

University of Regina English Department External Review

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External Review Team

David Gay, Professor of English, University of Alberta
Lisa Surridge, Professor of English, University of Victoria

Internal Review Member

Kathleen Irwin, Professor of Theatre, University of Regina

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1. Executive Summary

The English Department at the University of Regina is emerging from a period of severe loss. In less than a decade, the numbers of majors and upper-year class enrollments have dropped by roughly 40%. Since 2004-05, the department's faculty complement has diminished by 48%. In the words of the department's own self study, these are "stark and troubling" trends.

Coinciding with this period of loss, the university has significantly expanded its international student population, admitting some students with lower English-language competencies than other Canadian universities. As a result, the department's responsibility for teaching English 100 has become increasingly onerous.

The department has felt "under siege," as one member observed, struggling to maintain its former identity in a period of massive losses and enrollment shifts. Understandably, it has not managed to be especially nimble or responsive in this period of change. Its curriculum is dated and sprawling. It has not capitalized on its significant strengths as it could have.

Enrollment is a challenge for English departments throughout North America. There is no single cure; instead, potential lies in the revitalization of programs and curricula. The department needs a rebirth from within, a process that will require significant decanal support. This rebirth should start with a facilitated curriculum review and proceed to a review of governance structures. Finally, the relationship with the dean's office needs to be reinvented on both sides, from the current state of palpable tension to one of collaboration and innovation.

2. Strengths, Opportunities, and Challenges

The department has emerged from this period of loss with significant strengths intact and with opportunities upon which it has only just started to capitalize. Serious challenges remain, those already outlined and others that we elaborate on below.

2a. Strengths

i. The Creative Writing Program

The unit is justly proud of its creative writing program: "We make writers," as one faculty member told us. The department has wisely structured both its undergraduate and graduate programs to enable a fertile cross-pollination of creative writing and literary criticism. Creative writing courses are proving popular online and the department is considering offering a credential in creative writing, a move that we encourage. Creative writing is likely to be a recruitment tool for the department, and as such we recommend that the department change its name to the Department of English and Creative Writing, highlighting the established MA graduate program and its significant strengths in this area. This change will entail an overhaul of the department's website and recruitment materials to place Creative Writing and English equally as central to the department's self-image.

ii. Expertise in Marginalized Voices

The unexpected addition of Michelle Coupal, Canada Research Chair in Truth and Reconciliation Education, to the department was described to us as a "miracle." Unplanned but fortuitous, this addition of research expertise can provide a focus for the department's new identity; the department should move to consolidate strengths around Dr. Coupal's work. Dr Coupal holds a SSHRC Insight Grant titled "Teaching Trauma and Indian Residential School Literature in Canada." Her research responds to the

TRC calls to action and is of national significance. Given the presence of Jesse Archibald Barber at First Nations University and the department's established focus on Holocaust literature (led by Christian Riegel) and its emergent focus on prison writing (led by Jason Demers), the department should develop a profile in the literature of marginalized voices. We suggest that it highlight this area as a significant strength, hosting conferences and creating partnerships with other departments at the University of Regina and with other universities.

iii. Student Life

Departmental student life is vibrant and the English Students Association (ESA) is highly active. As the Associate Dean (Undergraduate) told us, a huge strength of English faculty members is that "they get in and work elbow to elbow with their majors." This involvement is manifested as follows:

- in the enthusiasm of all students interviewed, both formally and at the reception event;
- in the excellent professional development series run by the department (which would be the envy of many larger and richer departments);
- in student involvement in 2017's Jane Austen bicentennial anniversary and this year's bicentennial of Mary Shelley's publication of *Frankenstein*; and
- in the English Students' Association's annual conferences for honours and graduate students, Literary Eclectic and Trash Talkin'.

We commend the department for its extraordinary support of students. We recommend that it collaborate with the Arts@Work program to give students internship credit for hours spent on conference organization, community events, or support of the professional development series.

iv. Professional Development Series

The department has a robust professional development series that builds on its rich alumni connections to introduce students to possible career paths. Students were uniformly positive about this series and indeed it would be hard to match this in larger and richer departments. The series forms part of the department's exemplary dedication to student life, remarked on throughout this report. The committee recommends that the Faculty of Arts support the professionalization series, possibly from online communications revenue and possibly by a student intern from Arts@Work.

v. Alumni Connections

The department has done a superb job of tracking alumni and noting what careers they are developing. Its rich connection to its alumni (similar to its connection to its students) would be the envy of many departments. Such connections arise only when student experience has been positive and productive. Maintaining strong alumni relations is good for advancement and fundraising, public awareness, promotion and recruitment, and morale. Regina is a young university (founded as an independent university in 1961). As it approaches the sixtieth anniversary of its foundation in 2021, it should invest in alumni relations at the unit level in order to sustain donations of money, time, and expertise (that is, possible Board of Governors members) in the future. We recommend that the Faculty of Arts invest in computer software capable of tracking alumni and profiling demographics for recruitment to provide to departments on request. The Faculty Administrator is in an ideal position to inform the department of what other departments are trying or achieving in alumni and recruitment to ensure the entire faculty is aware and engaged in a collaborative way.

