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A Tale of Two Sides: An analysis into which demographics the English Department attracts and why

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<u>Chapter 1: Who am I?</u>

Growing up, I came from a Latine household in a small apartment in the Bronx, New York. Both of my parents immigrated from Mexico to the United States in hopes of obtaining a better life for me and my brother and the way they knew to do that was through a proper education. They encouraged me to do reading programs in the public library down the block, reading lists in school, and would take me to Barnes and Noble to read so I guess in a sense, majoring in English with a concentration in Literature doesn't really seem too off. Coming into college, I had come in with the notion that I was going to major in STEM or economics, so why English? Literature is unique in the sense that it can highlight one voice or multiple. They can be entirely fiction or based on fact and open up the minds to new realms that one might have not thought of before. That being said, I choose English to be my major, because it allows individuals to have a voice and be heard regardless of where they come from. It allows for those who choose to listen, to find someone they can relate to and create a connection. Furthermore, it's all about communication and how you choose to express yourself which is an incredibly valuable life skill to have. This is something that I have personally struggled with both throughout my academic and social life. When it came to papers, I never fully knew how to be more concise in my writing and in my social life, I dealt with not being able to fully explain my thoughts or emotions. Therefore, I really wanted to work on throughout the course of the major. In trying to find my own voice, I chose the English major and have been able to learn a vast amount throughout the course of it all. I have learned how to analyze texts, discovered literature theory, and how to construct a paper where I don't just summarize a text, but actually look more deeply into it just to name a few. However, one of the biggest lessons of all I learned was how to navigate this major as a student of color.

Even as I write this, I am conflicted to impose that label on myself. In the Latine community, colorism is a very real thing where essentially those with lighter skin complexion are treated differently than those with a darker skin complexion. I myself am a white-passing Latina and figuring out one's identity is already a complex thing enough to navigate, but even more so on a predominatley-white institution. That being said, it is important to note my lighter skin has given me certain privileges that my other peers do not have and in turn, has affected me to be seen differently from them in regards to the campus and thus face less severe different challenges from them because my skin color is not the first thing that people are looking at . One of the first things I was told even before arriving to Trinity's campus, was to be prepared for the racial disparities that exist throughout campus. From student's flags being egged to Heritage month banners being torn down to hateful language being left on a student's dorm, it is easy to see why a student of color wouldn't always feel welcomed or safe on campus.

This feeling of discomfort can be attributed towards having to ask myself the question, am I good enough? I do not come from the same background as many of the white individuals amongst me whom perhaps attended boarding school or had tutors to help them or even had the privilege of having parents with a college education. My parents did their best to help me achieve this opportunity of attending college by encouraging me to do well in school and apply to college programs to get into a good college. Therefore, arriving on campus was already intimidating enough, but walking into a classroom and feeling as if you do not belong, nor have enough support, only furthered this intimidation. Throughout my English major career, I began to notice certain aspects throughout the department and classroom in terms of its demographics. In terms of the layout or structure of the classroom, there would be only two or three more students of color amongst me sitting in the room. I tended to sit towards the front of the room or

amongst the other students of color, leaving the classroom to feel divided at times. When it was time to pair up for class projects or group work, rarely did I ever join a group outside of the students of color and when I did, it would feel uncomfortable at times leading me to feel a disconnect within the classroom.

Furthermore, a large majority of curriculums require texts in order to do the assignments and follow the syllabus. However, while one may not realize it at first, the cost of books can rapidly add up combined with the other required texts from other courses leaving the feeling of financial strain. In order to get my books for class, I would often go to the library in search of them, ask a friend to share their text, find PDF copies online, or ask the professor if I could possibly borrow their text to scan it. In some cases these would work, but in others, where I was not allowed to bring technology into the classroom or couldn't find it in the library, I would do a final resort to the Student Emergency Equity Fund. However, they can take time to review your request and in doing so, leaving me without the texts and already feeling that I am falling behind in class.

Furthermore, one may not realize at first, but having other students of color in the classroom is a major support system. They are the people you can relate to and make you feel comfortable to ask questions as simple as what was the assignment? Overall, they are the ones who help you make it through the course not just as a partner, but as a friend. That being said, social circles at Trinity College are very distinct and not that difficult to ignore. The students of color tend to stick together or at least be familiar with one another in one aspect, so most of my friends are P.O.C identifying individuals. I would see few of them take classes with me but then stop at one English course, or hear that they were once interested in the major but then changed

paths. I also took note that I was the only one familiar with the English department building amongst the people I knew.

The main overall aspect I notice however, was that there was and still is, a big disconnect between the English department, curriculum, major and students of color on this campus. This essentially is my main focus within my independent study and why I choose to focus on this topic - to ensure that steps are taken to implement, or even recognize, that this is a serious issue and one that affects a student of color emotionally, mentally, and academically on campus. That way moving forward, students of color can perhaps feel more comfortable and encouraged to join the English major by seeing that they are individuals they can confide in and relate to. So that they look at the curriculum and feel a connection to not just what they are reading, but also learning.

Chapter 2: Creating the Study

Being that there was - and still is - a large gap between the English department and students of color, I wanted to look into why that is and what the department could do as a whole to help bring in more diversity. In order to answer this question, I began by proposing the idea to my advisor, Professor Fisher, who helped me brainstorm the following plan of action in this order: weekly journals, weekly meetings, creating interview groups and the formats for the interviews, scheduling them, meeting with the librarians, and finally creating a survey to distribute. All these tasks had to be completed by the end of the month of November, so as to allow time for putting it all together throughout the first weeks of December before the semester came to an end, and also to meet with the chair of the department.

Beginning with my weekly advisor meetings, I would go through a run through of my latest progress regarding research and interviews. The weekly journal would go hand in hand with these meetings as I not only put my progress down into writing, but also kept us aware of whether or not we were on track with the timeline we had lined out. It kept myself accountable to ensure the work got done. These meetings were incredibly helpful in the sense that they guided me in which steps I should take next, if I was heading in the right direction, or if there was anything I should edit in preparation for the interviews I was going to be conducting.

In general, with each interview I conducted, I would have them be limited to an hour maximum as I wanted to ensure I had enough time to ask the majority of my questions, but also understood it was difficult to account for a longer period of time with people's busy schedules. Furthermore, anonymity was a key part of my study; at the commencement of each interview, I would ask each individual if they wished to remain anonymous or not. By doing so, it allowed the participants to feel more comfortable to be open and as honest as they could be without fear

of facing repercussions. All the information they disclosed to me could range from academic to personal experiences. Depending also on the participant's location and availability, the interview would be held via zoom or in person, but either way, pending on the individual's permission, I would audioally record the conversation in case I needed to refer back to it in the future. Besides the recording, I also discovered the website Otter.ai, which immediately became an incredibly useful tool to use and one I would recommend to others. Essentially it records and transcribes conversations at the same time and came in great hand with the numerous interviews I then had to conduct.

So why do interviews and not a general survey? I chose to do interviews, because I wanted to hear personally from people's own experiences with the English department, where they could go more into depth with their answers in comparison to a survey where they would just click an answer. In terms of who I wanted to interview, I broke it down into the following groups:

1. P.O.C English majors

2. White English majors

3. P.O.C students who had taken an English course but are currently in another major

4. P.O.C and white professors both from Trinity College and outside universities.

The reason I chose these specific groups was because they are critical to understanding the opposing experiences that occur daily on campus. A white student's experience will not be anything like that of a student of color, thus affecting how they react to a classroom and it's lesson materials. The same goes for professors as well and in turn, can affect how they create and run their classroom. I found that whilst looking for P.O.C individuals to interview, it was not

difficult to find students who would be willing participants in my study. In comparison, it was more difficult to find white individuals as I did not know as many. On one hand, it was alarming for me to see how many students of color did not know other white students in the English department despite us being listed under the same major. One would make the assumption that we would've based on us having to complete the same major requirements or attend departmental events. On one hand however, I was kind of glad that I did not know as many individuals, because it forced me outside of my comfort zone to meet and talk to new students. The same goes for the professors whom I got to interview who were not just from Trinity College, but from Smith College, Binghamton University, and the University of Connecticut - all of which were extremely helpful throughout this entire process by being open and honest about their experiences both as a student and now as a professor. Their eagerness to participate in this study demonstrated to me this was a conversation that has been waiting to happen for a period of time now.

Once I gathered up all the individuals whom I wanted to interview, I began to think about how I was going to interview them and what questions I wanted to ask them. Because there were various participants involved, I created multiple interview formats. The reason I did this was because they each hold a different positionality on campus, making their answers vary based on they're differing perspectives and experiences. In regards to the white student individuals, I was curious to learn how they viewed themselves within a classroom setting and if they are aware of the social discrepancies that exist on just this campus, but nationally and globally. In comparison, for the students of color within the English Major, I was curious to find out if their experience had been at all similar to mine. How did they feel in the classrooms and why had they chosen to go for English? However, for P.O.C students who had taken an English course but not selected it

as their major, I was interested in finding out what deterred them from selecting it as their major. Was it something in the curriculum, an incident with their peers or professor, or something in general with the major?

In terms of the professors' questions, I wanted to structure the questions to focus on their role as the lead of the classroom. As a professor, they are responsible for dictating what the curriculum will focus and highlight. This is critical to be cautious about as the text's material, while informative, can hold underlying racist undertones especially when looking at older time periods. If that is then the case, it can cause a student to feel isolated or uncomfortable. Furthermore, I chose to interview professors, because I wanted to inquire about their own personal academic experience with English as a subject and how that has affected them today in terms of how they choose to teach. Being able to draw professors from different universities gave me the advantage of analyzing how the size and build of the school itself can affect how the major requirements are laid out, what resources are provided to the department, and thus how many students choose to enroll in a particular major. Overall, I wanted to learn about their mission and purpose that they each aim to achieve in their classes, because that is usually what drives the outline of not just their course, but how they teach as a professor and how they work to connect with their students. about how they structured each of their courses to ensure they achieved their purpose with it. For each of these groups, the interview formats will be included in the appendix of this paper, so as to reference the exact questions that I choose to ask each individual group.

Finally, the last crucial part of my study was a survey that I sent out to all of the English Department students. This survey had not been a part of the original plan, but after talking to various students and professors, I began to get ideas for what students may want to see more

moving forward in the future. Furthermore, I also began to get ideas based on what other institutions were doing within their own departments. Even though I had chosen specific individuals for my students, I still wanted to hear from others outside of those I had spoken to, in order to hear from their input and the easiest way to do so was through a survey. Similar to the interview, I also choose to make the survey anonymous to help encourage more participation and people being comfortable to answer truthfully. Upon brainstorming with my advisor, we agreed to make it a short survey, no longer than 5 minutes, and one that would not require lengthy responses to further encourage participation. In this survey, the questions ranged from the design of the building to the structure of the syllabus. In addition to the interview formats, I will also have the survey link and questions listed.

