Humanities Department
Self-Study Report
2015-2016

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Humanities Department

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1. **Role of the Humanities Department within the Massachusetts Maritime Academy**

The Massachusetts Maritime Academy prepares students for careers in the maritime and engineering industries and in related fields, such as environmental protection and emergency management. A brief history of the Academy and its mission is attached as Appendix 1.

Within the broader Academy curriculum, the Humanities Department takes the role of offering courses that "build skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, and communications; aesthetic and cultural awareness; and humanistic inquiry" (MMA course catalog, page 35). Although the Academy has a small graduate program, the Humanities Department currently is involved only in the undergraduate curriculum. The full Humanities Department mission statement and statement of learning outcomes is attached as Appendix 2.

Massachusetts Maritime Academy offers no majors in the humanities; therefore, the Humanities Department offers courses only in the core general education curriculum. These courses are required by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASAC) so that the Academy can be accredited to grant Bachelor of Science degrees.

Humanities Department courses are taught by seven full-time faculty members and generally seven part-time adjunct faculty members who have contracts that must be renewed each term. We are fortunate that our group of adjunct faculty members has remained quite stable for a number of years. These instructors are both skilled and dedicated to the Academy.

There are two levels of Humanities courses at Massachusetts Maritime. Students are required to take a total of four Humanities courses to graduate.

The first level of Humanities courses is two semester-long required courses in the freshman year. In the fall term students take *English Composition*, which of all the Academy's required courses focuses most directly on building students' writing skills. In the spring students take *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*, which is a writing-intensive course designed to introduce ways of engaging critically with fiction, poetry, and drama. Although both courses are required, they are taught in separate, independent sections, and each section instructor within limits can design the course with a specific focus and content. The limits are provided by general

course guidelines for both courses to which all members of the department have agreed. A copy of these guidelines is attached as Appendix 3, and syllabi from sections of both these courses, showing the variety of approaches different instructors take, are available in a separate notebook also attached to this report.

The second level of Humanities courses is the requirement that students complete two additional Humanities courses in their sophomore to senior years. Students can select from a variety of Humanities offerings. These elective courses are divided into two groups. Students are required to take at least one course from Group 1, which contains literature courses. For their second elective, students can take either another Group 1 literature course or a Group 2 course; Group 2 contains all the Humanities elective courses that are not directly literature courses, such as foreign languages, *Introduction to Art*, *Philosophy*, *Public Speaking*, and *Business Communications*.

Massachusetts Maritime Academy does not have a college-wide foreign language requirement; however, the International Maritime Business Department requires one term of a foreign language to complete the graduation requirements for its major. Often, foreign languages are taken at Massachusetts Maritime by students majoring in International Maritime Business or by students seeking to fulfill one term of the Humanities Department's two terms of elective requirements.

A complete list of Humanities Department courses and their descriptions can be seen in the *Massachusetts Maritime Academy 2015-2016 College Catalog*. Pages 35-39 present the Academy's General Education Requirements in Humanities, Social Science, and Science and Mathematics. Descriptions of Humanities Department courses are on pages 78-88.

Not every elective is offered every term. In a typical term, six or seven electives are offered in each group for a total of 12-14 elective offerings for the term. Generally, every elective is offered at least once every two years, in some cases once every three years. Which electives are offered and the number of electives offered varies depending on sabbaticals and the limited release time various Humanities Department members are given for other non-teaching Academy activities.

2. The Humanities Department and the Massachusetts Maritime Academy Institution Outcomes Assessment

Massachusetts Maritime Academy is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). To aid in conforming to the NEASC standards, Massachusetts Maritime prepared an Institution Outcomes Assessment, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 4. The five core competencies identified here comprise "the essential skills and abilities that form the educational foundation for all other courses and allow for success beyond the academy." The Humanities Department has a central role in helping students to fulfill two of the five core competencies in this standard:

> Communication – Students should be able to read, write, and speak effectively in a variety of styles appropriate to a variety of audiences.

> Higher Order Thinking – Students should be able to apply the elements of reasoning and be able to use criteria and intellectual standards in order to make decisions, analyze arguments, solve problems, and create original ideas.

Many Humanities courses require papers where students must do online research. These courses together with several writing courses taught as Group 2 electives, such as HU-6057 *Composing in New Media*, have a role in helping students to fulfill a third of the five core competencies:

> Technology Literacy – Students should be able to apply computer technology skills to acquire, organize, analyze, and communicate information.

3. **The Humanities Department and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Accreditation Standards 4 and 5**

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) publishes eleven sections of guidelines as standards for institutions seeking accreditation. Two of these sections are particularly relevant in assessing the program offered by the Humanities Department: Standard 4 concerns the academic program, and Standard 5 concerns faculty. A reprint of these two sections is attached as Appendix 5.

Not all the NEASC standards in these two sections apply to the Humanities Department, but here is our department's view of the standards that do:

Standards 4.2 and 4.3 refer to an **"effective system of academic oversight"** that ensures the quality of the academic program and its coherence. Before a new Humanities courses can become part of the Academy's curriculum, it must be vetted by a departmental curriculum committee that includes full-time faculty members and two students and be approved by both the Academy-wide curriculum committee and the All-University Committee, which oversees the faculty's role in the governance of the Academy. The quality of ongoing Humanities courses and the coherence of the entire Humanities program are monitored through department meetings about curriculum. In addition, in accord with the contract between the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA, the state-wide faculty union in the Massachusetts state university system) and the universities in that system, all instructors are assessed by peer reviews including classroom visits for all reappointments, tenure, promotions, and post-tenure review, and all faculty must allow student evaluations in at least one course each year.

Standard 4.5 requires that **learning goals and requirements be published** for each program. It is an Academy requirement that learning outcomes be included in the syllabus for every course. In addition, as discussed in Section 2 above, the Academy has published a statement of Institution Outcomes Assessment that identifies five core competencies the Academy curriculum as a whole seeks to provide each of its graduates: communication skills, scientific literacy, quantitative literacy, higher-order thinking, and technological literacy (See Appendix 4). Humanities Department courses provide instruction in three of these core competencies: communication skills, higher-order thinking, and technological literacy. The Humanities Department also publishes a mission statement and statement of learning outcomes for its program as a whole (See Appendix 2). The Humanities Department guidelines for *English Composition* and *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* were revised fall 2013 (See Appendix 3). There are no departmental guidelines for elective courses; the configuration of electives is determined by the instructor.

Standard 4.6 requires that programs have "a **coherent design** and are characterized by **appropriate breadth, depth, continuity**, sequential progression, and synthesis of learning." The four-course Humanities Department requirements have a coherent design in the movement from *English Composition* in the fall term of the freshman year, to *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* in the spring, to the two electives in

the sophomore to senior years. *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* and the Group 1 and Group 2 electives ensure breadth in the program. The electives provide greater depth than the freshman introductory courses, and together with the introductory courses provide continuity and a sequential synthesis of the students' learning experiences.

Standard 4.7 requires that students use "**information resources and information technology** as an integral part of their education." Research papers are required in *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* and often in other Humanities Department courses. Although students are not required to do online research or use online databases to complete these projects, many students do use these resources. Most Humanities Department courses use the Course/Learning Management System Blackboard as a way of organizing and presenting course materials. In addition, several of the writing courses taught as Group 2 electives engage students with online resources and information technology in a more significant way.

Standard 4.8 applies most explicitly to the Humanities Department programs. It requires that students demonstrate "**collegiate-level skills in the English Language**." This requirement is reflected in the first core competency in the Massachusetts Maritime Institution Outcome Assessment: "Communication – Students should be able to read, write, and speak effectively in a variety of styles appropriate to a variety of audiences." With the exception of our foreign language courses, all the Humanities Department courses focus on meeting this standard. See syllabi that accompany this report for specific requirements in individual courses. Our program for assessing the effectiveness of our writing program will be discussed more fully in Section 5 of this report.

