

# Assessment: Program Four Column



## Program (ALP) - Liberal Arts MA

**College or Division:** Graduate Studies

**Department:** College of Graduate Studies

**Assessment Coordinator:** Dr. Rob Kinucan

**Statement of Purpose:** The Master of Arts in Liberal Arts is an interdisciplinary program which allows students to pursue interests in three related disciplines. The degree was established in 2001 and was administered through the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences until 2016. At that time the program was transferred to the newly established College of Graduate Studies. The M.A. in Liberal Arts requires that the student choose three fields to study, usually from the disciplines of liberal arts, although one of the fields may be outside the domain of liberal arts if the student's committee approves. The student may have up to eighteen semester credit hours in one field and no fewer than six semester credit hours in each of the other fields. All students enroll in Liberal Arts 5101 (Prospectus for Master's Project) and Liberal Arts 5301 (Master's Project). The Master's Project must reflect or incorporate ideas, subject material, research, and/or creative work from the three disciplines selected for study. The project is of the student's and committee's design and may take the form of a creative production (such as an exhibit, performance, portfolio, or video documentary); an extended paper or publishable article; an internship; or a practicum. A written project narrative must be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies regardless of the project's primary form.

## Annual Updates

### 2017 - 2018

**Evidence of Improvement from Previous Assessment Cycle:** Seven students completed the M.A. in Liberal Arts during the 2017-18 assessment period, demonstrating the continued growth and success of this program. The students were Melissa Embrey, Ulises Martinez, Ashley Page, Miguel Pena, Emad Habib, Joe Edd Waggoner, and Jennifer Martinez. In April, the university received word that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board had approved the M.A. in Liberal Arts program based on the program review submitted by the university. That review included an internal self-study, an external reviewer's critique, and a response to the external reviewer. According to the evaluation received from the Coordinating Board, "Overall, the review reflects a successful program that meets student needs."

**Review History: Reviewer #1 Name, Date, and Comments:** Dr. Maria Gear, August 2, 2018

**Review History: Reviewer #2 Name, Date, and Comments:** Dr. Joey Velasco, August 2, 2018

**Related Documents:**

[Liberal Arts Program Approval.docx](#)

### 2016 - 2017

**Evidence of Improvement from Previous Assessment Cycle:** Four students completed the M.A. in Liberal Arts and graduated in 2016-17, which is the highest number of completers since the inception of the program. The students were Michael Gallardo, Richard Reed, Matt Hardison, and Megan Wilde.

**Review History: Reviewer #1 Name, Date, and Comments:** Carol Fairlie, June 14, 2017

**Review History: Reviewer #2 Name, Date, and Comments:** Kathy Stein (AM), June 14, 2017

**Review History: Reviewer #3 Name, Date, and Comments:** Chris Estepp (PM), June 14, 2017

**Review History: Reviewer #4 Name, Date, and Comments:** Jeanne Qvarnstrom, July 6, 2017

## 2015 - 2016

**Evidence of Improvement from Previous Assessment Cycle:** During the 2015-2016 academic year, only 11 students were enrolled in the program, and they were not in the designated courses and levels where the assessments were assigned, so there is no evidence of academic improvement. However, the External Review was a positive impetus for focusing on problems in the program and introducing changes. For example, the program was moved from the College of Arts and Sciences to the College of Graduate Studies where student progress in the program can be better monitored. Furthermore, the Dean of Graduate Studies plans to better advertise the program for student enrollment. Finally, several new professors, with terminal degrees, were added to the program to offer greater choice for students to customize their degree programs. This should make the Liberal Arts MA program more attractive to students in the future.

**Review History: Reviewer #1 Name, Date, and Comments:** Dr. Jeanne Qvarnstrom, January 9, 2017

## 2014 - 2015

**Evidence of Improvement from Previous Assessment Cycle:** The Master of Arts in Liberal Arts program is developing slowly. In 2013-2014, one student completed the program. In 2014-2015, two students completed the program. Due to the small enrollment numbers, little evidence of improvement can be documented. However, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, with the assistance of the Master of Liberal Arts Council, continued to develop and enhance the program by adding one new SLO and four new assessments. It is anticipated that there will be more evidence of improvement during the 2015-2016 academic year. Furthermore, during the 2015-2016 academic year, the program will be externally evaluated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and those findings will be reviewed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Master of Liberal Arts Council and integrated into the program.