2b. Opportunities

i. Recruitment: The Arts Faculty Administrator is ready and willing to support recruitment initiatives from departments. Saskatchewan has a relatively low provincial population, a fact that affects regional

recruitment, but it is important to communicate a strong interest in receiving majors and minors. Creative Writing is likely to be a strong signal for recruitment into the department. (The change of department name makes sense for this reason.) The department should develop its own recruitment drive in collaboration with the Arts Faculty, using its strong connections to students, community, and alumni as assets.

ii. Cross-fertilization

Fostering interdisciplinarity through team teaching (seeing what succeeds and what does not) is one possibility for renewal in the department. Being responsive to new individual relationships is important: opportunities exist for co-teaching or collaborations among the new CRC Michelle Coupal, Chris Riegel, and Jesse Archibald Barber. The recent revivification of the Faculty of Media, Art, and Performance (MAP) provides significant potential for cross-listing of courses and for joint research projects, especially given the department's undoubted strength in Creative Writing. The department should foster team teaching and cross-fertilization with other units as a way of generating high impact despite its reduced size. Members should keep the whole department informed on what these connections generate.

iii. More Productive Use of Teaching Assistants

We observe that TAs are underutilized while adjunct faculty struggle with high marking and student demands in ENGL 100. This needs to be addressed, not through overwork, but through important and productive professional service. TAships can provide critical training grounds for graduate students and are a bridge to future employment. We recommend that the department review its use of TAs with a view to relieving its most pressed members and fostering innovative course delivery, while making sure that graduate students are fairly treated.

iv. Expanded Role for the Department Assistant

Danielle Myers, the department's sole support staff member, has served the department for ten years. She could take on a higher academic profile through practical advising (connecting students to courses). Students nowadays register with phones, but we recommend that Danielle can support the positive branding of the department by being named Undergraduate Program Administrator (or a suitable profile title). She could also be a key departmental contact for the Arts@Work program, since she could explain it or acquaint students with it within the office, giving her an important recruitment role.

v. Joint English/Education Degree

Education is keen to reintroduce the joint B.A/B.Ed degree in English that was previously cancelled. We recommend that the department pursue this significant recruitment opportunity.

vi. Hiring

The ten-year period from 2009-19 has to be assessed as a period of loss and struggle for the department. A 50% reduction of faculty in a period that amounts to one academic generation (ten years being the time it takes to do a BA, MA and PhD) is creating a major intellectual and professional gap in the unit that will at some point become irreparable. A less conventional hiring in a new and refreshing area is a must. The CRC is exemplary in this respect. We recommend that the unit should transform her fortunate appearance into a strategy. We recommend that the department's next hire be one designed to foster connection and cross-fertilization with other units on campus and beyond. Repeating conventional period coverage alone will not suffice unless the candidate has innovative elements in their training (media studies, disability studies, race studies, or other emerging or existing sub-disciplines). In addition, given the department's

emergent strength in marginalized voices, the unit might consider a diversity hire in this area: trans and queer voices, for example.

vii. Co-op and Arts Internship Opportunities

The department has a remarkable student life and thriving links to local arts organizations and writers. The city has a rich arts scene in which the department is involved. This situation makes co-op and internships a natural fit for students wanting careers in arts. Moreover, the presence of creative writers in the department makes such partnerships even richer. We recommend that the department work with Co-op and Arts@Work to enable students to get credit hours and valuable experience from student professional development opportunities that already exist. The department should appoint a Co-op champion in the department and promote both cooperative education and internships as robustly as possible. A representative from a local arts organization to whom we spoke noted the need for students with skills in coordination, organization, the ability to respond to multiple emails, the ability to “think on your feet” and to be super detailed. These skills, added to English skills, are a winning combination.

viii. Mission and Vision

Despite all of the challenges this unit has faced, it has a strong sense of values and identity. We recommend that the department seize the current moment to articulate its vision and mission in a positive move rather than an embattled one. As part of this process, creative writing should be formalised as a permanent and integral dimension of the department’s mission and identity. The mission and vision will guide the department in the process of curriculum renewal and future hirings. The unit should nest its vision in the university’s own Strategic Plan. We recommend that the Faculty of Arts consider and be able to articulate how the department fits into its own vision of the arts faculty and within the university’s strategic vision.

2c. Challenges

i. Enrollment

The department has experienced a severe drop in student numbers, with the noteworthy exception of its online growth. In less than a decade, the number of student majors, minors, and graduate students has dropped by 41.7%, from 242 in fall 2011 to 141 in fall 2018. Between fall 2010 and fall 2018, majors have dropped by 48.7%, from 191 to 98. Class registrations have also fallen: 200-level enrollments have dropped from 443 in 2008-09 to 259 in 2017-18 and 300-level courses from 706 to 382 in the same period.

ii. Loss of Faculty Lines

Since 2004-05, the department’s faculty complement has declined steeply by 48%, from 27 to 14. The complement consisted previously of 18 faculty, 8 instructors, and one term appointment (as well as 5 faculty at Campion College, 3 at Luther College, and 4 at First Nations University) and is now 11 faculty, 2 instructors, and 1 lecturer (as well as 3 faculty at Campion College, 2 at Luther College, and 1 at First Nations University). The department has absorbed a rapid sequence of retirements in this decade. These include the retirement of world-class scholars such as Jeanne Shami. One new appointment early in the decade (Heather Meeks) moved on to a Quebec university. The status and future of Chris Bundock is uncertain at present; due to family circumstances, he is only available for online teaching and lives out of the country. The loss of his presence as a force for renewal in the department is palpable in such a period of constraint. These cuts in faculty are common in English departments across the country, but the strain is very seriously magnified in a small department that has become much smaller, even as the university’s

overall enrollment (and demand for service teaching) has grown. At present the unit is just managing to meet its commitments without any prospect of reinforcement. The recent addition of a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Studies is a great boon to the department's prestige and profile, but this was entirely fortuitous. A further, carefully planned hire is needed to enable the unit to take steps towards renewal and to bridge what will otherwise be an insurmountable gap in the future.