4.8 also is met by the Academy's fourth core competency in the Institution Outcomes Assessment: "Higher-Order Thinking – Students should be able to apply the elements of reasoning and be able to use criteria and intellectual standards in order to make decisions, analyze arguments, solve problems, and create original ideas." The Humanities Department's courses focus directly on both this core competency and Standard 4.8. The Humanities Department's mission of providing courses that "build skills in reading, writing, critical thinking, and communication" (MMA course catalog, page 35) directly supports the Academy's commitment to this NEASC standard and these institutional goals.

Standards 4.9 and 4.10 require a **regular cycle of reviews of academic programs** and the inclusion of an "external perspective" in these reviews. This self-study, repeated every five years, and the inclusion of an External Reviewer in this self-study process fulfill these requirements. All new courses proposed by an instructor in any Massachusetts Maritime department must be approved by a departmental curriculum committee and then by an Academy-wide curriculum committee and the Academy's administration before they can become a permanent part of the department's course offerings. The department also generally reviews its course offerings at least every five years as part of the self-study process and deletes

courses that no longer are serving students effectively. See Section 6 for a listing of courses that have been added or deleted in the Humanities curriculum since academic year 2010-2011. A department-wide discussion of individual courses was not undertaken as part of this self-study.

Standard 4.11 discusses **off-campus programs** and concern about the institution's capacity to properly initiate, sustain, and oversee quality in these programs. Although the Humanities Department has no off-campus programs, we have begun to offer online courses, and Massachusetts Maritime students now can take live-streaming introductory Italian and Arabic language courses originating at Fitchburg State University for credit in Humanities at Massachusetts Maritime. These online initiatives are in their earliest stages, and little data for assessment is available yet, but they do have the potential to become an off-campus program, and special attention must be paid to them. The role of online courses in the Humanities Department's curriculum will be discussed more fully in Section 10, "Current Challenges," later in this Self-Study Report.

Standard 4.14 concerns the **breadth of the general education program** a school offers. Programs should be "designed to give students a substantial and coherent introduction to the broad areas of human knowledge, their theories and methods of inquiry, plus in-depth study in at least one disciplinary or interdisciplinary area." Together with the Science and Mathematics Department and the Social Science Department, the Humanities Department offers courses that provide breadth of education in the Academy's curriculum. The Humanities Department currently offers 38 electives; most are taught at least once every two years or more frequently. See pages 79-88 of the *Massachusetts Maritime Academy 2015-2016 College Catalog* for a listing of Humanities electives. The Humanities Department's courses engage students with the "theories and methods of inquiry" used in various humanistic studies, as can be seen in the syllabi for Humanities courses, which are attached to this report in separate notebooks. (See also NEASC Standards 4.17 and 4.19.)

Standard 4.15 requires that programs offer "undergraduate students the opportunity to pursue knowledge and understanding through **unrestricted electives**." Students at Massachusetts Maritime do have two unrestricted or free electives that they can use to take courses in any department they wish, but in a few cases major departments advise their students to use these free electives in prescribed ways.

Additionally, concerning electives, sometimes the scheduling of course offerings in the majors is so limited that students have little choice about when to take general education electives. Their decisions may be driven by the times at which courses in their major are scheduled rather than their interest in the topic of the elective; students take an elective simply because it fits their schedule. This can mean that initially some students in an elective course may not be eager to engage with course materials. However, in general, students at Massachusetts Maritime use their two free electives well to broaden their educations and to explore new areas of interest.

Generally, Humanities elective courses are capped at enrollments of 20 students, and often Humanities courses have smaller enrollments than electives offered in other departments.

Standard 4.16 states that the college's general education program "embodies the **institution's definition of an educated person** and prepares students for the world in which they will live." The Massachusetts Maritime Academy's definition of an educated person is stated in its Institution Outcomes Assessment (Section 2 above and Appendix 4):

> **MMA Core Competency Areas:**
>
> Students are assessed in five core competency areas comprising the essential skills and abilities that form the educational foundation for all other courses and allow for success beyond the academy. These competencies are introduced, reinforced by, or incorporated into many courses throughout the curriculum. All students who graduate from MMA should achieve competency in the following areas:
>
> Communication – Students should be able to read, write, and speak effectively in a variety of styles appropriate to a variety of audiences.
>
> Scientific Literacy – Students should be able to understand the scientific method and how it is applied to establish new knowledge.
>
> Quantitative Literacy – Students should be able to analyze and interpret numerical data and to reason with quantitative information.
>
> Higher-Order Thinking – Students should be able to apply the elements of reasoning and be able to use criteria and intellectual standards in order to make decisions, analyze arguments, solve problems, and create original ideas.
>
> Technology Literacy – Students should be able to apply computer technology skills to acquire, organize, analyze, and communicate information.
>
> **MMA Institution-wide Learning Outcomes:**
>
> Specifically, MMA has developed the following student learning outcomes that all students should be able to demonstrate upon graduation.
>
> Intellectual Learning:
>
> - Competency in written, oral, and listening skills;
> - Ability to critically and creatively comprehend and evaluate new information and ideas;

- Ability to use quantitative reasoning skills, applying basic concepts of mathematics and science and utilizing relevant computer skills;

- Basic knowledge and understanding of the social, physical, and life sciences;

- Competency within the major.

Leadership and Personal Development:

- Ability to work and achieve goals as a member of a team;

- Ability to make rational decisions while complying with a set of standards;

- Ability to perform and behave in a professional manner acceptable for career goals;

- A sense of curiosity;

- Ability to make appropriate future decisions based on past and present conditions and circumstances.

Global Awareness and Social Responsibility:

- A sense of global awareness and social responsibility;

- Ability to make decisions and act in a socially responsible manner.

The Humanities Department provides instruction leading to three of the five core competencies listed in this statement: Communication, Higher-Order Thinking, and Technology Literacy. In addition, the department's courses engage students with literary and other texts that encourage many of the skills and traits listed in the three learning outcome areas.

Standard 4.17 states that the college's **general education** requirement should ensure "**adequate breadth** … by showing a balanced regard for what are traditionally referred to as the arts and humanities, the sciences including mathematics, and the social sciences." The requirements should "focus on the subject matter and the methodologies of these three primary domains of knowledge." Students are required to take a minimum of 12 credit hours (four courses) in the humanities: *English Composition*, *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*, a Group 1 literature elective, and either a second Group 1 elective or a Group 2 non-literature elective. See pages 35-39 of the *Massachusetts Maritime Academy 2015-2016 College Catalog* for a statement of the Academy's general education requirement and a listing of the range of courses in Humanities, Social Science, and Science and Mathematics that meet this standard. (See also NEASC Standards 4.14 and 4.19)

Standard 4.18 requires that at least 40 credit hours in a bachelor's degree program be devoted to general education courses. At Massachusetts Maritime 46.5 general education credits are required for graduation (MMA course catalog, pages 35-39).

- 12 credit hours are required in Humanities, three credits in each of the following four courses: *English Composition*, *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*, a Group 1 literature elective, and a second Group 1 elective or a Group 2 elective.

- 15 credit hours are required in Social Science: a three-credit course on western civilization, a three-credit course on American government, a three-credit course in an economics elective, a three-credit course in a law elective, and a three credit elective course chosen from an array of topics traditionally associated with the social sciences from psychology and various history courses to United States energy policy and national security issues.

- 19.5 credit hours are required in Science and Mathematics for students who do not place out of algebra and trigonometry on entering the Academy: 3 credits in an algebra and trigonometry course, 3 credits in a calculus course, 3.5 credits in a basic chemistry course with a lab, 3 credits in a more advanced mathematics course, 3.5 credits in a physics course with a lab, and 3.5 credits in a more advanced chemistry course with a lab.

