despite no advertising about the revival of the degree, we accepted five applicants for fall 2017, two applicants for spring 2018, and three applicants for fall 2018. (We were unable to accept one applicant, due to a weak background in English Studies.)

Because most of our English MA students have full-time jobs, they generally take one or two courses per semester. That means that we can anticipate students completing their degrees in five semesters, so we won't have sufficient assessment data until AY 2019-20. In the meantime, the graduate faculty need to design new assessment tools to address recent changes to the English MA Program:

1. Based on the recommendation of potential English MA students, we added an exam option for those students who are not interested in writing a thesis. This year we need to design the exam and assessment tools for students who choose this option.
2. We need to design an assessment tool for students who want a Graduate Certificate in English.