

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• English (HBA): Specialist, Specialist (Co-op), Major, Major (Co-op)• English Literature, Minor• Creative Writing (HBA): Major, Minor• Literature and Film Studies, Minor
Unit Reviewed:	Department of English
Commissioning Officer:	Vice-Principal Academic & Dean, University of Toronto Scarborough
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cecily Devereux, Professor, Department of English & Film Studies, University of Alberta• Vivian Nun Halloran, Professor and Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Office of Executive Dean, Department of English, Indiana University Bloomington• Phillip Wegner, Professor and Marston-Milbauer Eminent Scholar, Department of English, University of Florida
Date of Review Visit:	April 4-5, 2023
Review Report Received by VPAP:	June 26, 2023
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	March 14, 2024
Date Reported to AP&P:	April 10, 2024

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: December 17-18, 2015

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths

- Innovative pedagogical and experiential learning approaches, including the positive addition of curricular routes through the programs and the Writer-in-Residence program
- Two new minors and positive plans for program development
- Creative ideas for teaching and learning spaces, including the Writers' Room and the Teaching Garden
- Exhilarating students who are inspiring and enthusiastic, with a strong commitment to the department and the university, along with a very active student organization
- Faculty provide very high quality teaching and are energetic and enthusiastic about their work together, their students, and their future
- Very strong research that measures against international comparators
- Faculty actively involving students in research and making their research more visible at the UTSC campus
- Welcoming, thriving, and creative departmental culture in which faculty and students come together on projects of shared interest outside the classroom as well as in it

Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Improving programs through increasing upper level course offerings; examining how course timing, structure, and format best serve students and the discipline; and involving more students in research.
- Increasing representations of diversity in the curriculum and in the faculty complement, matching the diversity of the UTSC student population
- Pursuing the department's well-articulated plans for growing enrolment
- Determining the right mix of appointment categories within the faculty complement to support current programs, and the planned program in creative writing
- Adding more experiential learning opportunities, including international exchanges and service-learning in the community
- Exploring possibilities for collaboration with cognate units
- Adjusting staffing levels to support the department's administrative functions
- Improving the scheduling and showing of films

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; Self-study and supporting data; Previous review report including the administrative response(s); Access to all course descriptions and syllabi; Access to the curricula vitae of faculty; UTSC Strategic Plan (2020-2025); Campus virtual tour and map; UTSC Viewbook (2023-24).

Consultation Process

Faculty, students, administrative staff and senior program administrators as well as members of relevant cognate units, including Arts & Science Co-op and the Office of the Vice-Principal Research & Innovation.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program(s)

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ UTSC's Department of English is relatively small unit, which demonstrates innovative undergraduate teaching across all its programs
- Objectives
 - ▶ All current programs align well with the five priorities of UTSC's Inspiring Inclusive Excellence strategic plan for 2020-2025
 - ▶ Strong engagement with the broader Scarborough community through the placements for students participating in both the English Major (Co-operative) and Specialist (Co-operative)
 - ▶ Both the Co-operative program and the new service-learning course address a 2016 review recommendation, which urged the department to explore and enhance service-learning opportunities
 - ▶ Department's ongoing plans to develop a Major in Film Studies clearly aligns with UTSC Strategic Plan initiative 1.2, related to curriculum renewal
 - ▶ Curricula for the various UTSC English programs reflect "the current state of disciplinary transformation in recent decades", and address many recommendations from the most recent external review
 - ▶ Program has developed helpful visual maps to inform students of the various available "routes through the program"

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Department has re-thought its curriculum and broadened the range of modalities in which their courses are offered, based on data they gathered during the pandemic
 - ▶ Popularity of online offerings increased following pandemic lockdowns, particularly since UTSC is largely a commuter campus; English Majors appreciate the flexibility of this new teaching modality, and the department plans to continue offering some online courses
 - ▶ New Major in Creative Writing appears to have “lived up to expectations”; it is small by design because students must submit portfolios to be eligible for admission
 - ▶ Requirements for the Literature and Film Minor clearly emphasize the development of critical skills for close reading and critiquing film as a visual narrative medium; “[t]his means that while the Minor will get a new name when the Major in Film Studies is approved, the necessary skills are already built into the Minor curriculum”
 - ▶ English faculty have been inventive in providing learning opportunities for their students that extend beyond the classroom, even during the pandemic (eg. working with improv actors, connecting students to film industry insiders, using a hand-press, engaging with the landscape, and supporting volunteer opportunities in the Scarborough area)
 - ▶ Highly successful introduction of the Creative Writing Major highlighted as a significant recent achievement, and is the only such major in the U of T system; and the popularity of the first-year Introduction to Creative Writing course, open to all U of T students has exceeded expectations
 - ▶ Department has increased flexibility in the programs, reducing the extent to which students trajectories depend on prerequisites and area coverage
- Innovation
 - ▶ Development of the Specialist (Co-op) and Major (Co-op) in English are innovative responses to increasing calls for all university programs to highlight potential employment paths for students
 - ▶ New English and Psychology Dual Degree Program is “another innovative approach to bridging the gap between the arts and humanities and the sciences”
 - ▶ Department has created new course offerings that align with the emerging field of gaming studies
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Department has increased the diversity of the courses offered in literature and film studies in response to previous review recommendation to enhance the diversity of its curriculum “to match the diversity of the UTSC student population”
 - ▶ Department has taken steps to remove the Eurocentric emphasis built into some of its courses
 - ▶ Department has established a working group to identify additional ways to incorporate Black and Indigenous knowledge
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Student evaluations are positive, and consistently higher than UTSC as a whole
 - ▶ NSSE results rate UTSC English considerably higher than other U15 departments / U of T as a whole

- ▶ Students enjoy the service learning experience available in a new course on ‘writing in the community’
- ▶ New English and Psychology Double Degree program, while small, shows promise; reviewers note there is currently a robust number of Double Major students who are completing similar requirement to those of the Double Degree
- ▶ Department has instituted a yearly Career Paths panel featuring alumni discussion, and have conducted a study of current students’ career-readiness skills
- ▶ The Co-op program and small number of Community Service Learning opportunities are important parts of the student experience in English
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Creative Writing Majors have grown from 7 to 25 in the program’s first year, and Minors have held steady
 - ▶ English Majors (literature) have been increasing, since a low point in 2019-20
 - ▶ Numbers of English Majors and Specialists pursuing the Co-operative Program option are small, but show signs of steady improvement
 - ▶ Enrolment in the Literature and Film Minor has grown and “this momentum bodes well for the roll-out of the proposed new Major in Film Studies”
 - ▶ Average GPA of admitted students has improved considerably since previous review
 - ▶ Average GPA of graduating students is ahead of the UTSC average
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Many UTSC Creative Writing student begin to publish with major presses shortly after (and even before) graduation, and win awards, reflecting the success of the workshop teaching approach
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ Department has a solid record of attracting students to the study of film, which corresponds well to existing faculty’s research and creative activity strengths
 - ▶ Assessment of teaching shows achievements higher than those on average at the St. George campus