This distribution of general education requirements is weighted toward the sciences and mathematics, which is understandable in a technical college.

Standard 4.19 explicitly addresses the role the Humanities Department has taken on at Massachusetts Maritime: providing instruction in **written and oral communication; critical and logical thinking; capability for continuing learning; information literacy; and appreciation for the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of humankind.** This role also is addressed in part in the first, fourth and fifth core competencies identified in the Academy's Institution Outcomes Assessment: communication skills, higher-order thinking, and technology literacy.

All the Humanities courses, with the possible exception of introductory foreign language courses, involve improving students' writing skills. See the attached course syllabi for individual course requirements. Beginning with the class that entered the Academy in September 2013, students are required to pass a two-part writing assessment, including a writing portfolio, to graduate. This will be discussed more fully in Sections 4 and 5 of this report.

All Humanities courses include class discussion, and some require in-class presentations. These improve students' skills in oral communication. The department also offers HU-6071 *Public Speaking*, a Group 2 elective, to students who want to work on oral communication explicitly.

Critical and logical thinking is addressed in every Humanities course.

Capability for continuing learning is addressed in the five core competencies identified in the Academy's Institution Outcomes Assessment, and Humanities courses help students to gain three of these competencies: communication skills, higher-order thinking, and technology literacy. (See Section 2 above.)

Appreciation for the aesthetic dimensions of humankind is provided by all the department's literature courses; the two creative writing seminars, one on poetry (HU-6060) and one on fiction and non-fiction (HU-6061); HU-6057 *Composing in New Media*; and HU-6080 *Introduction to Art*.

Specific ethical issues are considered in many of the department's courses, from literature courses to HU-6072 *Business Communications*. Courses with a broader focus on the "ethical dimensions of humankind" include HU-5031 *War Literature*, HU-5036 *Survival Literature*, HU-5037 *Discipline and Punishment: Philosophies & Theories*, HU-6051 *Philosophy*, HU-6054 *Ethics*, and HU-6055 *Introduction to World Religions*.

Standard 4.31 requires that **courses be clearly described in print and electronic catalogs** so that students can make realistic course selections and that courses be **offered with sufficient regularity** to ensure that students can meet graduation requirements in a timely manner. All Humanities courses are fully described in the Massachusetts Maritime print and online catalogs, and all courses are offered with sufficient frequency to ensure that students can meet Humanities requirements within four years. The two required courses, *English Composition* (fall term) and *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* (spring term), are offered not only in their normal terms but also in trailer sections in alternate terms and in the summer and winter terms for students who previously may have failed the courses and need to repeat them. Each elective course typically is offered at least once in two years, and each term an array of 12-14 Humanities electives is available.

Standard 4.33 requires that **credit** be awarded based on "clearly stated **criteria that reflect learning objectives and are consistently and effectively applied**." All course syllabi in the Humanities Department include a statement of learning objectives, a statement of course requirements, and a statement of grading procedures and policies. These are discussed with students at the beginning of each course. The department also holds grade-norming sessions each term in our two courses where there are multiple instructors teaching individual sections: *English Composition* and *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*.

Standard 4.34 requires that there be "**demonstrable academic content for all experiences for which credit is awarded**." All Humanities courses require that students write essays, demonstrate knowledge on an examination, give presentations, or provide other similarly substantive demonstrations of learning to earn course credit. Students cannot earn credit in Humanities by auditing a course; however, throughout the Academy, juniors and seniors with GPAs of at least 2.5 may take free elective courses pass/fail if they have the course instructor's permission (MMA Catalog 149).

Standard 4.38 requires that schools strive to prevent **cheating and plagiarism** and that they have a forthright system for dealing with occurrences. All entering students at Massachusetts Maritime are required to engage in a 50-minute presentation on avoiding plagiarism as part of freshman orientation in September, and all Humanities faculty members discuss plagiarism with their students at the beginning of each course. Here is the statement from the Academy's published Academic Standards for the Class of 2019 on academic honesty:

> **Academic Honesty**
>
> Massachusetts Maritime Academy expects all cadets and students to abide by its Honor Code which states: Cadets and Students do not lie, cheat or steal nor do they tolerate these acts from others.
>
> The Cadet Regimental Manual clearly outlines the various actions that may be considered cheating. These include plagiarism, misrepresentation, and unauthorized notes, among other things. Individual instructors may set the requirements for their courses as they wish, and students should make sure they understand these requirements.
>
> Academic freedom has traditionally allowed instructors to deal with academic dishonesty in many ways, including (but not limited to) requiring the student to redo an assignment, assigning a grade of zero for the test or assignment, or failing the student for the course. When the situation warrants, the instructor may also refer the matter to the Honor Board, which may recommend suspension or dismissal from the Academy for violations of the Honor Code.

Many Humanities Department courses have essays submitted through TurnItIn.com, SafeAssign in Blackboard, or other online plagiarism prevention systems. The fact this is announced at the beginning of a course often limits students' temptation to engage in plagiarism.

Standards 4.39 – 4.42 address **distance or correspondence learning**. The Humanities Department does not offer distance or correspondence courses, but we are beginning to offer online courses, and Massachusetts Maritime students can take online foreign language courses originating at Fitchburg State University for humanities credit at Massachusetts Maritime. Concerns involving the development and oversight of online courses and special issues here concerning language courses will be discussed in Section 10 of this report: "Current Challenges."

Standards 4.44 - 4.45 concern **transfer credit**. Standard 44 requires that quality be maintained; Standard 45 prevents schools from erecting unnecessary barriers in accepting transfer credit. A transfer student who wants to have credit accepted for work that was completed prior to transferring to Massachusetts Maritime approaches our registrar's office with the request. The registrar then sends the request to the chair of the appropriate Massachusetts Maritime department for

review. In the Humanities Department, the chair requires that the student submit an official description of the course at the other school. If, based on the description, the course is deemed sufficiently similar to the comparable course at Massachusetts Maritime, and the student's grade is considered high enough to demonstrate competence in the subject, then the Humanities chair gives permission to transfer the credits. Students enrolled at Massachusetts Maritime must get prior approval to substitute a course they plan to take at another school for a course at Massachusetts Maritime.

Currently, students also may place out of certain Humanities courses by attaining a score of 3 on a standard Advanced Placement Examination administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). The department believes this standard should be raised to 4.

Standards 4.48 – 4.55 concern the assessment of student learning. The Humanities Department's assessment processes are among the most sophisticated at Massachusetts Maritime. They involve the use of standardized, department-wide rubrics in core writing courses and the Taskstream online portfolio system, which can be used to analyze student data and generate reports. Massachusetts Maritime began using Taskstream in the fall of 2013. During the past two and a half years, we have made significant progress in implementing the system, but we have not yet developed a thorough program for assessing the ongoing effectiveness of our courses or for using assessment to refine the development of course offerings. We will fully develop and implement this within the next five years.

The Humanities Department's assessment process will be discussed at length in Section 5 later in this report.

Standard 5.2 concerns **faculty qualifications**, stating that this should be measured by "advanced degrees held, evidence of scholarship, advanced study, creative activities, teaching ability, and relevant professional experience, training and credentials." With the exception of Mr. Palmer, who did not complete a doctoral degree although he is a tenured assistant professor, all tenured and tenure-track Humanities faculty members have appropriate doctoral degrees.

Standard 5.3 requires that schools have a **sufficient number of faculty members** to manage the necessary workload to meet the school's mission. Class sizes in writing-intensive courses are beginning to creep over 22-23; that makes it difficult to provide Massachusetts Maritime students, who often enter with weak writing skills, the kinds of intensive training and support that they need to improve adequately. We have hired an additional tenure-track faculty member, who will join us on September 1, 2016, to teach composition and creative writing, but we also will be forced to continue to depend on a pool of adjunct writing instructors to keep class sizes appropriate. This pool may not be sufficiently large.