Looking at areas of improvement with the study for the future, I quickly encountered the issue of not being able to get into contact with alumni for their perspective throughout the years. I did not have their number to get into contact, nor had their email anymore, thus leaving me with no option but to remove them from my study. Furthermore, I quickly realized that each set of interview formats were slightly lengthier than I had originally planned them out to be. Thus not giving me enough time during the interviews to ask all the questions I wanted to. In the process of the interview, I would see the topic or direction the interview was heading towards and used questions that continued it. However, having gone through trial and error for the duration of 3 months, I was able to conduct my study and achieve some results that I will be going over in the next portion of the paper.

Chapter 3: The Results

As I come towards the end of my study, in this following chapter I will be compiling and analyzing the results that I obtained from the interviews I conducted from both students and professors regarding their experience within the English department and major. Some of the participants have chosen to remain anonymous, but that allows them to share their story and opinion honest and openly. It will also allow for one to do a comparison analysis of their responses and look at any similarities or differences that exist within them. In doing so, my goal is that one can look at what changes or additions people want to see be implemented throughout the department in the near-by future. As I go through the interview groups, I will be going in order of the formats that are listed in the appendix above.

For the category of students of color who are English majors, I was able to find two students who were willing to be interviewed, and who have both asked to remain anonymous. I was really interested in learning more about why they chose English as their major and what their general experience had been like. In order to do so, I wanted to hear more about their educational background prior to coming to college to see if that had had any affect or influence on their experience with English. The first individual described their experience with literature being more focused on the analytical side. Aside from being read to by their grandmother from a young age, it was the process of reading more closely into a text and engaging in group discussions during class that began their interest in English. For the second individual, it was their English highschool teachers who had left an impact on them, even going on to influence their career path for the future stating "I wasn't even thinking about English as my main passion or drive until like freshman year maybe. I had this one teacher who was just really engaging. I remember her just talking about real life stuff..it just felt like a very inclusive space and looking

at English and Educational studies, I wanna be a highschool teacher". This just goes to show how impactful teachers can be on their students based on the relationship that they work to create with them. They can inspire them on what path and interests they will decide to pursue in the long run, so what other factors made these two individuals choose English as their intended major?

For the first individual, it was after taking Professor Wyss' course during their first-year at Trinity that solidified their decision to declare English. Aside from Professor Wyss' teaching style, her course allowed this student the opportunity to continue engaging in group discussions and analysis of the text which is what they truly enjoyed doing. For the second individual, it was taking a step back to look at their educational strong suits stating:

"The idea just came through my mind in teaching…with English, I like writing. I know I'm good at English, specifically writing, like I really enjoy writing and helping people with their essays…and then also, with that too you can teach kids the ability to develop their own personal narratives, and I feel that's one of the biggest things about writing in general. It's just such a great opportunity for kids to express themselves and I feel there is just such a power with words - having that confidence to express yourself and put yourself out there".

Language in itself plays a powerful role in everyone's day-to-day life. It is what helps one to communicate and express themselves and so this is what really drew in the second individual to the English major. Combined with their passion for teaching, helping others learn more about their writing skills in order to help them at the same time with their confidence. In doing so, it helps them to find and share their voice with others whether that is verbally or through writing.

Looking at their experience as a whole throughout their course in the major, there have been some challenges, but equally great aspects that they have encountered. One great side to the major the first individual describes is the dedication of the professors within the department not

just about their course but about their teaching and encouragement of their students as well. They stated, "They want to see you do well and therefore they are willing to put in the effort to make comments on your paper that are constructive and will really help you become a better writer". The second individual also added on saying "For every English professor I've met, it's been nothing but positive engagement". These are the qualities that make professors stand out to the students - not just being willing to be critical and encouraging of one's academic work, but also willing to create a personal connection with students and getting to know them better. However, when it came down to their relationship with their fellow peers, the first individual went on to state, "I can say I'm usually the only black person in class". This student personally has encountered uncomfortable situations during their time in the major stating:

"Sometimes people have racial blind spots and that becomes very apparent through discussions and I think it's very difficult for a person of color to navigate that, because one you are a student obviously, and then two, when your professor says something racially insensitive, what are you supposed to do…like do you say something or do you let it be? but that means hurting yourself".

In specific, this student was referring to an incident that occured in class when a professor said the N-word, thus letting white student individuals feel that they could say too. This dynamic shows how students follow the professor's lead and so both students and professors alike must be cautious about the language they use, because it could be racially insensitive and harmful towards a student of color's experience and level of comfort in a classroom. This student however, was able to talk after class to the professor about the incident, and they were very honest and understanding about their mistake, reassuring the student this would not occur again, but still - it had already left a mark on their general experience within the major.

Moving onto the next group, it focused on English majors who identify as white student individuals. The structure and layout of their interview questions were purposefully made to be similar to the format of students of color English majors. The reason being that I wanted to see how two groups who are set up to have the same expectations and requirements for the major, can end up going through an entirely different experience. This interview group consisted of two individuals likewise - Jane Fantozzi and an individual who has chosen to stay anonymous. Similar to the students of color, both of their previous experience with English was due to being a part of the classroom setting in high school. It wasn't so much reading for enjoyment, but rather part of a requirement. However, both enjoyed the group discussions aspect that gave them the opportunity to gain further insight into the text with the help and engagement of their peers. Additionally for Jane, literature had also been a part of her life since a young age, saying. "My mother was a first grade teacher and is now a librarian, so lots of books were always around, reading was really important. My parents read to me before I read to myself, so it was only a natural progression to just get really into books". So how have these past experiences affected this time now in the major? Jane spoke more about this in terms of the professor to student relationship stating, "I think English classes are hard to run because they rely on the students, but if the whole class isn't engaged, then I feel like I'm dominating because I talk so much in class and I feel like a jerk, so it's a weird balance you have to strike". Here she points out again to the fact that the professor is the one leading the class and while students are meant to engage, they are not meant to guide the conversation. Students look to the professor not just on the material they are learning, but how they are learning it as well.

In terms of their general experience throughout the course of the major, they too have faced challenges, but different to those the students of color described. Jane recalled back to a

time when reading a book for class made her, among her other classmates, feel uncomfortable. She described the experience by saying:

"We read this book called 'The Vegetarian', and there was some upsetting content in it, so upsetting that when I talked to my friends about it, honestly I don't think you should read it…it's a disturbing book, it's not worth your time. There's an inappropriate scene of assault and I told my professor I don't think it's appropriate or respectful or kind to put that in a book".

This incident shows how her concerns focus more on what is being taught and how it can be triggering and sensitive for some students so should it really be being taught? In that sense, it disrupts her feeling respected and comfortable within the classroom. Furthemore, for the second individual, their answer to the question of "do you think English classes are diverse enough?" was:

"things have been diverse, but not diverse enough. Like the class I'm in right now, the Shakespeare class, there is one student of color in the class and there's also a good amount of men in the class. Which is kind of nice because I think people assume English is for women, but at the same time, because they are men, they think that they can dominate the conversation, but I think it's pretty equal".

Their answer intrigued me because while it looks at the racial diversity within the classroom, they answered that part briefly and rather focused more on the gender diversity within the classroom. This is not to say gender cannot be an area of marginalization as well, but that is not the focus of this particular question. Thus, their response signals to me that their area of concern lies in a more gender and feministic area, not a racial one. That being said, both students pointed out two large areas of challenges and concerns within the department, but both responses

were very different to what the students of color had pointed to because theirs was more on racial tensions within the classroom itself.

Beside the English major students, I really wanted to hear from the students of color who had taken an English course, but ultimately had chosen another major. Why or what made them steer away from English? For this group, I interviewed 5 individuals who were all sophomores or above in terms of their class year. Their majors ranged all around from Sociology, Women and Gender Studies, Political Science, and Educational studies. However, they had each taken at least one English course that I got to hear their experience about. Equally as the past interview groups, I asked those involved in this one about their educational background prior to coming to college and their current major now. However my main question was why had they opted out of the English major? For one individual, it was because she felt a lack of representation within the course material and peers that surrounded her. She stated:

"English 260 made me change my idea of literature that was offered …it was very small, like 6-5 people, and they were all white. Even the content I think I just checked out because it was poetry, reading, things like that but it was very white like authors. I looked at all the other classes that were offered and you didn't really see latino literature or anything like that and I wasn't going to make myself go through being in a classroom where I couldn't relate to what I was reading…when I was in that class for that intro, I remember everyone in that class literally had read the readings we had before and it was because of their high school. It just made me feel like I was behind in every single class".

This response is something that the majority of students of colors experience and relate to- the feeling of imposter syndrome. Essentially this means feeling like you do not belong or are not as competent as others perceive you to be. As a student of color, you want to be able to walk

into a space and not just relate to the material that is being taught, but also understand it. It is crucial for professors to not make the assumption that all students have the same education background or at the same level. In doing so, it can be harmful for students who do not, because it leaves them feeling constantly behind in a class, overall affecting how well they perform academically.

Furthermore, another incident that occured within the classroom setting that made a student feel uncomfortable had to do with the Churchill institution. For some background context, the Churchill institution was made up of a group of students who believed that Western ideologies were superior to those over others and many on campus, specifically students of color, viewed this as supporting white supremacy. In trying to get established as a formal organization on campus, there were various protests and town halls to oppose this and not let it happen. For this same individual, they described an instance in their class when they felt isolated by their professor at the time who brought up this situation stating:

"Going back to the churchill thing, one time we were having class and I remember I came in and I sat down and everyone was talking about it and then, but Professor [N/A] said let's get this out of the way and talk about what was going on in SGA and all those things and he said I think they should just let the club happen…but then he said '[N/A] what do you think?' In that moment, I was like no, they did not single me out and that made me feel very small and like I can't do this"

In a classroom setting, where there are already majority white students, it can feel lonely as it is, but being singled out like that, only further intensifies that feeling. Furthemore, by just saying "they should just let the club happen", especially knowing what the club meant for students of color, reveals the professor's beliefs and ideologies which in this case, was not a

positive one. Looking more into it, students of color often face personal or difficult situations which in turn can affect their academic grade and performance. For another student, they mention how two specific professors ended up reaching out to him, because they began to notice a pattern evolving. They stated, "Both with [N/A] and [N/A], we had talks at the end of semester. I'm really bad at like talking to professor about what I'm going through as I'm going through it, it's always like an after the fact thing, so after I turned in that really bad final for [N/A], we convened and talked about everything that was going on in my life, and they understood why I was performing the way that I was as a student and it like I really really appreciated that conversation, I just wished it happened earlier".

Being able to have this conversation on what's going on in your personal life and how it is affecting you not just mentally and emotionally, but academically now is often not an easy one. This is another reason why it is so crucial for professors to establish a positive relationship with their students, because it allows them to feel like they can talk to them. In cases like this, feeling like you can disclose and talk to your professor about personal issues that could be affecting your academics, brings a sense of confinement and reassurement.

