I. Program Overview – A one to two-page summary of department’s vision and goals.

As a major academic discipline within a multi-purpose university, the Department of English serves undergraduate and graduate students, the academic community, and society in general. Through its courses in literature, literary criticism, linguistics, composition, rhetoric, creative and technical writing, and pedagogy, the department seeks to implement its belief that literature and informed discourse are vital forces in the preservation of culture. In its courses, the department further seeks to develop students' reading and writing skills, to increase their understanding of their literary heritage, and to stimulate their imaginative and critical abilities. Students are encouraged to express themselves clearly, effectively, and correctly, so that they can control language rather than be controlled by it. The department further seeks to prepare students for future careers in professions such as teaching, law, medicine, business, and for enriched, responsible, and productive personal lives. As a major facet of its mission, the department teaches the fundamentals of research, encourages the use of scholarly methods and attitudes throughout its programs, and contributes to the growth of knowledge through the individual scholarship of its members.

In a world where the internet and the web are generating a whole new life of letters for millions of people, the Department of English will prepare students to engage technically, critically and creatively in that life. The department will continue to study and teach texts representing the riches of our heritage, and will enhance this study and teaching through intersections facilitated by the use of alternative texts and media. Students taking classes in the department will benefit from intersections among technical communication, literary, and creative writing programs, and from increasing access to computer-based resources and a corresponding sense of agency allowed by new digital media.

In the Department of English, we value

- creative, critical, and analytic thought.
- sophisticated, nuanced, rhetorically-savvy oral and written expression.
- appreciation for and understanding of literary history and recent revisions thereof.
- open exchanges of ideas, with an understanding of how class, race, gender, and other factors may affect that exchange.
- respect for students, staff, and faculty.
- diversity in our student population, faculty, staff, and teaching materials.
- excellence in research, teaching, and service.
- ongoing intersections among areas of technical communication, literature and linguistics, composition, and creative writing.

Graduate study in the Department of English is characterized by intellectual curiosity regarding the theoretical principles and key issues of the discipline. At the master’s level, students strive to be sophisticated users of research, identifying pertinent applications of research that might improve the teaching and practice of their discipline. At the doctoral level, students strive to be effective creators of research, generating new knowledge for their discipline and communicating this knowledge through publication and presentation.
The MA in English will
• increase students’ understanding of the reciprocal relationship between language/literary texts and culture.
• increase students’ analytic and creative abilities as language users.
• prepare students with an interest in literature, creative writing, linguistics, or rhetoric/composition for doctoral work, for teaching positions (including those at the secondary or community college level), and other professional pursuits that require skills in working with language.

The M.A. in Technical Communication will
• qualify students for writing, editing, and supervisory positions in industry and for teaching in community colleges.
• prepare students for further graduate study.
• offer knowledge of the history, theory, research, genres, principles, techniques, and practices of technical communication.

The Ph.D. in English will
• prepare students to teach literature, creative writing, and linguistics at the college and university level.
• initiate students into a culture of research and textual production required of university faculty.
• increase students’ skills as critical/creative readers, writers, and thinkers.

The Ph.D. in Technical Communication and Rhetoric will
• qualify students to conduct independent research by various methods and thus to contribute to knowledge through presentation and publication
• develop broad knowledge of the literature on technical communication and rhetoric and specialized knowledge of some aspect of technical communication or rhetoric as reflected in the dissertation research.
• prepare students to participate effectively in appropriate scholarly and professional organizations.