We currently have six full-time faculty members and five adjunct faculty members teaching *English Composition*. Usually five full-time faculty members and five

adjunct members teach *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*. The number of full-time faculty members teaching *Analysis* varies depending on which faculty members are on sabbatical and the number of seniors who still need to take a Humanities Group 1 (literature) elective to graduate. If additional Group 1 electives are needed, the four full-time faculty members with doctorates in literature teach additional elective courses and fewer sections of *Analysis*. In spring 2017, six full-time faculty members will teach *Analysis*.

In general, however, adjunct faculty members teach much more than 15% of the students in these core courses, which is the guideline prescribed by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. We have hired a new full-time faculty member who specializes in writing and who also will teach *Analysis*. Her addition to the department will improve the imbalance in our ratio of full-time to adjunct instructors.

A full-time professor who taught literature retired at the end of the spring term in 2015; he was replaced with a full-time writing professor who will join the department in fall 2016. As the number of undergraduates at the Academy continues to grow over the next few years, the Humanities Department will need to hire an additional professor to teach Group 1 literature electives. This staffing requirement will need to be addressed soon.

Foreign language courses also have an impact on our ratio of full-time to adjunct faculty members. Although one department, International Maritime Business, does have a one-term foreign language requirement, Massachusetts Maritime does not have an Academy-wide foreign language requirement for graduation; therefore, there is not sufficient student demand for foreign language courses to merit full-time faculty members to teach them. We always will need to depend on adjunct faculty or some system of online or streamed courses originating at other schools to meet our students' needs for foreign language instruction.

The problem of our current ratio of adjunct to full-time faculty will be discussed more fully in Section 4 on the Writing Program and in Section 10, "Current Challenges."

The workload for all seven full-time faculty members is equivalent to 12 credit hours (four courses, three course preparations) each term. Each course, with the exception of some English Composition sections where class size purposefully is limited, typically has 20 or more students, and all faculty members do their own grading of the many essays that are assigned; we do not have teaching assistants. Several department members have taken on other non-teaching obligations at the Academy for which they are given a reduction in their course load, but all full-time faculty members have a workload equivalent to teaching 12 credit hours (four courses, three preparations) in the fall and 12 in the spring. In addition, each full-time Humanities Department faculty member has 16 advisees in either the International Maritime Business Department or the Emergency Management Department because there is not a sufficient number of faculty members in those majors

adequately to handle the advising load. Additional release time may be needed as Humanities faculty members take on additional roles at the Academy outside the classroom.

Part-time faculty members generally teach two or three sections per term, often requiring only one preparation but sometimes two. In addition, some part-time faculty members are teaching at other schools besides Massachusetts Maritime each term. This is a significant teaching load.

Given the anticipated 200-student increase in enrollment at Massachusetts Maritime in the next three to five years to a total undergraduate student body of 1800, coming into compliance with the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education guideline of having no more than 15% of courses taught by adjunct faculty will require a significant increase in the number of full-time faculty members in the Humanities Department to "assure the accomplishment of class and out-of-class responsibilities essential for the fulfillment of institutional mission and purpose."

If a sufficient number of full-time faculty positions in the Humanities cannot be attained to meet the needs of the anticipated future enrollment, one possible alternate solution to explore is the **addition of visiting lectureships** at Massachusetts Maritime, a faculty position the Academy used to offer but has not offered recently. These full-time lectureships would be offered to adjunct faculty members who had excellent teaching records for the prior three years, and lecturers would be given multi-year contracts and financial benefits by the Academy, such as health insurance and access to retirement plans, unlike our adjunct faculty, who lack these benefits and whose contracts must be renewed each term. The additional employment stability that visiting lecturers have as opposed to adjuncts would benefit not only these instructors but also the continuity of the Humanities Department's course offerings. See also the Section 10.2 on the treatment of adjunct faculty members.

Standard 5.4 seeks to ensure that **hiring practices** are open, orderly and fair. Full-time faculty positions are advertised in appropriate online databases of open academic positions, such as those organized by the Chronicle of Higher Education and the Modern Language Association. Faculty involvement in the hiring process follows the guidelines established by the contract between the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA, the state-wide faculty union) and the state university system. The Massachusetts Maritime Academy Human Resources Department has an equal-opportunity officer who participates in every search for full-time faculty. In the Humanities Department, the search committee varies from search to search but always contains a majority of the full-time faculty members. The chair is an unofficial observer of all departmental search committees, sitting in on all interviews but not allowed to vote or to ask questions of the candidates; this is because the chair has the right to make his or her own recommendation for the position separate from the recommendation of the search committee. After discussions with the chair, the search committee makes its recommendations to the Vice President for Academic

Affairs; the department chair makes a separate recommendation, which may or may not agree with the search committee's choices, and the vice president makes his selection – usually from a list of three finalists provided by the search committee and the department chair. The vice president's recommendation goes to the Academy's president, who makes his own recommendation to the board of trustees, who generally affirm the president's decision. The newly hired full-time faculty member is given a contract that conforms to the guidelines stated in the state-wide faculty union (MSCA) contract with the Massachusetts state university system.

Part time positions are advertised in regional newspapers and other local media. The department chair along with one or two full-time department members acts as the search committee and conducts interviews. Recommendations from the department chair go to the Vice President of Academic Affairs to issue a contract to the selected candidate. These contracts are for teaching courses for a single term.

Standard 5.6 concerns **faculty recruitment, retention, and equitable treatment.** It requires that faculty be "accorded reasonable contractual security for appropriate periods" and that salaries and benefits be "set at levels that ensure the institution's continued ability to attract and retain an appropriately qualified instructional staff."

Full-time tenure-track faculty have contracts for reasonable periods as they go through the six years of the tenure acquisition process; the terms of these individual contracts are set by the statewide contract between the faculty union and the state university system. Salaries and other compensation for Humanities faculty members are typical of compensation packages throughout the Massachusetts State University System. The Humanities Department has not experienced any difficulty in recruiting or retaining faculty because of faculty compensation or other benefits.

Standard 5.7 is about **faculty workloads**. This issue is discussed under Standard 5.3 above.

Standard 5.8 concerns the **ratio of full-time to part-time faculty members** and the integration of non-tenure-track faculty into the department and institution. We currently have seven full-time and seven part-time faculty members. This places us far out of compliance with the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education guideline of having no more than 15% of our courses taught by adjunct faculty, and clearly this issue needs to be addressed. It will be discussed further in Section 10 of this report, "Current Challenges."

Given the current structure and role of foreign language courses at Massachusetts Maritime, these will need to be taught by adjunct faculty or taught through courses offered to Massachusetts Maritime students through other institutions, perhaps through online courses. There is not a sufficient workload for full-time faculty positions solely teaching foreign languages at Massachusetts Maritime.

Standard 5.10 addresses the **procedures for "recruitment, appointment, evaluation, promotion, and, if applicable, tenure**" within a school and requires that these procedures be "equitable." These procedures are determined by the contract

between the statewide faculty union in the Massachusetts state university system and the universities in that system. The Humanities Department and the Massachusetts Maritime Academy have no independent control over these procedures.

Standards 5.11 and 5.12 concern methods for **assessing faculty effectiveness**. (See also Standard 5.18.) At Massachusetts Maritime these procedures are controlled by the statewide faculty union contract with the Massachusetts state university system. They involve classroom visits for reappointment, promotion, and tenure and annual standardized student evaluations of at least one course for all faculty members. These procedures are uniform throughout the Massachusetts state university system and are typical of procedures at many other colleges.