iii. Treatment of Adjunct Faculty

With this loss of regular faculty lines and the expansion of the cohort of international and EAL students at the university, adjunct faculty have filled the gap. The service function of English 100 is enormous and is currently controversial among all faculties dependent on it, placing strain on those teaching in these service courses. Working in precarity, without a course coordinator for the English 100 program, and without offices in the summer, adjunct faculty are understandably discouraged. We recommend that the Faculty of Arts explore how to keep adjunct faculty in their offices over the summer in order to recognize their key role in the department. Can a standard term contract be adjusted to eliminate the off-contract gap that results in office expulsion?

3. Working Environment

Various sources report significant tensions between the traditional English Studies program and Creative Writing. The relationship should be reframed as an opportunity. Unfortunately, these tensions, which are signs of prolonged fatigue and increasing demands on faculty time and energy, make it hard to reimagine the department holistically. Discovering new possibilities in program delivery, pedagogy and self-governance in innovative and even risky ways is currently inhibited by constant pressures to maintain and deliver current programs. Tensions may also indicate internal mistrust over the viability of important traditional teaching areas. A major curriculum review (recommended below) is certain to raise mistrust at the outset under these conditions, but that should be only a stage leading to productive and ongoing scholarly and pedagogical dialogue among all parties. A revitalized balance of tradition and innovation is possible and desirable.

i. Governance Review

The department should undertake a governance review to consider its new size and plan accordingly. For example, the new size of the department poses the question of spouses serving together on graduate committees. The unit should have an explicit policy on such matters. The new smaller size also raises the question of whether there should be a single honours-graduate coordinator. Can creative writing and traditional instruction work together, or should there be separate coordinators for each program? How can adjunct faculty be brought more fully into the life of the department? We have chosen not to make specific recommendations except to say that the department needs to find its own new vision of itself through governance as well as through an explicit vision and mission statement and curricular reform.

4. English 100

English 100: Critical Reading and Writing I is a service course in critical reading and writing that English delivers to the university. Its mandate is comparable to service courses at other universities in Canada. The departmental description allows for flexibility in content and method by different instructors: "This course develops students' proficiency in critical reading and writing through the study of a wide range of non-literary and literary texts, and the study of composition, with emphasis on connections between modes of reading and writing." English maintains an online tutorial program in support of all first-year English students.

English departments that carry large service functions face a complex challenge: i. they must fulfill the mandate of the service course by grounding all students in the ethics and practices of academic writing; ii.

they must rely on a compulsory service course to attract students to their programs and discipline as majors and minors.

The condition of the course has become critical for both the department and the university at this time by all accounts. Different faculties appreciate the work English undertakes on their behalf but diverge in their understandings of how their needs are met. For example:

- Engineering notes the high value and expectations employers place on communication skills. They are inclining towards a technical writing course that features their unique professional genres.
- Science is alarmed by the high failure rates it is seeing. 5% of their students attempt 100 more than once. They also note their unique needs for student training in genres such as lab reports.
- Business emphasizes basic writing competency and notes a range of genres in which their students are required to write.
- Nursing is highly satisfied with English 100. Their student pool is highly qualified and motivated, requiring a 90% average for admission. They perform well in English 100.
- Education stresses the importance of critical reading skills and notes that non-EAL students often struggle with longer assignments. Surprisingly, they suggest shorter written reports.

It is clear from these diverse responses, as well as from conversations with the Provost, that English 100 needs immediate and urgent review. The question is what form this crucial course should take to meet the emergent needs of the university.

The Strategic Plan recommends incorporating the liberal arts in all areas of campus life and teaching. This is a laudable goal, one that English 100 provides by its very nature. Faculties and units can, of course, require a liberal arts elective or requirement for their students to meet this goal; however, they should be careful of going down the road of complete dissociation from English. Language is not merely an object of study; like its sister discipline of mathematics, the language of science, it is the element in which students create, imagine and communicate. If, for example, Engineering opts for (and funds from its own resources) a technical writing course, it is safe to predict that the course will be staffed entirely by English adjunct (sessional) faculty. Science, in turn, may be facing a particular crisis with EAL students who find figurative language challenging as they struggle to function on campus on a literal level. Business might note the importance of narrative and literary experience to its profession (noted in research using Shakespeare as a model for family businesses and the turn to narrative for corporations seeking to tell their stories). Education should expect high-functioning essay writers at all levels.

We learned that plagiarism is at crisis levels at this moment across the university. This indicates a need for more academic integrity infrastructure in all units. Quizzes on plagiarism and ethics online can be taught in class. The social and group activity of working through such a quiz can make students more resistant to plagiarism, which happens most often when students self-isolate. We also recommend that the university undertake a plagiarism audit to canvas faculties on their practices for prevention and discipline. How is actionable plagiarism (discipline) distinguished from correctable plagiarism (no discipline)? Inviting successful EAL and ESL senior students from all faculties (especially Science) to mentor groups of new students for a term may also provide social resistance to ethical lapses (such important community service could go on a student's c.v.). English TAs could take breakout groups from classes and subvert student isolation by reinforcing academic integrity (we learned that TAs are underemployed in English at present, so no additional funding is needed). Rather than suggesting that English 100 is not doing enough based on what they are seeing, faculties should brainstorm creatively on moderating a disturbing trend that English alone cannot suppress. For example, academic integrity (as a positive virtue, not a dire

warning) could be part of every faculty's first week of student orientation and part of any entrance packages they send to new students.

