

Implementation Plan

1. Cover memo

Department of English *Year of appraisal* 2014

To: Vice-Provost, Innovation in Teaching and Learning
From: Faculty Dean
Faculty of : Arts and Science
Date: 19 September 2017

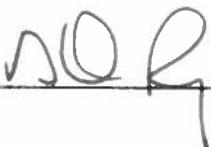
Please find enclosed the finalized Implementation Plan for the Department cited above as part of the academic program appraisals process. This Plan was duly discussed with:

- The Department Chair
- The Dean of Graduate Studies (if applicable)

As mentioned in the Concordia University Academic Program Appraisals Manual, 5th edition revised, the Faculty and Department will follow-up on this Plan in two years, when prompted by your office.

Sincerely,

Faculty Dean's name Dr. André Roy

Faculty Dean's signature 

Implementation Plan: Department of English

The Department of English offers a broad range of undergraduate (BA Major, Specialization or Honours in English, or BA Joint Honours in English and Creative Writing, or BA Joint Specialization in English and History, or BA Major in Creative Writing, or Minors in English, or Creative Writing, or Professional Writing), and graduate (MA in English with Literature or Creative Writing Options and PhD in English Literature) options. Ranked among the top 200 English departments in the world by the QS World University Rankings, the English Department “represent[s] as comprehensively as possible the range of materials and methodologies that constitute the discipline of English, including its history, its current debates and its creative practice, and ... intervene[s] critically in these areas”. This is summed up effectively in the banner on the department’s home page, “Thinking. Writing. Making. A unique combination of outstanding academic and creative writing faculty in a remarkably stimulating milieu for learning and growing as thinkers, writers, and communicators.” To meet these objectives, the research and teaching in the department reflects expertise in areas as diverse as the Anglo-Saxon epic, medieval romance, Renaissance drama and the Romantic lyric, early Canadian print culture, Modernist literature, recent Montreal poetry, Postcolonial travel writing, Tolkien, and video games. “The Department is distinguished by the versatile scholarly interests of its academic members, who publish and teach in more than one period or field, while the creative writing members are established poets, novelists, and playwrights.”

When this appraisal was initiated, the complement of faculty and staff responsible for delivering the Department’s academic and research programs included 28 full-time tenure-track faculty members (including a Canada Research Chair and a Concordia University Research Chair as well as the President of the University), a Department Administrator, an Assistant to the Chair/Assistant to the coordinator, Undergraduate Creative Writing Program, a Graduate Program Assistant and a Departmental Assistant/Assistant to Composition and Professional Writing Programs. The Department has office space, four seminar rooms, study space for graduate students and teaching assistants, the Mordecai Richler Reading Room, the Ampersand Lab and the Centre for Expanded Poetics, in the McConnell Library Building on the Sir George Williams campus. In addition, the Department also maintains affiliations with the Hexagram Institute for Research-Creation in Media Arts and Technology, matralab, Milieux Institute for Arts, Culture and Technology at Concordia, the Concordia Media History Research Centre, and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture (CISSC).

Research success within the Department is evidenced by the publications that have been presented in top-tier presses and leading journals, as well as in the use of digital media in the production and dissemination of content. In addition, the quality of the Creative Writing program is evident from involvement in cultural activities both within Quebec and nationally and from the many roles as writers, editors, festival organizers, publishers and distributors that faculty members play. Moreover, the vibrancy of the scholarly and literary production in the Department is evident in the securing of external funding from private, provincial and federal sources, publication in leading periodicals, and the National and International awards for which the work has been recognized.

While the research profile of the department helps to achieve its mission “to create a stimulating milieu for students to learn and grow as thinkers, writers, and communicators”, this also is achieved through the faculty members’ strong commitment to teaching. This is evident in the fact that more than 80% of the undergraduate and graduate student populations find the overall quality of English course instruction to be high. In addition, the Department embraces a commitment to digital technologies and new methodologies and is a leader in innovative in online humanities course development. “The Department of English responds to Concordia University’s commitment to diversity by designing its courses and programs for a variety of students, from those who seek a general introduction to literary culture and those who wish to develop analytical and critical skills, to those who have specific professional objectives” such that the Department fulfils three primary teaching functions: professional, cultural, and in terms of service.

To advance and improve the Department of English, a number of suggestions have been put forward as part of this appraisal process. With this in mind, the Faculty of Arts and Science has reviewed the DAC, External Evaluators’ and UAC Reports and our comments on the recommendations from the reports follow.

Recommendations	Prioritized timeline for completion	Responsibility	Dean's comments and resource implications
1) To optimize and improve graduate student support.	Ongoing	Department, Faculty of Arts and Science, School of Graduate Studies	Given that the first class entered the PhD program in Fall 2015 and the consistent success of the MA in English with Literature or Creative Writing options, the Department should continue to work with the Faculty of Arts and Science and the School of Graduate Studies to provide assistance in developing attractive funding packages for students.
2) To optimize and improve student recruitment and retention.	Ongoing, a departmental targeted recruitment strategy by May 2018	Department, Faculty of Arts and Science, School of Graduate Studies, Office of the VP, Advancement and External Relations, Recruitment, Student Academic Services	The Department should continue to work with the Office of the VP, Advancement and External Relations to develop strategies for student recruitment. This includes everything from keeping the Departmental website up to date, to deciding which students to target, to admission requirements, to approaches to student advising. This also should include tracking and contact with alumni and increased faculty participation in student-organized events.
3) To continue to define and promote a strategic hiring plan that includes positions required in the context of the Department's, Faculty of Arts and Science's and University's strategic goals.	Ongoing	Department, Faculty of Arts and Science	The hiring needs of the Department must continue to be expressed in the context of its strategic plan and that of the University. The Department should include technical and support staff in this detailed hiring plan. Requests for new hires will continue to be considered along with those of all other units.
4) To continue course and program development to include experiential learning, interdisciplinarity, and greater diversity in areas such as gender, race, culture and geographical regions.	Program assessment should be ongoing. The Joint Specialization in English and History should be assessed by April 2018.	Department, Faculty of Arts and Science, Institute for Co-operative Education	The Department can use existing programs, <i>e.g.</i> , the Joint Specialization in English and History, as an example and explore opportunities for team-teaching or joint courses both within the Faculty and beyond. Darren Werschler's appointment as the Provost's Fellow Interdisciplinarity should help in this process. In addition, recent hires in the Department reflect the desire to address diversity and will expand students' options both in courses and in research. Finally, the Department should continue discussions with the Institute for Co-operative Education about the potential for Coop opportunities for their students.
5) Map the administrative and clerical duties allocated to faculty members.	September 2018	Department, Faculty of Arts and Science, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs	The Department should map current duties allocated to faculty members, determine what reforms are required and outline the priorities. Part of this discussion should ensure that there is a fair and equitable sharing of these responsibilities among the members of the Department. The Faculty of Arts and Science should be consulted in this continuing process to define appropriate regulations and guidelines.
6) Meet with the Subject Librarian to discuss issues related to library acquisitions.	January 2018	Department, Arts and Science Subject Librarian	The Department should prepare an outline of its needs in specific targeted areas and have this discussion with the Subject Librarian in the context of the recently approved PhD program.