

# English

College of Arts

## Dean's Summary

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Submitted by:

Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts

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Accepted by:

Senate in February 2026

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in January 2026

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## MEMORANDUM

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

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**TO:** James Mandigo, Chair, Senate

**FROM:** Tracy Ryder Glass, Chair, Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

**CC:** Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts  
Chris Campbell, Director, Program Development and Quality Assurance

**DATE:** January 30, 2026

**RE:** Program Review – English

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The English programs underwent a program review in 2025. The Academic Planning and Priorities Committee reviewed all of the documentation related to the program review and accepted them at its January 28, 2026 meeting and recommend to Senate for acceptance.

An overview was given with a big thanks to the department for their incredible work and notes some recommendations include changes to maximum enrolment, cleaning up some credentials that are no longer necessary, and revitalizing some of the other credentials. This review provides some great opportunities to renew and revitalize the programs, including an opportunity to help students that plan to go on to teaching careers, and the possibility to add some theory to second year courses.

The proposal notes that there were five credentials reviewed and that the department has already taken action on some of the recommendations.

The APPC thanked everyone for their work on this review as well as the ongoing support work from the PDQA office.

### Attachments:

- Memo to APPC
- Action Plan and Dean's Summary

## Dean's Summary Report

### English Program Review, Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, College of Arts

Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean of Arts, January 16, 2026

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#### Introduction

The English program review occurred in Winter and Fall 2025 in accordance with Policy 189.

The following credentials were to be examined, as stipulated in the Dean's scope letter:

- BA, English major, concentrations in English Literature, Creative Writing, Writing and Rhetoric, and Drama
- BA English Honours and Creative Writing Honours
- English extended minor
- English minor
- Creative Writing extended minor (for the BFA and BA) and minor

The Program Review was informed by a self-study report conducted by the department in accordance with the template provided by UfV's program review office. The External Review Committee (ERC) conducted an in-person site visit on February 19 and 20, 2025. The site visit included meetings with myself, the English department faculty, students (current and alumni), and an academic advisor. The External Review Report (ERR) was received on March 25, 2025. The department examined the ERC's recommendations at their meetings in August and September, and have already started acting on some of the action items. Their Action Plan addressed all recommendations made by the ERC.

The summary below and Action Plan attached includes several action items that will ensure realization of the panel's main recommendations in the next few years.

The main recommendations and goals resulting from the program review are as follows:

- Curriculum and Assurance of Learning:
  - Integrate more theory, criticism, and methodology into the fabric of the English Major
  - Better articulation of rationale and list of courses for the breadth requirements (Canadian and Global)
- Student Achievement:
  - More writing studies support in the Academic Success Centre
- Governance and Resources:
  - The department has decided not to pursue a recommendation by the ERC to increase the maximum enrolment in English 105, which is under their purview under the Collective Agreement. Relatedly, while open to revising the credit value of upper-level courses from 4 to 3, they recognize that this change is most likely not feasible from a budgetary perspective.
  - Discontinue the Extended minor due to declining enrolment
  - Eliminate the Drama concentration due to low utilization
  - Revise the Rhetoric and Writing Studies concentration to make it more current and to better prepare majors, many of whom intend to become teachers, for teaching writing in the K-12 system

- Review capacity for Humanities specialist support in the Research Office
- Identify collaborative space for English students
- Improve the English department website

In addition to the above, I recommend discontinuation of the English Literature concentration, which is not selected by students (as shown in the Data Book) most likely on the assumption that the major is in English Literature.

Creating Writing deserves more focused attention than this review has allowed. While I agree with the Action Plan statements that courses are popular, and students and faculty contribute to a vibrant literary community in the Fraser Valley, a streamlining of the credentials offered in this area might help increase the number of students officially signing up for this specialization. Currently, there is a concentration in Creative Writing in the English major, a minor, and an extended minor, the latter serving primarily the Bachelor of Fine Arts.

The department should be proud of the many commendations offered by the external reviewers in the three areas of Curriculum and Assurance of Learning and Student Achievement, and faculty commitment and leadership:

- the department updated and streamlined its course offerings and introduced a breadth requirement in response to the last program review
- expansion of experiential learning opportunities through its in-house Literary journal (Louden Singletree Magazine), practicum at the Fraser Valley Writers' Festival, and on-going participation in CityStudio
- students impressed the panel as articulate, engaged, collaborative—"strong ambassadors of English and of UFV", "smart future educators, writers and leaders".
- willingness to push to the next levels of the Indigenizing work it undertook in response to its previous review
- faculty members' strong passion for their mission, and dedication to the well-being and development of their students
- Head's strong leadership who inspires confidence and respect from her peers

The ERC appreciated the support provided by the Program Review Office and noted that the "minimalist approach to the process" could be somewhat rectified, including a dedicated meeting with the unit head, apart from the general meeting with the department.