Standard 5.13 addresses opportunities faculty members have for **professional development**. The Academy, in accord with the statewide faculty union contract, offers sabbaticals to full-time faculty members and has been generous in the past in funding travel for conferences. Unfortunately, upcoming constraints on the Academy's budget due to cuts in funding from the state may cause support for travel to be curtailed in the future. There is little support from Massachusetts Maritime for the professional development of adjunct faculty members except for attendance at one local writing-instruction conference.

Standard 5.16 concerns the adequacy and appropriateness of **instructional techniques and delivery systems**, including technology. Massachusetts Maritime has made significant progress in the past few years in upgrading classroom technology, and this process continues. Nonetheless, many classrooms where Humanities faculty members teach have unreliable or unnecessarily complicated technology systems. Presumably, the Academy will remedy this problem over the next few years.

Faculty members are provided with new computers every three years upon request.

Standard 5.17 requires that students be **taught by a variety of faculty** so that they are exposed to differing methods of instruction and viewpoints. Generally, this is the case in the four courses students take in the Humanities Department. After completing *English Composition* in the fall of their freshman years where students are assigned to sections by the registrar's office, students themselves select sections for their courses. Most students have at least two if not three or four different instructors in their four Humanities courses.

Standard 5.18 concerns methods for assessing "**the effectiveness of instruction**." This will be discussed at length in Section 5 of this report.

Standard 5.19 addresses **advising**, specifically requiring that student advisors are "adequately informed and prepared to discharge their advising functions." There are no humanities majors at Massachusetts Maritime, therefore full-time Humanities faculty members have been assigned advising roles for freshmen majoring in International Maritime Business or Emergency Management. Each Humanities faculty member has roughly 16 advisees. As these students progress through the

major, they are given instructors in their major departments as advisors, and the humanities faculty members are given new groups of freshmen each year. This system has worked in the past because Humanities faculty need to understand only the sophomore year the students will be entering, not the details of upper-level courses, coop placements, or job searches. Presumably the workload will be manageable in the future.

Standards 5.21 – 5.23 concerns faculty **opportunities for scholarship**, research, and creative activity. All the Humanities Department full-time faculty members feel they have adequate time for scholarly and creative pursuits, and they are grateful for the Academy's support of these activities.

Standard 5.24 addresses **assessment of institutional effectiveness**. For the Humanities Department, this concerns the effectiveness of our courses in providing students with intended outcomes. This will be discussed in Section 5 of this report: Assessment of Curricular Effectiveness.

4. The Writing Program

The writing program at Massachusetts Maritime has two parts: course work and a testing/assessment program. An overview of our writing program and its requirements that is distributed to students is included as Appendix 6 of this report.

This discussion of our writing program will be divided into the following sections:

1. Overview of Writing Courses

2. *English Composition*: Types of Sections and the Need for an Additional Course

3. *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*

4. Other Upper-Level Writing Courses

5. Writing in Group 1 and Group 2 Humanities Electives

6. The Writing Testing/Assessment Program

7. Additional Support for Students Who Fail to Demonstrate Writing Proficiency

4.1   Overview of Writing Courses

Course work in writing involves at least three of the four courses required in Humanities for graduation. (See Section 1 of this report for an overview of Humanities Department requirements and pages 35-36 of the *2015-2016 College Catalog*):

- *English Composition* in the fall of freshman year

- *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* in the spring of freshman year

- A Group 1 elective literature course sometime from sophomore through senior year.

All of these courses are writing intensive. A research paper is required in *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* and often in other Humanities courses. In bridge (developmental) sections of *English Composition*, we try to hold the class size to 12 students; in regular *English Composition* classes, 18 students; in *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*, 20-25 students. All Humanities courses are taught by individual instructors; there are no large lecture courses with smaller sections. There is not a shared syllabus for multiple sections of a single course, but general departmental guidelines to which all instructors adhere in constructing their individual sections are provided for *English Composition* and *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*. (See Appendix 3.)

The fourth Humanities requirement can be met either by taking a second Group 1 literature course or a Group 2 elective, Group 2 being a catch-all of all the non-literature elective courses offered by the department. Most students fulfill this fourth Humanities requirement with another writing-intensive course, but they are

not required to do so. They may choose to take an introductory language course instead.

4.2 *English Composition*

With few exceptions, the roughly 400 freshmen who enter Massachusetts Maritime each September take *English Composition* in the fall term of their freshman year. An additional 50 students, who generally have started college elsewhere and transferred, are admitted in the spring. All students are assigned to one of three types of sections in this course based on their performance on a placement examination that will be discussed in Section 4.6 below on writing assessment.

1. Roughly 70% of the incoming students (a total of roughly 280 of the 400 incoming students) are assigned to regular sections of *English Composition*. These students are deemed to be typical of college freshmen writers across the country, and this course concentrates on critical thinking, the organization and structure of essays, and the full development of ideas, with some attention to issues of mechanics and grammar in the editing of final drafts of essays. As in all writing courses at Massachusetts Maritime, writing is approached in this course as a process, and significant time is spent helping students develop skill in revising their early drafts into finished essays. Ideally, we hope to cap the class size in sections of this course at 18 students. When sections become much larger than that, insufficient time can be devoted to the individual work with students required to effectively meet their needs in developing writing skills.

2. Roughly 10% of the incoming freshmen (a total of no more than 40 students) are recognized as having strong writing skills. These students are placed in two or three sections of HU-6012, *Advanced Expository Writing*, to provide them with an opportunity to concentrate on developing their skills at a higher level. Ideally, sections of this course are capped at 15 students.

3. Roughly 20% of the incoming students (a total of 80 of the 400 freshmen) are placed in *English Composition* HU-1111 "bridge" sections designed for students who are assessed as under-prepared for college level writing. This intensive writing course is currently capped at 15, although in some cases it has crept higher, to allow for more individualized instruction. We would like to lower this cap back down to 12. Bridge sections are only identifiable as developmental writing sections by members of the administration and the course instructor. Students are not informed of their placement in these sections, and credits remain the same as they are in the standard sections of the HU-1111 course.

In our English Composition courses we face two problems that will be addressed at length in Section 10 of this report, "Current Challenges":

1. Maintaining a small class size in English Composition sections, especially in the bridge sections, so that so that significant time can be spent individually with students helping them develop skills in revision.

2. Most students at Massachusetts Maritime would benefit from a second composition course before they take *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* and other more advanced writing-intensive courses in the college. Adding this second semester of *English Composition* also was recommended as a response to the previous Humanities Department self-study, which was completed in 2010-2011. Nonetheless, it has proved difficult to find space in the overall Academy curriculum for the addition of this course.

4.3 *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*

Although *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* is a writing-intensive course and much of an instructor's time is spent helping students to improve their essays, this course is primarily a literature course devoted to introducing students to ways of engaging with fiction, poetry, and drama; it is not a dedicated composition course. As the course title suggests, the emphasis is on the analysis of ideas presented in the readings rather than on how students are developing their essays, which is where the focus is in *English Composition*.

4.4 Other Upper-Level Writing Courses

Students may choose to complete one of two elective requirements in Humanities by taking a Group 2 upper-level writing course such as

HU-6012	Advanced Expository Writing
HU-6057	Composing in New Media
HU-6060	Creative Writing Seminar: Poetry
HU-6061	Creative Writing Seminar: Fiction and Non-Fiction
HU-6062	Writing in Style
HU-6071	Public Speaking
HU-6072	Business Communications
HU-6073	Technical Writing

4.5 Writing in Group 1 and Group 2 Humanities Electives

With the exception of the introductory language courses in Group 2, all Humanities elective courses require students to write extensively. These courses provide not only an introduction to their specific contents but also additional training in writing essays, and that training in writing is recognized as a significant part of their value in the curriculum.

