

## MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION: Senate

TEL

FROM: Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic and Provost *pro tem*, and Chair, SCUP

RE: External Review of the Department of English (SCUP 19-28)

DATE: November 13, 2019

TIME

At its October 23, 2019 meeting, SCUP reviewed and approved the Action Plan for the Department of English that resulted from its External Review.

The Educational Goals Assessment Plan was reviewed and is attached for the information of Senate.

**Motion:**

That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of English that resulted from its External Review.

c: C. Lesjak  
J. Pulkingham

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www.sfu.ca/vpacademic**MEMORANDUM**

**ATTENTION** Jon Driver, Chair, SCUP  
**FROM** Wade Parkhouse, Vice-Provost and  
Associate Vice-President, Academic  
**RE:** Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review of the Department of English

**DATE** October 11, 2019**PAGES** 1/1

Attached are the External Review Report and the Action Plan for the Department of English. The Educational Goals Assessment Plan is included, for information only, with the Action Plan.

Excerpt from the External Review Report:

*"The Department of English... is an intellectually and pedagogically vibrant unit with an impressive record of research production and dissemination. The department is characterized by a genuinely collegial environment in which outstanding teaching, cutting-edge enquiry, prolific publication activity, and exciting research are fostered through collaborative and often novel enterprise at both the undergraduate and graduate levels."*

Following the site visit, the Report of the External Review Committee\* for the Department of English was submitted in April 2019. The Reviewers made a number of recommendations based on the Terms of Reference that were provided to them. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Chair of the Department of English and the Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (VPA) to consider the recommendations. An Action Plan was prepared taking into consideration the discussion at the meeting and the External Review Report. The Action Plan has been endorsed by the Department and the Dean.

**Motion:**

That SCUP approve and recommend to Senate the Action Plan for the Department of English that resulted from its external review.

**\*External Review Team:**

Peter W. Sinnema, University of Alberta (Chair of External Review Committee)  
Jennifer Clary-Lemon, University of Waterloo  
Russ Castronovo, University of Wisconsin – Madison  
Lara Campbell (internal), Simon Fraser University

**Attachments:**

1. External Review Report (April 2019)
2. Department of English Action Plan
3. Department of English Educational Goals Assessment Plan

cc Jane Pulkingham, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Carolyn Lesjak, Chair, Department of English

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
EXTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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Prepared by:

Peter W. Sinnema, University of Alberta (Chair, External Review Committee)

Jennifer Clary-Lemon, University of Waterloo (Member, External Review Committee)

Russ Castronovo, University of Wisconsin—Madison (Member, External Review Committee)

Lara Campbell, Simon Fraser University (Internal Member, Review Committee)

<b>Introduction</b>	2
<b>Overview &amp; Recommendations Summary</b>	3
<b>Process</b>	5
<b>Program Quality</b>	6
<b>Quality of Research</b>	9
<b>Administrative Participation, Workplace Environment</b>	10
<b>Future Plans</b>	11
<b>Issues Specific to English</b>	12
Enhancing Enrolments	12
Teaching and Pedagogy	13
International Student Recruitment	14
Indigenization	14
Research Creation at the Graduate Level	15

## Introduction

The Department of English at Simon Fraser University is an intellectually and pedagogically vibrant unit with an impressive record of research production and dissemination. The department is characterized by a genuinely collegial environment in which outstanding teaching, cutting-edge enquiry, prolific publication activity, and exciting research are fostered through collaborative and often novel enterprise at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

English is well served by competent, energetic, and deeply-invested administrative teams, both academic (Chair, Associate Chairs, officers, etc.) and non-academic (front-office staff), and its outward-looking focus is evident in a wide range of activities emphasizing community engagement and service to the public (the MATE and Writer-in-Residence programs being perhaps the most visible among those various initiatives operating at the intersection of the arts, cultural activism, and social justice).

Overall, the department may be said to be “punching above its weight,” particularly in the areas of research productivity and graduate programming, in both of which it invests significant energies and resources, and from which it derives much of its identity and prestige. As a result of ample endowment funds and substantial annual income generated through its relationship with Fraser International College, English is also in the enviable position of being able to support its graduate students and various internal initiatives with a generosity that, as the department Chair notes, helps to keep people happy.

Like many humanities programs across the continent, however, English at SFU faces some rather daunting challenges. Declining enrollments are the most concerning of these, with a percentage change in Majors of -42.87% in the ten-year period 2007/08 – 2017/18. This decline was represented to the review committee as a “crisis” by several English faculty members and administrators concerned about its implications for future resourcing and, indeed, for the long-term viability of the department itself (“the drop-off in English Majors ... affects everything we do”).

Investment in English by way of faculty renewal (i.e. continuing faculty lines, or CFLs) has also withered, with no new CFLs in English in the past ten years. There are no Assistant Professors in the current faculty complement, which is becoming increasingly top-heavy and expensive as more Associate Professors are promoted to Full. The review committee discovered wide-spread anxiety and foreboding among English faculty members regarding this fact. Whither English without the imminent prospect of faculty renewal?

The department also appears to have a recent history of “missed opportunities” that may have compromised its ability to vigorously confront its challenges. It was unable to negotiate a successful amalgamation with World Literature and, according to several interviewees, has allowed writing studies/rhetoric to wane. English 199, in particular, has been relegated to the margins of a department identified by some of its members as being focused on “traditional” or even “remedial” literary studies. The small writing-and-rhetoric contingent in English feels largely invisible, suggesting that the department’s otherwise manifest collegiality may not be universally experienced.

As one member of the review committee frames the picture at SFU, “English is a tale of two programs, one that is thriving and, indeed, over-performing at the graduate level, and one that is struggling at the undergraduate level. The task will be to use existing strengths—with support and vision from the senior administration of the university—to innovate and form partnerships in new ways. Fortunately, the excellent teaching and prodigious research scholarship that is characteristic of English provide a firm foundation for taking the next steps toward stabilizing and re-growing the Major.”

## **Overview**

In the interest of charting potential pathways toward that stabilization and growth, the review committee makes the following six core recommendations, recognizing that very real institutional barriers (i.e. to meaningful cross-Faculty collaborations in teaching and service) will require hard work and commitment not only at the department level, but also at the decanal level, and possibly higher, if structural and ideological impediments to inter- and cross-disciplinary collaboration are to be overcome. Ultimately, these recommendations—which are more fully fleshed out in subsequent sections of this report—are based on the committee’s conviction that **English at SFU would benefit from re-imagining what it means to provide “service” to SFU students and to the institution as a whole, based on its established expertise and excellence in writing instruction and the cultivation of humanities knowledge, and in the process of that re-imagining embrace and promote discipline-based, writing intensive service courses as foundational to English’s mission.**

The review team believes that service teaching, capaciously conceived, holds real potential for the department’s future growth and vigor. The recommendations are presented here in summary form for the convenience of the report’s readers and to foreground them as succinct articulations of the committee’s chief points of advocacy.

