Program: English Department

1) Have formal learning outcomes been developed? What are they? (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect its majors to have acquired before they graduate?)

English majors at Boston College should demonstrate:

— an ability to write clear, coherent, organized, and stylistically correct papers;
— an ability to close-read, interpret, and analyze texts (including poetic texts);
— a knowledge of literary genres and appropriate use of critical terminology;
— a recognition of the historical specificity of literary works and/or other cultural products;
— an awareness that there are a variety of critical approaches to literary and cultural texts.

2) Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific. (Where are the department’s learning expectations accessible to potential majors: on the web or in the catalog or in your department’s major handouts?)

Department website:

http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/cas/english/undergraduate.html
http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/cas/english/undergraduate/major.html

University catalog (online and print):

http://www.bc.edu/publications/ucatalog/schools/cas/en/undergrad.shtml#program

3) Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes are being achieved more or less well?)

We will determine the extent to which our students achieve these goals through assessment of essays posted by graduating seniors who have been instructed to choose their best analytical paper written in an elective taken in the final year of the major. After posting their essays, senior majors also complete a 10-question exit survey on the assessment website.

An Assessment Committee scores the essays anonymously, using a checklist that reflects elements of our learning goals.
4) Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

The Assessment Committee evaluates the essays in the sample using a scoring checklist. The Committee discusses its findings and sends its report to the chair along with the scoring checklist data and exit survey results. Full discussion is taken up in the department the following semester to decide whether any adjustments should be made to the program.