4.6 The Writing Assessment Program

To graduate from Massachusetts Maritime, students must undergo three parts of an ongoing writing assessment and pass the last two parts. This is in addition to passing all four required courses in the Humanities.

a. They must take a writing placement test to evaluate their writing skills when they enter as freshmen. This test is a timed essay on an assigned topic. The results of this test have a large role in determining their placement in English Composition in the fall term of their freshman years. Other elements in the evaluation are their high school grades in English and their scores on the writing and English components of college entrance examinations. All essays in this placement examination are read independently by two Humanities Department faculty members; if their evaluations differ significantly, a third Humanities faculty member also reads the examination.

b. Early in the second semester of their sophomore years, all students must take a one-hour Writing Proficiency Examination (WPE) in which they again write a timed essay on an assigned topic. These essays again are read independently by two Humanities Department faculty members. A third reader is involved if the first two readers disagree significantly in their evaluations.

If a student fails this writing examination, the student is given feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the essay and then given the option of retaking the examination.

Students who fail this second attempt at the WPE or who do not take it by the end of the semester are assigned to a special writing course, HU-6062 *Writing in Style*. For these students, this course counts as fulfillment of one of their Humanities electives, the one that can be satisfied by a Group 2 non-literature elective. Students must complete this course before taking further testing or submitting their writing portfolio in their junior years.

c. Toward the beginning of the second semester of junior year, students must submit an online writing portfolio through Tasksteam. The portfolio must be 3500-7000 words long and contain at least three essays. One of these must be a 500- to 1000-word cover letter that reflects on the writing process and the strengths and weaknesses of the portfolio. A second must be a research paper demonstrating proper citation style. The third may be any of the following:

   a. A paper from *English Composition* or *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*

   b. An essay from any other courses at MMA, preferably from the student's major. These may include project reports: for example,

i. The Introduction to a Commercial Shipping Project for Marine Transportation or Marine Engineering majors

ii. The Introduction to an intern project for students in all other majors

No collaboratively written compositions may be included, but these essays may be revisions of work that originally was completed for courses.

The portfolios are read independently by at least two Humanities Department faculty members, and again a third reader is involved if the first two readers disagree significantly in their evaluations.

All portfolios are graded using the Humanities Department Writing Assessment rubric. Categories of evaluation are Pass with Distinction, Pass, and Needs Work.

Students whose portfolios are rated Needs Work will be given strategies, including additional course work, for improving their portfolios before resubmitting them. Achieving a passing grade on the writing portfolio is a graduation requirement.

The fact that the required writing portfolios must be presented through the online Taskstream portfolio system with a uniform rubric for all students enables evaluators to analyze all the portfolios by a common standard. Eventually we will be able to use this data to assess the effectiveness of our writing courses in various areas. Taskstream provides not merely a grading method for the portfolios but also an assessment analysis and reporting system for our entire writing program. A more general discussion of our assessment process is given in Section 5.

4.7 Additional Support for Students Who Fail the Junior-Year ePortfolio

Our upper-level writing portfolio requirement is new; it began spring 2015. The recent summer and fall terms were the first and second times we offered HU-6062, *Writing in Style*, the special course for students who fail the Writing Proficiency Examination or the Junior Writing Portfolio. We are already aware that the *Writing in Style* course is not sufficient support for students failing elements of the Writing Assessment Program.

More effective communication with and support from the Writing Resource Center (WRC) will be needed in the future to help support students through the Writing Assessment Process (WAP). Currently, tutors in the center are not familiar with the WAP rubric, and tutor training is sporadic and inconsistent due to the student tutors' time constraints. The Humanities Department would like to make the WRC a centralized resource for students seeking help with Taskstream or with other administrative and technical details about completing the WAP requirements for graduation.

The Humanities Department needs to work more closely with the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs, who oversees the WRC, to improve the training of student tutors and their ability to work effectively with tutees at various skill levels. The department also recommends that a full-time director of the WRC be hired who would report to the Assistant Dean and oversee the general effectiveness of the WRC and its coordination with the Writing Assessment Process and writing-intensive courses throughout the Academy. This will be discussed more fully in section 10.1.d on page 34.

Additionally, students who have not completed *English Composition* (HU-1111) or *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* (HU-1222) at the Academy do not receive direct classroom instruction on the use of Taskstream, which is provided in these courses. These students often require instruction outside of class in the use of Taskstream after they come to the Academy.

Currently, the Writing Program Administrator offers workshops on Taskstream for all students and faculty; however, as our writing assessment program expands, it will become impossible for one person to manage such training. The Humanities Department plans to work with the Writing Resource Center (WRC) so that tutors there can provide more effective assistance to students about using Taskstream and creating their writing portfolios for their junior-year assessment. Tutor training at the WRC, both to enable the tutors to be more effective at helping students with revision of their essays and to assist students in the use of Taskstream technology, is an essential part of the on-going development of our writing assessment program. Only in this way can all students, regardless of the level of writing skill with which they enter the Academy, be provided with adequate support for their successful advancement through our writing assessment process.

5. Assessment of Curricular Effectiveness

Any program that adequately assesses the effectiveness of courses and curricula needs to have at least four elements:

1. The gathering of data over a number of years about how students are engaging with a course and whether they are achieving the course's intended outcomes

2. A method for systematically reviewing this data so that patterns and trends can be identified

3. A method for using the information about patterns and trends to suggest ways in which the course can be made more effective

4. A method for implementing these suggestions in the course and its instructional processes

In the fall of 2013, the Humanities Department introduced the Taskstream ePortfolio System at Massachusetts Maritime. Currently this online system is used as a course assessment tool in *English Composition* and *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*. Students submit their essays through Taskstream, where instructors grade them using a standard rubric that is shared by the entire Humanities Department.

Although we are beginning to gather long-term data, the system has not been in place long enough for us to be able to identify significant learning trends in these courses or places where the courses need to be reconfigured to better meet students' needs. This will be developed over the next few years.

In addition, Taskstream and a uniform rubric are used in the evaluation of all three levels of the Writing Assessment Program: The Writing Placement Test for entering students, the Writing Proficiency Examination toward the beginning of the second semester of the sophomore year, and the Junior ePortfolio, which is submitted in the second semester of the junior year. As we take the assessment program forward, data from these evaluations also will be used in refining and reconfiguring our writing courses.

6. Review of Courses to be Added or Deleted from the Humanities Department Offerings

Few courses have been dropped from the Humanities Department official offerings in the Academy's course catalog since 2010, but six have been added successfully. Many of the recent additions reflect the expansion of the writing program during the past several years.

German 1 and German 2 were added in fall 2011 because of student interest. But that interest faded. We no longer have an instructor for this course, and the department recommends that it be dropped from the catalog.

2010-2011

Added	Dropped
None	None

2011-2012

Added	Dropped
HU-2441: German 1	HU-6043: Spanish Language/Literature
HU-2442: German 2	
HU-5038: Moby-Dick	

2012-2013

Added	Dropped
HU-5039: Detective Literature	None
HU-6056: Brain, Narrative, and the Self	
HU-6057: Composing in New Media	

2013-2014

Added	Dropped
None	None

2014-2015

Added	Dropped
HU-6062: Writing in Style	None
HU-6073: Technical Writing	

2015-2016

Added	Dropped
None	None, however … - German 1 and German 2 should be dropped; the course is not actually offered. - The instructor who taught HU-5022, *Literature and Film*, has retired. We do not yet have a full-time faculty member in place to continue this course. - The instructor who taught HU-5024, *Shakespeare*, has retired. We do not yet have a full-time faculty member in place to continue this course.

