



8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6

TEL: 778.782.3925
FAX: 778.782.5876

vpacad@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/vpacademic

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate **DATE** October 9, 2015
FROM Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP **PAGES** 1/1
RE: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review Update for the Department of English (SCUP 15-33)

At its October 7, 2015 meeting, SCUP reviewed the External Review Update Report for the Department of English within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The report is attached for the information of Senate.

c: G. Myers



OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST

8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC
Canada V5A 1S6TEL: 778.782.4636
FAX: 778.782.5876avpcio@sfu.ca
www.sfu.ca/vpacademic**MEMORANDUM**

ATTENTION	Jon Driver, Chair, SCUP	DATE	September 29, 2015
FROM	Gord Myers, Associate Vice-President, Academic	PAGES	1/1
cc	P. Budra and J. Craig		
RE:	External Review Update for the Department of English		

The External Review of the Department of English was undertaken in March 2012. According to the procedures established by SCUP, the Unit is required to submit an update describing its progress in implementing the Action Plan, which was derived from the External Review report, in the fourth year following the start of the External Review process. Please find attached this update, together with a copy of the Action Plan approved by Senate.

Based on this midterm report, my assessment is that the Department of English has made substantial progress toward implementing the Action Plan.



FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
Department of English

TEL 778.782.3136
FAX 778.782.5737

www.sfu.ca/english

MEMORANDUM

To: Glynn Nicholls, Director of Academic Planning

Date: 7/30/2015

From: Paul Budra, Chair of English

CC: Bal Basi, Coordinator, University Curriculum and Institutional Liaison
John Craig, Dean of FASS

Re: English Department external review update

I am responding to your request for a progress report on the actions taken by the Department of English to address recommendations of the External Review of March 2012.

Recommendation 1, attention to the honours program:

The English Department has restructured its honours program from a 132-unit degree to a 120-unit degree that can be completed within four years. We have also changed the requirement from an "honours paper" to an "honours project," allowing for such alternatives as creative writing portfolios or digital humanities projects. This came into effect in the fall of 2014 and we have seen a 500% increase in the number of honours students.

Recommendation 2, promotion of co-op education

The English Department does encourage students to enter the co-op program and faculty members regularly announce the program in undergraduate lectures. The Undergraduate Chair and Arts Co-op have arranged several information sessions especially for English majors. The program is also promoted through Arts Central, the main advising office for students in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The recommendation of a faculty-wide initiative spearheaded by the Dean's office to reinvigorate co-op education in the faculty is a good one. We would welcome and support such a plan.

Recommendation 3, capstone presentation for MA students

The department has not moved to a mandatory public presentation of the capstone research project. We can find no evidence that such presentations are standard, or even common, in Canadian English departments. What *is* increasingly common is course-based, as opposed to thesis-based, MAs. That is the preferred option for our MA students. The capstone research paper gives that option an added degree of research intensity.

Recommendation 4, alumni development

Over the past two years the English Department, under the leadership of the Undergraduate Chair, has organized a series of alumni events. These have included pub nights and literary events. Alumni have been invited to special talks given by the Department's Writer in Residence. The Department has invited and paid for alumni to attend SFU's Outstanding Alumni Awards ceremony. At present we are developing a mentoring program that would match successful alumni from a variety of fields with students. These outreach activities are having effects: in 2015 one of our alumni, Shenul Dhalla, created an undergraduate award valued at \$1100 per students.

Recommendation 5, "W" at SFU

The English Department has provided lower level "W" seats to 1000s of students a year since the WQB requirements were introduced at SFU. Recently a number of other faculties and departments have introduced their own lower division "W" courses. This has taken some of the enrolment pressure off English. Accordingly, the English Department is in the process of restructuring its lower division courses with an eye to changing their vectors. The plan is to offer just as many seats per semester, but in more, smaller classes. This will allow professors to spend more individual time with students working on writing issues.

Recommendation 6, associate with World Literature

The Department held talks with the Chair of World Literature about the possibility of amalgamating the units. The Dean of FASS, however, has recently decided to make substantial changes to World Literature. At the Dean's request, the English Department has accepted one of the World Literature faculty members, Sasha Colby, as a member.

Recommendation 7, career development/retention planning

This recommendation concerns the encouragement and support of young faculty members in the Department. We now have no faculty members who can officially be called "new" as all are tenured Associate or Full Professors. What is more pressing for our faculty members, then, is mid-career support. Our former department chair, Jon Smith, began such an initiative, steering faculty members towards university-based programs for mid-career professors.

