

## Proposal for a Bachelor's Degree in English

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As Snow College seeks to expand its bachelor's degree offerings, a BA/BS in English is a viable and strategic degree to develop, not only because it would address statewide and regional needs, but also because it would enhance Snow College's mission and strategic plan.

**Statewide Initiatives.** As Utah educators, administrators, and policy makers continue to work toward the goal of having 66% of Utah adults holding a college degree or certificate, increased degree opportunities in the six-county region Snow serves would help. According to 2012 U.S. Census data, 29.6 percent of Utahns over the age of 24 hold a bachelor's degree or higher. However, the number in Snow's service area is much lower: the average for the six counties is only 17.8 percent.<sup>1</sup>

**Economic Development.** At the same time that a BA/BS in English would support the push for educational attainment in the state, a degree would also help with economic development in the six-county region and the state. Individuals wishing to study English are much more employable with a bachelor's degree than with an associate's degree, and these students can best be served by offering a locally delivered degree with a much lower cost of attainment.

Perhaps even more importantly, English is a versatile major that helps its graduates think critically, read deeply, research effectively, and write clearly. As central Utah seeks to attract information and composite technology jobs as well as other educational, non-profit, business, and STEM jobs, there will be increased needs for good writers and thinkers, and English majors are prepared in these areas. Because of this, a bachelor's in English would have a strong writing component to train technical and professional writers. Furthermore, this training in writing could be worked into the curriculum in other majors; good writing is a key element of professional training.

**Snow College Mission, Core Themes, and Strategic Plan.** This proposed BA/BS degree in English would support the mission of the college and the newly completed strategic plan. The degree would have three areas of emphasis that students would be able to choose from: Writing for the Professions, Literary Studies, and Cultural Studies.

While the Literary Studies would be a fairly traditional English degree, Writing for the Professions and Cultural Studies would be more innovative and interdisciplinary. As the college develops an integrative model for general education, these two areas of emphasis have the potential to cross disciplinary boundaries and partner with related fields across the campus, and this interdisciplinary work, would also be of great value to English majors. The exact course work in all three areas will be determined at a later date and will depend on faculty expertise and cross-disciplinary partners. Possible areas include folklore, gender studies, environment and culture, writing for STEM, grants/proposal writing, etc. Another cross-disciplinary connection is the potential of English Education as a future degree option. A minor in English could be achieved immediately as a support to other degrees.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/49000.html>

The proposed BA/BS degree would also emphasize quality. The English Department is proud of the learning students achieve in our writing classes, and a key reason for this is that all faculty members teach composition. This is a characteristic that would be maintained in the move to a four-year degree, and we would work to minimize the development of a two-tiered faculty in the department.

This proposed degree would cost relatively little to develop. Members of the English Department have a wide range of specialties, and the department has a high percentage of its faculty holding terminal degrees (six faculty members have Ph.Ds, and it has been relatively easy in recent years to hire strong teachers who hold doctorates; with several impending retirements in the department, we can naturally increase the number of terminal degree holders). Costs would also be low because the degree would have only minimal needs for technology and infrastructure. Furthermore, the plan has the advantage that it could roll out the three areas of emphasis in phases.