We wish to express our appreciation to the members of the ERC for their thoughtful observations and recommendations.

I warmly commend the English department Head and members of the department's program review team for their thorough engagement with the cyclical program review process, and express my appreciation to the Program Review office and other institutional stakeholders (IRP, Teaching and Learning, Student Affairs) for supporting this important quality assurance work.

Program Review: Action Plan  
English

Curriculum and Assurance of Learning			
<b>Goal #1: To integrate more theory, criticism, and methodology into the English Major</b>			
<p>This recommendation, raised by the external review committee and mentioned by some of the students who met with them, is one we have also discussed as a department. For example, instructors who deliver ENGL 366 (Literary Theory) have suggested eliminating the specific 200-level prerequisites for that course to make it accessible to all upper-level English students, and there have been questions about whether our Intro to Methods course (ENGL 200) could incorporate more introduction of critical and theoretical lenses. While we have incorporated language about “critical frames” or “critical lenses” into the learning outcomes of the upper-level courses we revise on their regular rotations to make it clear that theory and criticism are an integral part of literary study, we hope that this working group will identify more specific changes that integrate theory, criticism, and discussion of methodologies more explicitly into the fabric of the program.</p>			
<b>Tasks:</b>			
Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Department review of current theory and criticism curriculum	Discussion at department retreat	September 2025	All B faculty
Review of curriculum by Working Group	Report to the department about possibilities for integrating more theory and criticism into the program	September-December 2025	Working Group
Revisions to curriculum as suggested by working group	Revisions sent to CACC	Winter 2026	English Curriculum Committee
<b>Goal #2: Consider the following external review panel’s recommendation “that the Department continue to review its implementation of the revised ENGL 105 syllabus with an eye to recognizing both common learning outcomes and the unique requirements and expectations of other units.”</b>			
<p>The English department has consulted on and continues to consult with stakeholders on ENGL 105. We embarked on a thorough process of consultation with stakeholders during the 2023 revision of ENGL 105. Faculty also continue to pursue professional development in this area, adjusting methods in response to current developments and the latest research in writing pedagogy. Data gathered as part of the College of Arts’ recent study of the writing courses offered by English, Communications, AIS and SOCA affirms that students across the university are successful and well-served by ENGL 105.</p>			
<b>Tasks:</b>			
Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Ongoing consultation and professional development	Updates to course delivery as needed	N/A	All
<b>Goal #3: Better articulate program requirements and rationale, particularly breadth requirements.</b>			
<p>Since introducing breadth requirements (Canadian and Global) into our English Major following the 2017 program review, we have noticed a number of issues: 1) some students are unaware of these requirements until very late in their program and 2) some students either miss or opt not to take one of the approved courses and request approval for substitute courses that do not align with the purpose of the requirement (e.g., requests for women’s studies, women’s literature, Russian literature, or Canadian history courses). By articulating the purpose these requirements serve, we hope to clarify the program for students and encourage them to satisfy the requirements in a timely and appropriate way. We also propose to review the lists of courses under each of the breadth categories to ensure completion, consistency and coherence.</p>			

<b>Tasks:</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>
Review of current materials by Working Group	Brief report detailing where and how requirements and rationale are communicated, suggestions for improvement	Fall 2025	Working Group
Review of courses listed under each breadth requirement category, consultation with Indigenous Curriculum Developer	Revised lists	Fall 2025	Working Group and Department Curriculum Committee
Production of written materials articulating requirements and rationale	Draft of improved language for calendar and website	Winter 2026	Department Curriculum Committee

**Student Achievement**

**Goal #4: Invite Advising to meet with the English department.**

The external review report recommends that the English department meet with Advising to learn more about their processes and share our questions and concerns. The department is more than happy to open more direct lines of communication with Advising and has invited them to the October 2025 department meeting as a first step.

**Tasks:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>
Invite Advising to a department meeting	Meeting with Advising	October 2025	Department Head

**Goal #5: Seek more writing studies support in the ASC.**

The English department agrees with the external review committee that the discontinuation of the Writing Center at UFV in 2015 has created a scarcity of specialized writing studies support, and that our students – and writing instruction at UFV more generally – would benefit from more expert support in this area. Engaging in discussions with ASC and assessing the current supports for writing instruction would be a good first step towards this goal.

