A. Learning Goals

Professional Development
Students completing the Ph.D. in English are expected to have acquired the following foundations for professional development: 1) The ability to teach undergraduate courses in writing and literature; 2) Familiarity with academic organizations and structures; and experience as active citizens of a collaborative academic community; 3) Specialized competence in the primary and secondary literatures of a particular field within literary studies or Composition/Rhetoric studies, and the ability to position themselves as contributing members of their professional community of scholars and writers.

Professional Ethics
Students completing the Ph.D. in English are expected to be conversant with the ethical issues commonly encountered in the following areas: 1) Teaching. Through their training and experience teaching at the CUNY colleges, students should be familiar with policies regarding sexual harassment and academic dishonesty, and should know where to turn to address institutionally any ethical violations that they might encounter or experience; 2) Research. Students conducting research with human subjects should be conversant with the guidelines for human subject clearance and must receive approval from an Institutional Review Board. In accordance with CUNY policy, all graduate students must complete training in the Responsible Conduct of Research; 3) Publication. Students should be able to make responsible use of evidence in developing arguments, and properly to acknowledge sources that they cite in their work. ENG 70000 (“Introduction to Doctoral Studies in English”), required of first-year students, provides a foundation in conventions of citation and fair use. Guidance in making responsible use of the work of others is also provided by seminar instructors, faculty members, and dissertation supervisors.

B. Data Collection
I surveyed English Program faculty and students about their experiences with professional development and ethics, as these activities are articulated in the above learning goals. Faculty were asked to explain how they advance professional development and ethics through coursework and mentorship. I received fourteen faculty responses. Students were asked what kind of professional development and ethics training they had received at the Graduate Center and at the colleges where they teach; they were also asked to recommend any improvements. Nineteen students responded to the surveys. I also collected student CVs for data about conference presentations, publications, teaching, service, and other professional activities. Seventeen students sent me updated CVs; of those students, 15 had presented papers at professional conferences, and 12 had published a scholarly essay in a journal or a collection of essays. In addition to the surveys, I documented the professional development events that our Program regularly offers and collected information about the professional development activities of three comparable English doctoral programs (Rutgers, Michigan, and Pittsburgh).
C. Findings

**Professional Development:**
The English Program sponsors several professional development initiatives. We have encouraged some courses to be run as “research-intensive seminars,” in which 8-10 weeks are devoted to traditional content (reading primary texts and criticism), and 4-6 weeks are devoted to presentations on research, grant writing, the role of professional organizations in an academic career, and publishing, as well as on workshopping students’ proposals and paper drafts. We occasionally offer workshops on presenting papers at conferences, publishing, grant-writing, turning the dissertation into a book, and the job search, including mock interviews and mock job talks. In Spring 2015, two students proposed grant-writing workshops that were funded through the Provost’s Office. The other universities from which we gathered information (Rutgers, Michigan, and Pittsburgh) offer comparable professional development services, including a required pedagogy course, publication and dissertation-writing courses, a Placement Committee, an Alumni Lecture and networking event, student-run interest groups, and certificate programs.

Our required course, “Introduction to Doctoral Studies in English” introduces first-year students to topics such as the state of academic publishing, research strategies and resources, and the disciplinary boundaries of English. For instance, in a recent iteration of “Introduction to Doctoral Studies,” the professor give a “state of the field” assignment that required students to identify, in their chosen field, the following: 3-5 journals, 3 books published in the last two years, 3-5 annual conferences, 3 university press series, 3 speaker series, 3 scholarly blogs, 3-5 twitter accounts maintained by scholars in the field, and 3-5 twitter accounts maintained by institutions related to the field.

This year we offered “Professional Studies in English” for more advanced students making the transition from seminar work to more independent forms of scholarship. Finally, we offer two “Dissertation Workshop” courses each year, and we have occasionally offered a “Publication Workshop” course.