7. Accomplishments During the Past Five Years

The major departmental accomplishment during the past five years has been the enhancement of the writing program. This began with the hiring of Dr. Kearney as the Writing Program Administrator in fall 2011. It continued with the hiring of Dr. Grohowski in fall 2015 and the hiring of a new full-time faculty member with a doctorate in writing for fall 2016.

As Writing Program Administrator, Dr. Kearney has put in place the beginning of an Academy-wide writing assessment procedure using the Taskstream ePortfolio system, a uniform evaluation rubric for *English Composition* classes, and Taskstream's data capture technology and automated reporting systems. We still have a long way to go before this system can be used to provide meaningful information to guide the reconfiguration of our courses, but significant progress has been made.

The Humanities Department's second major new initiative during the past five years is the establishment of *Turning Tides*, the Academy's journal of literature and the arts. Dr. Morgan, Ms. Kane, and Dr. Kearney initiated *Turning Tides*, and Dr. Morgan, Ms. Kane, and Dr. Grohowski have continued involvement in overseeing it. The journal provides an ongoing vehicle for student engagement with their own creative abilities in literature, photography, drawing, and painting. The high quality of the publication encourages student involvement. See Appendix 7.

8. Other Department Activities

Dr. Elaine Craghead is president the Massachusetts Maritime Academy chapter of the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA), the statewide union of faculty members in Massachusetts state universities.

Dr. Julie Kearney is the Writing Program Administrator for the entire college.

Dr. James Morgan, Dr. Mariana Grohowski, and adjunct faculty member Ms. Mary Kane volunteer their time as advisors for *Turning Tides*, an undergraduate journal of literature and the arts, which Dr. Morgan, Dr. Kearney, and Ms. Kane were instrumental in launching in spring 2013. See Appendix 7.

Dr. Kathryn Mudgett founded *The Nautilus*, a peer-reviewed professional scholarly journal of maritime literature, history, and culture, in 2010 and continues as its editor. She not only produces a new issue of the journal annually but also organizes occasional maritime conferences to encourage the development of papers for the journal. See Appendix 8.

Dr. Mudgett also oversees the American Studies Minor (See pages 39-40 of the *2015-2016 College Catalog*.) This program has had trouble attracting students. It will be discussed in Section 10 of this report, "Current Challenges."

Dr. Nelson Ritschel, the Humanities Department Chair, for years led the Maritime Players, an undergraduate theatre program in which he directed a play every fall. See Appendix 11.

9. Current Department Strengths and Weaknesses

The department has significant depth in teaching literature. Four of the seven full-time faculty members have doctoral degrees in literature or dramatic literature, and the department offers 18 elective courses in this area. All of these courses are not offered each term, but in a typical term five to seven literature electives are offered, and every literature elective generally is offered once every two years or at least once in three years. However, a long-time Humanities professor who taught literature retired at the end of the spring term in 2015 and was replaced by a tenure-track assistant professor who specializes in writing. As the Academy's enrollment increases from 1600 to 1800 undergraduates in the next few years, we will need to add at least one full-time faculty member to teach literature if we are to maintain appropriate class sizes in our writing-intensive literature courses.

The department is developing strength in teaching writing. A major step forward was taken in fall 2011 when Dr. Kearney began her role as the first Writing Program Administrator at the Academy. In September 2015, Dr. Grohowski, who like Dr. Kearney has a doctorate in rhetoric, joined the department, and a new full-time, tenure-track faculty member who has an appropriate doctorate to teach composition and creative writing will join the department in fall 2016. In addition, Dr. Craghead has a strong background in teaching *English Composition* although her doctoral degree is not directly in this field. All our adjunct writing instructors have Master's degrees and a number have excellent student evaluations in their *English Composition* sections; they are skilled teachers who make a significant contribution to the Academy's writing program.

The department is less suited to offer courses outside of literature and writing. No one in the department has a doctorate in a field traditionally associated with the breadth of the humanities, such as art, music, philosophy, or classics. This is because, with the exception of philosophy taken together with its related areas, such as religion, the curriculum cannot support a sufficient number of courses in these areas to require a full-time faculty member in the department.

Everyone in the Humanities Department recognizes that our offerings in foreign languages are limited to first- and second-semester courses in only Spanish and Chinese and that this is inadequate for a college curriculum. However, improving our foreign language offerings is not a priority for the department at this time, primarily because the structure of the Humanities Department's requirements within the Academy's curriculum creates little demand for advanced language courses. The Academy cannot offer a sufficient number of courses in any foreign language to justify hiring full-time foreign language instructors. We will continue to rely on adjunct faculty and to explore language courses offered through a consortium of Massachusetts State Universities and provided by Fitchburg State University. Our foreign language program will be discussed more fully in Section 10 of this report, "Current Challenges."

10. Current Challenges: Goals for the Next Five Years

Members of the Humanities Department have identified the following areas where the department's programs seem fragile, where they need improvement, or where new initiatives might be undertaken. The discussion of these areas is divided into two parts: Priorities on which the department plans to focus in the next five years and Additional Initiatives, which we continue to be aware of but which we believe are less important for the department's fulfillment of its role within the Academy's curriculum.

Priorities:

1. Continued Support for and Enhancement of the Writing Program
2. Improved Treatment of Adjunct Faculty Members
3. Development of the Curriculum Assessment Systems
4. Development of Online Courses: Analysis of their Role and Effectiveness

Additional Initiatives:

5. Implementation of a Summer Reading Program for Entering Students
6. Development of the Department's Website and Use of Social Media
7. Development of a Department Guest-Speaker Program
8. Evaluation of the American Studies Minor
9. Development of Foreign Language Offerings

Priorities:

10.1 Continued Support for and Enrichment of the Writing Program

Certainly, hiring Dr. Julie Kearney in 2011 as the Academy's first Writing Program Administrator and hiring Dr. Mariana Grohowski, whose doctorate is in English Composition and Rhetoric, as an assistant professor in 2015 provide the department with new and needed expertise in the teaching of writing. This commitment to the department's writing program will be enhanced again next fall when a new tenure-track faculty member teaching composition and creative writing joins our full-time staff. There are, however, additional types of support our writing program needs if it is to be effective in meetings the needs of Academy students.

a. Continue Support for the Bridge Sections in Freshman English Composition.

Our experience over the past years has been that roughly 20% of the students in any incoming freshman class (roughly 80 students) struggle with writing in ways that are fundamentally different from those of their peers.

Shortly after Dr. Kearney arrived as Writing Program Administrator, the Humanities Department developed what we call "bridge" sections in English Composition to address these students' special needs. These sections are

designed to bridge these students from their poor preparation in writing to a skill level that will enable them to function successfully in their college courses. The bridge sections have a smaller class size – ideally 12-13 students – the pace in the class differs slightly from that in regular sections of English Composition, and more time is available for instructors to work one-to-one with students on expressing their ideas clearly in a unified and coherent essay.

Class size in these bridge sections has been increasing recently due to state-initiated budget cuts. Sections in fall 2015 regularly had 15 to 17 students, which makes it impossible for instructors – who typically teach two or three English Composition sections a term often in addition to other courses – to provide the individual attention that students need and deserve to be successful. We hope that the Academy will maintain its commitment to these struggling students by continuing to support the writing course placement process that identifies them and the smaller class size that enables their particular problems with writing to be met effectively.

b. Limit Class Size in All *English Composition* Classes and in Other Writing-Intensive Courses.

In order to meet this goal, we will need a sufficient teaching staff to cover 27-30 sections of English Composition each autumn, assuming the freshman class size continues to grow from 400 students to 450 in 2020. Roughly, these are the class sizes we would like to maintain:

- Bridge Sections: 80-90 students, 7 sections of 12-13 students

- Regular Sections: 280-320 students, 18 sections of 15-18 students

- *Advanced Expository Writing*: 30-40 students, 2-3 sections of 15-18 students

As the freshman enrollment increases to 450 students, in the spring term we will need 22-23 sections of *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*, each ideally with no more than 20 students. For the coming spring term, class size in *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* more typically is 22-23 students.