## ***Recommendations Summary***

### **1. Reach out to other units.**

- forge interdisciplinary connections by actively pursuing and building undergraduate teaching opportunities with other departments and programs at SFU, based on promising, cross-disciplinary pedagogical alliances (First Nations studies? Health tracks? Economics and literature? Literature of the environment?)
- there is growth potential for English in more cross-listings and co-taught courses
- English may play a vital role in addressing students’ increasing interest in the STEM disciplines by developing and pitching courses in such areas as technology, climate change, aging, disability, etc.

### **2. Revisit partnership/integration with the World Literature Program and possibly other humanities units.**

- the prospect of any such partnership will depend on leadership from the Dean of FASS and the development of common goals and aspirations, particularly with regard to undergraduate curriculum and pedagogy, between the two units

3. **Explore the possible advantages attendant on a gradual move away from a coverage (period-based) undergraduate curriculum.**
  - full period coverage is no longer possible with a dwindling faculty complement
  - in its current form, the Major limits flexibility, i.e. the option for faculty members to reach out to new student populations with non-period-based course offerings
  - the VP Research indicated to the review team that funding might be available for English to innovate in the area of Indigenous curriculum and courses that play more directly to the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of SFU students in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century—English faculty voiced their willingness to expand in these directions
  
4. **Meet undergraduate student demand for writing instruction, and graduate student demand for teaching support and training.**
  - English 199 should be viewed as an opportunity to engage and recruit students early in their university careers with courses imaginatively linked to faculty members’ cutting-edge research interests, not as “service drudgery”—redesigned to feature an array of topics consistent with the above recommendations about engaging students’ interest in STEM, courses under the 199 number could prove an effective recruitment tool to the Major
  - how might the department get its best, most exciting instructors into junior (100- and 200-level) classrooms?
  - English 199 could be an excellent professional training ground for graduate students, who are seeking more such training, and many of whom go on after degree to teach in lower mainland colleges, where their teaching is heavily writing-focused
  
5. **As a humanities department, English should conceive of service to the humanities as an opportunity and a boon to its own mission.**
  - English is well positioned to attract students from across FASS into courses focusing on materiality, circulation, and production
  - the small and sequestered Digital Humanities initiative, currently limited to one 300-level DHIL class, should be grown across all levels of the department, more fully integrated into the English curriculum, and actively promoted to other humanities and social sciences programs
  - the Master’s-level Print Culture program should likewise find ways to “filter down” to the undergraduate level, perhaps as a special stream that might prove highly attractive to undergraduate students interested in questions of textual production, distribution, reception, etc.
  
6. **Continue to loosen or eliminate prerequisites.**
  - create credit-level (as opposed to course-specific) prerequisites for as many undergraduate courses as possible, to ease students’ progress through the degree and attract more non-Majors
  - credit courses in the Rhetoric and Writing Certificate toward the English degree

- eliminate the period requirement for the M.A. program

## Process

The review committee convened to assess both the undergraduate and graduate programs in the Department of English at Simon Fraser University over the course of three days, 27 February – 1 March 2019. The site visit followed a rigorous schedule of meetings and conversations with numerous constituencies and individuals.

The committee was provided with an overview of and guidance on the review exercise and issues specific to the Department of English in an initial meeting with senior administrators: Wade Parkhouse (Associate VP Academic), Glynn Nicholls (Director, Academic Planning), Dugan O’Neil (Associate VP, Research), Jeff Derksen (Dean, Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies), Jane Pulkingham (Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences), and Bal Basi (Coordinator, University Curriculum and Institutional Liaison).

Separate meetings were held with department academic administrators, during which the committee learned about the structure and history of—as well as some of the opportunities and challenges facing—individual programs and English as a whole: Paul Budra (Chair, Department of English), Mike Everton (Undergraduate Chair), and Clint Burnham (Graduate Chair). A meeting with Dean Pulkingham provided insight into the relationship between English and the Faculty, with a focus on questions of resourcing, enrollments, and future directions. The committee also met individually with Associate VP Research O’Neill and Zoë Druick (Associate Dean, Graduate Studies).

Meetings with groups of undergraduate, M.A., and PhD students provided an informative view of the experiences and aspirations of these lively cohorts. The committee was provided time to meet one-on-one with faculty members (two of whom took advantage of the opportunity, while one contributed via a detailed letter), with teaching faculty (one attending), and with Peter Cramer as an expert in writing and rhetorical theory. The five members of the department’s non-academic (front office) staff impressed the committee with their unwaveringly positive comments about their relationship to both their jobs and the department they serve with commitment and enthusiasm.

The final day of the site visit introduced the committee to four of the department’s special initiatives/program streams and their coordinators: the Digital Humanities Innovation Lab, located in the W.A.C. Bennett Library; the Print Culture Program; the Master of Arts for Teachers of English; and the Ellen & Warren Tallman Writer in Residency committee. Closing meetings with the Chair and the senior administrators wrapped up the visit. The latter allowed the visiting committee to present their initial impressions of the Department of English and to share some preliminary recommendations for its continued vitality into the future.

Throughout these conversations, the committee listened carefully to the many thoughtful and passionate remarks of department members. After dispersing, committee Chair Peter Sinnema, with the aid of extensive notes from Russ Castronovo and Jennifer Clary-Lemon, drafted a



report, circulated it by email to other members of the committee, and revised it for submission in its present state.

## **Program Quality**

The review committee was left in no doubt as to the exceptionally high quality of both the undergraduate (B.A.) and graduate (M.A. and PhD) programs offered by SFU's Department of English, although the committee was also persuaded that certain structural changes and shifts in emphases could lend new resilience and potency to already-strong programs. The committee's key phrases in this regard would be **program flexibility, teacher training, and forging alliances**. This assessment is based on information derived from three primary sources: student feedback, the self-study report, and faculty-member testimonials to the strengths and limitations of their own program environment.