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Lack of film screening facilities noted in the library and across UTSC more broadly, which impacts UTSC’s ability to support a new Major in Film Studies
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Despite recognizing that their major provides them with job-readiness skills, many students note desire for more career-focused opportunities, and learning how to best put the skills their programs teach them to use in the workforce
 - ▶ Self-study and reviewers highlight the need across all departments for further discipline-specific writing supports
 - ▶ Co-op students would benefit from having a stronger sense of cohort
 - ▶ Some students do not appear have a realistic sense of how their writing skills could be put to use in the workforce; and some Co-operative students note dissatisfaction with primarily administrative job placements

- ▶ Concerns noted that students may be ill-prepared for university learning, after home-based learning during the pandemic
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - ▶ Total course enrolments in 2020-21 were down significantly from 2013-14 (though marked an improvement over figures from 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20)

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Explore the possibility of enhancing film projecting / viewing facilities in conversation with library staff, to support the success of the anticipated new Major in Film Studies; consider the development of a film and digital media specialist role
 - ▶ Student research experience opportunities may warrant further discussion and development
 - ▶ Students note interest in more Spring/Summer English offerings; “the department should discuss the expansion of classes taught in the regular summer term within a wider University-level conversation”
 - ▶ Explore the feasibility of expanding the writing program to accommodate student interest in more practical writing courses at the A and B levels; discuss the possibility of developing courses in writing across the disciplines with cognate units
 - ▶ Students express desire for more Community Service Learning classes and more experiential learning; continue to develop offerings in these categories
 - ▶ Students note interest in more interdisciplinary courses; consider engaging with other UTSC departments to expand interdisciplinary offerings
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Periodically review the department’s ongoing participation in Co-op programs to ensure that English Majors are aware of the Co-op option, and that students have realistic expectations of the career opportunities the Co-op program can provide
 - ▶ Enhance recruitment efforts targeted to double Majors in English and Psychology, to grow the new Double Degree program
 - ▶ Potential noted for the Film Studies program to work in coordination with the recently established Creative Writing Major, to leverage and develop productive connections for both student groups with the Toronto film industry
 - ▶ Department might enhance efforts to identify current or former Co-op participants, and help them establish a network to provide support to one another
 - ▶ Department should work to help students align their expectations with career paths more intentionally, by better promoting existing courses, such as ‘Creative Writing as a Profession’; consider development of an analogous course for the anticipated new Film Studies Major, and offerings on career skills for English Majors / Specialists
 - ▶ Students note difficulties with identifying who to contact for support with program questions; noting concerns about the capacity of the current staff complement, reviewers suggest exploring adding to the numbers of support staff, and enhancing available web resources for students
 - ▶ Observing that the burden of ensuring that students are prepared for university learning following the pandemic falls overwhelmingly to faculty, the reviewers

stressed the importance of engaging the UTSC Dean and broader University in identifying and addressing these challenges

2. Graduate Program(s) (n/a)

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Commendable growth over the past 20 years with great success in teaching, research, and creative writing
 - ▶ Growth in faculty numbers, particularly recent hires of younger scholars in film, creative writing, early modern literature, and Indigenous studies, has enhanced research activities and is fully relevant to both the departmental mission and the UTSC Strategic Plan
 - ▶ Department emphasizes the importance of achieving real diversity in terms of research areas and the composition of the faculty complement
 - ▶ Strong funding and awards for faculty members' creative work
 - ▶ "The department's sense of the integration of creative and critical work as salient is compelling"
- Research
 - ▶ Faculty continue to publish new monographs and articles in preeminent peer-reviewed journals in some of the most interesting and dynamic areas of contemporary humanities research
 - ▶ Faculty excel in the production of high-profile publications in fiction, poetry, screenwriting, translation, and creative nonfiction
 - ▶ Faculty have been successful in obtaining SSHRC grants and other funding including from CIHR and Canada Council, as well as internal funding and grants administered through units on other campuses
 - ▶ Research activities are fully appropriate to the needs of UofT's undergraduate and graduate students
- Faculty
 - ▶ "This department is notably rich in extremely accomplished scholars and teachers"
 - ▶ Faculty are highly active as editors and advisory board members of major journals and press series, and share their research and creative activities through invited lectures, significant conferences, and other forums, and have won numerous awards for teaching, research, and creative writing
 - ▶ Faculty bring their research into classrooms and actively support student research efforts
 - ▶ "The faculty is student-centered and this remains among the department's greatest strengths and a primary reason for the long-term unity of its dedicated faculty and the enthusiasm of the students with whom we met"

- ▶ Department has made significant efforts in recent years to increase the number of Indigenous faculty on campus, including strong recent hires in the Creative Writing program
- ▶ Creative Writing faculty are demonstrably committed and successful teachers
- ▶ Department has done an excellent job of hiring tenure-stream faculty whose scholarship has expanded the global reach of research activities in Film Studies; all Film Studies faculty members have actively participated in the design and implementation of the new Major