**Tasks:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>
Discuss current support with relevant administrators and ASC staff	Meetings and discussions	Fall 2025 and ongoing	Department Head
Advocate for more specialized writing studies support	Memo / letter	Fall 2025	TBD

**Governance and Resources**

**Goal #5: Consider the following external review panel’s recommendation to “Undertake review of enrolment cap in English 105 and consider increasing current cap of 25 to 30 students per section. As part of review, determine whether cap increase frees up capacity and provides opportunity to offer additional programming in upper year courses.”**

Class sizes are a collective bargaining issue. However, the department discussed this potential goal in Spring 2025 and determined against it on several grounds. First, the department’s position – supported by both pedagogical research and the external review committee itself – is that “this recommendation [is] contrary to pedagogy research on teaching effectiveness in the composition space” (*English External Review Report* pg. 8). In jointly produced guidelines updated in 2023, the National Council of Teachers of English, the Council for Writing Program Administrators (CWPA), the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), and the National Writing Project affirmed that 20 should be the

maximum class size in a writing course. Secondly, while it is noted in the external report that raising ENGL 105 class sizes might allow the department to add capacity at the upper level, any increased capacity would largely come at the expense of our sessional instructors, who would effectively teach more students for less pay.

**Tasks:**

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Department discussion	Decision on ENGL 105 class size	Spring 2025	All

**Goal #6: Consider the following external review panel’s recommendation to “Undertake review of “4 credit” courses in upper-year programming, and consider whether or not establishing uniform 3 credit versions of the course is feasible from financial, capacity, and program perspectives.”**

This is something the department head and curriculum chair reviewed with the help of staff in Advising and in the Deans’ office, and the information was brought forward for discussion at the department retreat in 2024. It was also subsequently discussed at department meetings. At this time, establishing 3-credit upper-level courses does not seem feasible from a budgetary perspective, but there is no obstacle to switching to 3-credit upper-level courses if at some point a uniform switch became financially feasible.

**Tasks:**

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Examine feasibility of switching from 4- to 3-credit upper-levels		2024-25 and ongoing	All

**Goal #7: Eliminate the extended minor.**

With the decision in 2024-25 to require a major in the BA, the extended minor, which has already seen dwindling usage (from 10 students in the English program in 2018-19 to 0 currently), seems to be a less useful option for students. In order to streamline and clarify program choices for students, the department has decided to eliminate the extended minor.

**Tasks:**

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Department vote	Department vote for discontinuation of the extended minor	Spring 2025	B faculty
Discontinue extended minor	Submitting relevant documents to CACC	Fall 2025	Department Curriculum Committee

**Goal #8: Review capacity for humanities specialist support in the Research Office.**

Faculty applying for major grants from a teaching-intensive institution start at a disadvantage against peers who work at research-intensive institutions. While the Research Office has endeavoured to support faculty in producing major grant applications, the lack of humanities-specific support in that office has meant faculty in our area are not as well-supported as our colleagues in the sciences and social sciences. We affirm that our teaching and work with undergraduate students is enriched by our research, and that this research is worthy of recognition by major granting agencies. The Dean of Arts has been generously supporting teaching releases and coaching for faculty who intend to apply for major grants, but there is still little in the way of discipline-specific support available from the Research Office. Faculty report a number of frustrations in working with the Research Office on major grant applications, including a lack of humanities knowledge among those tasked with supporting applications, waiting months for feedback, receiving no feedback, or receiving incorrect information

and outdated advice. While the support generously provided separately by the Dean of Arts has helped, change is needed to improve the ways humanities faculty are supported to apply for major grants.

**Tasks:**

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Discuss current capacity with relevant administrators	Meeting with administrators	Fall 2025 and ongoing	Department Head

**Goal #9: Work to identify student/community space for English.**

The English department is fortunate to have a thriving and robust student association. However, over the past several years, the association has struggled to find spaces for its events: the Student Union’s policies do not facilitate bookings, and the room booking portal is not available for student organizations, meaning that a number of events have been delayed or cancelled. Beyond this, other similar departments such as History and Psychology have dedicated spaces for their students and faculty which allow for casual gatherings, study sessions, and community-building. English has no such common space. While we understand that space is difficult to find within the university’s existing buildings, securing community space for our program would enhance student experience and help to grow relationships between students and faculty.