The following three groups that I interviewed were professors - both of color and non-P.O.C. For professors of color, I was only able to obtain an interview with two within the department who have both chosen to remain anonymous. As stated previously, the purpose of their interview was to see how their background prior to becoming a professor has influenced their teaching today, and also what it means to be a professor of color in a predominantly white institution. Similar to students of color, one professor expressed also feeling alone at times within the department stating:

"I think just feeling isolated, not knowing who your allies are and feeling like, particularly in English that has such a heavy British component to it. I felt like 'you're the only one who can teach this class' and I like teaching the literature I teach. I feel a sense of commitment to it…but there's a tension between people saying anyone can teach that. No actually, I have a degree and I studied but also you have to teach it or it's not going to get taught. You have to get support from across campus and other faculty, and you often don't have time".

Therefore, when it comes down to certain courses that focus on marginalized communities, there is already a limitation on how many are available to take as there is. These types of courses should be taught by someone with a similar background because they are the ones who understand first-hand the importance of talking and teaching about it. However, by saying just anyone can teach this particular type of course, is to devalue the positionality and perspectives of those not just within the material, but of the students of color as well because it brings in the "White Savior Complex". Essentially as a white individual, you are teaching about something that you have no personal relationship to, and thus cannot truly understand it to teach it to others who do, in the first place. Therefore, when creating new curriculums that focus on authors of colors, that also means hiring professors of color who are qualified to speak on the subject matter.

Throughout this semester, it is equally critical to look at the fact that Trinity College has recently hired 10 professors of color across the board this past year, putting more of focus on diversifying the department which is a great first step, but was certainly not been an easy one to achieve. An anonymous professor stated:

"It was hard, we still got pushback 'we want the best candidate' you know that language that's coded as often as we want someone more like us, but there were definitely people in the

department who were supportive of it, actually I learned a lot about my colleagues in these searched and feeling a lot more supported than I did at first, because it like a transitional moment, you gotta take advantage of it now".

I was personally fortunate to meet a few of the running candidates for the position and see first-hand the excitement of students about their arrival to campus. They each had something new and incredible to bring to the department, but what does it mean to be the best? One must be cautious of the language being used to describe a potential candidate or an ideal one in this case, because oftentimes, that it can be disguised under coded language. To use code language means to replace terms describing racial identity with race-neutral terms that have hidden or undercover racial animosity. One can do this without even knowing it, but in doing so, it reveals their unconscious biases. Thus with the new professors of candidates coming in, it is important for students, professors, and administrators alike to be cautious of the language that they use towards them.

My next interview group consisted of white individual professors within Trinity, for which I was able to interview three individuals. Based solely on these three interviews, it quickly became apparent how much the professors in the English department care about their students and building a relationship with them to ensure that they feel safe in their classroom. For Professor Hager, who is also currently the chair of the Department, he does so by including an interview component within his curriculum. Essentially, students each get a turn to sit in the front of the classroom with him, and in an interview style, discuss the book they are reading at the moment because in a subtle way, it ends up connecting back in a personal manner to the student. Professor Hager recalled a time when:

"I once interviewed a student…about this chapter in Mobey Dick and Mobey Dick as you might know has no women in it, it's all men who are on a ship, it has sort of these homoerotic elements and parts in it and this interview with this one young man, I didd't see this coming actually but… he opened up about talking about what it was like to be gay on Trinity campus…it was a really rich conversation that I'm gonna guess that student remembers to this day".

It is aspects like these that are a part of class curriculums that make the course memorable for the students and professors alike. It allows for those within the setting to get to know each other more, whilst also learning about the text at the same time. Furthermore, Professor Hager explains more as to why it is important for his students, and students in general, to take literature courses stating, "It's really important to me that students start to learn that studying literature is a really great way to engage with the world, socially, politically. That if you are a person who cares about making a difference in the world…English can be very good for that".

From the second professor's interview, it was clear that both them and Professor Hager have a well-rounded understanding on what goes on in their classroom and what it means for students. They stated "students will see something that you don't see, and I always feel that when you leave class you either leave like this is the best job in the world or I just failed utterly and completely". This self-awareness is what can often make a professor stand out to students. Being able to know what is and isn't working for their course is crucial in ensuring the students are responding well to the curriculum and the way it is being taught. Unfortunately, professors do not really tend to know what is happening outside of the classroom stating, "I don't often know about these things [racial incidents on campus]. What largely galvinzies students is living on campus and experiencing things together that don't always trickle into the classroom. So sometimes I learn about these things accidentally and it's always a little surprising to me how

much I don't know". Not knowing what goes on within the college's environment can then impact how these issues are discussed, if at all, because the professor may not know what is going on in the first place. They should be made equally aware of the situations, because then it allows them to know that some students may be facing a difficult time that day, and in turn, can affect their academic performance. However, this is also ultimately on the college's administration to let the professors be aware of the situation so that they can be ready to handle it and discuss it if need be.

Finally, the last interview group focuses on professors, both of color and non-POC, outside of Trinity College. Being that Trinity is a small liberal arts college, I wanted to see if this disconnect could also partially be due to the size and resources of the college. Therefore, I reached out to individuals at institutions such as University of Connecticut and Binghamton University, which hold a large student population, as well as Smith College whose population in comparison is very similar to Trinity's. Professor Millington over at Smith College, who identifies as a white professor, was able to share statistical data regarding the demographic makeup of the current English majors. He shared that "students identifying as "White" made up around 80% of our majors in 2011-13; in recent years this proportion has been in the low 60% range. Among particular demographic groups, there's some year-by-year fluctuation. Among our graduating seniors from the class of 2020, 9% identified as Black, 15% as Latinx, and 2% as Asian American". Furthermore, that "international student majors in 2020 were 9%; that number also jumps up and down fairly randomly. It does seem to me that our introduction of a creative writing "emphasis" has led to a gain in students of color majoring in English". These numbers to me were interesting, but not surprising. I was intrigued by the fact that the numbers tend to fluctuate constantly making me wonder what their professors and curriculum structure is like.

However, it is important to note that their addition of creative writing "emphasis" has led to an increase in English students of color majors. With the new professor of color coming into the creative writing department, I am curious to see if this will also encourage more P.O.C students to become interested in the major.

Furthemore, the professor at UCONN, who themself identifies as Black, brought up the importance of studying BIPOC literature stating:

"literature played a big part in forming that identity literature is such a big part of the history of African Americans so I would tell them that just recognizing when you study Black literature, you're really are studying a lot about Black history and about Black politics and even political speeches from Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Angela Davis, there's a long history of black radical thought that can be traced through these speeches so it's just so important to study these words that have been spoken and written by Black Americans because so much of our history is contained in those words".

With the rise of Black Lives Matter, it is more important than ever to spotlight and give space for Black voices to be recognized. By doing so, it allows for more discussion on the current national and global issues that marginalized communities are facing today. This professor also brought up an interesting new way to look into BIPOC literature by describing a course where the speeches of notable Black figures through history are studied and analyzed. Ranging from Malcolm X's addressing police brutality to Toni Morrison's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, there is a large array of issues and accomplishments covered in this course.

Lastly, the professor at Binghamton University, who also ironically attended Trinity, and identifies as a professor of color, spoke about the importance of ensuring that students don't just stop learning once they leave their classroom, but take that knowledge and put it to use in today's

modern society. To not just observe the injustice that is occurring, but be able to have a conversation about it because to stand by and stay silent is the equivalent to doing nothing at all. Part of ensuring students receive the proper knowledge to do so is by asking questions, so at the beginning of each class, they leave room for any questions students may have and reassuring them that there is no such thing as a bad question. This simple act not only allows for students to have more clarity on the material, but feel comfortable enough to ask for help thus establishing trust between themselves and the professor which is another critical element in any classroom in general.

Overall, all these interviews were enlightening to see both from the student and professor perspectives. It displayed how they have all had variations in their experience within English not just as a department, but subject as a whole. Based on these interviews, I was able to get an idea on what students want to see more within the major based on what they felt was missing in the first place. Furthermore, gain ideas from outside universities that can be brought over to Trinity College. In the following chapter, I will be delving more into these ideas and proposing the more specifics of them so they may be considered to be instituted within the department.

<u>Chapter 4: Conclusions</u>

_____As I mentioned in the beginning, the purpose of this study is to acknowledge that there is a large detachment between students of color and the English department on campus. This study serves as a start to the discussion that we, as a community must have. In doing so, we can look at what changes should be instituted within the curriculum, department, and building in order to encourage more participation and engagement from students of color and thus, bring in more diversity and inclusion. That being said, this following section will focus on potential proposals that would take steps focused on working on this issue. The ideas being proposed stem from the interviews I conducted over the month of November and results from the survey I distributed towards the English student majors. Based on these two, it will reveal what individuals are interested in seeing be changed or added to the major, as well as what the structure behind instituting these ideas would look like, in hopes of them taking place in the near-by future.

Beginning with the curriculum, within any course structure, every student starts out by receiving a course syllabi which serves as their first impression on what they will be learning and discussing in the class. Being that literature can cover a range of topics, there can be some areas that are some may consider to be sensitive. After talking to Professor Brown and learning that he himself at one point utilized trigger warnings in his syllabi, it seemed like an interesting idea to bring into Trinity. This was one of the main essential questions that I had not just during the interviews, but in the survey as well. 9 out of 16 students voted above a 5 on a scale rating from 1-10 that they would be interested in seeing this be implemented within English course syllabi. Furthermore, not a single student who was interviewed was opposed to this idea either. Going back to Jane's experience with the text titled, "The Vegetarian", she agreed that trigger warnings would be a great addition to each course. It would help avoid putting any student in a position

where they feel they aren't just being disrespected, but also made uncomfortable. This idea was also brought up to the professors who were interviewed and a key point that was brought up was *how* would the trigger warning be structured within the syllabus itself. Would it be for each individual reading? Would students be able to be excused from the class on a particular day that they find the material to be triggering? The answer to these questions is a tricky one, because it would be more dependent on the professor and their individual design and layout of their courses. I do believe however, that adding trigger warnings, whether it be in the general description on what the course is going to cover or for each individual book that is going to be discussed, would be helpful in alerting students what is to come so that they may be prepared mentally and emotionally. When it comes down to whether they should be excused or not from class on a particular day due to the triggering content, that would ultimately have to be a discussion between the student and professor, if they feel comfortable enough to have that conversation in the first place. However, in implementing this, it helps create a more intimate and understanding relationship between the students and professor. One where it demonstrates to the students that the professor cares and prioritizes the student's mental well-being which for a student, can be the difference in how well they participate and do in the class.