Recommendation 8, research ambition

The report lauds the research record of the English Department's faculty members but suggests that we prioritize team-based research projects. In fact, the past few years have seen a large increase in such projects. A few examples: recently Deanna Reder and her team of researchers secured a \$351k SSHRC Insight Grant for "The People and the Text: Indigenous Writing in Northern North America to 1992" project; Tiffany Werth was awarded a SSHRC Connection Grant for her work on the Oecologies' network; Margaret Linley is working on a project that brings together scholars in the English and History Departments as well as SFU's Special Collections and the Wordsworth Trust in the UK; Christine Kim was recently awarded a \$95k SSHRC Insight Grant as well as an International Engagement Fund for the Transpacific Asian Media, Art, and Culture Research Cluster; Peter Dickinson has a \$24k SSHRC Connection Grant to fund team research on "The Life and Death of the Arts in Cities after Mega-Events." Faculty members have also collaborated on so many joint publications that they cannot be listed here.

Recommendation 9, graduate secretary to 100%

The position was made 100% in December 2012.

A handwritten signature or set of initials in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'R' followed by a horizontal line.

EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director

Unit under review Department of English	Date of Review Site visit Feb. 8-10, 2012	Responsible Unit person, Betty A. Schellenberg, Chair	Faculty Dean John Craig
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***Note:** It is **not** expected that every recommendation made by the Review Team 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.
Should an additional response from be warranted it should be attached as a separate document.*

1. PROGRAMMING

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

1.1.1 Undergraduate:

- Honours program –
 - a. Dept. will work towards a cohort of 20 students/year
 - b. Dept. will consult with Honours students about impediments to application and timely completion
 - c. Dept. will improve advertising of the program via courses, advising, etc.
 - d. Dept. will address structural and administrative issues, including entrance GPA, sequencing, etc.
 - e. Dept. suggests that the university reconsider the requirement of 132 credit hours for Honours, since length of time to completion appears to be a major disincentive
- Co-operative education option –
 - a. Dept. will work with new primary co-op coordinator for English to publicize co-op, beginning with invitation to speak to a department meeting
 - b. Dept. will feature co-op student stories on its website
 - c. Dept. will clarify responsibilities among staff and faculty for co-op program publicity and oversight
 - d. Dept. will develop course links between its new Writing and Rhetoric Certificate and co-op opportunities, for example by offering ENGL 371 (Writing: Theory & Practice) regularly, designed around practical themes such as “Writing for Non-Profit Organizations”
- “W” courses –
 - a. Dept. feels the reviewers did not understand distinction between introductory-level “W” (WAC, not necessarily in discipline) and discipline-specific “W” (WIC), which we offer to our majors in the 4th year. Dept. recognizes its current role in offering WAC courses to a large number of students, and would like to participate in university-level discussions about the future of the “W” initiative

- b. Dept. notes that it has a first-year course that does teach “transferable” writing successfully (ENGL 199W, “University Writing”). This is a resource-intensive course the Dept. would be happy to offer more sections of, should other units or the University choose to expand offerings.
- c. Dept. has already submitted a statement regarding EAL issues to the VP Academic, and does not consider the suggestions made here to be its concern

1.1.2 Graduate:

- Co-operative education option –
 - a. Dept. will consider how co-op might be incorporated into its MA program
- Capstone symposium for MA program –
 - a. Dept. reaffirms the value of the MA symposium as the capstone event of the program, and notes the success of its similar event for the MATE cohort program
 - b. Dept. will develop strategies for maximizing student and faculty attendance despite the difficulties of a trimester system – e.g. advertising date(s) from start of academic year

1.2 Resource implications (if any):

- Honours program – none
- Co-operative education option – none for a, b, c. Item d, offering ENGL 371 and/or equivalent theory-and-practice courses regularly, is currently impossible because a recent retirement (with another likely in a couple of years) has depleted our Writing and Rhetoric faculty to a bare minimum. The Dept. asks the university to prioritize the hiring of a Lecturer with expertise in professional writing, seeing this as an opportunity to enhance our ability to respond to the university priorities of offering experiential and community-integrated learning. (This position would also serve the needs of ENGL 199W, mentioned above.)
- Website additions will be supported by Chair’s Secretary/Webmaster; other modes of publicity by Advisor and Undergraduate Secretary

1.3 Expected completion date/s:

- Honours program – consultation with students has already taken place; structural and administrative changes can be made in the next year; we aim to grow the program to 20 students/year in 4 years
- Co-operative education option – can be completed in 1 year, with the exception of additional ENGL 371 (or equivalent) offerings; these will be dependent on the provision of instructional monies, preferably in the form of a continuing Lecturer position