### *(i) Student Feedback*

Student satisfaction is high, particularly among M.A.s, who spoke animatedly about generous funding packages, plasticity of programming requirements, strong support from faculty (they are "always willing to support you," are "very accessible" and "sympathetic"), and a non-hostile, non-competitive environment among their peers. M.A. students also perceive English at SFU to offer freedom that other English graduate programs lack: there is "plenty of opportunity to explore." Socially and intellectually, there is a strong sense of cohesion and community. Students comment on there being "lots of professionalization opportunities," including alt-ac, and meaningful faculty advocacy. There is also room for improvement, however:

- limited course offerings at the graduate level—the fact or perception that there are "fewer courses being offered" than there were in the past as a result of a shrinking faculty complement—have resulted in widely-shared resentment about the period requirement (pre-twentieth century literature) for the M.A. The requirement is generally seen as redundant, having already been fulfilled at the undergraduate level, and as limiting options for course selection. English should consider eliminating the period requirement for the M.A.

PhD students similarly express high satisfaction with most aspects of their degree program, despite a generally-shared disillusionment with academia in general (the post-secondary sector or "system" and poor prospects for academic employment post-graduation) and concerns about the exorbitant housing costs associated with living in or near Vancouver. One student testified that the program "really helped me grow in confidence." Others note that the PhD process was made clear at the beginning of the degree, that supervisors and committees are "incredibly supportive," and that there is "space to try something that won't necessarily work out." Most PhDs take pride in belonging to the "more radical intellectual culture" of SFU (some gentle jabs being made at UBC as a more conservative institution). Two areas could use improvement:

- there is a general sense among PhDs that T.A. training is inadequate, an area where the department "has generally failed." T.A. student evaluations are typically excellent, but "we probably don't get enough training." Although the two Proseminars offer some useful preparation, English should develop a more comprehensive training program for PhD

students so that they feel better prepared for the pedagogical and interpersonal challenges and pleasures of the undergraduate classroom. Such training should also include conversations about why the undergraduate curriculum is structured the way it is—the overall shape and curricular concentrations of the undergraduate program remain something of a mystery to many T.A.s teaching in it.

- English could better oversee and implement supervisory standards and expectations. Commenting on delayed feedback and a general lack of communication, one student expressed fears about aggravating or alienating a supervisor: “I’m afraid most times to ask for things, because I don’t want to be *that* student.”

Undergraduate students—as represented by the two Honours and two Majors who met with the visiting committee—agree that their professors are readily accessible and do a “great job” of helping students. Muted grumbling about limited course offerings did not detract from the committee’s sense that students are, on the whole, satisfied with their undergraduate experience. Two take-aways deserve emphasizing, however:

- when asked what is most valuable about the English B.A.—i.e., what chief learning outcome students associate with the degree—they unanimously agreed: strong writing skills. Students would like to see writing emphasized across all four years of their program. Currently all first-year courses are W-designated. Since W courses are seen to be the most beneficial in terms of skills development, English should consider offering more writing-intensive instruction across all levels of the undergraduate curriculum.
- the under-subscribed but well-conceived and promising English Network should be widely and actively endorsed in undergraduate classrooms. Students believe that the most effective advertising of services, programs, and activities designed for their use and benefit is through the promotion of such by their professors and instructors—not through the departmental website or general email announcements.

(ii) *Self-Study Report*

The self-study presents a detailed and compelling picture of a department comprised of three diverse, well-managed programs, each delivering a high-quality, stimulating education to students, in many respects at the vanguard of contemporary pedagogical and curricular practices for English/literary studies. Each also appears to be effectively delivering on those educational goals developed in response to this quality assurance exercise: for the B.A., literary mindedness, literary knowledge, analytical and research proficiency, argumentation and communications agility, and cultural literacy; for the M.A. and PhD, literary knowledge, analytical and research proficiency, argumentation and communications agility, cultural literacy, and professionalization.

The emphasis on “the literary” in the B.A. goals-list suggests that SFU English continues to cherish a “traditional” curriculum based on period—a coverage model—and indeed the study recognizes as much in its “Introduction” by noting that “the Department has traditionally offered a full range of courses in the discipline, from Old English to graphic novels, from rhetoric to

creative writing.” As already observed, such a model may no longer be sustainable or indeed desirable, given an attenuating faculty complement and the study’s acknowledgment that English “may have to specialize further” in light of the fact that “it may be difficult to cover some traditional historical periods” (3).

A renewed emphasis on writing across the undergraduate curriculum, a closer integration of already-established and excellent initiatives/concentrations (DHIL/English 363; Print Culture) into the undergraduate program, and the forging of new teaching alliances with other FASS and extra-Faculty units may represent ways forward at a moment of general contraction in terms of CFLs and teaching capacity.

The committee’s experience during its visit to the Department of English confirmed the existence of numerous other program assets highlighted in the self-study. With 51 students (31 M.A.s, 20 PhDs), the graduate program is comparatively large and is competitive with other Canadian comprehensive and research-intensive universities when it comes to both recruitment and placement. The Honours program, although still quite small at 8 students per year, has nevertheless experienced growth in recent years, thanks to reforms introduced in the wake of the last external review.

A Creative Writing Minor has been designed and is in the process of governance review; if successfully established, it holds the promise of increased undergraduate enrollments, although there are concerns about adequate staffing of such a program without future CFLs being hired into it. That said, the skyrocketing, international prominence of novelist David Chariandy, along with the established or burgeoning reputations of other creative writers such as Clint Burnham, Stephen Collis, Jeff Derksen, and Peter Dickinson, suggests that these talents may be effectively employed and serve as recruitment magnets in a dedicated Creative Writing program. Certificates (3: Writing and Rhetoric, Performance Studies, Creative Writing) and international field schools (2: France, London & Lake District) contribute to a diversity of undergraduate educational opportunities and experiences, and supplement a broad array of rotated course offerings (75+) on three campuses.