In addition to adding trigger warning to syllabi, another matter that must be discussed is the availability and accessibility to required course texts. Oftentimes, professors assign 1-2 required texts per course. However, a Trinity student is required to take 4 courses minimum to be considered a full-time student. With the 4 courses totaled together, the price of the required texts can rapidly add up. Students may deter from taking an English course because of this, but a possible solution would be to provide course packets with the readings. By doing so, it would eliminate the fear and anxiety of students who do not have the sufficient financial needs to

purchase the texts. Rather it would encourage them to stay with the class and allow them to stay up to date with it and the assignments. Now, creating course packets for every individual English course or student may not be plausible, but a way to manage this efficiently would be to create an application or request form for students with financial needs, who can fill it out and submit in order to be eligible for this course packet. Students should not have to worry about whether or not they will be able to afford the necessary texts and materials for school so by the English department being willing to accomodate with their needs, it demonstrates to the students that they are understanding of their personal situation for which there are no words to describe how much this is appreciated. Furthermore, another possible solution to this would be creating a communal library within the English Department. If professors have spare copies of books, they can leave it there for students to check-out and borrow for the semester. Likewise goes for other students who may have taken a particular course in the past and still have their texts for it. Rather than just letting the books sit in their room, they could give them away so that other students could use them. Furthermore, based on the survey, 14 students voted above a 5 out of 10 that they would like to see more course packets be distributed and likewise, all the students from the interviews expressed interest in seeing this be instituted.

In regards to the English department building, many have expressed a desire to see it become more of a place where they can study and work. It is rare for a department on campus to have their own space, yet alone a building, so this gives the English Department the opportunity to make it into a space that is more than just offices and classrooms. Not many individuals visit the building as it is aside for attending class, going to office hours, or visiting the writing center. By making it more of a common space, it will attract more students of all backgrounds to come and take advantage of the building, whilst also learning more about it. In order to begin making it

more of a common space, a community mural could be installed within the building. Currently on campus there exists an organization by the name of NEST artists, which consists of student artists on campus from all backgrounds, but is mostly run by students of color. They have experience in various forms of art, but are largely known for their painting and design. Being a newly established organization, they have already made a name for themselves through the various murals they have been commissioned to complete throughout campus including the Underground Coffee House, La Eracra cultural house, and Trinfo Cafe just to name a few. Each of which have been significant because it has been a collaborative process between the student artists and the community to properly represent them. The mural could put an emphasis on more authors and literary figures of color to not just highlight them as critical figures of literature, but also to give students of color more representation within the building. Based on the survey, not a single response said that they would be against this idea, but rather feel it would be "enriching" and "add a greater appeal to the department building". By adding a mural in the English Department building, it will not only help to bring in more students of color, but students in general to come who utilize the English Department building as a common space where they are constantly welcomed to visit.

Finally in looking at the overall department, this means looking at the major requirements, professors, and social media outlets. At the moment, the English major requires for students to complete a survey course, ENGL 260, a 100 or 200 elective course, two 300/400 courses focusing on literature before 1700, 1700-1900, and after 1900, a 300/400 level elective, and a critical reflection course. In my personal experience, out of these 9 requirements, I have only taken two courses that were taught by a professor of color and three that focused on either authors of color or Indigenous literature. When speaking to students, they brought up that they

have yet to see a course that focuses on LGBTQ+, Asian-American, or Latin-e authors and literature. Furthermore, there is only really one course that highlight BIPOC authors, but these type of courses tends to place a focus on slavery. Thus, it centers on the trauma of Black individuals, but not on any of their accomplishments that have occurred since then. As a student of color, sometimes the last thing you want to hear is the traumatizing history of your people and community, but rather celebrate them. Therefore, I propose for more curriculums that highlight P.O.C or BIPOC authors and literature to be created and to make it a requirement to take a minimum of one of these courses. 12 students out of 16 voted above a 5 on the scale of 1-10, expressing their interest in seeing this take place. One student of color who had opted out of the English major stated they wanted to see, "More professors teaching non-traditional courses…I've dreamt of a Asian-studies course, there is like one that technically is, but it's listed under American Studies…but I would love it if students could pick more courses that would benefit them directly towards their identity". Thus, by creating and emphasizing students to take these types of courses, it allows not only for these marginalized voices to be heard, but also for students of color to see more representation within the department. They can take classes to learn and read from authors that they can relate to and thus, connect to on a more personal level. In seeing a course they can relate to, it will bring in a more diverse range of students.

In talking about marginalized communities and authors of color, white individuals may not know how to go about this in fear of saying something wrong. A solution on how to help them navigate this is by making it a requirement for all professors and administrators in the English department to undergo diversity, equity, and inclusion training. As students enrolled in Trinity College, we are required to do so when we first enter the college. Therefore, professors and administrators should be expected to do the same because it should not be the job of a

student of color to educate white student individuals, professors, or administrators. By taking this training, professors and administrators alike will know how to properly discuss literature that focuses on marginalized communities and the social issues they are currently facing. Moreover, there have been racial incidents that have occurred throughout campus these past years and so this type of training will help to teach professors and administrators alike how to discuss it whether it is giving a space in their class to talk about it or a student personally coming to them in private. By acknowledging the situation and what has occurred, it tells students that the incident will not just be brushed under the rug and ignored. Rather, it creates a safe space for students to discuss how they felt, if they feel comfortable to do so. 14 out of 16 students voted above a 5 on a scale of 1-10 to have this training be implemented within the department. Implementing this training would aid professors and administrators to have the necessary knowledge on how to discuss literature and issues of communities of color.

One cannot also forget to look at social media. Nowadays, it is rare to find an individual who does not have some form of social media whether that be Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Currently at the moment, the English department has an Instagram account with 440 followers, where they highlight events, professors and student achievements, author readings, and more. That being said, I have found that not many students, both inside and outside the English major know about what is going on within the department. Because of this, I propose the department hire a student to help run the social-media account. All throughout campus, this position can be found being occupied by various offices and organizations. Furthermore, students are constantly not just looking for a way to be more involved on campus, but for jobs as well. This position's responsibilities would include the following:

1. Creating the posters and flyers for events

2. Going to the events to take pictures of it and promote it online

3. Creating interactive ideas to engage with others via social media

4. Providing a general promotion of what is currently going on within the English department

By creating this position, there would be multiple benefits attached to it; first, it encourages more students to look into the English department. If they wish to run the social media account, they first have to know what the department is about and what it stands for. Second, it would be providing a job opportunity, which oftentimes students of color look for on campus to provide an extra means of economic support. Jobs on campus can be difficult to come-by, being that job postings are not usually updated on Handshake. To obtain a job, one usually has to know someone personally or hear about it through word-of-mouth. Moreover, this job would provide extra experience for an individual to include it on their resume when looking for an internship or post-graduate career. Third, more organizations would be able to connect with the English department. Social media specialists for organizations often tend to share their flyers with others through Instagram and vice versa, creating a connection between the two and more promotion at the same time to drawing in a larger crowd for their events. Looking at the results of the survey, 68.8% of the participants said that they would be interested in this position, signaling to the fact that there would be applicants eager to apply.

Additionally to creating a connection via online, there is also the matter of creating a connection with the local Hartford community. Over the years, the college has dealt with the issue of feeling divided from the local Hartford community that surrounds it. Largely a Latinx and Black neighborhood, Frog Hollow has gotten a reputation for being a "bad neighborhood" and "dangerous", causing students - particularly white individuals - to not want to engage with it.

Certain courses, however, promote more engagement with the community by partnering with community-based organizations and this is something students want to see occur more. From my own personal experience, I was able to engage more within the community by taking Prison Literature, which partnered with the Judy Darwin's Performance Project. This partnership made the class feel more than just about analyzing literature, but actually about seeing how the issues and topics being discussed in the text affect real-life individuals on a day-to-day basis. It gives a greater and deeper meaning to the course and what we learn from it. Based on the results from the survey, there are various organizations both on and off campus that students want to see the English department partner with including Mutual Aid Hartford, Hartford Public schools, Womens and Gender Resource Action Center. To further work to connect with the community, both inside and surrounding Trinity, I encourage the English department to collaborate with more cultural organizations on campus such as La Voz Latina, Asian American Student Association, Men of Color Alliance, Trinity College Women Black Organization, etc. These organizations are constantly hosting events that highlight their culture and looking for partnerships on campus. By collaborating with these organizations who are largely run by students of color, it allows for students to get to learn more about the English department and vice versa. It demonstrates to them that they have the department's support and can equally learn a thing or two from one another.

Lastly, when it comes down to it, one must ultimately enter the real world after graduating from college and that means getting a job. Whilst Trinity currently has a Center for Student Success and Career, and the English department holds alumni panels, I found that the majority of the students whom I interviewed have no awareness about when they occur. Because of this, I propose creating a mentorship program between current English majors and Trinity

English alumni. This program would aim to create a better bond between current students and alumni who can share advice based on their own past experience to those looking to enter a similar career field that they are in. Professor [N/A] informed me during their interview, about a binder that used to exist within the English Department building with the contact information of past English majors. They stated, "For a long time, the department collected information from alums who were dropped in different professions, people said I am willing to network with English department alums and you could go and look at this thing…they were grouped by professions and were all over the place". However, it is no longer being updated, nor do students know about it or where it is in the building. This database where the information of alumni are stored should be continued to be updated because with obtaining a job, networking is everything. The alumni who have been fortunate to find their career path could continue to be a part of the Bantam community and give back by helping soon-to-be graduates find a job or internship opportunity. They would understand firsthand what this struggle is so by mentoring current students, it would go to show the support from the department goes beyond just the professors, but from the alumni as well.

In conclusion, I set out in the beginning of this study to answer what is creating a disconnect between the students of color and the English department. However, as I reach the end of the study, I learn that this answer is not an easy one to pin down; it is not directly affiliated to just one aspect of the structure of the major, but rather a blur of multiple. This is not to place the blame on specific individuals, but rather recognize where we stand in terms of diversity within the English department and acknowledge that there needs to be a push for more. To do so, change will be necessary within the department, curriculum, and building. While steps have begun to be taken to increase the number of students of color within the major, there is still

much more that can be done. In the end, my hope is that the proposals mentioned above will be taken into consideration so that we as a community can work towards creating an environment where students from all backgrounds will be encouraged to participate, engage, and hopefully even major in English. This study would not have been made possible without the help of my advisor, Professor Fisher, and the individuals who allowed me to interview them. Their endless support, honesty, and voices are deeply appreciated and only the start to this significant and crucial dialogue.