A review of English 100 must include a consideration of class size. English 100 is capped at 40 students at the University of Regina and 35 at colleges. A class size of 40 is double that recommended by the Conference on College Composition and Communication to support student success: see section 11 of <https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/postsecondarywriting>. Any review of English 100 should look to see if smaller classes result in lower failure rates. Data from before the increase in class caps and from the smaller classes offered by the colleges (if they have students with similar EAL challenges and similar high-school entry grades) might be suggestive in this respect.

A review of English 100 must similarly consider entry-level English standards. The university's decision to admit students with lower IELTS and TOEFL scores than other Canadian universities is a valid choice, but the strong consensus among instructors is that the range of language abilities in this course is making it non-viable. We recommend that the Faculty of Arts support the department in its recommendation of a data-based skills test for admission to English 100 and that the department develop a for-credit preparatory course for students with extra language training needs at sentence and paragraph level, for example. In any outcome, English will require strong support for ESL and EAL students. We recommend that the Faculty of Arts negotiate with the central administration to provide significant support to the EAL students on which the university's international fees depend. English cannot be expected to have significant expertise in this area.

English should initiate a review of English 100 with all this in mind. Such a review should be a prelude to the comprehensive review of its entire curriculum that we recommend below. It is likely impossible to propose and implement a new 100 for fall 2020 but fall 2021 should be possible. Wide consultation with stakeholders is needed, but the department needs room and encouragement to reimagine the course internally (if they are willing). English 100 as it stands may be an obsolete course, but we recommend a continuing connection with the Humanities as important and desirable to Engineering, Science and Nursing in the production of a new vision of English 100.

English could refresh 100 with complementary courses based on different focal points such as genre (as found at the University of Saskatchewan) or any points it supports. It could invest further in academic integrity and ethics by teaching more research with writing, moving from low stakes research tasks to high stakes essays. A productive place to start the discussion of the revitalization of English 100 might be with Nursing. The dean is very receptive to a type of medical humanities approach, noting that course readings were successfully tailored to health and healing in some sections. This may show real potential for harmonizing within, rather than hiving off from, a new English 100 on the part of faculties. Dialogue on Indigenization is also a source of great potential across English, First Nations University and Nursing because Indigenous health is a crisis issue in Canada at this time. Nursing may prove to be a promising source of conversation for a new 100, and other STEM faculties may follow or join.

We further recommend that the Faculty of Arts explore how UR International could enhance support for the formation of community and mentorship for international students in English 100. In initiatives like writing across the disciplines and the teaching of research, writing as a responsible social (not individual) activity should be emphasized.

Finally, we recommend that the Faculty of Arts provide the department with support (two courses of release time per year) for a coordinator of English 100. The department is stretched too thin to provide the course release that this job demands.

5. English Undergraduate Program

i. Curriculum Review

The undergraduate curriculum is dated, and we recommend its immediate and holistic review. At present, it has been designed additively: that is, courses seem to have been added as desired, but none taken away. It bears the marks of many hands over many years. The current plethora of courses would be unmanageable for a department of twice or three times the size. In particular, methods courses should gather majors into a single class: otherwise, students will be dispersed among methods classes, decreasing efficiency and lowering enrollments. This review will take a lot of work and energy concurrent with the reimagining of 100, but it needs to be done. Curriculum is the place where the department could discover its shared vision and mission in proximity to its greatest love: teaching.

To achieve such a review, the department would have to pass a motion declaring itself a curriculum committee of the whole for three years. Small breakout groups could meet and interact with others. New conversations might develop, and this would be an opportunity to stimulate a department with low morale.

We recommend that the department adopt a more streamlined curriculum, with clear learning outcomes at each level and a slate of core courses meeting these, together with special topics courses at all levels so that the unit can respond nimbly to opportunities and disciplinary shifts. A revised 400-level curriculum could capture some trending issues as well with broad, flexible headings rather than set courses. Establishing learning outcomes at the outset would help to spur program revision. The review should reconsider the current emphasis on the essay as the main outcome of courses, embracing alternatives to the literary essay such as research fairs or class conferences, for example, as a capstone experience in some courses. As part of this review, the department should articulate transferable skills in these learning outcomes and include them on their syllabi.

A core challenge will be to redesign the curriculum to address the faculty's concerns over class sizes. Course cancellations (of the threat of them) are currently a source of stress for the department and its faculty, as well as a source of friction with the associate dean. We recommend that the curriculum design needs to be built around the current number of majors, with a view to but not relying on growth. It will be critical to reach a new and clear understanding between the department and the Faculty of Arts on enrolment policies so that these can underpin any revision. We recommend that the department and faculty should study how other institutions in Western Canada accommodate smaller class sizes by offsetting larger ones against them. For example, instead of prescribing set class sizes at particular levels, the faculty could establish an average class size that would be acceptable if attained by the department overall, enabling the unit to imagine how larger classes could balance smaller ones as needed to reach enrollment targets. Another option could be to establish a target enrollment per regular faculty member. The latter option could enable the unit to envisage a balancing of class sizes, this time at the level of the individual. Either option could satisfy the faculty's legitimate enrollment concerns while providing flexibility to the unit.