(iii) *Faculty Perceptions*

The review committee had the privilege of meeting with 12 English faculty members (some multiple times, several in their capacities as department administrators, special-program coordinators/leads, or committee members) and one senior lecturer—40% of the total faculty complement. Questions put to faculty on the issues of program quality, structure, and future directions gave rise to varied and occasionally contradictory responses, which are registered in the bullet points below, as are certain common themes that emerged from the committee’s spirited conversations:

- a widely- if not universally-shared belief among faculty members is that future growth (in numbers of Majors, in faculty complement, in departmental esteem/“heft” within FASS and the University at large) can only be achieved if new alliances between English and other units/programs (i.e. First Nations Studies, World Literature, etc.) are part of the

strategic plan; significant expectations are also placed on expanded outreach (to alumni and high schools) and the launch of a Creative Writing Minor

- other ideas for enhanced programming and development: students taking English courses at FIC could be more actively courted (with class visits and follow-up); English should take advantage of faculty members' (a) demonstrable willingness to be flexible, to step outside of their areas of specialization and engage with new pedagogies and course materials, and (b) "real appetite" for rethinking how writing instruction is done, to make it more rigorous and central to the curriculum; undergraduate courses in Asian North American and Indigenous literatures are most urgently needed; further collaboration between the DHIL and English at all levels would be mutually beneficial (i.e. courses in digital story-telling, digital exhibition, digital pedagogies)
- the English undergraduate curriculum is "too geographically narrow, too narrow in terms of period"
- department culture, teaching, and research are excellent: English is in a state of relative "tranquility," faculty members are "fair-minded people," there's a good deal of energy
- the department's slow decline, as evidenced in its loss of Majors, will not be resolved by its (i) obsession with the graduate program, (ii) focus on ideology, (iii) self-congratulatory collegiality
- the graduate program faces three major challenges, which also represent real opportunities: Indigenization of the curriculum; developing paths for research creation (new forms of scholarly production, as per recent developments at SSHRC); revising the Proseminars so that they don't bear the weight of too many expectations (i.e. for teacher training)
- undergraduates tend to discover writing and rhetoric courses late in their degree programs, when they are close to graduating, by which point it is too late for them to enroll in more such courses—more writing-focused courses at lower levels of the curriculum could resolve this issue, and in the process bolster writing studies
- the need for renewal through additional CFLs is pressing, although renewal could also take the form of structural changes in departments, i.e. more team-teaching

### **Quality of Research**

Publication, grant activity, and research dissemination are notable for a department of SFU English's size. A rough count indicates that English faculty published no fewer than 17 sole-authored monographs in the five-year period 2013-18, placing books with prestigious university and trade presses such as Cambridge, Illinois, Delaware, Massachusetts, Palgrave, McGill-Queens, and Bloomsbury. These publications were supplemented by the appearance of 20 co-authored or co-edited books and special journal issues during the same period. Further, a significant majority of faculty members churn out journal articles, book chapters, short stories,

novels and poems on a regular (in some cases, annual) basis, placing work in such top-tier venues as *Victorian Studies*, *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, *Metascience*, *Mediations*, *Studies in Romanticism*, *Mississippi Quarterly*, *College Composition and Communication*, and the *Journal of American Studies*.

English faculty have also organized numerous national and international conferences and symposia. They regularly bring in to the department significant research dollars from both internal (FASS, VP Research, SFU Library, etc.) and external (SSHRC, Hong Kong Baptist University, International Engagement Fund, library fellowships, etc.) sources. The visiting committee was impressed with English's active and robust research culture, much of it of a collaborative nature, extensively supported through successful applications to major funding bodies.

### **Administrative Participation & Workplace Environment**

At no point during its visit did the review committee hear serious complaints about disengaged or nonparticipating faculty, although one senior professor expressed a "wish [that] more of the (recently tenured) department would get more active, especially in committee and Senate work outside the department." The committee *did* hear from several interviewees about the commuter-campus ethos that afflicts work and social life at SFU, perched as it is on a mountain-top an hour's public-transit ride from East Vancouver. The committee also learned that several faculty members have recently moved further afield (Nanaimo, Squamish) to purchase affordable housing. Geographical and market forces, then, represent not-insignificant challenges to faculty involvement and departmental cohesion. And yet, the general sentiment is that English "remains an extraordinarily good place to work" and that real energy continues to percolate in the department.

The Chair and Associate Chairs are hard-working, resourceful administrators who appear to find genuine meaning and satisfaction in their positions, for which they also feel adequately compensated. They recognize that English "may need to become something different"—if the department is getting smaller, should it embrace smallness and adopt more of a boutique undergraduate curriculum? If students find humanities Majors too complicated, should English eliminate more coverage requirements and prerequisites?—even while reciprocally extolling an "excellent department culture and excellent teaching."

Non-academic administrators, in turn, see English as a united and supportive department ("we have really great faculty members"), noting that they never need to contend with snobbery or verbal abuse. Faculty administering the Print Culture, MATE, and Writer-in-Residence programs all spoke eloquently and enthusiastically about the multifaceted gratifications attendant on managing these important and unique portfolios.

The DHIL is one English-affiliated unit that would benefit from additional administrative resourcing. Collette Colligan described to the committee the collaborative leadership model currently practiced in the DHIL, noting that the library is fully committed to the lab's growth. Collette's and Michelle Levy's unremunerated (i.e. with course release or other incentives) labour in running the lab and mentoring its three Digital Fellows is probably too onerous to be

sustainable in the long term. English faculty and students have shown a lot of interest in the splendid work being done in the DHIL, but the department should be thinking about developing future leadership for the lab and more actively bringing its cutting-edge work into the department at the curricular and possibly organizational/structural levels. The visiting committee noted the rather cramped space assigned to the DHIL on the library's top floor—class visits are not possible.

Although the committee was not given a dedicated tour of English facilities (aside from the library-based DHIL headquarters), its impressions of the various seminar rooms, offices, and gathering spaces on the sixth floor of the Academic Quadrangle were positive. Views from those rooms with north-facing windows overlooking the Burnaby Mountain Conservation Area invoked murmurs of delight, and occasionally jeopardized the committee's attentiveness. The Burrard Inlet vista from the West Mall Centre cafeteria during lunch with the Chair was equally sublime, and more than made up for the mundane scenes of plastic tarps and scaffolding on a campus undergoing major—and, the committee was given to understand, long overdue—renovations. The functionality and quality of aging brutalist facilities does not appear to be a cause of solicitude on the part of faculty, students, or staff.

### **Future Plans**

Reforms introduced to the undergraduate English degree in 2016 and following—reconceptualizing first-year courses away from a classical genre-based curriculum, streamlining of prerequisites for upper-division courses, eliminating period and national distribution requirements for the Minor—represent a laudable effort on the part of the department to ease students' progress through the degree and to attract more students to the department's offerings, whether as English Majors and Minors or as curious browsers taking options outside of their home departments and Faculties. Such reconfigurations are oriented toward a future many other English programs are also striving to claim in a period of enrollment decline: a flexible curriculum with exciting, relevant courses open to any students interested in them.

English might want to more aggressively explore what student representatives on its Undergraduate Curriculum Committee advocate: adopting in the Major the model for the revised Minor, *viz*, “jettisoning nearly all coverage requirements except perhaps Canadian literature” (self-study, 22). As the 2018 Association of Departments of English (ADE) Ad Hoc Committee on the English Major remarks (in the “A Changing Major” report, hereafter “ADE report”), “a responsive and engaging major can play its part in efforts to recruit more students into the major” (2).