Appendix

==1A. English Major Student (P.O.C Student)==

- **Background Information**
    - Name:
    - Year:
    - Major:
    - Ethnicity:
    - Where are you from?:
- **Education BEFORE College (*Highlight answer down below*)**
    - Did you read a lot of literature during your childhood/upbringing?
    - Highschool
        - Public
        - Private
        - Catholic
        - Boarding School
        - Homeschool
    - Have you taken English classes before college? (*Highlight answer down below*)
        - YES / NO
            - What did you think about it as a subject?
            - Was there any English class and/or teacher that was particularly memorable during Highschool?
                - If yes, what made it so?
- **Education DURING college**
    - Did you know coming into college what you wanted to major in?
    - Did you have a different major decided prior to choosing English?
        - If yes, what made you change your mind?
    - How would you describe the professors in the English department?
    - What has been your most memorable/favorite English course?
        - Professor?
        - General moment?
    - What are the English courses have you taken at Trinity College? (or as many you can name)
        - **Course Name**:
        - (*Highlight answer down below*)
            - FALL / SPRING
            - 2018 / 2019 / 2020 / 2021
        - **Professor Name:**
        - **Did you take the course PASS / FAIL ?**
        - **On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate the course on the following:**

- Professor Teaching Style and Effectiveness
- Diversity of the course
- Enrichness of the course
  - Would you recommend this course to others?
  - How would you describe it towards others?
- **Class Environment**
  - How would you describe the English department building?
    - What would you like to see added to it? Taken away?
  - What was your first impression of the English courses?
  - **On a scale from 1-10, how welcomed/comfortable did you feel in the class?**
    - **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
      - What made you feel safe and/or welcomed in this class environment?
      - What DIDN'T make you feel safe and/or welcomed?
  - What did the professor do in order to ensure it was a safe environment, if anything?
    - How did you feel about this?
  - Where would you sit in the classroom?
    - Did you notice anything about the layout of the class?
    - Were there many other students of color in the classroom or were you the only one?
      - If yes, how many others? _____
  - Was there ever a moment(s) where you felt uncomfortable/unwelcomed in the classroom whether by your professor, peers, the material being discussed, and/or guest speakers?
    - How did it make you feel?
    - Do you feel that it was addressed and/ or handled?
  - **How often would you participate in class from a scale of 1 -10?**
    - **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
      - When/what made you feel comfortable to participate?
      - When/what made you feel uncomfortable to NOT participate?
      - Did your professor ever encourage your participation
  - **How often did you visit your professor for Office Hours to ask for help from 1- 10?**
    - **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
  - **How comfortable did you feel about visiting your professor for Office Hours to ask for help from 1- 10?**
    - **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
- **Reflection on English Courses**

- What was your reason behind taking the course(s) mentioned above / what interested you in it?
- Did you ever consider dropping the course?
    - YES / NO
    - If yes, why?
- How would you describe the overall
- What were your major takeaways from the English Courses that you took / what did you learn?
- Were any of the courses memorable?
    - YES / NO
        - And if yes, what made it so?
- What are your thoughts on the course's required text(s) accessibility financially?
    - Do you believe that professors offer enough alternate solutions to obtain these texts? (etc. library, scanning, online texts, funding)
    - Has a professor ever helped you find alternative solutions to obtain the required texts/ have you ever asked for help?
    - Are they understanding if you inform them that you require aid in obtaining the required texts?
    - How do you normally obtain the required texts for a course whether it is for an English course or another?
        - Library
        - Online PDF
        - Share with a Classmate
        - Scan the text
        - Request aid from the Student Emergency Aid and Equity Fund
    - Does it ever feel like a burden to not be able to obtain said required texts as easily as your other classmates?

- Is there any English professor you have had a bad experience with?
    - YES / NO
    - NAME / ANONYMOUS
- Is there any English professor who you have had a great experience with?
    - YES / NO
    - NAME / ANONYMOUS
- What draws you or grabs your attention to a particular course? (ex. The one that you took)
- **Career**
    - What are your plans after college career wise?
    - Have you had any mentorship or assistance in figuring out your career?

- ○ Would you be interested in having the English department create a mentorship program between past alumni and current students?
- ○ Would you want to see more panels?
- ○ How would you want to learn about job opportunities in general?
- **Course Curriculum**
  - ○ Do you feel that the current English courses that are being taught lack diversity?
    - ■ YES / NO
  - ○ Do you think that the English Department staff is diverse?
    - ■ YES / NO
  - ○ If someone were to ask you to describe an English course or department in general, what would you say?
  - ○ Do you feel as though English courses are being taught too "traditionally"?
  - ○ What are your thoughts on adding trigger warnings to courses/ specific classes if something explicit were to be discussed? (ex. Sexual Assault, hate crimes, violence)
  - ○ What do YOU want to see in an English course in relation to the readings?
    - ■ Any particular
      - ● Authors:
      - ● Types of genres:
      - ● Time Periods focused on:
      - ● Teaching styles:
      - ● Interaction Element:
  - ○ What teaching techniques do you want to see employed?
  - ○ Have you taken any English courses that are cross listed under other departments?
    - ■ What were your thoughts?
  - ○ How would you feel about the English department working with cultural organizations on campus? (such as La Voz Latina, Asian American Student Association, Men of Color Alliance, etc.)
    - ■ What about community partners?
- **Last Question**
  - ○ Finally, is there anything you would like to say and/or advise the English Department to do, in order to not only bring in more diversity to the curriculum, but to the classroom as well to help it become more welcoming for students of color?

2A. English Major Student (Non P.O.C)

- **Background Information**
  - Name:
  - Year:
  - Major:
  - Ethnicity:
  - Where are you from?:
- **Education BEFORE College (*Highlight answer down below*)**
  - Did you read a lot of literature during your childhood/upbringing?
  - Highschool
    - Public
    - Private
    - Catholic
    - Boarding School
    - Homeschool
  - Have you taken English classes before college? (*Highlight answer down below*)
    - YES / NO
      - What did you think about it as a subject?
      - Was there any English class and/or teacher that was particularly memorable during Highschool?
        - If yes, what made it so?
- **Education DURING college**
  - Did you know coming into college what you wanted to major in?
  - If you did not start off with English, what did you originally want to major in?
    - What made you change your mind?
  - What made you choose English as a major?
  - What has been your most memorable/favorite English course?
    - Professor?
    - General moment?
  - How would you describe the professors in the English department?
  - Can you name all the English courses that you have taken? (or as many as you can)
    - **On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate the course on the following:**
      - Professor Teaching Style and Effectiveness
      - Diversity of the course
      - Enrichness of the course
    - Would you recommend this course to others?
    - How would you describe it towards others?
- **Class Environment**
  - What was your first impression of the English courses?

- ○ **On a scale from 1-10, how welcomed/comfortable did you feel in the class?**
  - ■ **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
    - ● What made you feel safe and/or welcomed in this class environment?
    - ● What DIDN'T make you feel safe and/or welcomed?
- ○ What did the professor do in order to ensure it was a safe environment, if anything?
  - ■ How did you feel about this?
- ○ Where would you sit in the classroom?
  - ■ Did you notice anything about the layout of the class?
- ○ Has there ever been a moment you had to acknowledge your privilege in class?
- ○ Has there ever been a moment(s) where you noticed a student of color felt uncomfortable/unwelcomed in the classroom whether by your professor, peers, the material being discussed, and/or guest speakers?
  - ■ Do you feel that it was addressed and/ or handled?
- ○ **How often would you participate in class from a scale of 1 -10?**
  - ■ **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
    - ● When/what made you feel comfortable to participate?
    - ● When/what made you feel uncomfortable to NOT participate?
    - ● Did your professor ever encourage your participation
- ○ **How often did you visit your professor for Office Hours to ask for help from 1- 10?**
  - ■ **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
- ○ **How comfortable did you feel about visiting your professor for Office Hours to ask for help from 1- 10?**
  - ■ **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
- ● **Reflection on English Courses**
  - ○ What got you interested in taking the courses mentioned above?
  - ○ Did you ever consider dropping any of the courses mentioned above?
    - ■ YES / NO
    - ■ If yes, why?
  - ○ How would you describe the overall English major experience?
  - ○ What were your major takeaways from the English Courses that you took / what did you learn?
  - ○ Were any of the courses memorable?
    - ■ YES / NO
      - ● And if yes, what made it so?
  - ○ What are your thoughts on the course's required text(s) accessibility financially?
    - ■ Do you believe that professors offer enough alternate solutions to obtain these texts? (etc. library, scanning, online texts, funding)

- - ■ Has a professor ever helped you find alternative solutions to obtain the required texts/ have you ever asked for help?
    - ■ Are they understanding if you inform them that you require aid in obtaining the required texts?
    - ■ How do you normally obtain the required texts for a course whether it is for an English course or another?
      - ● Library
      - ● Online PDF
      - ● Share with a Classmate
      - ● Scan the text
      - ● Request aid from the Student Emergency Aid and Equity Fund
    - ■ Does it ever feel like a burden to not be able to obtain said required texts as easily as your other classmates?
  - ○ After taking an English course, did you ever at one point consider doing a major in English?
    - ■ YES / NO
      - ● If yes, what made you change your major?
  - ○ Is there any English professor you have had a bad experience with?
    - ■ YES / NO
    - ■ NAME / ANONYMOUS
  - ○ Is there any English professor who you have had a great experience with?
    - ■ YES / NO
    - ■ NAME / ANONYMOUS
  - ○ What teaching styles/ tactics do you find to be the most productive for learning?
  - ○ What draws you or grabs your attention to a particular course? (ex. The one that you took)
- **Career**
  - ○ What are your plans after college career wise?
  - ○ Have you had any mentorship or assistance in figuring out your career?
  - ○ Would you be interested in having the English department create a mentorship program between past alumni and current students?
  - ○ Would you want to see more panels?
  - ○ How would you want to learn about job opportunities in general?
    - ■ Would you consider applying to one that the English Department advertises, even if it does not fall under your specific major?
- **Course Curriculum**
  - ○ Do you feel that the current English courses that are being taught lack diversity?
    - ■ YES / NO
  - ○ Do you think that the English Department staff is diverse?
    - ■ YES / NO

- ○ If someone were to ask you to describe an English course or department in general, what would you say?
- ○ Do you feel as though English courses are being taught too "traditionally"?
- ○ What are your thoughts on adding trigger warnings to courses/ specific classes if something explicit were to be discussed? (ex. Sexual Assault, hate crimes, violence)
- ○ What do YOU want to see in an English course in relation to the readings?
  - ■ Any particular
    - ● Authors:
    - ● Types of genres:
    - ● Time Periods focused on:
    - ● Teaching styles:
    - ● Interaction Element:
- ○ Were you aware that multiple English courses are cross-listed under American Studies as well?
  - ■ (EX. Freedom & Confinement- described as *show description*)
  - ■ Does this in any way change your mind about taking an English course, if it were to be cross-listed under another department as well?
- ○ How would you feel about the English department working with cultural organizations on campus? (such as La Voz Latina, Asian American Student Association, Men of Color Alliance, etc.)
- **Last Question**
  - ○ Finally, is there anything you would like to say and/or advise the English Department to do, in order to not only bring in more diversity to the curriculum, but to the classroom as well to help it become more welcoming for students of color?