Such a move would leave the department free to decide what subjects it can teach in large sections and where to reserve smaller sections. 110 and the 200 level could be sites for different delivery and participation models (team teaching; seriously employing TAs. It would also encourage the department to create a couple of popular classes designed to attract large enrollments. Given the department's unique research strengths in the fiction of George R.R Martin, we suggest that the first such course be on fantasy

literature from J.R.R. Tolkien through C.S. Lewis to *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*. Such a course would be an ideal place to employ graduate teaching assistants and might use guest lecturers from across the department. The department should also consider interdisciplinarity or cross-faculty-of-Arts offerings (it might consider religion and literature; space and place; thematics).

We recommend that the review team consider how to decolonize classroom methods of instruction: consider non-western teaching methods and embrace diverse voices. Think of validating storytelling; embrace literatures from different cultures. The city and the province are changing. Classroom styles and texts need to change too.

ii. ENGL 110

We recommend that the department undertake a review of English 110. The fact that this course is no longer in the Arts core might offer an opportunity to build another course as a recommended entry point for majors and a potentially attractive course for Arts majors and others. It could be possible to exempt students with high GPAs from English 100 and allow them the option of taking English 110 instead. Such a move could take some pressure off English 100, which is currently serving too many masters. The department could consider recasting 110 as a team-taught course profiling the expertise of four or five of its leading scholars in one section and using less writing instruction than English 100. Such a version of 110 would appeal to prospective majors and minors.

6. Graduate Program

Two key parameters directing the graduate program appear in the university's strategic plan: i. "increased proportion of graduate students completing programs in a timely manner"; ii. increased research and scholarly dissemination by graduate students" (10). The department's self-study document places the graduate program under the heading of weaknesses, although the accompanying observation is not alarming: "a few faculty expressed concern for the status of the graduate program, noting, variously, challenges with recruitment, students of quite variable ability, and difficulties in delivering a three-pronged MA (course-work, thesis, creative thesis routes) with current staffing levels" (21). These goals, achieved through a new project-based MA, would bring the department into closer (and hence competitive) alignment with other national MA programs; however, the challenge of developing new programs in a shrinking department remains constant.

Historically, the thesis-based MA has been a capstone degree for motivated Honors and Majors. In the past, the department has professionalized and indeed celebrated completion by using external examiners for the thesis. Thus, the culture of student affirmation in the graduate program has been, and continues to be, very high. The course-based MA emerged in recent decades across the country as an alternative designed to improve completion rates while ensuring a solid grounding for doctoral studies for students planning to continue. The department has maintained both a thesis-based and course-based MA along with an MA in Creative Writing.

The Graduate Chair (Dr. Michael Trussler) recommends the development of a "third route" in the form of a project-based MA. Conversations within the department occur in the HGC (Honours-Graduate Committee). This administrative structure no doubt enhances the connections between undergraduate and graduate programs, given that the MA is a terminal degree and many graduate students come from the department's own programs. The project-based MA provides a flexible and a productive middle ground between the thesis and coursework. A project often emerges from a graduate seminar, harvesting an existing investment of time, energy, and tuition by students. It adds the distinction of a sustained and focused scholarly production set to the length of a major scholarly article undertaken by faculty members. Comparator institutions for this third route include Concordia, SFU, UVic, and U of S. If implemented, the department will likely find that this route eclipses the course-based MA and surpasses the thesis.

These possible outcomes need not be seen as negative. In fact, the availability of this option should improve completion rates in accordance with the strategic plan and enhance scholarly dissemination on a manageable rather than daunting scale (also in accordance with the strategic plan). Providing a program that is consistent with comparator institutions (and in larger institutions) should also lead to higher external application rates to balance the Honours to MA stream that has sustained the program in the past (enrollments and completions in the program are currently stable and healthy for the size of the department across this decade: see Self-Study 152-53). In addition, the CRC in Indigenous Studies, which is certain to bring deserved national attention to the University of Regina, will draw MA students to the campus to work specifically with Dr. Coupal and Dr. Archibald-Barber. The project-based MA is essential to capitalizing on this prospect. It should be expedited.

Concerning course loads for the third option, Dr. Trussler recommend seven courses plus a project. This sounds excessive. One course will be (and should be) dedicated to research and writing. This is vital to improving time to completion and developing a strong sense of cohort community. Given the challenge of a shrinking faculty, the number of graduate courses required can surely be reduced to five or six (including the dedicated writing seminar). In fact, this load would not be out of keeping with a larger faculty complement. One objection to this might be less graduate teaching for faculty members over periods of time, or the potential omission of key areas in response to student demand. These issues can and should be addressed with equity. The Faculty of Arts should be tolerant to a point of lower graduate seminar enrollments in important areas of the discipline. Completion rates and program attractiveness are paramount considerations.

Opportunities for scholarly dissemination are both internal and external. Externally, a faculty member can mentor a student towards scholarly publication provided it is a reasonable and timely expectation. There should be no absolute requirement to publish externally before graduation. The standard for completion should be the internal judgment of English faculty and FGSR. The loss of the *Wascana Review* is the more unfortunate with dissemination in mind; nevertheless, the department could establish an in-house publication for MA project publication and scholarly notes and other academic genres. Thus, internal publication would maintain the strong culture of graduate student affirmation. Continuing and increased support for student conferences is needed. Current activities show a dynamism that will benefit even more from a project-based MA cohort.

