

9 July 2018

William Hales, Head
Department of Theatre
University of Regina

Dear Bill,

Thank you for meeting with the Council Committee on Academic Mission this morning to provide an initial verbal response to the findings and recommendations of the Academic Unit Review team.

I wish to congratulate you and your Theatre colleagues for receiving a positive review that spoke of your “well delivered” courses, your “very outstanding staff” (5), your fruitful relationship with the Arts Education program and more recently with First Nations University of Canada, your longstanding and widely recognized community service, and, according to input from student respondents, a widespread perception that the quality of education the Department offers is “outstanding” (4). These are important affirmations of the Department’s work and personnel.

Among the recommendations made by the reviewers, the following are of particular interest to me:

- Revitalizing the BFA for a new generation of students who will graduate into a professional world very different from what it was even a decade ago
- Examining and reconceiving (the reviewers say “greatly streamline” (7)) the inventory of courses currently on the books, with a more strategic use of resources especially in years 1-3 of the undergraduate program
- In a fiscal environment in which enrolments are increasingly central to a balanced budget (see bullet 3 on page 3 of the review report), focusing strategically on student enrolment and retention, as well as outreach to potential new students from countries such as Mexico
- Developing new partnerships with other academic units, most immediately with the Department of Music in the area of musical theatre
- Collaborating in new ways, including a 2+2, with the University of Saskatchewan, maximizing the opportunities for Saskatchewan theatre students to have a rich, stimulating educational and pre-professional experience
- Taking the fullest possible advantage of physical facilities that are recognized as being among the best in Canadian university Theatre departments.

In our discussion at this morning’s meeting, I noted the comment that historically Theatre students are largely domestic, and indeed mostly from Saskatchewan. I further note the caution about the linguistic challenges faced by students whose first language is other than English, and who are confronted by the need to assimilate a great deal of unfamiliar professional vocabulary early in the Theatre program. Still,

we have increasing numbers of students coming from abroad whose English-language skills are very good, and who would be interested in the education your Department can provide. If Theatre can strategize curricular, enrolment, and retention protocols that would allow it to attract, retain, and graduate Indigenous and international students in roughly the same proportions as we see across the University as a whole (13% and 15%, respectively), it could help further enrich the Department and educate new generations of increasingly diverse students.

Congratulations once more on a fine review! I will write again in November once we've received your Department's formal written response to the recommendations of the Academic Unit Review Team.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the University, the members of the Academic Unit Review Team – Dr Bruce Kirkley of UFV, Professor Robert Gardiner of UBC, and Dr Valerie Triggs of our own Faculty of Education – for carrying out a thorough review that balances a pragmatic recognition of current challenges in funding and staffing with a strong sense of hope for a revitalized future, and for providing a series of recommendations that will help to shape the Department of Theatre and its offerings for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Chase', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas Chase
Provost

Copies: Dean of Media, Art, and Performance
Dean of Education
Associate Vice-President (Academic)
Chair, Council Committee on Academic Mission
Members of the Academic Unit Review Team