- **Background Information**
  - Name:
  - Year:
  - Major:
  - Ethnicity:
  - Where are you from?:
- **Education BEFORE College (*Highlight answer down below*)**
  - Did you read a lot of literature during your childhood/upbringing?
  - Highschool
    - Public
    - Private
    - Catholic
    - Boarding School
    - Homeschool
  - Have you taken English classes before college? (*Highlight answer down below*)
    - YES / NO
      - What did you think about it as a subject?
      - Was there any English class and/or teacher that was particularly memorable during Highschool?
        - If yes, what made it so?
- **Education DURING college**
  - Did you know coming into college what you wanted to major in?
    - Is that your major now?
      - YES / NO
    - If not, what made you change your mind?
  - What made you choose the major you currently have?
    - How would you describe the professors in that field
  - How many English courses have you taken at Trinity College? _____
  - What are the English courses have you taken at Trinity College?
    - **Course Name**:
    - (*Highlight answer down below*)
      - FALL / SPRING
      - 2018 / 2019 / 2020 / 2021
    - **Professor Name:**
    - **Did you take the course PASS / FAIL ?**
    - **On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate the course on the following:**
      - Professor Teaching Style and Effectiveness
      - Diversity of the course
      - Enrichness of the course

- ■ Would you recommend this course to others?
- ■ How would you describe it towards others?
- **Class Environment**
  - ○ What was your first impression of the English course?
  - ○ **On a scale from 1-10, how welcomed/comfortable did you feel in the class?**
    - ■ **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
      - ● What made you feel safe and/or welcomed in this class environment?
      - ● What DIDN'T make you feel safe and/or welcomed?
  - ○ What did the professor do in order to ensure it was a safe environment, if anything?
    - ■ How did you feel about this?
  - ○ Where would you sit in the classroom?
    - ■ Did you notice anything about the layout of the class?
    - ■ Were there many other students of color in the classroom or were you the only one?
      - ● If yes, how many others? _____
  - ○ Was there ever a moment(s) where you felt uncomfortable/unwelcomed in the classroom whether by your professor, peers, the material being discussed, and/or guest speakers?
    - ■ How did it make you feel?
    - ■ Do you feel that it was addressed and/ or handled?
  - ○ **How often would you participate in class from a scale of 1 -10?**
    - ■ **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
      - ● When/what made you feel comfortable to participate?
      - ● When/what made you feel uncomfortable to NOT participate?
      - ● Did your professor ever encourage your participation
  - ○ **How often did you visit your professor for Office Hours to ask for help from 1- 10?**
    - ■ **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
  - ○ **How comfortable did you feel about visiting your professor for Office Hours to ask for help from 1- 10?**
    - ■ **1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9 / 10**
- **Reflection on English Courses**
  - ○ What was your reason behind taking the course mentioned above / what interested you in it?
  - ○ Did you ever consider dropping the course?
  - ○ Would you ever consider taking another English course?
    - ■ If yes, did you have any in mind for the upcoming semester(s)?

- ○ What were your major takeaways from the English Courses that you took / what did you learn?
- ○ Were any of the courses memorable?
- ○ What are your thoughts on the course's required text(s) accessibility financially?
  - ■ Do you believe that professors offer enough alternate solutions to obtain these texts? (etc. library, scanning, online texts, funding)
  - ■ Has a professor ever helped you find alternative solutions to obtain the required texts/ have you ever asked for help?
  - ■ Are they understanding if you inform them that you require aid in obtaining the required texts?
  - ■ How do you normally obtain the required texts for a course whether it is for an English course or another?
    - ● Library
    - ● Online PDF
    - ● Share with a Classmate
    - ● Scan the text
    - ● Request aid from the Student Emergency Aid and Equity Fund
  - ■ Does it ever feel like a burden to not be able to obtain said required texts as easily as your other classmates?
- ○ After taking an English course, did you ever at one point consider doing a major in English?
- ○ Is there any English professor you have had a bad experience with?
- ○ Is there any English professor who you have had a great experience with?
- ○ What draws you or grabs your attention to a particular course? (ex. The one that you took)
- **Career**
  - ○ What is the first career that comes into mind when someone says they have/ or are in the process of getting a degree in English?
  - ○ Do you believe you can have a successful career with a degree in English?
    - ■ Why or why not?
  - ○ What do you believe influenced your belief on this?
  - ○ *List example of jobs one could acquire with an English degree*
    - ■ After hearing these jobs, does this change your mind at all on being able to have a successful career with an English degree?
    - ■ Would it help if the English Department advertised these types of jobs for example more?
    - ■ How would you want to learn about job opportunities in general?
      - ● Would you consider applying to one that the English Department advertises, even if it does not fall under your specific major?
- **Course Curriculum**

- ○ Do you feel that the current English courses that are being taught lack diversity?
  - ■ YES / NO
- ○ Do you think that the English Department staff is diverse?
  - ■ YES / NO
- ○ If someone were to ask you to describe an English course or department in general, what would you say?
- ○ Do you feel as though English courses are being taught too "traditionally"?
- ○ What are your thoughts on adding trigger warnings to courses/ specific classes if something explicit were to be discussed? (ex. Sexual Assault, hate crimes, violence)
- ○ What do YOU want to see in an English course in relation to the readings?
  - ■ Any particular
    - ● Authors:
    - ● Types of genres:
    - ● Time Periods focused on:
    - ● Teaching styles:
    - ● Interaction Element:
- ○ Were you aware that multiple English courses are cross-listed under American Studies as well?
  - ■ (EX. Freedom & Confinement- described as *show description*)
  - ■ Does this in any way change your mind about taking an English course, if it were to be cross-listed under another department as well?
- ○ How would you feel about the English department working with cultural organizations on campus? (such as La Voz Latina, Asian American Student Association, Men of Color Alliance, etc.)
- **Last Question**
  - ○ Finally, is there anything you would like to say and/or advise the English Department to do, in order to not only bring in more diversity to the curriculum, but to the classroom as well to help it become more welcoming for students of color?

<mark>4A. Trinity Professor of Color (Trinity College)</mark>

- What position do you hold at Trinity College? *Highlight answer*
  - Student
  - Faculty
  - Alumni
  - Non-College Member
- **Bachelor Degree**
  - Where did you attend for your Bachelor Degree?
    -
  - How would you describe your college education?
    - Private
    - Public
    - State (SUNY)
    - City (CUNY)
  - What did you major in?
    -
    - Why?
      -
    - **Double Major** *(if applicable)* →
    - **Minor** *(if applicable)* →
- **Doctor of Philosophy (PHD Degree)**
  - When/ where did you obtain your PHD degree?
  - What did you get your degree in?
  - How would you describe your experience socially, academically, mentally, and emotionally?
  - What were some of the challenges you encountered?

- **On Being a Professor/ Teaching**
  - What made you decide to become a Professor?
  - How long have you been teaching?
  - Where did you first begin if Trinity was **NOT**- your first teaching institution?
  - Why did you choose trinity?
- Can you state the current courses that you are teaching?
  - What is the goal that you are trying to achieve with each of your selected courses?
  - What is the process behind creating your syllabus and course?
  - On a scale from 1-10, how difficult is it to create it?
  - If your course involves readings, what made you specifically choose those?
    - What factors, if any, do you take in account when selecting them?
      - Ex. Authors, Student accessibility, $
        -

- What was the most memorable course you have taught or a specific moment in a selected course? What do you think made it so?
- Do you have any teaching tactics? *Highlight Answer*
  - Where did you learn them from?
  - Do you believe them to be effective?
  - How do your students feel about them?
- How does your scholarship relate to your teaching?
  - Does your teaching inspire your scholarship?
- What challenges have you faced as a professor of color?

- **Class Environment**
  - Would you consider your classroom to be a safe space and if so what do you do to ensure that it is?
  - Do you notice who participates more in class?
    - On average, how many P.O.C students would you say are typically in your classroom?
      - If the number is low, why do you think that is?
- Many Students often shy away from English, because they assume the job field does not hold many opportunities for this degree, what would you say about that?
  - Have students ever asked you about jobs one can acquire with an English degree?
  - Have you ever brought in information to discuss this? Or a guest speaker?
    - If not, would you consider doing this in the future?
- What are some misconceptions you have heard of the English department or degree in general?
- Has there ever been a moment where you felt uncomfortable or disrespected as a Professor of color? Whether by other faculty or students?
- What is one change you would like to be instituted within the English department?
- Do you see areas of improvement within yourself as a professor and your courses as a whole?
- What topics/issues do you think students would be interested in learning about?
- Do you promote your course towards students?
  - If so, how so?
  - How would you feel about working with Student Organizations to do so?
    - Have you ever been in contact with P.O.C affiliated organizations? (Ex. La Voz Latina, IMANI, Men of Color Alliance, Asian American Student Association, etc.)
- Finally, what would you say to students of color who have considered taking an English course, but have shied away due to not feeling safe/comfortable?

<mark>5A. Non P.O.C Professors (Trinity College)</mark>

- **Name:**
- What position do you hold at Trinity College? *Highlight answer*
  - Student
  - <mark>Faculty</mark>
  - Alumni
  - Non-College Member
- **Bachelor Degree**
  - Where did you attend for your Bachelor Degree?
    - Stanford
  - How would you describe your college education?
    - Private
    - Public
    - State (SUNY)
    - City (CUNY)
  - What did you major in?
    - **Double Major** *(if applicable)* →
    - **Minor** *(if applicable)* →
  - What was your experience like?
    - How would you describe your college education?
      - Private
      - Public
      - State (SUNY)
      - City (CUNY)
    - What did you major in?
      - **Double Major** *(if applicable)* →
      - **Minor** *(if applicable)* →
- **Masters**
  - Where did you attend for your Masters?
  - How would you describe your college education?
    - Private
    - Public
    - State (SUNY)
    - City (CUNY)
  - What did you get your master's in?
- **Doctor of Philosophy (PHD Degree)**
  - When/ where did you obtain your PHD degree?
  - Where did you attend for your PHD degree?
  - What did you get your degree in?

- ○ How would you describe your experience socially, academically, mentally, and emotionally?
- ○ What were some of the challenges you encountered?
- **On Being a Professor/ Teaching**
  - ○ What made you decide to become a Professor?
  - ○ How long have you been teaching?
  - ○ Where did you first begin if Trinity was **NOT**- your first teaching institution?
  - ○ Why did you choose trinity?
- Can you state the current courses that you are teaching?
  - ○ What is the goal that you are trying to achieve with each of your selected courses?
  - ○ What is the process behind creating your syllabus and course?
  - ○ On a scale from 1-10, how difficult is it to create it?
  - ○ If your course involves readings, what made you specifically choose those?
    - ■ What factors, if any, do you take in account when selecting them?
      - ● Ex. Authors, Student accessibility, $
- What was the most memorable course you have taught or a specific moment in a selected course? What do you think made it so?