The MA in Creative Writing is a very positive development for the department and the entire university. Enrollment and completion levels for the MA (Self-Study 152-53) reveal a healthy and established program. Creative Writing is increasing in popularity at many national institutions. It can provide for a flexible and attractive undergraduate minor, for example, as technology and social media lead many students towards rather than away from creative expression and linguistic self-awareness. The MA in Creative Writing implies a professional standard of talent and achievement worthy of cultivation and celebration. Given that Creative Writing is a degree program (though not undergraduate at this time), a change of department name to English and Creative Writing merits serious consideration. The creative MA is adaptable by genre. The department can consider creative non-fiction as an addition if it has yet to do so. Collaborative work with journalism and fine arts is also possible through creative writing programs. Creative therapies might also be considered in collaboration with Nursing (as happens in music and fine arts departments in some institutions).

Saskatchewan has an extraordinary heritage of fine creative writing. Creative writing continues to make strides in student and alumni achievement, as shown in the publication record. A low creative writing faculty complement, even with faculty who practice both scholarly and creative writing, risks limiting student exposure to ideas. Academic faculty should be willing to respond to creative writing by serving on supervisory committees in order to diversify the feedback pool. Academic staff should even supervise creative writers when the theory or conceptual basis of a project fits (for example, poets or fiction writers emphasizing space and place or history or gender studies can work with an academic scholar in those and

other areas). Despite current challenges, English faculty members should recognize the glowing opportunities that Creative Writing offers to the overall identity and reputation of the department.

Certain issues require some immediate response from the Faculty of Arts and FGSR. Funding lines from FGSR have not been fully transparent by some accounts and need greater transparency. Dates for early offers can be supported and advanced to improve competitiveness. Another concern is the value placed on Humanities research and graduate work by FGSR and the university as a whole. There is a perception among some English faculty members that their work is not highly valued at advanced levels, even though the integration of the liberal arts across the university is mandated by the strategic plan. As much as possible, FGSR should partner with English to enhance the culture of student affirmation that has existed in the English graduate program for much of the university's history. Support for the technical requirements for English thesis defences may be one opportunity.

7. Research

Research is a central link between teaching and community connection the Strategic Plan (13-15). Our mandate is to assess the scope and significance of research in the Department of English.

The department's self-study document reflects an active and dedicated research environment (4-9). The reflections begin with the termination of the *Wascana Review*. Its termination by a vote of the department Council in April 2012. This termination is an unfortunate development for the department and the university since this was a highly respected publication with a national reputation.

The Humanities Research Institute, founded by Dr. Nick Ruddick and directed at different times by Dr. Garry Sherbert and Dr. Chris Riegel, is an important component of the Faculty of Arts and a vital vehicle for sustaining academic conversations within and beyond the university. Its main activities focus on conferences, public lectures, and colloquia. All of these profile the scholarship of English and the Faculty of Arts. The topics are exciting and diverse. Its current director is Professor of History Dr. Ian Germani. Dr. Chris Riegel is prominent among its research profiles. The HRI features his current project: "Eye Tracking, Disability, and Mind Art Creation." It assembles "a multidisciplinary team of researchers, students, and community members who are connected through humanities concerns of artistic production to a) examine the hardware and software potential for eye tracking devices to produce tangible creative outputs (visual art, musical composition and performance, and creative writing); b) develop, following a 'hackathon' model, functional eye tracking modes that produce creative outputs using existing commercial eye trackers." This is an example of how certain areas of research can foster relationships across faculties and disciplines and generate collaborative research internally, nationally, and internationally. It could be included in the English self-study given that English is Dr. Riegel's home department. The department should maintain its level of engagement with the HRI and consider ways of making its involvement even more generative and productive.

The self-study cites the edited collection as a publishing strength. Monographs from reputable presses have appeared in recent years. Scholarly articles by members also appear in range of important journals. Members have produced a remarkable sixty book chapters during the review period. This is a strong testament to national and international interest in the expertise of faculty members since book chapters often come by invitation. The scope of research, historically, geo-politically, theoretically, and creatively, is excellent given the shrinking size of the department.

Department members are active in seeking internal and external funding for conferences and research projects. The list of successes (8-9) indicates three things: i. creative writing is acquiring provincial and local support, fulfilling the connection between research and community modelled in the Strategic Plan; ii. the university has good sources of internal funding for projects; iii. success rates for external funding are concentrated among a relatively small number of researchers, all of whom are department members but two of whom are based in affiliated colleges or First Nations University. The third point is due in part

to the high value SSHRC now places on Indigenous Studies and major collaborative initiatives. While we are not certain of the overall participation rate (meaning numbers of applications that are not successful), we recommend that the Faculty of Arts offer more affirmation, encouragement, and practical support for the application process. External grant applications are increasingly demanding genres with respect to key words and signals the granting bodies expect. Application retreats, seminars, workshops, and mentorship initiatives can serve to lift up a department that is strained for this activity by declining numbers and constant and increasing demands. Student interns might help to support researchers in the early stages of an application. The department should also take steps internally to regenerate its participation rates. Its inventory of internal interests and energies may disclose some potential for connections and collaborations. For example, consider a SSHRC connection grant to unite interests in prison writing, residential school writing, Indigenous writing, and holocaust writing, among others. A connection grant might be the foundation of a new graduate course or graduate research group. The arrival of a Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Studies must surely be a boost to the overall morale of the department. Researchers in all areas can take pride in that development and affirm its impact on the overall research climate in English.