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Faculty
 - ▶ Faculty members expressed concerns regarding overload and burnout
 - ▶ “Obvious imbalances” in the division of teaching labour and the recognition of research and creative work in the current structure of the department; particularly that tenure-stream faculty have research and creative work explicitly indicated as a component of their appointments while teaching-stream faculty do not
 - ▶ Faculty expressed concerns that the informal nature of the current teaching release agreements means they are subject to change at any time
 - ▶ Reviewers note recent challenges in hiring for the Creative Writing faculty complement, attributed in part to Creative Writing appointments being exclusively in the teaching stream; “the current structure remains untenable for both encouraging new faculty to join the department and ultimately retaining the outstanding faculty already in place”
 - ▶ Reviewers note the recommendations from the previous review to discuss converting existing Creative Writing teaching-stream positions to tenure-stream, and for new hires to be tenure-stream appointments; these discussions were held but changes were not implemented due to concerns that a hiring process would put long-term current faculty at risk of not being re-hired into tenure-stream positions
 - ▶ Creative Writing faculty “are showing signs of exhaustion and burnout”
 - ▶ Creative Writing faculty expressed concern that “the advising, teaching, and mentoring demands created by the success of the new major has made it very difficult for them to find time to work on their writing projects”
 - ▶ Workload structure in Creative Writing faculty contracts suggest that there are no clear criteria for the assessment of their work outside the classroom or in service, “and that the assessment of that work may be idiosyncratic”
 - ▶ “The current arrangement is untenable as it creates a faculty who is not offered ample time to do their own work of creative writing, something integral to the program’s success”
 - ▶ Current mix of tenure-stream and teaching-stream faculty, and negative impacts of potential imbalances in this mix, may be complicating factors in department’s desire to hire faculty from more diverse backgrounds
 - ▶ Faculty in Creative Writing and Film Studies expressed a pressing need for more Teaching Assistant support in popular courses

- ▶ Self-Study acknowledges unsustainable situation regarding faculty support for teaching courses in critical writing
- ▶ Reviewers raise concerns regarding tensions between tenure-stream and teaching-stream faculty; “it is clear that the system produces feelings of resentment and second-class citizenship”
- ▶ “The fact that only tenure-stream faculty teach graduate courses and supervise theses may have an effect of exacerbating tensions between tenure-stream and teaching-stream faculty”
- ▶ Graduate supervision workload is not distributed evenly among tenure-stream faculty members
- ▶ Reviewers observe that most tenure-stream faculty are at the level of Associate Professor
- ▶ Reviewers raise concern that women and racialized faculty may be asked to serve on more committees than others
- ▶ Covid-19 pandemic produced conditions for working longer days and into the evenings and weekends
- ▶ Reviewers note mild concern regarding the amount of internal funding awarded in the past five years, but acknowledge the impact of limitations on research and conference travel due to the Covid-19 pandemic

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Current imbalance between tenure-stream and teaching-stream faculty must be addressed if the department is to continue its successes in teaching, research, and creative writing
- Faculty
 - ▶ Reconsider the department’s shift toward the appointment of teaching-stream faculty, and explicitly include research/creative practice as a component in faculty workload contracts
 - ▶ Major concerns regarding workload and recognition of creative work, and the situation in which Creative Writing faculty have exclusively teaching-stream appointments, need to be addressed; “this is no longer an issue of equity amongst the Creative Writing faculty but of very real inequities between the Creative Writers, including the department’s Indigenous faculty, and others working in research areas”
 - ▶ “If the conversion of the current [Creative Writing] faculty to tenure stream is not possible, a creative solution needs to be sought that would be fair to both those who have worked so long to establish the program and more recent and all future hires”
 - ▶ “If the Creative Writing program and its instructors are to continue to flourish, its operation with only teaching-stream faculty must be addressed. Again, the possibility of converting teaching-stream appointments to tenure-stream appointments should be vigorously pursued, in close consultation with the faculty members.”

- ▶ Engage in strategic faculty complement planning to ensure continuity and excellence in light of current needs and potential retirements; “a conversation needs to take place as the department continues to evolve and expand its mission concerning whether [future hires should] be part of the Tenure or Teaching streams”
- ▶ Hiring diverse faculty, particularly Black and Indigenous faculty, is a vital part of the future planning for the department
- ▶ Reviewers endorse department’s priority to hire a tenure-stream Black scholar in an open area of literary studies
- ▶ Create a new faculty position in Critical Writing, with an emphasis on the new media for the training of students for the contemporary job market.
- ▶ Provide more Teaching Assistant support throughout the department, especially in Creative Writing and Film Studies courses
- ▶ Regarding future faculty hires in Film Studies, “thinking through the implications of hiring in tenure vs teaching stream to accommodate the expected increase of students will be a crucial step in ensuring comity and ongoing research productivity”
- ▶ Consider extending teaching release or other recognition to faculty serving on committees working toward inclusion and accountability, to ensure that the workload remains equitable
- ▶ Develop measures if none exist to offset workload of faculty with graduate supervision responsibilities
- ▶ Faculty burnout is a major problem that must be addressed; faculty workload and availability on email must be addressed
- ▶ Reviewers raise the question of whether there are built-in incentives for tenure-stream faculty to seek promotion to the rank of full professor

4. Administration

Note: Issues that are addressed through specific University processes and therefore considered out of scope for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns) are routed to proper University offices to be addressed, and are therefore not included in the Review Summary component of the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Department has a history of strong connections and good relations among faculty members
 - ▶ Reviewers note a “sense of equity and community between the Film Studies mix of full-time tenure stream and part-time teaching-stream faculty that is not always evident in similar programs”
 - ▶ Librarians are engaged and supportive of the department’s work and mission
 - ▶ Students are lively and clearly invested in the department
 - ▶ English department faculty collaborate with external partners, and several faculty members from other units regularly teach English courses

- ▶ “Staff members are tremendous professionals, clearly dedicated to their work and appreciated by the Chair, faculty, and students”
- ▶ Several faculty members have explored options to collaborate with peers across the globe as part of UTSC’s Global Classroom initiative
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Staff indicated that they are happy with post-pandemic hybrid work arrangements
 - ▶ Department has a strong tradition of participatory decision-making involving all faculty ranks
 - ▶ Department has successfully secured base funding for an annual Writer in Residence, and established a Writers’ Lounge which is available for meetings of the UTSC student creative writing group or sessions with the Writer in Residence
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Soon to be established Film Studies Major is a “very real area of positive energy”
 - ▶ Department’s strengths include “excellent and deeply committed faculty members and administrative staff, well- conceived programs with innovative and diverse course offerings in English, Film and Creative Writing, and an engaged, energetic community of students”
 - ▶ Department's prominence in established and emerging areas is noteworthy given its size
- International comparators
 - ▶ Department requires more courses for the completion of both the Majors (15) and the Specialist (24) than any of UTSC's comparators
 - ▶ UTSC is similar to many other North American universities in requiring courses in pre-twentieth-century literature for both Majors and Specialists
 - ▶ Beyond the University of Toronto, four Ontario universities and nine elsewhere in Canada currently offer undergraduate Major programs (BA) in Creative Writing
 - ▶ The quality of the research is very strong and measures extremely well against national and international comparators