- Do you have any teaching tactics? *Highlight Answer*
  - ■ Yes
  - ■ No
  - ■ N/A
  - ○ Where did you learn them from?
  - ○ Do you believe them to be effective?
  - ○ How do your students feel about them?
- How does your scholarship relate to your teaching?
  - ○ Does your teaching inspire your scholarship?
- **Class Environment**
  - ○ Would you consider your classroom to be a safe space and if so what do you do to ensure that it is?
  - ○ Do you notice who participates more in class?
  - ○ On average, how many P.O.C students would you say are typically in your classroom?
    - ■ If the number is low, why do you think that is?
  - ○ In general, what do you notice about the layout of the class?
- Many Students often shy away from English, because they assume the job field does not hold many opportunities for this degree, what would you say about that?
- Have you ever brought in information to discuss this? Or a guest speaker?
  - ○ If not, would you consider doing this in the future?
  - ○ How is Festivus created? What is the process behind putting it together?

- How do you think your students of color view you as a Non P.O.C professor?
- How do you acknowledge your privilege in your course?
- What are some misconceptions you have heard of the English department or degree in general?
- Has there ever been a moment where you noticed a student said something disrespectful or racially insensitive whether that is towards another student or in general?
  - If yes, how did you handle this situation?
  - How did the other students react?
- There have unfortunately been racist incidents that have occured on campus in the past years, have you ever taken a moment in class to address this or give a P.O.C students a chance to express how they feel?
- What is one change you would like to be instituted within the English department?
- Do you see areas of improvement within yourself as a professor and your courses as a whole?
- What topics/issues do you think students would be interested in learning about?
- Do you have access to the data that demonstrate the demographics of English majors and their racial identity?
- Do you promote your course towards students?
- As the chair of the department, how would you feel about working with Student Organizations to do so?
  - Have you ever been in contact with P.O.C affiliated organizations? (Ex. La Voz Latina, IMANI, Men of Color Alliance, Asian American Student Association, etc.)
- Finally, what would you say to students of color who have considered taking an English course, but have shied away due to not feeling safe/comfortable?

<u>6A. Professors from Outside Universities</u>

- **Name:**
- What position do you hold at the University of Connecticut? *Highlight answer*
  - Student
  - <mark>Faculty</mark>
  - Alumni
  - Non-College Member
- **Bachelor Degree**
  - Where did you attend for your Bachelor Degree?
  - How would you describe your college education?
    - Private
    - Public
    - State (SUNY)
    - City (CUNY)
  - What did you major in?
    - **Double Major** *(if applicable)* →
    - **Minor** *(if applicable)* →
  - What was your experience like?
- **Masters**
  - Where did you attend for your Master's Degree?
    -
  - How would you describe your college education?
    - Private
    - Public
    - State (SUNY)
    - City (CUNY)
  - What did you major in?
    - **Double Major** *(if applicable)* →
    - **Minor** *(if applicable)* →
  - What was your experience like?
- **Doctor of Philosophy (PHD Degree)**
  - When/ where did you obtain your PHD degree?
  - Where did you attend for your PHD degree?
  - What did you get your degree in?
  - How would you describe your experience socially, academically, mentally, and emotionally?
  - What were some of the challenges you encountered?
- **On Being a Professor/ Teaching**
  - What made you decide to become a Professor?

- How long have you been teaching?
- Where did you first begin if _____ was **NOT**- your first teaching institution?
- Why did you choose _____?
● Can you state the current courses that you are teaching?
  ○ What is the goal that you are trying to achieve with each of your selected courses?
  ○ What is the process behind creating your syllabus and course?
  ○ On a scale from 1-10, how difficult is it to create it?
  ○ If your course involves readings, what made you specifically choose those?
    ■ What factors, if any, do you take in account when selecting them?

● What was the most memorable course you have taught or a specific moment in a selected course? What do you think made it so?
● Do you have any teaching tactics? *Highlight Answer*
  ○ Where did you learn them from?
  ○ Do you believe them to be effective?
  ○ How do your students feel about them?
● How does your scholarship relate to your teaching?
  ○ Does your teaching inspire your scholarship?
● What challenges have you faced as a professor of color?
● **Class Environment**
  ○ How would you describe the overall campus environment on _____?
  ○ How are racial incidents handled on _____?
  ○ Would you say there are many P.O.C students who become English majors?
    ■ How would you describe the _____ English courses?
  ○ What is the English department like on Campus?
    ■ How would you describe the community?
  ○ Would you consider your classroom to be a safe space and if so what do you do to ensure that it is?
  ○ Do you notice who participates more in class?
  ○ On average, how many P.O.C students would you say are typically in your classroom?
  ○ If the number is low, why do you think that is?
● Many Students often shy away from English, because they assume the job field does not hold many opportunities for this degree, what would you say about that?
● What are some misconceptions you have heard of the English department or degree in general?
● Has there ever been a moment where you felt uncomfortable or disrespected as a Professor of color? Whether by other faculty or students?
● What is one change you would like to be instituted within the English department or your class?

- Do you see areas of improvement within yourself as a professor and your courses as a whole?
- What topics/issues do you think students would be interested in learning about?
- Do you promote your course towards students?
  - How would you feel about working with the Student Organizations on _____ campus?
- Finally, what would you say to students of color who have considered taking an English course, but have shied away due to not feeling safe/comfortable?

<u>Survey Questionnaire Format</u>

Focusing on the English Department and Curriculum

This survey is meant to hear what you want to see from the English Department and will be completely anonymous! I truly appreciate you taking the time to fill this survey out! If you have any questions and/or concerns, you can reach me at jennifer.mendez@trincoll.edu.

🚫 **jennifermendez4711@gmail.com** (not shared) Switch account

* Required

Class Year

Your answer

What is your concentration with the English Major

○ Creative Writing

○ Literature

○ Film

Why did you choose English as your major?

Your answer

Rate on an scale from 1- 10, how interested you would be in seeing the following be added to the English curriculum

Trigger warnings be added to English course syllabi *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Getting course reading materials through course packets or PDF files *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Creating courses that can be cross-listed with other departments? (Outside of American Studies and Film)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Making it a English Major requisite to take one course that emphasizes authors who are P.O.C or BIPOC identifying

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Making it a requirement for ALL professors and administrators in the English Department to go under a diversity, equity, and inclusion training?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Would you be interested in the English department hiring a student social media specialist for their media accounts?

○ Yes

○ No

How would you feel about creating a mural or community book library in the English Department Building?

Your answer

Is there anything else you would like to see in the English Department Building?

Your answer

Are there any community organizations you would be interested seeing a English course partner with?

Your answer

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey!

Survey Questionnaire Results

Class Year

16 responses
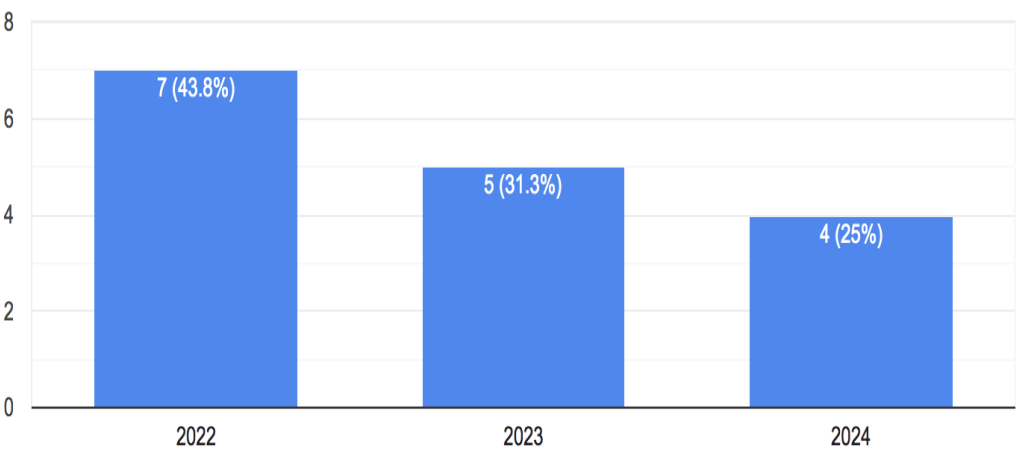
What is your concentration with the English Major

16 responses

Legend:
- Creative Writing
- Literature
- Film
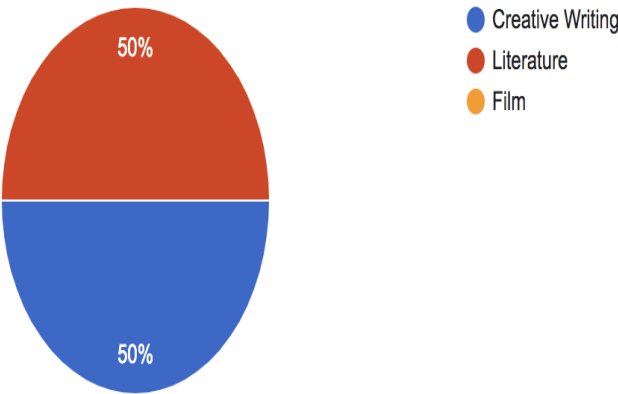
Why did you choose English as your major?

16 responses

Good basis for law and gives a broad understanding of multiple subjects.

I have always loved writing and enjoyed my English classes and professors the most during my first two years

love words and storytelling

I enjoy writing, analysis, and creativity

I want to go to law school

Because I love to read and I believe literature can teach you so much about life as well I want to become a good writer

Because I love writing!

Literature is the most transcendent, highest, most powerful thing that humankind can create. Naturally, then, I wished to partake in this and pursue this interest I had had since early in life.

Why did you choose English as your major?

16 responses

I really enjoy analyzing books through class discussion and written form.

I'm aiming to be a high school English teacher.

I like writing and find literature interesting.

I enjoyed the english classes that I took

I think it's important to be able to read and write at a high level, but also critically think and read at a high level where you can articulate the meaning of works and understanding broad perspectives. Also, I feel as though the English major could be a human rights major, a history major, or even an economics major depending on the works one chooses to read.

I felt like I would be best able to cultivate a relationship with the English Department community over other majors

I want to be a high school English teacher and love writing.