As already noted, SFU English is hopeful that its proposal for a Creative Writing Minor will soon be approved. The Chair's dream hire into such a program would be an Indigenous female playwright, to complement existing (male) expertise in prose fiction and poetry. Certainly, the department should push on a strategic hiring initiative that holds synergetic possibilities: Indigenization of the faculty complement and curriculum through a new Indigenous CFL in Creative Writing. The ADE report just cited observes that “the growth potential of creative writing does not appear to be exhausted ... For most programs, creative writing students provide an important source of majors and help shore up contracting literature-class enrollments” (19).

English could thus help SFU and FASS meet post-TRC obligations to “Indigenize the academy” while simultaneously building up a growth-promising Creative Writing Minor.

If English were to have more CFLs approved, the Chair indicated that, in addition to the Indigenous playwright just mentioned, he would prioritize hires in Modernism (as an area that has been wholly vacated) and in Writing and Rhetoric. Although the visiting committee is hesitant to advise on such matters as hiring priorities and planning—traditionally (and rightly) the internal prerogative of departments—it may be that, in the current fiduciary climate, a Modernist represents a straightforward *replacement* of lost expertise/specialization rather than a forward-thinking *extension* into new, possibly interdisciplinary areas of research and pedagogy. Dean Pulkingham, who told the committee of her desire to support English in finding solutions to its problems, and who noted that the department’s obvious strengths aren’t simply reducible to the total number of faculty members, might more readily endorse English CFLs that speak to emergent, even experimental fields that hold the promise of high student demand and exciting cross-disciplinary liaisons.

### Issues Specific to English

The Terms of Reference provided to the external review committee contained six questions specific to the department’s interests. A number of these have been addressed in earlier sections of this report, and so are only summarily touched upon. Question 6, in particular—*What strategies would you suggest we pursue to promote “English” at SFU?*—has been the focus of the preceding pages, and so is not revisited here. The committee also considered certain questions to exceed its proficiencies for adequate and informed response or to fall outside the purview of department-level redress. The report’s readers are asked to bear these caveats in mind.

(i) *What could be done to halt our declining enrollments?*

It would be delusional to ignore what the burgeoning literature on the decline of English (and other humanities disciplines) has to say about the profound impact broader cultural and economic forces have had on that decline, accurately represented as a crisis to “traditional” programs of literary study. Even exceptionally well-planned, boldly experimental, and generously-resourced responses at the department level may not be adequate to stem, let alone reverse a 10- to 15- year downward trend in enrollments. Paula Krebs’ “Note from the Executive Director” to the ADE report explicitly “connects the decline in interest in the English major to a national decline in leisure reading and to the reshaping of reading practices by electronic media” (n.p.). Ultimately, SFU English may not be in a position to radically improve upon its own enrollment problems, at least in the short term and through independent effort. The university’s upper administration needs to be cognizant of this fact and a true partner in attempts at its amelioration.

That said, Krebs puts a series of provocative questions to Chairs and other administrators of English departments about what they are doing to confront those external pressures:

How is your department addressing those changes directly? How are you changing your courses, your recruiting, your public programming to acknowledge that the ways in which students approach narrative, poetry, and performance have changed since we were English majors? The report notes the centrality of writing to the English major and the rise of interest in creative writing as a separate major. What is your department doing to link the study of reading and the study of writing? How are we capturing the interest of students who want to write but who don't connect that desire to a need to read broadly and critically? How are we recruiting students who want to study literature and to write but who worry that they should be business majors instead? (n.p.)

These questions need to be taken up by English departments across the continent, not only English at SFU. The review committee has stressed in this report the importance of **flexibility** (in course offerings, degree requirements, and cross-disciplinary exchanges) and **adaptation** (to an evolving student population, new disciplinary emphases, and writing skills-based service to FASS and other Faculties). Along with Krebs, the authors of this report advocate for program changes that better “meet our students where they are and help them become the readers and writers ... they want to be” (n.p.). Only by offering courses and learning experiences that “meet our students where they are” can we hope to have the programs and departments where “they want to be.”

SFU's unique geo-political situation on Canada's west coast within the Vancouver conurbation presents English with an opportunity to develop a curriculum appealing to a distinctive ethnographic population. The Undergraduate Chair identified Asian North American Literature as one area in which more courses could be offered, to better reflect the SFU undergraduate student body. Significant expansion into this and other currently under-represented areas (i.e. Indigenous literature) without additional CFLs would by necessity mean shifting resources from one part of the existing curriculum to others. Any such reallocations must, of course, be made strategically and judiciously, but could reinvigorate a curriculum perceived to be heavily focused on traditional literary studies organized by the principle of period coverage.

(ii) *What forms of pedagogy would improve our teaching?*

The reviewers did not deliberate on this particular question, either in conversation with members of the English department or in committee. Teaching quality appears to be outstanding and not in need of remedial action, despite the fairly conventional format of junior undergraduate classes (the lecture/tutorial structure). Conventions typically persist because they work. The existence of an *Undergraduate Teaching Manual* outlining guidelines and expectations for all instructors suggests that the department is serious about teaching quality and about consistency across its curriculum. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee's regular review of course outlines and faculty members' willingness to take advantage of the Teaching and Learning Centre's resources further signify a genuine commitment to pedagogical excellence.

As already noted, PhD students feel that their own training as T.A.s could be more rigorous and expansive. Given that the first-year English curriculum relies so heavily on T.A.s to lead tutorials defined in the self-study as “dedicated discussion spaces and writing workshops” (20), additional teacher training—with a particular focus on formal writing instruction—would benefit both PhD



students and the undergraduates they teach. If the option for professors to exchange tutorial instruction for teacher training was made standard practice—i.e. was to become mandatory rather than discretionary—more opportunities would be created for “helping TAs better their own teaching in accordance with a set of best practices for TA supervision” (self-study, 20).

(iii) *How could we attract more international students?*

Again, the review committee did not explicitly discuss this question. In most if not all Canadian universities, recruitment and intake of international students are centralized activities, under the purview of such offices as the Registrar and Advancement. Assuming this to be the case at SFU, English may be limited in its capacity to reach out directly to international students.

Is the department in a position to team up with SFU International or International Services for Students to actively promote its programs? Are closer links with FIC desirable? Does English wish to enhance (multiply) its course offerings on subjects of ethnicity, race, postcolonialism, diasporic literatures, etc. in an effort to appeal to more international students?