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Morale and relationships within the department appear somewhat strained, “in part because of the effects of isolation and overwork faced by all university instructors and students during the pandemic, and in part because of the effects of the department's shifting away from tenure-stream to teaching-stream faculty”
 - ▶ COVID restrictions have had a negative impact on the well-being and mental health of students, staff, and faculty; reviewers note a “diminishment of good feeling about work, the workplace, workload and the future”
 - ▶ Lingering effects of pandemic disruptions include low attendance at in-person faculty meetings; faculty expressed concerns regarding how best to rebuild a sense of community after the pandemic
 - ▶ “Burdens of supporting students struggling with mental health and wellness during and since the pandemic may have fallen disproportionately on faculty”

- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Administrative staff expressed frustration with the lack of centralized resources, including business accounts for access to software; paper-based processes negatively impact staff productivity and add stress
 - ▶ Reviewers note lack of standard budget for staff professional development
 - ▶ Unanticipated expenses related to hiring additional Teaching Assistants have caused a budget deficit
 - ▶ Staff communicated concerns regarding an overreliance on carry-forward funds to pay for foundational department needs, including software, computers, professional training, and work study student assistants
 - ▶ Staff expressed concerns regarding increasing workloads and expectations of assistance from faculty and students
 - ▶ Staff expressed concerns regarding the need for additional administrative support, in light of recent growth in the department
 - ▶ Film Studies faculty commented on inadequacies in terms of the infrastructure and support for their teaching, including dedicated screening spaces with proper lighting, sound, and technology needed for showing film and digital media
 - ▶ Concerns expressed regarding availability of film and other media in the current library structure
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Departmental challenges attributed in part to UTSC's development from a satellite campus into a division within the tri-campus structure
 - ▶ Limited transportation options to UTSC campus raised as a concern for students wishing to take courses at the St. George campus and regarding ease of drawing people to events or classes at UTSC
- International comparators
 - ▶ Reviewers note that students in the department are not required to take courses in Indigenous, postcolonial or Black literatures, a requirement of other undergraduate English programs at the University and at other Canadian universities

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Consider the impact of additional student support needs during and since the pandemic on faculty's well-being and mental health
 - ▶ Work with Indigenous instructors to learn how to build strong support systems and networks in the department and with the University for new Indigenous instructors
 - ▶ Proposal for the "UTSC Institute for Critical Storytelling and Creative Re-Worlding" could contribute to external partnerships and networks
 - ▶ Explore ways to bring people together on campus and to re-establish aspects of community that were lost during the pandemic
 - ▶ Seek support from the Dean and the University for department-specific events to bring people together for good food and companionship as well as productive conversation and planning

- ▶ “Student evaluations need to be addressed and revised to ensure they are not being weaponized against women and racialized faculty. Microaggressions against women and racialized faculty must be taken seriously and addressed.”
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ “In order to ensure the successful operations of the program, there needs to be an increase in base budget and a move away from overreliance on carry-forward funds”
 - ▶ “Any increases of base funds would contribute greatly to easing pressures and bettering the morale of all those involved in the department”
 - ▶ Consider increasing staff complement in the areas of financial administration and communications/social media
 - ▶ Communicate clearly to faculty and students the nature, extent, and especially the limits on the duties of departmental staff
 - ▶ Consider resourcing to meet the unique needs of the Film Studies programs, including dedicated screening spaces, work study support, technology, and access to media
 - ▶ Coordinate with the library to develop resources and expertise required to support the Film Studies Major, including additional library capacity in the areas of film and digital media
 - ▶ Ensure that support is provided for faculty and students to adapt to post-pandemic teaching and learning, including support for hybrid teaching and audio-visual technologies
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Advocate for enhanced campus transit options to support the closer integration of UTSC within the tri-campus structure
 - ▶ Expand placement opportunities for students in English co-op programs
 - ▶ Clarify the benefits of co-op programs for students and develop ways for students in co-op programs to connect with each other
 - ▶ Continue to Indigenize the curriculum and work toward creating a welcoming space for Indigenous students
 - ▶ Consider developing departmental scholarships to support Indigenization
 - ▶ New LAMP building may enable and encourage faculty to gather and to form connections with colleagues outside the department



2 Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

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UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
SCARBOROUGH

Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

March 13, 2024

Dr. Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Office of the Vice-President and Provost
University of Toronto

Dean's Administrative Response: External Review of the Department of English, University of Toronto Scarborough

Dear Susan,

Thank you for your letter of December 11 requesting my administrative response to the external review of the Department of English and its programs. I want to thank the review team - Cecily Devereux, Professor, Department of English & Film Studies, University of Alberta; Vivian Nun Halloran, Professor and Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, Office of Executive Dean, Department of English, Indiana University Bloomington; and Phillip Wegner, Professor and Marston-Milbauer Eminent Scholar, Department of English, University of Florida - for their consultation with the Department during the site visit, held from April 4-5, 2023, and for their Report, which was finalized on June 26, 2023, and shared with the Department.

We deeply appreciate the reviewers' assessment of the Department's engaged and energetic community of students, as well as the excellent and deeply committed faculty and staff. They praised the programs as well-conceived, with innovative and diverse course offerings, and observed that all programs align well with the priorities of UTSC's strategic plan. They applauded the development of the Specialist and Major Co-op programs in English as "innovative responses to increasing calls for all University programs to discuss employment paths with students." They commended the Department's strong recent hires of younger scholars in film, creative writing, early modern literature, and Indigenous studies, and noted that both tenure and teaching-stream faculty bring their research into classrooms and actively support student research efforts. Finally, they praised the ways in which the Department "emphasizes the importance of achieving real diversity" in the faculty complement as well as in faculty research areas.

The report from the review team identifies a number of areas for enhancement and development, including developing practical and career-aligned courses, expanding and clarifying Co-op opportunities, addressing faculty workload and morale, planning faculty roles for comprehensive coverage, enhancing communication about staff roles, supporting Indigenous instructors and students, and ensuring equitable committee assignments for women and racialized faculty. With this letter you will find below a table which summarizes the responses to the specific recommendations of the reviewers, and their anticipated timelines for implementation.

Once again, I thank the review team for their insightful and valuable review of the Department and its programs. I look forward to supporting the Department in implementing the recommendations of this report.