**Review History: Reviewer #1 Name, Date, and Comments:** Dr. Christopher Estepp, November 16, 2015

**Review History: Reviewer #2 Name, Date, and Comments:** Dr. Sharon Hileman, December 16, 2015

**Review History: Reviewer #3 Name, Date, and Comments:** Dr. Jeanne Qvarnstrom, February 15, 2016

**Review History: Reviewer #4 Name, Date, and Comments:** NA

### *Student Learning Outcomes*

### *Assessment Methods*

### *Results*

### *Use of Results*

**SLO 1** - The student will conduct original research and present it effectively in written format.

**Outcome Status:** Active

**Written Assignment** - a. Prospectus Bibliography  
The faculty committee for the Master's Prospectus (LA 5101) evaluates the research bibliography, which is submitted as part of the prospectus.

**Target:** The target is for 80% of the students to receive an overall exemplary or satisfactory rating on the scoring rubric.

**Reporting Period:** 2017 - 2018

**Conclusion:** Target Met

Four students submitted excellent bibliographies and one submitted a good bibliography as part of the prospectus. Two students submitted unsatisfactory bibliographies, primarily because of an inadequate number of sources. (05/21/2018)

**Use of Results:** A bibliography workshop will be created by the thesis support staff in the Graduate Student Center. Liberal arts students will be required to attend the workshop during the semester that their prospectus bibliography is due. The workshop requirement will be added to the course specifications listed in Blackboard for L.A. 5101, and dates for the workshop will be posted in the Blackboard course. (05/21/2018)

**Reporting Period:** 2016 - 2017

**Conclusion:** Target Not Met

**Use of Results:** Based on the results, the Dean of Graduate

<i>Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Use of Results</i>
		75% of students (3 of 4) submitted exemplary or satisfactory bibliographies on their first attempts. One student submitted a very short bibliography with no recognizable documentation style. (06/15/2017)	Studies will create a rubric which will be given to M.A.L.A. students and committee members to ensure that an adequate number of appropriate sources and correct documentation are used in the bibliography. (06/15/2017)
		<p><b>Reporting Period:</b> 2015 - 2016</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> N/A</p> <p>During the 2015-2016 academic year, there were no students enrolled who took this assessment (05/17/2016)</p>	<p><b>Use of Results:</b> During the 2015 External Review of the program, the reviewer recommended that student writing be assessed at the beginning, middle, and end of the program. The reviewer provided a uniform writing rubric to use. The Master of Liberal Arts Council discussed the recommendations of the External Review and agreed to implement the benchmark writing assessments during the 2016-2017 academic year. The faculty will be identifying the courses and determining the schedule for these writing assessments. Faculty believe that by introducing writing assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of the program, that the process will have a positive impact on students' overall performance on this identified assessment, Original Research Production. (05/17/2016)</p>
		<p><b>Reporting Period:</b> 2014 - 2015</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> Target Not Met</p> <p>Although one student received an exemplary rating, one student received a passing rating. Therefore, only 50% of the students received a satisfactory or higher rating, instead of 80% as stated in the target. It must be noted, however, that the total student population</p>	<p><b>Use of Results:</b> More instruction for students will be included in the courses to ultimately prepare them for the written narrative of the capstone projects. Faculty plan to discuss the scoring rubric</p>

Student Learning Outcomes	Assessment Methods	Results	Use of Results
	<p><b>Project - b. Project Narrative</b> The faculty committee for the Master's Project (LA 5301) evaluates the written narrative of the project using a rubric designating projects as exemplary, satisfactory, and passing. <b>Target:</b> 80% of students will submit an exemplary or satisfactory project.</p>	<p>(2) is very small. (03/25/2016)</p> <p><b>Reporting Period:</b> 2017 - 2018 <b>Conclusion:</b> Target Met Five written narratives were rated exemplary, and two were considered satisfactory. (05/25/2018) <b>Related Documents:</b> <a href="#">MALA Project title page 2018.docx</a> <a href="#">MALA Project Approval Page with Guides.docx</a> <a href="#">MALA Rubric for Written Narrative 2018.docx</a> <a href="#">Guidelines For Liberal Arts Projects 2018.docx</a></p>	<p>with students and give them examples of exemplary student work. (The Master of Arts in Liberal Arts is scheduled for an external review during the 2015-2016 academic year by an outside reviewer from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Faculty plans to meet after the review and determine what improvements need to be added to the program, based on the reviewer's findings.) (03/25/2016)</p> <p><b>Use of Results:</b> Although the target was met, problems occurred in the written narratives of an international student and an American ESL student. The thesis support coordinator will receive training to assist him in working with students whose first language is not English. Committee chairs will encourage such students to work with the thesis support coordinator at the beginning of the semester in which they plan to complete the project. At least two drafts of the project narrative will be submitted to the coordinator to review and discuss with the student before a final copy can be submitted to the committee. (05/30/2018)</p>
		<p><b>Reporting Period:</b> 2016 - 2017 <b>Conclusion:</b> Target Not Met 75% of students (3 of 4) submitted exemplary projects, but one project was barely rated "passing". (06/15/2017)</p>	<p><b>Use of Results:</b> Based on the results, the Dean of Graduate Studies will create a Blackboard site to provide copies of the rubric</p>

