

English Program Review

College of Arts

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:

Dr. Jacqueline Nolte, Dean of the College of Arts

Accepted by:

Senate in October 2018

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in September 2018

MEMORANDUM

From: Jacqueline Nolte, Dean, College of Arts

Date: September 10, 2018

RE: Dean's Summary Report, English Program Review

The English department is the largest academic unit within the College of Arts with a total of 152 sections offered in 2017-18. Currently there are 169 declared English Majors, 42 declared Extended Minors, and 41 minors. Eight students are declared in the Honours programs. The department has twenty permanent faculty and thirteen active sessional members. The English department offers a BA Major, Minor, Extended Minor and Honours. Within the Major, three "concentrations" or "streams" are available: Creative Writing; Writing and Rhetoric and Drama

In May 2017 a Program Review site visit was undertaken by the Program Review Committee (PRC). The Program Review, in accordance with Policy 189, is designed to: foster ongoing improvement of the quality of programming; enhance the contribution of the programs to the university's strategic goals, vision, mission, plans and value; align the programs with the Institutional Learning Outcomes; achieve and maintain high standards of educational practices; achieve and maintain high professional standards, as recognized by the disciplinary and/or accrediting bodies; and ensure adequate and effective utilization of resources.

The Program Review was informed by the Dean's scope letter, the UFV Program Review Unit Guide (since updated) and the English Department self-study. The department drew on data provided by Institutional Research and from surveys conducted with students. The PRC met with a number of stakeholders, including students, faculty, sessional instructors, staff and members of UFV's senior administration. They also toured the campus to assess facilities and supports for faculty and students. Overall, the site visit and subsequent review was positive. In the executive summary of their report, the PRC observed that the English Department is an exceptionally collegial, hard-working, and productive unit with faculty members being devoted to their students, students enthusiastic about their professors and the program, and alum great ambassadors of the program and UFV. On page 18 of their report they noted, "[t]he fact that UFV's English program graduates have been accepted into professional schools and good graduate programs provides substantial evidence that the quality of the credential is not only recognized but also respected." On p 24, the reviewers wrote, "[b]ased on the information available to us, the student experience in UFV's English Department appears to be exceptionally good, especially for Majors and Honours students."

The primary recommendations of the review committee included suggestions to: trim the number of courses including reducing the number of genre and survey courses (reduce the number of 200 level courses); revise English 105 to be more cross-disciplinary in focus; introduce popular larger enrolment and less writing intensive courses; package and advertising the program more effectively; showcase the Indigenization of curriculum, provide the course schedule two years in advance; provide more appealing course descriptions; provide clearer program recommendations aligned to student career interests; market to International students; provide more awards and scholarships; improve connections with local High Schools; remove the drama concentration, revitalizing the writing and rhetoric concentration, phase out the extended minor; streamlined and simplify prerequisites for flexibility and ease of scheduling; phase out courses tied to individual expertise. Further suggestions pertained to offering more summer classes and building on efforts to create a strong student culture in the department.

The PRC recommended the introduction of faculty advisors with releases. Regarding future hiring, a suggestion was made that this should follow building up enrolments and to consider emphasis on the regional (Fraser Valley, Aboriginal, Cascade region) as well as global and also digital humanities.

The PRC commented on the need for UFV to increase support for research. It also commented on the need to ensure that the Academic Success Centre provide knowledgeable assistance on citation needs and that it provide timely assistance with support for writing. Finally, it is worth noting a comment on p 32, that the department “make bolder changes, engage in experiment, become better informed and mindful of what courses and modes of assessment are being offered by the department’s new competitors for students not only for ENGL 105 but across the degree.”

The English Department’s has been proactive in relation to suggested changes as evident on page 1 of their response to the external review: “In general, in response to the recommendations of the report, we recognize a need to both streamline our offerings and clarify our program and its benefits and attractions for students. We see a need to create more applied opportunities. We also want to make sure that our program learning outcomes are fully satisfied, including “Appreciate cultural differences as represented in a range of indigenous, national, and transnational literatures;” and “Learn different methods of literary criticism, including modes of formal, historical, and theoretical analysis.” We would like to make more visible our disciplinary practices of connecting literature to history and to the individual insights and experiences of the reader, practices that support the development of cross-cultural and historical understanding and empathy. We would like to further support the first and second year BA requirements in our courses. And we hope to continue to “collaborate across boundaries” in various ways, both within and outside the university.”

The Dean has been working closely with the Department Head on the department’s response to this plan and their detailed action plan with dates of delivery is laid out in the Department Response entitled “Department of English. College of Arts University of the Fraser Valley. 2017 Program Review”

These plans of actions relate to:

Program Profile(s): content and delivery:

Extensive streamlining of curriculum: implementation fall 2018

Introduction of required Global, Canadian and Indigenous content: implementation fall 2018

Revitalization of Rhetoric concentration: implementation fall 2019

Review of Drama concentration against requirement of the Performance Studies stream in the Bachelor of Media Arts and the Theatre Major: to be completed by December 2018

Learning Outcomes and Student Success

Applied opportunities for English students including the addition of *The Fraser Valley Literary Festival* to strengthen ties with community and involve students in the applied activities. Implementation fall 2018

Articulate ENGL 388D as a Civic Engagement course within the BA: implantation fall 2018

Student Recruitment, Engagement and Retention

Formation of an indigenization committee and publishing of Indigenization and decolonizing initiatives: implementation fall 2018

Seek opportunities to collaborate interdisciplinary, for instance with Modern Languages, Visual Arts, and Theatre: implementation ongoing

Work with the International office regarding partnerships for students to study literature and rhetoric and to market English, including to South Asian students with an interest in literature (including dramatic literature), creative writing, and rhetoric in English: implementation fall 2018

Explain program requirements in a student-friendly way in the Calendar and on webpage: implantation depends on update and relaunch of the website; in the interim the Social Media and Communications committee has developed material

Student culture and outreach efforts in the catchment area including “Young Authors Conference” organized by Heather McAlpine (2017) and continued work with English Students Association and Grad Gala

Faculty: pedagogy, qualifications, professional development and workload:

Department head to meet with Director of Advising to discuss how a faculty advisor from ENGL could best be used (with release time to be provided by the Dean's office if this plan is found to be feasible):
implementation fall 2018

Strategic Hiring: The department has identified a range of areas in which expertise would be appreciated, including the need for an Indigenous scholar and Digital Humanities expertise. These needs will be prioritised in conversation with the Dean's office

Some of the workload recommendations made by the Department Head in the Department's response to the external; review relate to flexible workload and broader CA conversations