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of English. An interim report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will be prepared in **Fall 2027**. The next external review of the Department will take place **no later than the 2030-31 academic year**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'WAG', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor William A. Gough
Vice-Principal Academic & Dean

2022-23 UTQAP Review of the UTSC English Department - Review Recommendations

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who will take the lead in each area. If appropriate, please identify any necessary changes in organization, policy or governance; and any resources, financial and otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, "it is important to note that, while the external reviewers' report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university's internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability" (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Program Response	Dean's Response
The reviewers noted students' desire for more hands-on practical writing courses, community service learning courses, and experiential learning opportunities; they recommended that the Department consider developing additional course offerings that align with students' potential career paths.	1	"Students expressed a desire for more hands-on, practical writing courses at the A and B levels. The writing program should be expanded to accommodate more students at these levels. The department should also discuss with other departments the possibility of developing courses in writing across the disciplines."	<p>Short-term (1 year): The Department will revive and offer ENGB02 – Effective Writing in the Sciences in 2024-25, and will continue to offer its suite of writing courses at all levels.</p> <p>Medium term (3-4 years): The Department plans to offer more sections of existing writing courses and to develop new writing courses, pending ability to conduct a search. Pending approval, the Department will plan to search in the area of Critical Writing/Rhetoric & Composition. We currently have only one full-time faculty member teaching these writing course regularly. And while graduate student instructors teach our A- and B-level writing courses (Writing About Literature and Writing About Movies), depending on sessionals or course instructors to carry upper-level writing courses would not be sustainable.</p>	Fully supportive of the department's plans. Funding expansion and providing necessary instructors (and related resources) will be explored with the department.
	2	"Students expressed a desire for more Community Service Learning classes and more experiential learning. The department should continue to add to and develop its offerings in these categories."	<p>Short-term (1-2 years): We will continue to offer our service-learning course, ENGD02Y. Led by the Associate Chair and the Departmental Curriculum</p>	The campus encourages the development of Experiential Learning offerings (including service learning) and this is supported by the

			<p>Committee, the Department will conduct an inventory of courses that regularly include significant experiential learning components and submit minor modifications to those courses so that they can be designated as experiential learning courses in the calendar. For example: our D-level documentary course (ENGD94) regularly includes hands-on filmmaking, but it is not described as such in the calendar. We plan to change the name of that course and to flag it for students. The Department will also designate a point-person for experiential learning (the convenor of the pedagogy committee) to help support faculty members who would like to develop and implement experiential learning approaches in their courses. The Chair will also designate a departmental “experiential learning fund” for micro-budgets (under \$1,000), since the Campus office of Experiential Learning only funds initiatives over that amount.</p>	<p>Associate Dean Experiential and Global Learning and her team.</p>
	3	<p>“The department can help students align their expectations with career paths more intentionally by better promoting existing department courses, such as ENGD95H3 Creative Writing as a Profession.”</p>	<p>ENGD95 is a required capstone course for Creative Writing students; as such it doesn't need promoting (it is always fully enrolled). However, the course, which is offered every year, does include a panel/master class on writing as a profession, featuring local professionals, and that panel is open to all students.</p> <p>Ongoing and short-term (1-year): We will continue to build our series of career-focused panels and events. Every Fall, we offer a series of careers panels (e.g., “What to Do with An English Degree?” and “Beyond English 101”) as well as a “Going to Graduate School” panel; we will work with our new Communications and Digital Media Officer to better promote those events and to stabilize them in the calendar so students know when</p>	<p>Fully supportive of the department's plans.</p>

			to expect them every year. In Fall of 2024, we saw huge demand for an event focused specifically on applying to teachers' college – and thus we added an additional, online version of the event (which we also recorded so that it could be accessible to students who couldn't attend the event). We plan to use this model for career-focused panels and events going forward, to accommodate demand and to offer flexibility.	
4	“The department should consider developing an analogous course for its new Film Studies Major, and likewise develop a 1-credit course discussing Career Skills for English Majors (or Specialists).”		We feel that this is not necessarily the best solution, logistically. We need faculty members willing to teach such courses, and using FCE for this will not necessarily be feasible. Beyond these practical issues, there is the problem that one course can only accommodate a limited number of students. We feel that the approach outlined above, with multiple careers panels in both in-person and online formats, will reach the most students. It should be noted that it is likely that the external reviewers based their comments on an interview with a very small group of students (with a disproportionate number of Co-op students, which may have skewed results a bit), so we feel we need to hear more from our students in general on this topic. To that end: Short-term (1-year): We have designed a survey of students to further explore student desires regarding curriculum and other issues – such as careers, outreach, etc.-- raised in the external review. That survey will go out at the end of February (2024), with a plan for focus groups to follow up on the results of the survey, held over the coming year.	I agree with the departmental response to this recommendation.
5	“[The Film Studies] program also has the potential to work in coordination with the recently established Creative Writing Major, as a number of the students in the Major with whom we met expressed great interest in		Medium-term (2-3 years): We will continue to develop connections by inviting local film professionals into our classrooms (as many of us already do in our	Fully supportive of the departmental response.

		developing productive connections with the film industry in Toronto.”	film classes). In addition, in tandem with the launching of our Film Studies Major in Fall of 2025, we plan to institute an annual “Careers and Film Studies” panel and/or networking event for program students. The department also plans to work with the Experiential Learning Office to consider ways to formalize our existing connections with area film and arts organizations (e.g., Scarborough Arts, Hot Docs, The Reel Asian International Film Festival, etc.) into recurring opportunities for students (such as internships or other work-integrated learning opportunities). This effort will be headed by the Film Studies program director, with the support of the Associate Chair and the Undergraduate Coordinator.	
The reviewers recommended clarifying and communicating the benefits of the Co-op program, exploring ways to expand Co-op opportunities for students in the English program, and working to support a greater sense of community among Co-op students.	6	“The department’s ongoing participation in the Co-operative programs should be reviewed periodically to ensure that more English Majors are aware of this as an option and that students pursuing an English Major or Specialist Program have more realistic expectations for what career opportunities the Co-op program can provide for them. “	We consulted with the Arts & Science Co-op office on Feb. 2, 2024 to review the upcoming changes to the co-op programs, to be implemented in the Fall of 2025. We also developed a strategy to improve the Co-op experience for English students. We discussed ways the Co-op office could support the English Department in our outreach to co-op students. Short-term (1-year): The survey to students discussed above contained specific questions about Co-op. We plan to hold a follow-up focus group with co-op students in Spring of 2024. In Fall 2024, we plan to hold a Co-op mixer/feedback session for students in which representatives from Arts & Science Co-op will also participate. We also plan to work with the Arts & Science Co-op office to organize a gathering/networking session for co-op students from across the Humanities departments in 2024-25. Within our department, we also plan to highlight the Co-op work experiences of English students in our student newsletter, website, and social	I applaud the immediate efforts to address the reviewer’s recommendation.