**Tasks:**

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Meet with Dean’s office	Inventory of possible spaces	Fall 2025	Department Head
Work together with the Dean, COA staff, and other departments in the COA to identify possible English space	Identifying a possible space	Fall 2025 and ongoing	TBD

**Goal #10: Improve the English department website.**

The current website is a mix of copy and links that were produced by the department, and some that were produced by marketing or communications (we aren’t sure). The website does not offer easy access to accurate information about our program, our requirements, our events, or any other aspect of the student experience. Along with revisions to our concentrations and the articulation of program requirements, we hope to revise the website such that it provides a clear, attractive, and legible window into the English program.

**Tasks:**

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Develop a list of changes or improvements	Department consultations resulting in a list of changes or improvements	Fall 2025	All department members
Determine what is possible or feasible	Meeting with Digital Communications Strategist and other relevant people	Winter 2026	English Social Media Committee
Make changes to website	Website changed and improved	Spring 2026	TBD

**Goal #11: Consider the following external review panel’s recommendation to “Consider and develop consensually best practices for annual course assignments, leaning into transparency, equity considerations, historical anomalies and trends, and student considerations.”**

The department’s process for course assignments already follows this model. It has long been our practice to consult with B faculty on their preferences for courses and scheduling before beginning the timetabling process each year. Not all faculty opt to communicate this information. The information faculty provide is used, alongside other considerations such as course rotation, student demand, and maximizing course availability for students, to produce the timetable. It is made clear to faculty that, given these sometimes conflicting or competing considerations, we cannot always accommodate all preferences, but the process is consultative, transparent, and equitable.

<b>Tasks:</b>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>
Continue to consult with B faculty ahead of timetabling	N/A	Ongoing	Department Head

**Planning and Sustainability**

**Goal #12: Review capacity to offer all advertised concentrations.**

In analyzing the program, the external review committee noted what the department has also discussed: namely, that not all of our existing concentrations are well-utilized, and that some students have struggled to complete requirements for some of the concentrations. During a discussion at the Department Retreat in September 2025, it was determined that the Drama concentration is not well-utilized, but that regardless, our Drama courses are consistently very well-enrolled; further, the creation of SOCA has meant that students interested in Drama and Theatre are well-served under that program – with which we also share some cross-listed courses. The department subsequently voted to eliminate the Drama concentration in October 2025. Meanwhile, there was enthusiasm for revising and reimagining the Rhetoric and Writing Studies concentration, including discontinuing some of the current required courses and substituting other, more current courses. Because many of our Majors intend to become teachers, the department feels that a specialized program to prepare these students for teaching writing is both useful and marketable.

**Tasks:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>
Department review of current concentrations	Department retreat discussion	September 2025	B faculty
Vote on eliminating Drama Concentration	Department discussion/vote	October 2025	B faculty
Creation of a working group to review Rhetoric & Writing Studies Concentration	Report to the department about the future of concentrations in the program	Fall 2025	Working Group
Revisions to Rhetoric concentration as suggested by working group	Submission of documents to CACC according to the process	Winter 2026	Department Curriculum Committee

**Goal #13: Explore possibility of additional position and retirement replacements in Creative Writing / Writing and Rhetoric; develop the conversation internally for upcoming retirement replacements that prioritize Creative Writing and Rhetoric**

Our Creative Writing concentration is robust, our creative writing courses are popular, and the numbers in this area continue to grow. Furthermore, through our events and publications (the Fraser Valley Writers’ Fest and the Loudon Singletree Magazine), our students and faculty foster a vibrant literary community that extends beyond the institution to enrich the cultural scene in the Fraser Valley. However, a Type B faculty was not replaced after his retirement, which leaves us with one less creative writing specialist. Indeed, despite retirement, this retired faculty continues to regularly work full teaching load each year as a sessional instructor. It’s clear that an additional Type B faculty instructor, one who specializes in creative writing, ideally with a secondary area of expertise in rhetoric or writing instruction, is needed.

**Tasks:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Assigned to</b>
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Discuss hiring with the Dean	Meeting to discuss hiring	Fall 2025	Department Head
Continue internal conversations about retirement replacements	Department discussions	Ongoing	All

**Dean's Summary Statement**

See Dean's memo

**Action Plan reviewed and approved by:**

Information verified by:

Department Head: Dr. Heather McAlpine Date: January 19, 2026

Dean: Dr. Sylvie Murray Date: January 19, 2026