Our meeting with department sessional lecturers also revealed strong research energy and activity. Dr. Jason Demers, for example, is active in the study and teaching of prison writing. It is gratifying to see his work profiled on the university's web site in the form of a journalistic report. He states: "I'll be bringing the founders of two highly regarded Canadian and American prison education initiatives to the University of Regina when Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences convenes here May 26 – June 1 (Walls to Bridges Canada, Bard Prison Initiative). These types of initiatives represent real innovative thinking, and the measured impact that they have on recidivism and employment rates are astounding." He and other instructors undertake this impressive activity while carrying especially high marking and grading levels in English 100. We encourage elevating the profiles of faculty and sessional faculty researchers on the English home page. This means enhancing and energizing self-descriptions. At present faculty and sessional faculty simply check off list a range of interests as briefly as possible. Active sentences of invitation or welcome to students and remarks on work-in-progress and supervision could stimulate the positive impression web sites must make on prospective graduate and undergraduate students and the general public.

On this note, we recommend deleting the word "sessionals" from the English home page. Sessional is a pejorative short-form term comparable to calling faculty "profs." Adjunct Faculty, Academic Teaching Staff, or Sessional Faculty Members are more affirming, dignified, and more formal. These gestures are not small and can convey a higher level of morale and cohesiveness in an organization.

8. Affiliations with Other Units and Community Service Connections

The Strategic Plan proceeds to a third broad area of engagement for units: the university is committed to collaborative community service and engagement opportunities. This includes the communities within the institution as well as people and organizations external to the academy at the local, provincial, national, and international levels" (15).

As a department established at the beginnings of the university, English is uniquely and firmly connected to other faculties and departments. The demanding and vital service teaching function it provides makes it an anchor department for the university as a whole. As English begins to reimagine its first-year curriculum (100 and 110), other faculties and departments should continue to value the built-in connection to Humanities education it provides. The review of English 100 can work from the premise that other units are both stakeholders and beneficiaries of English as a discipline. From a global perspective, English will require stronger support through EAL infrastructure and UR International as the university seeks to admit more international students.

English enjoys strong affiliations with Campion and Luther Colleges. Dr. Chris Riegel is exemplary in his ability to connect with other faculties such as MAP in teaching and research. Professors Archibald-Barber and Coupal are invaluable links to the First Nations University and to the local, provincial, and national progress of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Greater coordination with these affiliates and department members in curriculum development, course planning, and future tenure-track hiring decisions would be beneficial.

The Centre for Continuing Education has become essential to course planning, staffing and financing. This has benefits and limitations. CCE (distance education) allows English to reach a wider audience locally and provincially and to lift its enrollments in consequence. It is particularly valuable as a bridging mechanism connecting prospective students at the high school level to the first-year curriculum. Since 2010, online courses have been offered with strong enrolments. These include:

- English 100 (including a High-School Accelerated version, an excellent recruitment tool for the university),
- English 110,
- English 252 (Introduction to Creative Writing),
- English 352 (Advanced Creative Writing: Prose Fiction),
- English 211 & 212 (Survey of English Literature I & II), and
- English 302 (Shakespeare: Histories and Tragedies).

The department is currently working on implementing another online course, English 152 (Introduction to Creative Writing). We commend the department for its innovation in this respect and recommend that it expand online offerings with a view to recruitment, community access to higher education, and potentially an online certificate in creative writing.

At the same time, the Dean of Arts is concerned that CCE may somehow (in relation to the service function) serve to protect lower enrollment courses on campus. As with the issue of transparent funding for graduate studies, this question needs a clear resolution that respects and indeed favours the challenges English faces in balancing service teaching with its disciplinary goals. It is time to clear the air on these questions.

The committee also recommends that the Faculty of Arts return a significant portion of its revenues received for such online courses to the department, earmarked for student professional development and recruitment activities and seed money for research (in the form of student assistance).

Skills in communication, research, and creative thinking make Arts degrees formidable tools in the current job market; nevertheless, the defence of the liberal arts is historically a constant occupation. The Arts@Work Initiative has a bright future. Recent internship placements are revealing the high value employers place on Arts graduates, which should not surprise anyone. Comparable programs are functioning well on other Canadian campuses. The fact that AWI had to be revived and restored after a lapse may indicate underlying problems of staffing, energy and sustainability in the Faculty of Arts.

The self-study document provides an impressive list of achievements and ongoing relationships between English and the local and national community. The 2018 Congress held at the University of Regina was a glowing success. English played a key role in that success. In consequence, the university is a place identified nationally with positive intellectual energy in a vibrant academic and urban setting. English hosted meetings of national scholarly societies such as the Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies (convened by Jeanne Shami, Anne James and Troni Grande). The self-study highlights community connections in creative writing and carceral writing. Annual lectures and speaker series, academic colloquia and strong relationships with local and provincial literary organizations make community service connections an impressive component of the self-study document. The department can be commended for its strength in this area.

