**2018-2019 English (PhD)**

**The Assessment**

Under the guidance of the graduate director, officers of the English Department’s graduate student organization (WEGO) conducted focus groups to assess doctoral students’ perceptions of the purpose of and process for dissertations, which relate to multiple program learning outcomes. Focus group participants were current doctoral students at the pre- and post-prospectus stages. They responded to questions about the purpose and format of a dissertation, the support available for writing one, and its usefulness in engaging in other professional activities like publication and job searches.

**The Impact**

WEGO members analyzed and summarized the focus group results, and submitted fourteen recommendations to the department’s graduate committee. The committee has selected five for immediate action, including exploring alternative genres of dissertation writing, clarifying expectations for students, compiling a “graduate student survival guide,” and expanding the scope of focus groups to inform department decisions. WEGO has already begun work on related sections of the student handbook and on a survival guide.

**The Leader**s

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