<i>Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Use of Results</i>
			to students, so that they will know how committee members evaluate the project. Students who submit non-passing projects will be required to work with the thesis/writing support coordinator in the Graduate Student Center to improve the project narrative before resubmitting it to the committee. (06/15/2017)
		<b>Reporting Period:</b> 2015 - 2016 <b>Conclusion:</b> N/A No students participated in this assessment during the 2015-2016 academic year. (05/17/2016)	<b>Use of Results:</b> The reviewer in the External Review observed that "retention and graduation rates were poor". That is evidenced by the fact that there were no students to take this assessment. To address this problem of retention and graduation, the Liberal Arts MA program has been moved from the College of Arts and Sciences into the College of Graduate Studies. Student progress is going to be measured at different steps in the program, to assure that students are making adequate progress through the program. In addition, the Dean of Graduate Studies plans to conference with any students who drop out of the program to identify the problems, concerns they were having. With the implementation of the Student Self-Rating of Research Effectiveness, faculty may identify additional issues that cause students to drop out that may be addressed. (05/17/2016)
		<b>Reporting Period:</b> 2014 - 2015	

<i>Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Use of Results</i>
		<b>Conclusion:</b> N/A This measure was not assessed during the 2014-2015 cycle. (03/25/2016)	<b>Use of Results:</b> This measure will be used for the first time during the 2015-2016 academic year. (03/25/2016)
<b>SLO 2</b> - The student will present/defend the Master's Project orally and publicly. <b>Outcome Status:</b> Active	<b>Oral Presentation/Defense to Committee</b> - The faculty committee for the Master's Project use a rubric to evaluate the oral defense of the project. <b>Target:</b> 80% of students will make a satisfactory presentation of their project to their committee.	<b>Reporting Period:</b> 2017 - 2018 <b>Conclusion:</b> Target Met All students satisfactorily defended their projects to their committees, and all students were present in Alpine to meet with committee members. However, some committees met late in the semester, making it difficult for students to submit complete projects to the Graduate Studies Office by the due date. (05/22/2018) <b>Related Documents:</b> <a href="#">Blackboard L.A. 5301.PNG</a>	<b>Use of Results:</b> Every semester the Dean of Graduate Studies will establish a date by which oral presentations to committees will have been completed. Currently the Dean's office sets a due date for the complete project to be submitted to the Graduate Office. The due date for oral presentations will be added to the requirements listed in the Blackboard course L.A. 5301, which all students completing projects must enroll in. (05/22/2018)
		<b>Reporting Period:</b> 2016 - 2017 <b>Conclusion:</b> Target Met All students satisfactorily defended their projects to their committees, discussing research, methodology, originality, and their incorporation of three fields of study. (05/19/2017)	<b>Use of Results:</b> Based on the results, the Dean of Graduate Studies will meet with liberal arts faculty members to discuss formalizing the defense procedures, especially for students at a distance. A Blackboard Collaborate session can be arranged for students at a distance. (05/19/2017)
	<b>Presentation/Performance</b> - The faculty committee use a rubric which they generate themselves to evaluate the public presentation. Whenever possible, evaluations are obtained from audiences to provide additional feedback to students. <b>Target:</b> 80% of students will make a	<b>Reporting Period:</b> 2017 - 2018 <b>Conclusion:</b> Target Met All students made public presentations of their projects. Missy Embrey, whose project was "Podcast: A Modern Oral Tradition," cast actors who voiced characters enacting a short story in a podcast which was aired on the Sul Ross campus radio station. Ashley Page, whose project was "Directing a Musical: The Last Five Years by Jason Robert	<b>Use of Results:</b> Many liberal arts students were able to make presentations at the Graduate Student Research Symposium, which was held in the spring semester, so future students should use this venue to present their work to the public whenever