			media channels so that they are more visible and integrated into our program.	
	7	“The Co-op program is not department-specific, but there are nonetheless future planning challenges related to its effectiveness for English students: expand opportunities for students, some of whom feel that the available positions are more relevant to students in Science or Business than English [and] clarify benefits for students”	See above (#6); hopefully feedback from these events and efforts will help the Arts & Science Co-op office to address these issues and concerns.	As above.
	8	“The department can do a better job of identifying students who are or have been Co-operative participants and help them establish a network where they can support each other.”	See plans outlined above (#6)	As above.
The reviewers recommended enhancements to classroom supports for post-pandemic teaching and learning.	9	“Classrooms need better support to help faculty and students adapt to post-pandemic teaching and learning. The department will need to continue to request that support for hybrid teaching and AV support.”	We have a number of resources both departmentally and on campus to aid faculty. AV and IITS support faculty upon request, as does the Centre for Teaching and Learning, which runs workshops and also offers tech support (e.g., Quercus help) and one-on-one support. Departmentally, we run a regular pedagogy circle and we have a pedagogy advisor (Prof. Sonja Nikkila) who leads the circle and holds office hours for one-on-one and group support.	The opening of the Sam Ibrahim building in the fall of 2024 provides access to cutting edge classroom space with the latest in classroom technology. The department will have access to these new spaces. There is also an on-going upgrading of the older classrooms.
	10	“There is a need for more Teaching Assistant support throughout the department, and especially the Creative Writing and Film Studies faculty.”	In advance of the 2023-24 school year, we requested an increase in our TA budget from the Dean’s Office, in line with our increased enrolments (27% increase since 2019-20). We gratefully received the requested increase, but we will need to continue to monitor and make sure that TA and stipend budgets align with our enrolment demand, and curriculum needs. Current and Ongoing: With respect to creative writing, the English Chairs from UTSC, UTM, and UTSG held a meeting in October of 2023 with the English TA Coordinator and the Director of the MA program in Creative Writing to discuss how	The Dean’s Office is responsive to the needs of departments for additional support generated by enrollment and changes in pedagogy. We applaud the efforts to provide the requisite TA training to support Creative Writing courses.

			<p>we might better serve the needs of UTSC (and UTM) Creative Writing courses. We are currently developing approaches to increase the pool of available, well-trained TAs for Creative Writing courses.</p> <p>Short-term (1-2 years): Work with the St. George English department to Create Creative Writing-specific TA training for graduate students, including training that takes place on the UTSC campus.</p> <p>Medium Term (2-3 years): Our proposal for the Film Studies major accounts for increased TA needs for new required courses (and larger versions of existing courses). In tandem with the launching of the Film Studies Major, we will need to assess TA needs after the first year of the program (2025-26), when we will have a better idea of enrolment/demand. We also plan to continue to work with the Cinema Studies Institute and the graduate English department to coordinate film studies-specific TA needs. (This will be guided by the Chairs, the program director, the English TA coordinator, and supported by the English Undergraduate Coordinator and the Business Officer).</p>	
<p>The reviewers highlighted serious concerns expressed by teaching stream faculty in the Creative Writing program that they are “not offered ample time to do their own work of creative writing, something integral to the program’s success.” They raised related concerns regarding faculty workload and morale more broadly. <i>(Note: in developing your response, you may wish to consult with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty and Academic Life)</i></p>	11	<p>“The serious faculty concerns created by a recently established and popular Creative Writing Major being taught and directed by teaching-stream faculty need to be addressed in the very near future. The current arrangement is untenable as it creates a faculty who is not offered ample time to do their own work of creative writing, something integral to the program’s success.”</p>	<p>Current and Ongoing: The Department takes the creative and professional work of our Creative Writing faculty into account in workload, particularly teaching load. We grant a .5 FCE reduction for creative and professional work (thus bringing down the 3.0 FCE for teaching stream to 2.5 FCE). See further details on the question of teaching stream and the specific needs of Creative Writing below (#18).</p>	<p>As noted in the departmental responses the concerns were partially mitigated by changes in the workload (as expressed in the workload policy) for the Creative Writing faculty.</p>
	12	<p>“Faculty burnout is a major problem that must be addressed... Faculty workload and availability on email must be addressed.”</p>	<p>In departmental meetings to discuss the report of the external review, the members of the department noted that the sense of “burn-out” the reviewers noted was due, in</p>	<p>As noted in the departmental response, this sense of burnout was exacerbated coming out of the pandemic and has subsequently somewhat eased.</p>

			<p>part, to the timing of their visit which took place at the very end of the Fall, 2022 term, which was the first term back to fully in-person classes after COVID. That term was particularly challenging, as was noted across all departments. That said, there are still ongoing issues, and the Department has facilitated multiple conversations (at both our annual retreat in Spring of 2023 and at faculty meetings in 2023-24) about how to deal with increasing demands on faculty time, due in part to higher needs in the Covid and post-Covid student body.</p> <p>Current and Short-term (1 year): We plan clearer communications from the Department to students about University and departmental policies regarding extension requests, grading, petitions, and appropriate behavior toward and expectations from faculty. This includes communication on syllabi, the departmental website, and in the student newsletter. We also plan to continue to work with the Dean’s Office to maintain and, if necessary, increase our TA budget in line with the need for more contact hours and course administration roles to support faculty with greater student and technological needs.</p> <p>Medium-term (2-3 years): Assess the needs for more departmental mentoring and institute more mentorship opportunities for faculty, not just for new and pre-tenure faculty, but for post-tenure faculty and those at various career stages. The Associate Chair, EDI will spearhead these efforts.</p>	
	<p>13</p>	<p>“The department may want to seek support from the Dean and the University for department-specific events to bring people together in nice places for good food and companionship as well as some productive conversation and planning.”</p>	<p>Current and Ongoing: We hold an annual retreat every spring; this year’s retreat will take place on May 1 (at Miller Lash) and will focus on EDI-related conversations, departmental planning, and</p>	<p>Many departments have made similar efforts at community building, particularly to include and support faculty hired during the pandemic.</p>