Internationalization of the undergraduate student body must be a collaborative, university-wide effort if it is to be successful. Indigenization of the curriculum, the student body, and the faculty cohort is perhaps a more pressing and efficacious priority.

(iv) *How can we Indigenize our curriculum?*

This important question is being asked in English departments across the country in the wake of the TRC’s “Calls to Action.” Recommendation #3, above, proposes that a gradual move away from a coverage model in the undergraduate curriculum would allow English to relocate existing teaching resources into currently under-represented pedagogical areas such as Indigenous literature. The assumption here, however, is that such resources (expertise) already exist for potential redeployment, whereas there are compelling political and ethical arguments for the teaching of Indigenous literature courses *by* Indigenous instructors. True Indigenization of the curriculum must coalesce with Indigenization of the faculty cohort—a longer-term project requiring planning and cooperation between the department, the Dean, and perhaps central administration.

Ultimately, SFU English’s approach to Indigenization—which at the undergraduate level could mean an integrated, Indigenous curricular stream—needs to account for the department’s own historical, geographical, and political context, and speak to the shared interests and commitments of the department’s faculty and students. What does “Indigenization” mean to and for an English department serving the educational needs of students drawn largely from the Burnaby area? Which local Indigenous communities, if any, might SFU English see itself partnering with in this conversation? Do programs being developed or already in place at other Canadian institutions offer compelling and workable models for SFU?

One such model, however imperfect, exists in the Department of English & Film Studies (EFS) at the University of Alberta, and might have some applicability to English at SFU. By fulfilling writing-intensive requirements for several Faculties across the university, junior (100-level) English courses in EFS are taken by 10,000-11,000 undergraduate students per year—a heavy

service function, but with considerable outreach. A significant majority of students fulfill part of their writing-intensive requirements by taking ENGL 102: *Introduction to Critical Analysis*. The reading-list guidelines for the 70-80 ENGL 102 sections @ 40 students each stipulate that “at least one Indigenous North American text” must be taught. Further, each year EFS offers several sections of ENGL 125: *Aboriginal Writing*, also credited for the writing-intensive requirement and focusing on the “aesthetics, concepts, approaches, and debates that inform the production and study of aboriginal literatures” and “the roles literature plays in shaping and reflecting aboriginal identities, communities, and histories.” EFS’s build-in of Indigenous content to its 100-level curriculum, however under-developed, has some impact on several thousand undergraduates from across the university every year.

- (v) *How can we encourage research creation at the graduate level while also maintaining evaluative criteria and scholarly innovation?*

Although the committee did not discuss research creation, which has recently been identified by SSHRC as an official funding category, SFU English might look to various other Canadian programs that have approved research creation projects. See, for example, Concordia University’s Research Creation Stream in the Humanities PhD:

<https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/cissc/phd-humanities/research-creation.html>

Memorial University’s Research Creation in the Department of English:

<https://www.mun.ca/hss/research/creation.php>

Queen’s University’s Research Creation in the Department of English:

<https://www.queensu.ca/culturalstudies/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.cltstwww/files/files/CUSTprogramResearchCreationdefinition29April2016.pdf>

The Department of English & Film Studies at the University of Alberta is in the process of approving a research creation PhD thesis option that aligns with SSHRC guidelines and may represent one way forward for graduate English at SFU. EFS describes this option as:

A substantial work of research that combines creative and academic research practices and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation. The creation process is situated within the research activity and produces critically informed work in a variety of media (art forms). A graduate-level Research-Creation project could take various forms: a single “hybrid” text combining creative and critical modes of inquiry; a scholarly dissertation accompanied by separate but related creative work; or a “collage” text in which the student’s own research is placed in juxtaposition with excerpts from her or his own creative writing and possibly texts/media from other sources. Research-Creation projects could also involve intermedia (art & design) and performance-based work.

Graduate programs choosing to approve research creation need to have sufficient resources—i.e., expertise for the appropriate evaluation of theses or other creative works taking non-traditional forms—to ensure that such projects meet scholarly/academic expectations for graduate work at this level. To date, four EFS faculty members (all with some background in creative writing) have self-identified as being qualified supervisors for creative research dissertations.

## EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

<b>Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director</b>			
Unit under review	Date of Review Site visit	Responsible Unit person	Faculty Dean
.....English.....	Feb. 27-Mar. 1 2019...	Paul Budra, Chair	Jane Pulkingham, Dean of FASS
<p><b>Notes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is <b><i>not</i></b> expected that every recommendation made by the External Review Committee be covered by this Action Plan. The major thrusts of the Report should be identified and some consolidation of the recommendations may be possible while other recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.</li> <li>2. Attach the required plan to assess the success of the <b>Educational Goals</b> as a separate document (Senate 2013).</li> <li>3. Should any additional response be warranted, it should be attached as a separate document.</li> </ol>			
<b>1. PROGRAMMING</b>			
<p style="margin-left: 40px;">a. <b>Action/s (description what is going to be done):</b></p> <p><b>1.1.1 Undergraduate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>First, in response to the External Review’s third and fifth recommendations, the Department will review and revise undergraduate course offerings</b> to create (a) more adaptable course containers; (b) alternatives to traditional reliance on periodization/geography; (c) new opportunities for upper-division service teaching; and (d) an intensive, cohort-based, lower-division introduction to the field for majors/minors.</li> <li>• <b>Second, in response to the External Review’s sixth recommendation and in tandem with the revision of undergraduate course offerings, the Department will rethink the reasonableness and appropriateness of program requirements and course-level prerequisites</b> in order to create (a) more opportunities for non-majors/minors to take English courses, especially upper-division courses; (b) increased flexibility for students as they navigate the major; and (c) greater responsiveness to new areas of interest among an increasingly diverse student population (e.g. Indigenous and South Asian literature) while sustaining representation of established areas.</li> <li>• <b>Third, in response to the External Review’s fourth recommendation, the Department will reconsider the role of writing across the undergraduate English curriculum</b> in order to potentially create (a) higher visibility for the importance of writing as communication in the major/minor; (b) more faculty reflection on approaches to writing instruction; (c) fuller integration of the study of Writing &amp; Rhetoric into the curriculum; and (d) greater access to creative writing, including a new, interdisciplinary Minor in Creative Writing.</li> </ul>			

- **The Department has already begun acting on the External Review's first recommendation**, having reached out to other units (Economics, Business, Geography) about possible cross-disciplinary pedagogical alliances. Such alliances may generate new courses that will impact the process of revising the undergraduate curriculum.
- **Finally, the External Review's second suggestion, that English form a partnership/integration with the World Literature Program is not workable at this time** as World Literature is in the process of its own structural realignment with language training.

