**Annual Assessment Report for 2020-2021 AY**

Reports completed on assessment activities carried out during the 2020-21 AY will be due September 30th 2021 and must be e-mailed to the Director of Assessment, Dr. Douglas Fraleigh (douglasf@csufresno.edu).

Provide detailed responses for each of the following questions within this word document. Please do NOT insert an index or add formatting. Furthermore, only report on two or three student learning outcomes even if your external accreditor requires you to evaluate four or more outcomes each year. Also be sure to explain or omit specialized or discipline-specific terms.

Department/Program: \_\_\_\_English Department\_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_MFA in Creative Writing

Assessment Coordinator: \_\_\_\_Interim MFA coordinator (Fall 2021): Brynn Saito\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Please list the learning outcomes you assessed this year.

In 2020-2021, the MFA program assessed SLO 1.1 (“Students will understand and explain literary history”) and SLO 2.1 (“Students will apply their knowledge in order to create a body of publishable poetry, fiction, or creative non-fiction prose”) using the MFA thesis, the students’ culminating project. (Per our SOAP, we were on track to complete this assessment activity in 2019-2020. Due to the pandemic, we instead completed it in 2020-2021.)

1. What assignment or survey did you use to assess the outcomes and what method (criteria or rubric) did you use to evaluate the assignment? **Please describe the assignment and the criteria or rubric used to evaluate the assignment in detail and, if possible, include copies of the assignment and criteria/rubric at the end of this report.**

We used the MFA thesis to assess SLOs 1.1 and 2.1. Per the MFA program handbook, “the thesis for the MFA degree in Creative Writing consists of a single book-length manuscript of fiction, a collection of poems, or creative nonfiction that works together to make a unified body of work. The thesis committee works closely with the student on style as well as content; it adheres to a high standard of publishable quality work. In their final semester, students will complete a formal defense of their thesis with their committee.”

To directly assess the thesis, we created an assessment rubric that evaluated theses according to the following four categories: thesis introduction abstract, mastery of form and technique, analysis of collection as a publishable work, and overall evaluation. Possible scores included: “partial proficiency,” “basic proficiency,” and “advanced proficiency.” Each student received evaluations from 1-3 committee members (MFA thesis committees are composed of three members) and a total of 20 rubrics were submitted for eight students.

1. What did you learn from your analysis of the data? Please include sample size (how many students were evaluated) and indicate how many students (number or percentage instead of a median or mean) were designated as proficient.

Eight student theses (100% of the 2020-2021 graduating students) were evaluated and all (100% of sampled students) achieved either “basic proficiency” or “advanced proficiency” in each category of the thesis assessment rubric. No students earned scores of “partial proficiency” in any category. It is encouraging to see that students are mostly achieving “advanced proficiency” in all areas; it is expected that not all rubrics indicated “advanced proficiency” in the area of “analysis of collection / book as publishable work.” The MFA strives to prepare students to publish their work; often, this will occur in the years following graduation, as students further hone their theses and seek publishing opportunities.

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| **Assessment Category for the MFA thesis** | **% of rubrics scoring “Advanced Proficiency”** | **% of rubrics scoring “Basic Proficiency”** | **% of rubrics scoring “Partial Proficiency”** |
| Abstract and Introduction | 80% | 20% | 0% |
| Master of Form, Craft, and Technique in Creative Writing | 80% | 20% | 0% |
| Analysis of Collection / Book as a Publishable Work | 60% | 40% | 0% |
| Overall Assessment of Advanced Knowledge and Understanding in the Field | 85% | 15% | 0% |

Sample Rubric Comments:

“I was impressed with the fantastical worlds and landscapes conjured in the novel, with its multitude of characters and perspectives. I encouraged the student to bring more psychological depth and interiority to the characters in future iterations. I hope the student continues to seek mentorship to deepen and complexify his writing.”

“Student’s thesis is an outstanding book manuscript, it's professional and definitely publishable.”

“I believe her thesis is where it needs to be (for now) and is something she can continue to build upon. But as to the student's engagement with poetry and her comprehension of the field overall, I’d say she is exceptional and well-equipped to thrive in whatever literary pursuits she sets her mind to.”

“I served as a reader on the student's committee. There is more work yet to be done on the student's thesis, and she realizes that as well, but for now, her thesis meets the requirements for graduation. Her story is interesting, imaginative, and helps to deepen the discourse on how works of literature can center the histories and lives of people of color. Stylistically and craft-wise, there is a lot more room for Yia to grow and push further, but it’s exciting to see what she has been working on.”

1. What changes, if any, do you recommend based on the assessment data?

Over the past two years, the MFA program has implemented a number of changes to students’ culminating experiences in order to better align SLOs with learning activities. We have replaced the Exit Exam with a Contextualizing Narrative assignment, implemented Thesis Defense meetings, and updated assessment rubrics to provide both quantitative data and narrative comments on student work.

Once the MFA program coordinator returns in Spring, we will meet to discuss any further changes that need to be made. We will also update our SOAP.

1. If you recommended any changes in your response to Question 4 in last year’s assessment report, what progress have you made in implementing these changes? If you did not recommend making any changes in last year’s report please write N/A as your answer to this question.

In our assessment report for 2018-2019, we wrote: “For Fall 2020 admits we will use a revised and updated Entrance Assessment Rubric to correspond with the Assessment Rubrics for the culminating experiences.” We have accomplished this.

1. What assessment activities will you be conducting during the next academic year?

This is to be determined, as our SOAP will need revising upon the return of the MFA coordinator in Spring 2022.

1. Identify and discuss any major issues identified during your last Program Review and in what ways these issues have or have not been addressed.

Unfortunately, as the interim MFA coordinator, I do not have access to this information. I will discuss with the coordinator upon his return in the Spring semester.