			community-building. This will be followed by an informal lunch gathering. We have held such informal gatherings also throughout the year, though it is harder to get people to attend events held on campus than it was before COVID. The department has also organized “beginning-of-term” social events over the past two years (as we emerged from the COVID context), held downtown, closer to where many faculty live.	
The reviewers recommended strategic faculty complement planning in order to ensure coverage of existing and emerging disciplinary areas; they raised broader concerns regarding the balance between teaching and tenure stream faculty in the Department.	14	“There should be a tenure-stream hire of a Black scholar in an open area of literary studies.”		Faculty hires are handled through a centralized process (Faculty Complement Committee) and all departments are invited to submit proposals for complement augmentation. Included as part of this process is the Pathway to Parity which focuses on the hiring of Black and Indigenous faculty.
	15	“There continues to be a need for replacement hires in Creative Writing and for Dr. Neil ten Kortenaar. If either of these positions could be at a more senior level it would be of great advantage to this highly successful and ambitious department.”	Our search in Creative Writing (to replace a faculty member who resigned) took place in 2022-23, but did not end in a hire. We plan to search again, pending budgetary approval. We planned to search for a position in Caribbean/Black Diaspora literature in 2023-24 (to replace Prof. Neil ten Kortenaar, who retired at the end of 2022-23). That search (which was at the Assistant Professor level), planned for and approve through the faculty complement committee process in 2023-24, was postponed due to a UTSC campus-wide “moratorium” on searches. We await a decision on when we will be able to conduct that search. It is difficult for us to plan for a hire – in particular, a senior hire – in the current budgetary environment, but we will take up the question of a targeted and/or more senior-level hire at our next retreat (in May).	The campus is under substantial fiscal pressures and this has delayed, but not canceled, hiring. We are currently engaged in a sequencing process to move forward with a backlog of approved searches, including this replacement hire.

	16	“There should be a new position in Critical Writing, with an emphasis on the new media for the training of students for the contemporary job market.”	See #1 above. Medium to long-term (next 3-5 years): We plan such a hire, pending budgetary approval.	See fiscal considerations noted above
	17	“While faculty are excited at the prospect of debuting their new Major in Film Studies, thinking through the implications of hiring in tenure vs teaching stream to accommodate the expected increase of students will be a crucial step in ensuring comity and ongoing research productivity.”	We don’t currently have any plans to hire in the Teaching Stream for the Film Studies program, but we may need to conduct a search in Film Studies should program growth require it. As such: Long Term (4-5 years): If program growth warrants, we plan a tenure-stream search in the area of global cinema, likely either East Asian or African Film. We hope to continue to diversify our course offerings in Film Studies, in line with our conception of the program as offering Film Studies in a global context.	
	18	“The department has an impressive number of highly regarded creative writers. If the department is to maintain prominence in established and emerging areas, it needs, as noted above, to reconsider its shift toward the appointment of teaching-stream faculty, and to explicitly include research/creative practice as a component in what are now, as we understand it, 80% teaching/20% service appointment for teaching-stream faculty and/or to have a conversation about the possible conversion of those positions to tenure-stream.”	The department gives all the creative writing teaching stream faculty a .5 FCE release for their creative and professional work. In addition, for the purposes of PTR, we take creative output (publication of their work) and professional activities into account as part of the “80% for teaching and pedagogical and professional development.” Thus, their publications are counted and rewarded in the PTR process. We are re-visiting the complex question of tenure-stream for the Creative Writing faculty. Current and short-term (1 year): The Chair convened a meeting with the Creative Writing faculty in March of 2024 to discuss the pending Creative Writing Search (the re-mounting of the failed search in 2022-23). As a group and as a department, we feel strongly that, going forward, we can only consider hiring new creative writing faculty at the tenure stream if (and only if) after a review of all current Creative Writing positions in the department and their rank. We plan to continue to work with the Dean’s office to look to other possibilities.	The Dean’s Office continues to work with the department on rank and workload of the Creative Writing faculty.

			As to larger questions around equity and teaching-stream positions, the new Special Advisor to the Dean on Teaching Stream faculty success, Aarthi Ashok, will visit an English Department faculty meeting in March of 2024. This role is the result of the report of the UTSC Teaching Stream Working Group, initiated by the Office of the Vice Dean, Equity and Faculty Success.	
	19	“The department should be carefully considering its future if more faculty are doing work that does not explicitly include their research and creative work, even if all are "bring[ing] research into ... classrooms." The department needs to work against the perception of a two-tier system.”	We are very careful, in the PTR process, to encourage faculty to list all of their work, publications of all kinds, community work, professional work, as well as all labour related to teaching, research (including research-creation), and community outreach. Short-Term (1 year): The Chair plans to initiate regular one-on-one meetings with the VPRI (beginning in Spring of 2024) to highlight faculty research and to maximize their success; part of the goal of these discussions will be to make sure that opportunities around research-creation, and the new opportunities for teaching-stream faculty (such as tri-agency grants), are well understood and promoted within the English faculty.	The Dean’s Office is supportive of the department response.
The reviewers noted student comments regarding difficulty determining appropriate contacts for program-related questions; they recommended enhancing the clarity of communication to the faculty and students regarding the specific duties and responsibilities of staff members.	20	“Students suggested that it's very hard to figure out who to contact and get support from with program questions. These comments do not reflect on administrative staff, who are all working incredibly hard with multifarious portfolios, but on communication and, perhaps, on numbers of available staff. Support could certainly be enhanced through additional staff as well as web resources.”	We hired a part-time Communications and Digital Media Officer, beginning in November of 2023. This is a part-time, 1-year contract hire, but we hope that this position will become part of our base budget, as we have already greatly improved our communications and outreach to students: Current and short-term (1 year): Create a monthly student newsletter (this began in January 2024); Overhaul department website (currently in-process); Re-think and re-invigorate our use of social media channels and develop a coherent communications and	The department has responded substantially to this recommendation and the Dean’s Office applauds these efforts.