<i>Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Use of Results</i>
	satisfactory presentation of their project to the public.	<p>Brown," directed Brown's musical and presented it as a performance of the 2017-18 Sul Ross theatre season. Miguel Pena, whose project was "Big Scary Clowns with Red Balloons as Guns," presented a one-man show sponsored by the Department of Fine Arts and Communication. Jennifer Martinez, whose project was "Unfavorable Odds: A Fictional Portrayal of Diversity and Learning Struggles in the Education System," presented one chapter of the work in a session of the Graduate Student Research Symposium at Sul Ross. Ulices Martinez, whose project was "May the Gods Moan My Name: A Creative Piece of Literature and Artwork," showcased the art and poetry of his project at the Graduate Research Symposium, and Emad Habib, whose project was "Challenges Faced by International Students in the USA," presented a film of his project at the Symposium. Joe Edd Waggoner, whose project was "Despoblado: Landscape and Wildlife Photographs of the Big Bend and Davis Mountains," held an exhibition of his photography at the Sul Ross Art Gallery.</p> <p>Five of the projects were rated exemplary, and two were rated satisfactory. (05/22/2018)</p> <p><b>Related Documents:</b>  <a href="#">Graduate Symposium Program.docx</a></p> <p><b>Reporting Period:</b> 2016 - 2017  <b>Conclusion:</b> Target Met  Four students—Megan Wilde (documentary), Matt Hardison (original play), Richard Reed (play directing), Michael Gallardo (dramatic performance)— presented projects to a public audience. Three of the presentations were rated exemplary and one was rated passing. (An audience member who is a faculty member but not a member of the student's committee wrote an assessment describing the performance as non-passing. The three committee members, while disappointed by the student's presentation, still felt he should be given credit for the project and be allowed to graduate.) (05/19/2017)</p>	<p>appropriate and whenever possible. (Ulices Martinez, who had graduated in Fall 2017, was able to return and participate in the spring symposium, so it may be possible for future fall graduates to do so as well.) (05/22/2018)</p> <hr/> <p><b>Use of Results:</b> Based on the results, liberal arts faculty will review the different rubrics that have been employed this cycle to determine if changes should be made or if the same rubric could be used for some of the different kinds of presentations. (05/19/2017)</p>
<b>SLO 3</b> - The student will demonstrate competency in major field of study.	<b>Project</b> - The Dean of Graduate Studies uses a rubric to evaluate a	<b>Reporting Period:</b> 2017 - 2018	<b>Use of Results:</b> Given the difficulty

<i>Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Use of Results</i>
<b>Outcome Status:</b> Active	<p>paper, project, or recorded performance from a course taken early or midway in the major field.</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 80% of students will submit a satisfactory paper, project, or recorded performance from a course in the major field.</p>	<p><b>Conclusion:</b> Target Not Met The Dean was able to evaluate earlier work produced by three students. Two of the three students are ESL and consequently have problems with vocabulary, syntax, and sentence boundaries in their written work. Content of these students' work has been excellent, but to improve readability, additional help with editing has been recommended. The third student's written work was deemed excellent.</p> <p>No earlier paper, project, or recorded performance was provided by the other four students from this assessment period. (05/22/2018)</p>	<p>of obtaining earlier written work from students in fields that are not writing intensive, this measure is not especially useful. The Liberal Arts committee will meet prior to Fall 2018 to discuss a new means of evaluating students' competency in their major field of study. (05/22/2018)</p>
		<p><b>Reporting Period:</b> 2016 - 2017 <b>Conclusion:</b> N/A No students were given this assessment during 2016-17. (05/19/2017)</p>	<p><b>Use of Results:</b> This form of assessment was not in place when the four students in this cycle began their programs, so they were not required to submit materials. Students who began the program in Fall 2016 will be required to submit documents to the website in Blackboard which the Dean of Graduate Studies will create. (05/19/2017)</p>
	<p><b>Exam/Quiz - In Course -</b> The committee chair (or faculty member from the field in which 18 sch have been completed) administers a written comprehensive exam based upon the coursework</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 80% of students will receive a passing score (70% or higher) on the first administration of the exam.</p>	<p><b>Reporting Period:</b> 2017 - 2018 <b>Conclusion:</b> Target Met Two students were eligible to take the exam, based on the dates they began the program, and both received passing scores on the major field exam in English. Ulices Martinez scored 92 and Jennifer Martinez scored 88. (05/22/2018)</p> <p><b>Reporting Period:</b> 2016 - 2017 <b>Conclusion:</b> N/A No students were given this assessment during 2016-17. (05/19/2017)</p>	<p><b>Use of Results:</b> Incoming students and their committee chairs will be notified that a comprehensive exam in the major field will be administered once the student has completed coursework in that area. (05/22/2018)</p> <p><b>Use of Results:</b> This form of assessment was not in place when the four students in this cycle began their programs, so they were not required to take the exam. The Dean of Graduate Studies will meet with liberal arts</p>



<i>Student Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Use of Results</i>
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faculty to discuss this requirement and plan for future administration of a comprehensive exam in the major field to those students who began the program in Fall 2016. (05/19/2017)