#### **1.1.2 Graduate:**

- **The Department will consider eliminating the period requirements for the M.A.**
- **In response to the External Review's fourth recommendation, the Department will increase teaching support for our incoming graduate students**, including clawing back half of TA/TM day for in-house instruction and coordinating with FASS-wide initiatives for more T.A. teacher training.
- **The Department has already instituted a Teaching Assistant teaching award.**

##### **a. Resource implications (if any):**

**In order to offer courses that appeal to our diverse student population**, the Department requires instructors conversant in Indigenous literatures and/or South Asian literatures in English. **Also, in order to sustain our dedicated writing courses (e.g. ENGL 199W) and to shore up our reputation as an innovator in approaches to undergraduate writing** the Department requires lecturer positions in Writing & Rhetoric. We recently lost two lecturers in that field that have not been replaced.

#### **1.3 Expected completion date/s:**

As noted above, some of the recommendations have already been acted upon. Curriculum review and restructuring can be accomplished over the next two or three years. The offering of new courses and additional courses in writing, including Creative Writing and Writing & Rhetoric, depends on the acquisition of CFLs.

We have already begun to increase teaching instruction for our graduate students.

**Please note:** When the changes in the curriculum take place, the Department will have to revisit the educational goals for both the undergraduate and graduate program.

## 2. RESEARCH

### 2.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- The visiting committee was “impressed with English’s active and robust research culture, much of it of a collaborative nature, extensively supported through successful applications to major funding bodies.” The Department will continue to support faculty members’ research agendas and encourage collaborative, innovative, and community engaged scholarship.
- The Department will, as part of the assessment of its curriculum and in response to the External Review’s fifth recommendation, look for ways that faculty research (in areas such as Print Culture and Digital Humanities) can be introduced at the undergraduate level.

### 2.2 Resource implications (if any):

### 2.3 Expected completion date/s:

## 3. ADMINISTRATION

### 3.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- The visiting committee was impressed with English’s administrative participation and workplace environment. The Department’s administration was described as “hard-working” and “resourceful.” The Department will continue to encourage faculty members to be active above and beyond the department level by participating in Senate and other university-level committees.
- The visiting committee suggested that more resources be directed to the Digital Humanities Innovation Lab (DHIL) run out of the library. Unfortunately the committee was not clear about the relation of English, or our Digital Humanities course ENGL363, to DHIL. ENGL363 is *not* part of the DHIL. DHIL is a library-based initiative that supports all of FASS, not just English. Resources to support it would have to come from the Dean’s office or the office of the VPR. No action from English is required.

### 3.2 Resource implications (if any):

3.3 Expected completion date/s:

## 4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- The visiting committee concluded that English “remains an extraordinarily good place to work” and that “real energy continues to percolate in the department.” The Department will work to continue towards fostering of a “united and supportive department.”

4.2 Resource implications (if any):

4.3 Expected completion date/s:

## 5. .... (OTHER)


5.1 Action/s:

- .....
- .....
- .....

5.2 Resource implications (if any):

5.3 Expected completion date/s:

The above action plan has been considered by the Unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Dean.

<p>Unit Leader (signed)</p>  <p>Name .....Paul Budra..... Title.....Chair.....</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>.....</p>
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## Section 2 - Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan:

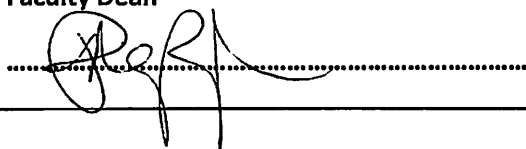
I met with Dr. Paul Budra, Chair of the Department of English on May 22, 2019 with Glynn Nicholls (Office of the VPA) to discuss the external review prepared by Professors Peter W. Sinnema (Committee Chair, University of Alberta), Jennifer Clary-Lemon (University of Waterloo) and Russ Castronovo (University of Wisconsin-Madison).

Close consideration has been given to the external review report and to the detailed response from the Department of English. The external reviewers have produced a very thoughtful assessment, capturing the strengths found in the Department, identifying opportunities for new initiatives building on the department's strengths, as well as some challenges.

As the attached Action Plan outlines, the Department intends to pursue a number of initiatives designed to realign curriculum and programming offerings that reflect contemporary disciplinary currents and changes in the student body. At the undergraduate level, these include repositioning the way in which disciplinary areas of expertise are framed in the curriculum; curricular changes to increase opportunities for non-majors/minors to take courses, particularly at the upper division level; developing cohort learning experiences for incoming majors/minors; putting greater emphasis on the role of writing, including the development of a new Minor in Creative Writing; and finding ways to provide greater exposure to the robust research culture of the unit in course offerings and the curriculum more broadly, especially in areas such as Print Culture and Digital Humanities. At the graduate level, the department will consider mirroring the repositioning of disciplinary framing at the undergraduate level (periodization) by eliminating the period requirements at the MA level. It will also transform how its graduate teaching assistants are trained and supported.

The department identifies faculty renewal priorities (resource implications) that would support its plan to give more emphasis to writing in the discipline, including the development of the Minor in Creative Writing, as well as to build up or establish new disciplinary expertise (e.g., Indigenous and/or South Asian literatures in English). The Office of the Dean will endeavour to support future faculty hiring in the unit as identified above, in particular should the creative writing minor be approved, including through joint appointments with cognate disciplines (e.g., First Nations Studies, World Literature). In the context of significant and sustained declines in enrolments and program majors/minors in English (but a less pronounced rate of faculty attrition), it is challenging to support faculty renewal in the unit, and as with all faculty renewal planning, renewal needs for the unit will have to be balanced against the needs of FASS as a whole over the next three to five-year period during which time the CODE transition initiative will be a key consideration. The Office of the Dean is cognizant of the challenges faced by units who wish to pivot their programming and the long-run benefits of supporting this activity; significant repositioning can occur with the existing complement of faculty, but much more will be able to be accomplished with one or two new appointments, strategically placed.

Faculty Dean



Date

OCT 10 2019



## Educational Goals & Tentative Assessment Plan - Dept. of English, May 2019

The Department of English was tasked with developing program-level educational goals as part of its 2019 external review. This document indicates those goals and outlines a tentative assessment plan, the details of which will be worked out in consultation with department members, department administration, and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) over the next three months.