Rate on an scale from 1- 10, how interested you would be in seeing the following be added to the English curriculum
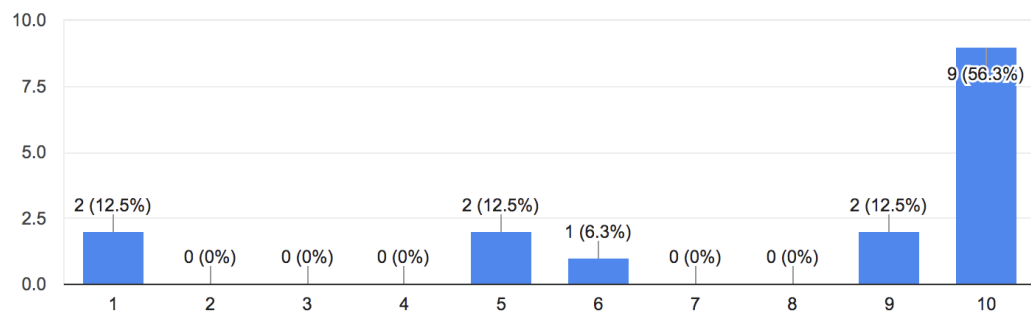
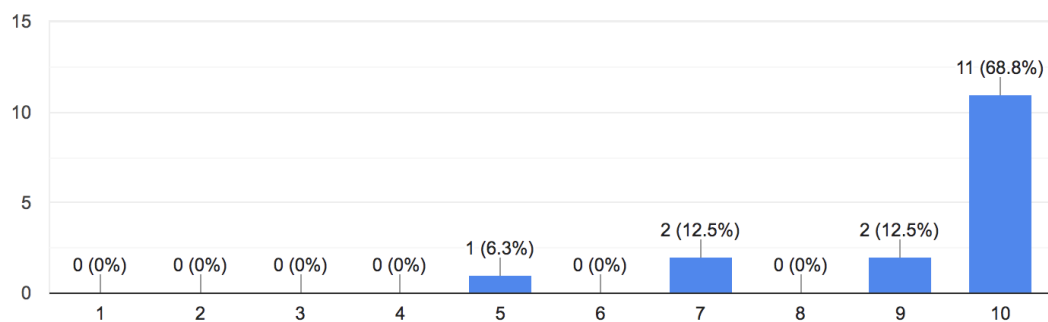Trigger warnings be added to English course syllabi

16 responses
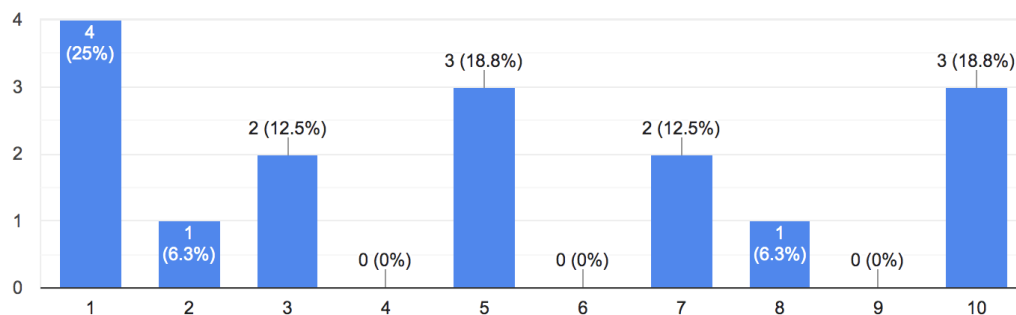
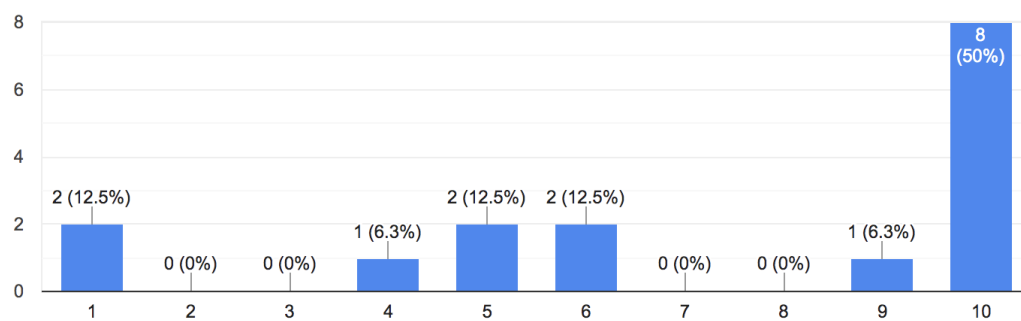Getting course reading materials through course packets or PDF files

16 responses

Creating courses that can be cross-listed with other departments? (Outside of American Studies and Film)
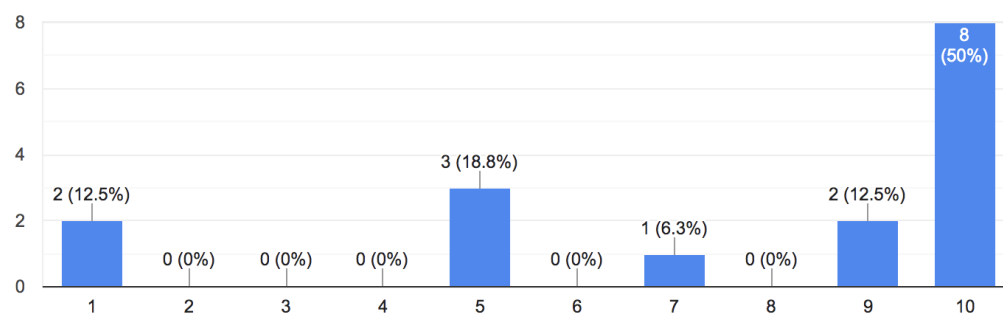
16 responses

Making it a English Major requisite to take one course that emphasizes authors who are P.O.C or BIPOC identifying

16 responses

Making it a requirement for ALL professors and administrators in the English Department to go under a diversity, equity, and inclusion training?

16 responses

Would you be interested in the English department hiring a student social media specialist for their media accounts?

16 responses
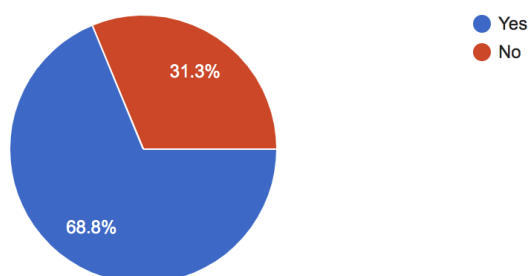
How would you feel about creating a mural or community book library in the English Department Building?

15 responses

Interested

Great idea!

love the idea

Would be interesting

interested

I think that is a lovely idea! We should do what we can to make the space more accessible and inviting

I feel it would be enriching and beneficial to the department

That'd be cool

I believe a project like this would add a greater appeal to the department building.

Is there anything else you would like to see in the English Department Building?

8 responses

snacks?

No

more use of the common room to hang out and do hw

No, I think it's really important to have every Professor undergo the training already mentioned and to implement trigger warnings!

I would like to see more diversity in staff, if that's a possibility.

Honestly, I don't frequent that building often.

I would like the reading spaces on the first floor to be more welcoming and utilized. As an economics major too there's the econ library that's extremely inviting and lots of students work there. I'd like the English department to have a space where peers can go and work together.

More of an inviting space/place to study

Are there any community organizations you would be interested seeing a English course partner with?

8 responses

urban studies

no

EROS and WGRAC. I would love to see a course that focuses on works from queer authors!

Educational studies and sociology.

Mutual Aid Hartford

not sure of any specific orgs

Trinity Tripod / Carrer Center

HMYCA/Hartford schools!

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey!

How To: Create an Independent Study

By: Jennifer Méndez

What is the difference between an Independent Study and Thesis?

Independent Study

- You design the curriculum with the help of your advisor
- Must take a senior seminar either during the fall or spring semester
- Schedule a weekly time to meet with your advisor to go over your progress and/or any questions you may have
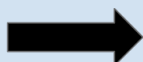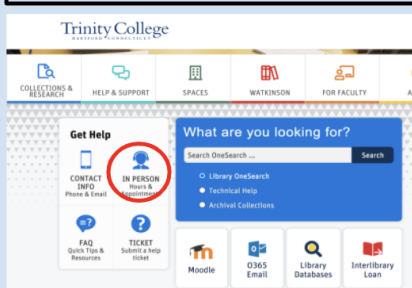- You design the midterm and how you will present/ conclude your final findings.

Thesis

- Focuses on a specific English text
- Is to be started the spring semester **prior** to the start of your senior year and submitted for approval
- Goes into the Trinity College Archives
- Broken down into various chapters with titles
- To be presented at the end

What are some key components of an Independent Study?

- Ask yourself:
  - What do I want to find?
  - What is the purpose of your study?
  - What angle will this study take?
- Put together a reading List
  - Meet with a librarian research who can help you narrow down the information and make your research concise
- Curate an Interview list
  - Categorize into various groups if needed to then create individualized survey questions
- Emailing
  - Whether that is for inquiries or inviting someone to be apart of your study!
  - Make sure you include and provide a detailed outline description of your study

Make an appointment with a Librarian

Librarians are very helpful for putting together a reading list and narrowing down your research

Putting Together a Reading List

- After making an appointment with a librarian, here are some extra steps you can take towards creating your reading list:
  - Online Research websites: JSTOR / Google Scholar/ Trinity Library website
  - Look at articles, books, E-Books, PDFs (preferably searchable, use **command - F** for specifc word searches)
  - Narrow down your search words
    - Practice using identity markers (ex. Ethnicity, race, gender)
    - For my particular study, I used words such as
      Marketing / Small Liberal College / Research / Curriculum

    - Make sure to look at the following:
      - The year it was published
      - Tables of Content
      - Index
  - Deciding which article or book to use is driven based on the questions you are asking

How do I get participants for my study?

- Ask your friends if they would be interested! Even if they have friends of friends, it is a great way to get to know new people
- Email Professors of the department or of other departments
- Look at other colleges' and/or universities' professors through their online directory
- Contact the alumni office
- Reach out to the chair of English department
- Create a FAQ page or sheet to distribute just in case participants have extra questions and/or concerns surrounding the study
- Most importantly, do this all in a timely manner to give you not only time to plan ahead, but also give the individuals a chance to respond back to you
  - *An appropriate follow-up email should occur around 5-7 days after your initially emailed them*

Template of an email asking for a potential interview

Hello _____,

My name is _____ and I am currently a senior here at Trinity College undergoing the process of my Senior Independent Study with the help of my advisor,_____. Essentially, my study surrounds the question of _____?

A little bit more details on my study, I myself am an English Major and _____ DESCRIBE PURPOSE OF STUDY _____. In the end, my goal is _____. I will have attached to this email a FAQ document, but if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out!

Thank you for taking the time to read this email, please let me know if you would be interested in participating no later than next_____, I would greatly appreciate it!

Best Regards,

[NAME]

Conducting an Interview/Creating Questions

- Keep your questions focused and generalized
  - Make sure you obtain the necessary background information (name, year, where they are from, etc)
  - Check to see if your questions first have to be approved by IRB
  - Do you want the survey to remain anonymous or not?
- If you wish to include a prize, reach out to departments or organizations for fundings
- Introduce yourself and state the purpose of your study and what you hope it accomplishes
- Otter.ai
  - A website that transcribes conversations automatically
  - Always ask for consent to record **FIRST**
- Focus your questions on what it is that you truly want to answer
- Find a quiet area where you will not be distracted nor interrupted
- Maintain eye contact during the conversation, it helps the interviewee feel heard
- Send a Thank You email/note afterwards

Final Step

- Piece these steps all together to gather up your final findings!
- Think about how you want to present your research and to who
  - How will this affect students in the future and what impact do you want to leave on them and others?
  - Final research paper
  - Presentation

Congratulations, you completed your independent study!