

To: Academic Review Committee  
From: Douglas Kneale, Dean, Faculty of Humanities  
Date: 7 April 2013  
Subject: Dean's Report Regarding the Implementation of Recommendations in the Final Assessment Report on the Program in ENGL

Senate approved the FAR report on ENGL on April 13, 2011. The one-year report to ARC was never submitted; now the two-year progress report is due. The 10 recommendations are addressed in order of ARC priority below.

### **First Priority (4 Recommendations in total)**

**1. It is important that the position in 19th-century American Literature, a key area for any serious English program and most particularly a North American one, be advertised and filled as soon as possible.**

Update as of March 19, 2013: Dr. Carole Stewart has now been tenured and promoted to Associate Professor. The funding for this position is stable, as the Killam funds were used to hire a replacement Early Modernist in 2011-2012.

**3. Maintain the Department's much valued seminar tradition but with reliance on M.A. students and experienced nonstudents as TAs, eliminating entirely the use of undergraduate TAs.**

Update as of March 19, 2013: we no longer use undergraduate TAs.

**4. Review further the nature and extent of the Department's commitment to the Writing and Rhetoric program and plan decisively in accordance with that determination. This will include engaging a number of difficult questions: a) is the Department willing to sacrifice future positions in the Literature program in order to strengthen the Writing program? b) Are existing faculty in the Literature program prepared to contribute in their own teaching and course development to the operations of the Writing program? c) What is the perceived relationship between the delivery of service / composition / remedial courses, primarily in first year, to the University at large and the disciplinary mandate of the Writing program? d) Does the Department wish to retain responsibility for delivering service courses to the University at large? e) If it does, what financial commitments is the University prepared to make to the delivery of these courses in a pedagogically sound format (i.e. small course sections, with a maximum of 30 students).**

Update as of March 19, 2013: The program in English & Writing, Rhetoric and Discourse Studies has developed significantly since 2009:

a. On July 1st, 2009, Dr. Gale Coskan-Johnson was hired as a specialist in Rhetoric. Dr. Coskan-Johnson, who is currently the director of the Writing Program, will be submitting a proposal to the department in May 2013 for converting the current BA with Major program into an Honours program, which the department believes will make EWRDS more attractive to students. The proposal also includes ideas for service learning courses and making professional and community links, in hopes of attracting students from across the disciplines to co-major or minor in EWRDS.

b. In the 2012-2013 APC submission, the department proposed to eliminate WRIT 1P93 from its offerings, thus terminating its undertaking of teaching writing across the disciplines. This online course was not cost effective, and was not successful in its pedagogical aims. The department is not able to undertake the delivery of service/composition/remedial courses, as it simply does not have the resources to do so effectively and does not consider this work to be part of the mandate for the EWRDS program (which is oriented towards the study of rhetoric, discourse studies and professional writing as opposed to composition and academic writing across the disciplines)

c. In 2012-2013, the department submitted to ARC a proposal for a new Honours Program in English & Creative Writing, thus hiving off one aspect of the previous incarnation of EWRDS. In recent years, student demand for creative writing courses has increased dramatically, as has faculty interest in responding to this demand. The new program in E&CW is being supported by a new hire in the area of Creative Writing (Fiction), who began July 1st, 2013.

d. Also starting July 1st, 2013, the department will welcome a new specialist in the area of Literary Theory/Rhetoric. This individual will be able to teach courses cross-listed between ENGL and EWRDS, thus further strengthening conceptual links between the two programs.

e. In 2012-2013, the department's APC submission included proposals for a new WRIT course in Digital Writing, to be taught by a faculty member usually associated with the ENGL program; this faculty member also regularly teaches a course in Life Writing, which is cross-listed between ENGL and EWRDS. Various faculty members associated with the ENGL program have taught - and will continue to teach - creative writing courses, while at the same time Dr. Coskan-Johnson has taught a literature course in travel writing. Thus, the department has worked hard to solidify links among its various programs.

**5. Undertake a full curriculum review within the next two years with a view to rationalizing current course offerings, addressing the problem of course "glut," and clarifying for the benefit of students the relationship between List and Non-List courses. This will provide the opportunity to organize courses into clearly conceived groupings that correct the**

**current impression that course offerings have developed by a process of piecemeal accretion related simply to the interests of new faculty who happen to join the Department, rather than as a result of a thought-through disciplinary logic.**

Update as of March 19, 2013: The curriculum review process is now complete. The new List Requirements are in place, and extraneous courses have been deleted.

### **Second Priority (3 Recommendations in total)**

**2. The logically indefensible, ethically questionable, and pedagogically unsound policy of requiring full-time faculty to be responsible for marking the work of only 20 students in any given class should be ended immediately, in time for next academic year. This should be done in conjunction with examining the use of TAs with a view to eliminating these positions where they are not really necessary. Should it prove sufficient for the purpose, the money saved by this should not be clawed back by the Administration but granted to the Department to fund another full-time faculty position.**

Update as of March 19, 2013: The departmental marking load of approximately 40 students per term has been maintained, although it is usually the case that instructors mark at least one assignment (for example, an essay proposal or a take home exam) for the entire class. Further, because of an increase in the number of graduate student TAs, many of whom come to the department without any experience, the mentoring of TAs has become increasingly important. The department has been able to fulfill all of its marking responsibilities (and maintain its excellent reputation among students for the amount and quality of feedback they receive) while at the same time satisfying its contractual obligations to CUPE members and the necessity to make cuts to the part-time budget. Course/Instructor evaluations by students are consistently high, indicating that this marking arrangement is working well for the students.

**6. Regarding Relationships to the Wider Community: The Department should consult with the Development and Alumni Offices at Brock to facilitate the building of relationships with alumni. These are a potentially extremely valuable resource in relation to both public relations and offering of advice to students on the transition from university to the workplace.**

Update as of March 19, 2013: The department is starting to track its alumni, working closely with the Academic Advisor to build a database of former students. In both 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, the English Students Association held a "career night," during which former English majors returned to discuss their career experiences with current students. The department is looking forward to increasing its community engagement even further as the EWRDS and E&CW programs develop.

**7. Regarding the Website: The Department should request Faculty funding to hire a professional to design a new website for the Department. A website is the face an organization shows to the world and the Department's website appears to have had little care expended on it. It may not be critically important for undergraduates (although it is becoming more so), but it is one of the main avenues of investigation for senior undergraduates planning to apply for graduate programs. It should be conceived of not just as a place to post information but as a showcase for the Department and its successes, highlighting the exciting work done by faculty members and the honours and awards received by them. It is one of the best resources for attracting good M.A. students, which is fundamental to the health of both the graduate and the undergraduate programs: more and better M.A. students will enrich faculty experience and provide a better pool of TAs for undergraduate classes.**

Update as of March 19, 2013: The website has been redesigned and is more functional than before, in terms of helping new and current students find what they are looking for. The Academic Advisor has recently developed some suggestions for further updates to the design, which the department will work to integrate over the summer of 2013. In general, the biggest difficulty with the website is generating new content on a regular basis.

### **Recommendations that Will Not be Implemented (3 in total)**

Recommendations 8, 9, 10