### Educational Goals

As part of the self-study process, the department's undergraduate and graduate programs each articulated five program-level goals. These goals were created by the Undergraduate and Graduate Curriculum Committees, respectively, in consultation with the Executive Committee and subsequently reviewed and approved by the department faculty as a whole in December 2018.

The educational goals for the undergraduate program are:

1. *Literary mindedness.* Understand the complex role of language and text in making the world and our perceptions of it.
2. *Literary knowledge.* Attain knowledge of the histories, forms, principles, and contexts of literary expression to the present moment.
3. *Analytical and research proficiency.* Develop skills in analyzing and interpreting different texts through directed and independent research in the discipline.
4. *Argumentation and communications agility.* Design cogent written and oral arguments advancing informed claims about language and literary cultures, their expression, and their contexts.
5. *Cultural literacy.* Learn to use language, its history, and its capacities to engage with the ideas of others.

The educational goals for the graduate program are:

1. *Literary knowledge.* Develop competencies in literary scholarship; story and language; genre, modes, and form; theory, criticism, and hermeneutics and critical contexts.
2. *Analytical and research proficiency.* This may take the form of information management, Print Culture, and or collaborative research.

3. *Argumentation and communications agility.* Learn oral argumentative skills, seminar paper writing skills, and long-form thesis and dissertation writing skills.
4. *Cultural literacy.* This includes questions of Indigenization and decolonization; gender and sexuality; citizenship, autonomy, and solidarity; and community engagement.
5. *Professionalization.* In areas including teaching, conferences and publication, and career preparation for academic and non-academic paths.

## **Assessment Plan**

### External Review Feedback

The department's 2019 external reviewers did not provide feedback on these goals. Instead, their report noted that the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. programs "[e]ach appears to be effectively delivering on those educational goals developed in response to this quality assurance exercise: for the B.A., literary mindedness, literary knowledge, analytical and research proficiency, argumentation and communications agility, and cultural literacy; for the M.A. and PhD, literary knowledge, analytical and research proficiency, argumentation and communications agility, cultural literacy, and professionalization" (p. 7). From this statement, it would appear that the committee did not understand that the department had not yet been tasked with assessing these goals, assuming instead that the committee itself was judging us on these goals (e.g., "[e]ach appears to be effectively delivering on those educational goals developed in response to this quality assurance exercise"). In developing an assessment framework, therefore, we are proceeding using best practices of other departments and programs at SFU and under the advice of consultants at TLC.

### Timeline

The department received the external review report on April 4, 2019 and immediately began exploring assessment models. Like other units in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and consistent with the university's own research, English wishes to note that developing a reasonable assessment plan for a large department takes much longer than six weeks. Therefore, what we submit here is our initial thinking, currently in development with the assistance of Sarah Turner at the Teaching and Learning Centre. We anticipate having ready a full assessment paradigm—one approved by department vote—by Aug. 31, 2019, though we recognize that even that plan may require revision as we approach our first assessment phase, especially given the fact that we may be substantially revising our undergraduate curriculum on the advice of the external review.

English plans to conduct its first assessment at our first mid-cycle review in 2022, collecting data for the assessment beginning one year prior.

#### **Outline for undergraduate program assessment:**

Data used to assess opportunities provided to attain its educational goals will come from a variety of sources, including:

- *Course map.* Individual faculty members will self-nominate which of their courses they regularly teach provide significant opportunities for student to meet individual goals.
- *Focus groups.* TLC will coordinate meetings of students—some early in their academic careers, some later—in order assess opportunities for them to meet goals.
- *Course evaluations.* Taking advantage of the ability to tailor questions for the new online course evaluation process in Fall 2019, the department will craft questions to assess opportunities for students to achieve goals.
- *Course- and program-related activities.* Opportunities for students to achieve goals can be documented via activities such as the department's annual honours research colloquium and annual graduate conference, among other things.

#### **Outline for graduate program assessment:**

The department will assess the educational goals above through a variety of potential evidence sources, including:

- *Course mapping.* Most of the actual graduate courses (ENGL 810-870) capture goals 1-4, and the professional development seminars (880/881) capture goal 5. More open-ended courses, including the directed readings (875) and M.A. project (882) provide more intensive ground for all five goals (both projects are, in a way, apprenticeships to writing a scholarly paper). Finally, the stepped process of a Ph.D. – two sets of qualifying exams (892 and 893), a prospectus (894), and dissertation and defence (899) – does the work of rendering the first four education goals – the content and methods of literary study – into a master- or meta-goal: the writing and defence of a dissertation as a professional qualification. Three principles of a graduate education in English are worth keeping in mind: first, that goals are *not stackable* (literary knowledge is not an empirically-defined

body of thought that one must “have” in order to write critically, for instance – the exception is the Ph.D. exams-prospectus-dissertation process); second, that a *diversity of offerings* is integral (a range of historical, theoretical, and methodological courses are, within limits of resources, available on a yearly basis); third, that the courses will, over the course of a student’s master’s or Ph.D., *amplify knowledge and skills* (one becomes a better researcher by doing more research, a better critic by writing more criticism).

- *Exit interviews.* In 2018, the Graduate Chair began a process of one-on-one exit interviews with completed Ph.D.s These will be summarized in a report to the graduate committee on a yearly basis, and we will also explore a similar process for M.A.s
- *Course evaluations.* Taking advantage of the ability to tailor questions for the new online course evaluation process in Fall 2019, the department will craft questions to assess opportunities for students to achieve goals.
- *Course- and program-related activities.* Opportunities for students to achieve goals can be documented via activities such as the department’s annual graduate conference, and graduate student progress reports, among other things.

#### **Statement on the Limits of Educational Goals and Assessment Frameworks**

The English Department wishes to note the practical and disciplinary limits of educational goals and any assessment framework tasked with assessing opportunities to attain them. First, the nature of teaching and learning in the Humanities makes the assessment of any educational goals a qualitative, rather than a quantitative exercise. Efforts to quantify qualitative data may misrepresent teaching and learning in English. Second, neither these goals nor the assessment thereof will impede academic freedom or inform the oversight of an individual’s teaching, including what (e.g., texts) an instructor chooses to teach and how they choose to teach it. The department will not consider creating course-level educational goals. Third, assessment will be carried out with existing data at the time of evaluation and that data and its analysis will be gathered/conducted with minimal impact on staff or individual faculty members (e.g., time). If there is cost associated, this cost must not be borne by the English Department. Fourth, these goals and their assessment are works in progress, especially considering that the department is considering substantial program-level revisions on the recommendation of a 2019 external review.