2. RESEARCH

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

- Research development – Dept. will maintain and increase its already high level of research accomplishment by:
 - a. maintaining a strong culture of equal expectations and opportunity, and fostering organic growth of research teams (a relatively new paradigm in our discipline) through already existing area groups (eg. First Nations Studies, Contemporary Literature and Poetics, Post-Colonial/Diaspora Studies, Print Culture Studies)
 - b. Dept. requests consideration for a CRC position
 - c. Dept. has obtained 5 VPR undergraduate research grants in the past year and will continue to encourage faculty to pursue these; Dept. also encourages the VP Research to offer more of these grants
 - d. Dept. will actively encourage faculty to seek funding sources that support graduate research training
 - e. Dept. Chair will actively encourage faculty who are approaching or have recently obtained tenure to apply for external grants and will provide reasonable support for this (eg. mentoring by senior researchers, use of seed money to develop grant proposals)
 - f. Dept. Chair will invite Beverley Neufeld, FASS Research Liaison Officer, to speak to a dept. meeting on the new SSHRC granting structure
 - g. Dept. Chair will encourage faculty members to take advantage of opportunities such as the FASS Shadbolt fellowships, which offer opportunities for course release to work on a research project
 - h. Dept. requests that the university offer enhanced internal support for research development – e.g. teaching release opportunities for recipients of major fellowships and grants

2.2 Resource implications ((if any):

- University: funding of a CRC search and position
- Some use of internal Dept. funds to facilitate development of individual and team-based research initiatives
- VP Research to continue/enhance funding of undergraduate student research

2.3 Expected completion date/s:

- b and f – in the next year; other items – ongoing

3. ADMINISTRATION

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

- Graduate Program Secretary –
 - a. Dept. will work with the Dean's office towards increase of the 85% secretary position to 100% to address a problem of constant, significant, unpaid overtime work
- Relations with World Literature –
 - a. While Dept. is open to continuing and developing its collaborations with World Literature, it feels the recommendation for an amalgamation of the 2 depts. (made without consultation with World Literature or perusal of any documentation related to World Literature) is inappropriate, and arises out of a misunderstanding of the very different disciplinary cultures of the 2 depts.

3.2 Resource implications(if any):

- Grad. Program Secretary – costs of this 15% increase should be considerably lower than the cost of the CUPE 4.0 position that the Department eliminated in 2009 by combining the previous General Office Receptionist (CUPE 4.0) and Undergraduate Program Secretary (CUPE 6.0) positions into one CUPE 6.0 position of Undergraduate Secretary/Receptionist

3.3 Expected completion date/s:

- Grad. Program Secretary – we will work with the Dean's office to enable a transition to full-time as soon as possible

4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

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

- Career development/retention planning
 - a. Recommendation is directed to Dean and senior administration
 - b. In addition, Dept. Chair will continue to make career development of faculty members a high priority, particularly those entering mid-career, in recognition of our outstanding faculty cohort

4.2 Resource implications(if any):

- Resources to be made available by the administration as needed

4.3 Expected completion date/s:

- Ongoing

5. ALUMNI DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Action/s:

- Alumni development –
 - a. Dept. will plan to offer two alumni-centred events per academic year
 - b. Dept. will designate a member of its Action Committee to serve as Alumni Coordinator for these events (in consultation with the Chair and our Dept. Endowment Advisor)
 - c. Dept. will establish a committee of English Dept. alumni to advise and assist with alumni relations
 - d. Dept. will use the resources and advice available through Alumni Relations and FASS Advancement staff to develop best practices for alumni relations
 - e. Dept. requests that the university enhance support for record-keeping, advising, and assisting with alumni communications and event planning

5.2 Resource implications(if any):

- Approx. \$5000/year for event plans; Dept. will use internal activity funds supplemented by grants available from Alumni Relations and/or FASS for pilot projects
- University support for record-keeping, website work, and a possible e-newsletter by Chair's Secretary/Webmaster of Dept.

5.3 Expected completion date/s:

- Already in progress; expected full implementation in 2 years

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

Unit Leader (signed)		Date
Name.....	Title.....

Petry A Scholten *Chair, Dept of English* *Aug. 8, 2012*

Section 2 - Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan :

I met with Betty Schellenberg, Chair of the Department of English, on 17 April to discuss the external review prepared by Professors Bennett (University of Calgary), Graves (University of Alberta) and Schaub (University of Wisconsin-Madison).

I have given close consideration to the external review and to the detailed response from the Department of English. The external reviewers have produced a thoughtful document capturing many of the strengths found in the Department and some of the challenges it faces. I fully concur with their pithy statement that the Department is 'very good' in every area and I welcome the substantive, thoughtful and persuasive response to the review found above.

I am in full agreement with the actions proposed by the Department. Specifically, we will work closely with the Department to find the necessary funding for converting the graduate secretary's position from 85% to 100%.

John Craig
Dean
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Faculty Dean



Date