Faculty respondents to the survey indicated that they build professional development aspects into each course. Most faculty require oral reports, which offer preparation for speaking at conferences. Several faculty have students write a conference paper abstract and/or conference-length paper; sometimes students are required to deliver the conference paper at a one-day “mini-conference” held as part of the course (certain students have gone on to deliver these papers at academic conferences or to publish longer versions in journals). For the mini-conference, students might also be required to collaborate on developing a conference theme, organizing panels, and choosing a respondent. One professor has students visit an archive and blog about their findings. Several faculty include one or more course components directed toward article publishing: an assignment on analyzing a scholarly article; a presentation by a student who has been published in a journal; a discussion of the range of journals in a particular field; an emphasis on the final seminar paper as potentially a conference paper or journal article; a sequence of assignments that models the publishing process (brainstorming topics, identifying critical conversations, workshopping drafts); an archival project aimed at publication in the Lost & Found series. One professor stresses the differences between a seminar paper and a published article and gives students a handout explaining what they would need to revise in order to transform a seminar paper into a journal essay.
A number of professors do not provide any Digital Humanities training in their courses. Others report that despite their lack of experience with DH, they discuss digital resources and responsible uses of them; they maintain a course blog, which the students help to run; or they encourage students to use online manuscript archives or digital sources. One professor requires presentations based on texts that students have located in open access on-line databases; the student has to explain why the text is of interest and why it should re-enter into a scholarly conversation. One professor provides extensive DH training: his students read texts about the practical and theoretical challenges of the field, take workshops on DH tools and methods, blog about their work in the class publicly, and create DH projects.

Many faculty are also involved in less formal kinds of mentorship, both at the Graduate Center and at other professional venues, such as conferences. Many faculty attend conferences with students, provide feedback on student conference presentations, introduce students to colleagues, include students on their own conference panels, or participate in mock-conference presentations. One professor reports the success of running a dissertation group that meets every other month to workshop students’ chapters: this structure keeps the students engaged in their work and gives them the opportunity to comment on each other’s work; it also facilitates the supervisor’s regular contact with students and saves time on meetings. Another faculty member, who emphasizes a broader definition of “professional development” as training in “a more broadly conceived public mission,” mentors students who are mainly involved with exhibits at public literary arts venues, museums, and other cultural events. As the editor of a journal, one faculty member has had students serve as editorial assistants and maintain the journal’s website. Another has co-authored a journal essay with a former student.

English students participate in many professional development opportunities, as scholars, teachers, and citizens. As their CVs attest, they serve on English Program and Graduate Center committees; collaborate with other graduate students on scholarly projects, including organizing and participating in English Student Association, GC, and local conferences; and participate in professional organizations and conferences. Students become familiar with academic structures through their experience teaching, developing courses, and mentoring undergraduate students and serving as adjunct department members. Finally, they present their research at local and national conferences and publish in journals or other formats.

Students who responded to the survey enumerated other ways in which they have developed professionally, including serving as an editorial assistant at a journal; chairing or participating in a student interest group; and serving as an ITF at a CUNY college. Several students recommended that the English Program provide more professional development training in the first year. One student suggested that “Introduction to Doctoral Studies” might require students to work directly with a research librarian, as a way to facilitate stronger research skills. Another observed that although English Program students receive training in writing instruction through the Practicum, they do not receive training in the teaching of literature. One student recommended that we offer a 1-credit course or practicum on academic institutions (their history, procedures, structures), which would help students negotiate job interviews and campus visits. Several students recommended more vigorous professional development services for students working on the dissertation or approaching the job market: workshops on applying for funding inside and outside of the graduate center, a publication workshop each semester, events on alt-ac employment options, a panel on structuring the dissertation, etc. A recent alumna of the program
explained that she used everything the GC Career Planning Office had to offer, including workshops, one-on-one consultations, SkillScan, and CV and cover letter review. She encouraged the English Program to collaborate actively with the Career Planning Office not only in organizing workshops on revamping CVs and cover letters for alt-ac positions, but also in developing a stronger support structure for the alt-ac campus visit.