In general, the increase in undergraduate enrollment from 400 to 450 students in the entering class will require the addition of three sections of *English Composition* in the fall and thee sections of *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* in the spring beyond the number of classes we currently offer in these courses.

The proposed increase in enrollment also will require the Humanities Department to offer two to three additional elective courses each term to maintain a suitable class size in our writing-intensive electives.

This teaching load cannot be met by the current full-time Humanities faculty even after we add an eighth full-time faculty member in the fall of 2016. If class sizes are kept within proper bounds, we will be forced to depend on a significant

number of adjunct faculty members in the Humanities Department. Since continuity in faculty is a benefit both to students and to the faculty members, we hope that the Academy can move toward initiating a full-time lecturer status in the Humanities Department.

c. Make Space in the Academy Curriculum for a Second Semester of English Composition in the Spring Term of Freshman Year Before Students Take *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature* (HU-1222).

Most students who enter the Academy need a second semester of English Composition – the only required course at the Academy where the quality and structure of student writing is the central focus of attention and where instructors provide detailed and time-consuming supervision of student revisions of multiple and varied essays. The addition of this course to the Academy curriculum will increase the total number of Humanities credits needed for graduation from 12 to 15.

This need has been identified before, but it has been difficult to find space in the Academy curriculum for the addition of this course. The department will renew its active exploration of routes to this goal with the administration and the Academy governance committees.

d. Improve Coordination between Academy Classes and the Writing Resource Center

Currently, the Writing Resource Center (WRC) is staffed primarily by student tutors whose quality is not uniformly sufficient; sometimes tutors lack skills to help students who bring their essays to the WRC. We would like to have a full-time position created for a Writing Resource Center Director who would report to the Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs. This WRC Director would be responsible for improving tutor training and for developing plans for making the WRC more effective and for coordinating interaction between the WRC and individual courses. This person perhaps also could teach writing courses in the Humanities Department and participate in the writing assessment program so that this position would be equivalent to full time.

10.2 Improved Treatment of Adjunct Faculty Members

Neither the Humanities Department nor the Massachusetts Maritime Academy controls the contractual arrangements that are made with adjunct faculty members. These arrangements are determined by the state-wide contract between the Massachusetts State University faculty union and the group of state universities.

However, all the members of the Humanities Department and the Academy's administration are well aware of the difficult employment situations adjunct faculty face throughout the country.

At other schools in the Massachusetts State University System, adjunct faculty members often are paid only 50% to 65% of the contractual rate for their first three consecutive semesters teaching; after that adjunct instructors must join the faculty union, and the schools are required to pay them at the contracted salary. Massachusetts Maritime, however, pays adjunct faculty the full contractual rate from their first semester teaching.

The Humanities Department appreciates our administration's commitment to adjunct faculty, and we encourage the Academy to continue to improve working conditions and job security for these colleagues by considering the ideas expressed in "Professional Employment Practices for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Members," a set of guidelines that was adopted by the Modern Language Association in 2011. See Appendix 9.

10.3 Development of the Curriculum Assessment Systems

Since arriving in the fall of 2011 as the Academy's first Writing Program Administrator, Dr. Julie Kearney has put in place an assessment program for the department's core writing courses, *English Composition* and *Analysis and Interpretation of Literature*, using Taskstream, an online portfolio and report-generating system that uses a grading rubric shared by all instructors. (See Section 4.6 above, pages 22-23.) The program is in its early stages, but we are beginning to be able to track student outcomes statistically from year to year using a shared rubric across a number of entering freshman classes. This assessment process needs to be extended to the elective courses in the department:

- This will require the development of new rubrics for assessment in additional courses. These new rubrics can be coordinated with existing rubrics.

- Assessment tools should be coordinated with items in the department's mission statement and statement of learning outcomes.

As Taskstream is used to identify areas where our courses need improvement, we should implement a system for regular review and adjustment of the writing rubric, course guidelines, and course syllabi in response to the assessment data that is being gathered and analyzed. Pedagogical strategies should be developed to address problems that are being identified in student learning.

10.4 Analysis of the Role and Effectiveness of Online Courses

In the past two years, the department has begun offering online courses. Dr. Craghead offers HU-5025 *Shorts Stories* online and Dr. Kearney offers HU-1111 *English Composition.* These courses are in their earliest stages, and further analysis needs to be done to determine their most appropriate role within our curriculum, how they should be developed, and how effective they are. But it is clear that online education will become an increasingly significant part of the Massachusetts

Maritime Academy's course offerings in the coming years, and the department realizes the need to prepare for this development.

Online courses also may have a significant role in how Massachusetts Maritime offers training in foreign languages, as was discussed above. This also needs to be monitored and developed.

Given the fact the Massachusetts Maritime identifies itself so closely with colleges in the Massachusetts state college system and the other maritime colleges in the United States, it seems likely that online learning will evolve here to include courses originating at one school in a consortium and being available for course credit at other schools. The Humanities Department at Massachusetts Maritime may be called on both to originate courses and to evaluate courses originating elsewhere for course credit here. The Humanities Department recognizes the need to prepare for both these roles.

In evaluating online courses and the Writing Assessment Program, the Humanities Department will work with the Academy's Director of Institutional Effectiveness to collect and analyze relevant data.

Additional Initiatives

10.5 Implementation of a Summer Reading Program for Entering Students

The Humanities Department seeks to implement a summer reading program in which all entering students would read a specific book, discuss it in the early weeks of their *English Composition* course in the fall term, and write an essay on it. This would be part of the bonding experience that is so much a part of the two-week orientation with which all entering students engage in the last two weeks of August, and it would provide a common literary topic for all entering students to discuss regardless of the particular *English Composition* sections in which they are placed. See Appendix 10 for a fuller statement of the proposal for this program.

10.6 Development of the Department's Website and Use of Social Media

The Humanities Department website is inadequate compared to the websites of similar departments at other colleges. Too much relevant information is missing from it. The website needs to be enhanced and the department needs to make better use of social media in providing information about department activities.

10.7 Development of a Department Guest-Speaker Program

The department seeks to develop a guest-speaker program where a distinguished speaker is brought to campus each semester and a response to the speaker's remarks is incorporated into course work in various Humanities classes.

10.8 Evaluation of the American Studies Minor

This program, run jointly with the Social Science Department, was begun in 2009 and has had trouble attracting students. Only one student has completed the program since its inception. The Humanities Department needs to work with the Social Science Department to decide whether the program should be maintained. See pages 39-40 of the *2015-2016 College Catalog* for a description of the minor.

10.9 Foreign Language Instruction and Use of Online Foreign Language Courses

Currently, the Academy offers instruction in only two foreign languages, Chinese and Spanish, and instruction does not go beyond the second semester. More needs to be done to offer these two languages at a higher level so that students can obtain a more thorough working knowledge of the languages, but the Humanities Department at Massachusetts Maritime by itself is not in a position to offer this instruction. There is not space in the Academy's curriculum to encourage sufficient demand for upper-level language courses, and therefore hiring full-time language instructors cannot be justified.

It is more likely that language instruction at Massachusetts Maritime will be developed through a consortium of Massachusetts State Universities. Students at Massachusetts Maritime now can take online courses originating at Fitchburg State University in Arabic and Italian. These courses are in their earliest stages and little information is available on their effectiveness. Nonetheless, online courses offered through a consortium of colleges may indeed be the way in which more diverse and sophisticated language instruction develops at Massachusetts Maritime, and the Humanities Department needs to prepare to evaluate and perhaps to implement these systems.