English is very engaged in the local and provincial literary community. In past decades, the campus has been the site of vibrant public readings and book launches by distinguished Saskatchewan poets. It is also the site of a Playwrights Reading series of 5 or 6 readings per year by Canada's top playwrights, now in its 25 year (although for 23 of those it was hosted by Theatre). These traditions should continue and will require affordability in the provision of spaces. Cost-recovery policies may need reconsideration for this kind of outreach. Saskatchewan's relatively lower population density among western provinces can be a strength in connecting the academy to the literary and arts scene. Literature is in the province's cultural DNA. As Creative Writing develops its undergraduate academic programs, accomplished writers may be asked to serve as adjunct instructors at times.

9. Summary of Recommendations

Mission, Vision, and Departmental Branding

1. The department should change its name to the Department of English and Creative Writing, highlighting its significant strengths in this area. This change will entail an overhaul of the department's website and recruitment materials to place Creative Writing and English equally as central to the department's self-image.
2. The department should develop a profile in the literature of marginalized voices. We suggest that it highlight this area as a significant strength, hosting conferences and creating partnerships with other departments at U. of Regina and with universities with related foci.
3. The department should articulate its vision and mission in a positive move rather than an embattled one.
4. The Faculty of Arts should consider and be able to articulate how the department fits into its own vision of the arts faculty and within the university's Strategic Vision.

Development, Student Recruitment and the Arts@Work Program

5. The Faculty of Arts should invest in computer software capable of tracking alumni and profiling demographics for recruitment to provide to departments on request.
6. The department should start its own recruitment drive in collaboration with the Arts Faculty, using its strong connections to students, community, and alumni as assets.
7. The Faculty of Arts should return a significant portion of its payments received for online courses to the department itself, earmarked for recruitment activities and seed money for research (in the form of student assistance).
8. The department should expand online offerings with a view to recruitment, community access to higher education, and potentially, an online certificate in creative writing.
9. The department should collaborate with the Arts@Work program to give students internship credit for hours spent on conference organization, community events, or support of the professional development series.
10. The Faculty of Arts should support the department's professionalization series, possibly from online communications revenue and possibly by a student intern from Arts@Work.

11. The department should review its use of TAs with a view to relieving its most pressed members and fostering innovative course delivery, while making sure that graduate students are fairly treated.

Academic Teaching Staff: Sessional Instructors and Teaching Assistants

12. The department should retire the term “sessional” from its website and all formal public correspondence. A range of more professional and affirming options is available.
13. The Faculty of Arts should explore ways of preventing the very disruptive removal of adjunct faculty from their offices at the end of summer.
14. The department should review its use of TAs with a view to supporting instructors (including adjunct faculty) carrying a heavy burden, relieving its most pressed members of some work while making sure that graduate students are fairly treated. TAs could offer breakout tutorials in small groups to help prevent plagiarism and to gain some first-hand teaching experience in critical reading and writing.

English 100 and Ethical Academic Writing

15. The department should initiate an immediate and urgent review of English 100. The review should also consider a new relationship between 100 and 110 to ensure its own needs in recruitment are met with renewed energy. New proposals for these courses could be ready for approval in 2020 for implementation no later than 2021.
16. The university should convene an all-faculty round table on the crisis in ethical writing. Faculties must become stronger partners in the prevention of plagiarism. If prevention is visible in the culture of a student’s home faculty rather than appearing to be siloed in English 100, the negative trend should reverse. Please note our other university-wide suggestions in the body of this report.

A Review of the Senior Curriculum

17. We recommend an overall review of the senior curriculum. The curriculum design needs to be built around the current number of majors, with a view to but not relying on growth. Such reviews work best at a careful pace, perhaps two years for a department of this size. Reviews can refresh and renew the curriculum and foster intellectual and pedagogical dialogue among faculty with different specializations, and who are currently divided on issues such as the role of creative writing.
18. The department should create a more streamlined curriculum, with clear learning outcomes at each level and a slate of core courses meeting these, together with special topics courses at all levels so that the unit can respond nimbly to opportunities and disciplinary shifts.
19. The department should foster team teaching and cross-fertilization with other units as a way of generating high impact despite its reduced size.
20. The department could create some large classes designed to attract large enrollments. For example, given the department’s unique research strengths in the fiction of George R.R Martin, we suggest the first such course could be on fantasy literature from J.R.R. Tolkien through C.S. Lewis to *Harry Potter* and *Game of Thrones*.

21. Given the robust relationship between English and First Nations University, a review should consider how to decolonize classroom texts and methods of instruction.
22. We recommend that the department work with Education to reintroduce the joint B.A/B.Ed degree in English that was cancelled.

Graduate Studies and Research

23. Expedite the implementation of the project-based MA.
24. The department's next hire should be designed to foster connection and cross-fertilization in research and teaching with other units on campus and beyond.

Department Governance

25. The department could review its governance structure to seek optimum participation in governance by members. Enhanced participation by members from affiliated colleges and Adjunct Faculty should prove beneficial. For the purposes of a curriculum review, declaring the entire department a curriculum committee of the whole for the duration of the review should be productive.
26. Danielle Meyers should be invited to help with the positive branding of the department by being named Undergraduate Program Administrator (or a suitable profile title). She could also be a key departmental contact for the Arts@Work program, since she could explain it or acquaint students with it within the office, giving her an important recruitment role.
27. In light of the current strains on surrounding English 100, the university could support the department to appoint an overall coordinator for first-year English. Allowing the coordinator to engage fully with other faculties and UR International, rather than providing minimal instructor oversight, would require an allocation of teaching release.