**Professional Ethics:**
Many faculty report that they do not address professional ethics or plagiarism directly in their courses, and one respondent felt that it was “inappropriate” to incorporate a discussion of plagiarism into a Ph.D. course, other than to include the legally required link to the CUNY Academic Integrity policy in syllabi. The “Introduction to Doctoral Studies” course required of first-year students generally includes discussion of intellectual property and proper use of sources. Faculty address issues of professional ethics in various ways: analyzing the composition of academic arguments (including citation patterns) in reference to assigned secondary sources; discussing proper citation of sources and the importance of acknowledging previous contributors to conversations that one joins; and fostering a cooperative and collaborative view of scholarship. A major plagiarism scandal in one faculty member’s field provided the opportunity for a class discussion about what might lead a scholar to plagiarism, how to recognize and avoid plagiarism, and so on. A faculty member who mentors students working with archives engages a broad range of ethical issues regarding relationships with literary heirs and estates.

Students confirmed that professional ethics were covered in “Introduction to Doctoral Studies”; others reported casual or ad-hoc discussions of citation and plagiarism in their seminars. One student explained that she addressed responsible citation issues while working as a research assistant for a professor who was completing a book manuscript.

English students also receive professional ethics training at the colleges: through the Teaching Practicum; at faculty meetings and workshops on fair grading, teaching proper use of sources, and addressing plagiarism; in their roles as Writing Consultants; through online training programs on sexual harassment; or through more informal discussions with mentors and peers. One student reported that plagiarism was mentioned in her pedagogical training but without explicit instruction on how to address it administratively. Several students explained that they have a general understanding of academic dishonesty and sexual harassment concerns and in any case would know where to go if they had a problem.

Several students felt that the mandatory RCR training at the Graduate Center was geared toward the lab sciences (the use of human subjects) and was largely a waste of time for Humanities students. Student recommendations included the following: a GC-produced interdisciplinary curriculum guide that would address teaching about plagiarism and citation; a workshop on ethical spending (in response to “the hyper-scrutiny” given to receipts for conference and research grants); an English Program panel on the types of professional ethics violations or concerns that tend to occur in both graduate and post-graduate English scholarship; a Friday Forum on ethics and academic freedom.
D. Analysis of Findings
Overall, our Professional Development and Professional Ethics are effective in reaching our goals. Faculty responses show that various instructors have integrated professional development into their courses, and workshops are regularly conducted on publishing, conference presentations, grant-writing, and applying for academic positions. Faculty actively mentor students who are presenting conference papers, preparing work for publication, or engaged in other professional activities (i.e., journal editing, curating exhibits). Students in our Program become experienced teachers, scholars, and citizens: they successfully develop and teach undergraduate courses, attend conferences, organize academic events, and publish in journals and collections. Students receive most of their professional ethics training at the colleges at which they teach, but English Program faculty also address proper use of sources and plagiarism in their courses when appropriate.

Several students surveyed indicated that more professional development activities could be targeted at first-year students and at students later in the program who are preparing for the job market. The Program might also address professional ethics concerns in a more deliberate way.

E. Proposed Changes
At a recent English Students Association meeting, it was proposed that English faculty (instead of students) organize and staff the English Program suite at the MLA Convention, as a way to mentor and support students on the job market. If faculty are willing to serve in this capacity, the Program would support this initiative.

The Program will consider offering a Friday Forum event on ethics/academic freedom in English studies. We will also consider offering a workshop for faculty who are interested in incorporating DH topics and resources into their Ph.D. teaching.

However, offering workshops on discrete or technical topics (e.g., how to get on a conference panel) might not be the best or only way to model ethical and professional practices. The more integrated these ways of thinking and behaving are in program procedure, pedagogical methods, and mentorship practices, the more likely they are to be transmitted to students. Faculty should be encouraged to make visible (in their own courses as well as through dedicated events) ethical and professional practices that they take for granted, and that have been ingrained over years of work in academia (for instance, responsible citation of the work of other scholars, ethical practices when serving as a reader for a journal). More formally, the Program might draw upon these faculty experiences by offering workshops on recommendation writing, tenure reviews, serving on hiring committees, writing reader’s reports, or various kinds of administrative experience.

F. Next steps
The EO will solicit ideas for Friday Forum events or workshops focused on professional practices and ethics. In the fall, the EO will arrange for faculty members to organize and staff the English suite at the MLA in January. The EO will also circulate this report to faculty as a way of disseminating and reinforcing the professional development and ethics practices we already undertake. As always, the Program will continue to solicit student input into kinds of programming or support that might be useful.