			<p>social media strategy; hold more regular, informal outreach events and gatherings to connect students, faculty and staff, re-acquainting them with the Department post-Covid (e.g., monthly “Chat with the Chair” events, begun in February 2024).</p> <p>Medium Term (2-3 years): The Department plans to institute an annual “Town Hall Meeting” for all program students, staff, faculty, and instructors (either held online or in a hybrid format). This will allow for student feedback and questions, and add to a sense of openness, familiarity, and accessibility for students.</p>	
	21	“There needs to be more clear communication to the faculty and students concerning the specific duties and responsibilities of the members of the staff.”	We send out a memo at the beginning of each term to all faculty, sessional instructors, and TAs listing all of the staff and their respective duties. With the new student newsletter, we can re-iterate that information for students as well, as well as across our other communications channels (see above, #20).	As above.
The reviewers recommended that the Department engage with Indigenous instructors to learn about their needs and to build strong support networks within the Department and the University; they endorsed ongoing initiatives to Indigenize the curriculum and to cultivate a welcoming space for Indigenous students.	22	“The department should work with Indigenous instructors to learn what is needed and to build strong support systems and networks in the department and with the University for new Indigenous instructors, to ensure that they are not “collateral damage to the grand experiment to Indigenize campus and respond to the TRC.”	Current and ongoing: In collaboration with the office of the Vice Dean - Equity and Faculty Success and with Professors Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm and Randy Lundy, the Department hosted Prof. Daniel Heath Justice in September of 2023 for a two-day visit, including a roundtable discussion with faculty, a guest-lecture in our large introductory class, “What is Literature,” and a series of individual and small-group meetings with faculty and students. This offered an opportunity to discuss the extra burdens on Indigenous faculty members, as well as other equity and diversity-related questions and topics brought forward by faculty members. The Chair also attended a meeting on how to support Black and Indigenous faculty	The campus Special Advisor on Indigenous Initiatives, Professor Mike DeGagne, has met with all the indigenous faculty, including the two indigenous faculty members in the Department of English to foster community among this group and provide individual support.

			<p>members in January of 2024, hosted by the Vice-Dean, Equity and Faculty Success.</p> <p>Current and Short-term (1 year): In July of 2023, the Chair appointed an Associate Chair for EDI (Prof. Maria Assif), which is a new role for the Department. The Associate Chair – EDI will head up EDI initiatives, including an EDI-themed retreat in May of 2024. In the coming year, the Associate Chair – EDI will and gather feedback from faculty, including hosting small-group discussions, lunches for Indigenous and racialized faculty members, etc., regarding needs and concerns, and also to assess what sorts of EDI infrastructure will work best for our department (e.g., a rotating EDI committee, working groups, and/or more full-group oriented events). This role will be ongoing in the Department.</p>	
	23	<p>“The department's commitment to the TRC's Calls to Action could be affirmed through continuing to Indigenize the curriculum and to outreach.”</p>	<p>Short term (1 year): The Department proposed a series of curriculum changes in the 2023-24 governance cycle, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The addition of a .5 FCE requirement in Indigenous Literatures for English Majors and Specialists; and - To support this new requirement and to continue our efforts to develop further course offerings in Indigenous Literature and Oral Traditions, we created three new courses at the C-level: “Indigenous Poetry,” “Indigenous Short Stories”, and “Indigenous Drama”; We also changed our C-level “Indigenous Literature of Turtle Island” to a B-level, so that students could get an introductory grounding in Indigenous literature and oral traditions before taking the upper-level courses. <p>Longer Term (3-5 years): The Department will begin consultations on the development</p>	<p>The department has done excellent work in responding to the TRC’s Calls to Action and is an exemplar among the UTSC’s departments.</p>

			of an “Indigenous Studies” Minor program. This may be interdisciplinary and will be led by Professors Akiwenzie-Damm and Lundy, in collaboration with the Associate Chair and the departmental curriculum committee (DCC). In terms of timeline - because Professors Lundy and Akiwenzie-Damm are both pre-continuing status, we don’t want to rush this process or put undue burden on them, as they are already deeply engaged in curriculum development and thinking about this future initiative.	
The reviewers recommended that the department work carefully to ensure that women and racialized faculty are not unduly burdened with committee assignments; further, they urged the department to pay close attention to how student evaluations are used, and to ensure that they are not being used inappropriately with respect to the assessment of women and racialized faculty.	24	“We note that women and racialized faculty may be being asked to serve on more committees than others. It’s true that there is vital work to be done toward inclusion and accountability, and teaching release or other recognition may be extended to ensure that the workload toward, for instance, curriculum not add to overload.”	We have in some cases worked with the Dean’s Office to secure teaching release for faculty members (such as Indigenous faculty members) for doing the labour of curriculum renewal (such as serving as the department’s representative on the Campus Curriculum Working Circle or working to develop land-based courses). Short-term (1-2 years): The Chair and the Associate Chair – EDI will work together to do an inventory of committees, assessing the equity of the division of labor, especially with regard to the work of EDI. The annual departmental retreat (May 2024) will be focused on EDI, and departmental committees, infrastructure, and workload will be part of that conversation.	The Dean’s Office fully supports the department’s work in this area, taking the lead on the Campus Curriculum Working Circle and the implementation of its recommendations. The related decanal Pedagogies of Inclusive Excellent (PIE) fund through individual and department subventions has provided the funding to enable changes in curriculum.
	25	“Student evaluations need to be addressed and revised to ensure they are not being weaponized against women and racialized faculty. Microaggressions against women and racialized faculty must be taken seriously and addressed.”	Current and short-term (1 year): Beginning in the Winter term of 2024, the Department will send a message to all students in English regarding course evaluations, encouraging participation but emphasizing that comments should be constructive and respectful. The Chair is also consulting with the Equity and Diversity Office (EDIO) on ways to educate students about the impact of evaluations, especially in terms of women and racialized faculty being disproportionately affected.	We recognize the concerns in this area. We are actively working on post processing of student evaluations to remove comments that are offensive, particularly targeting women, racialized persons, and members of the LGBTQ2+ community. In addition, the University has recently agreed to a moratorium on TA evaluations to review current practices and provide recommendations to remove systemic bias

			<p>Short-term (1-2 years): The Department has partnered with the Office of the Vice-Dean, Equity and Faculty Success to bring on consultants in Restorative Justice practices. This was the result of a proposal submitted by three of our faculty members (all racialized, female faculty) which reported on micro-aggressions and other issues, and which suggested that UTSC hire a Restorative Justice Officer to handle matters of student behavior not covered by the University's Code of Conduct. The English Department and the Dean's Office are piloting a Restorative Justice project, in hopes that it might be taken up campus wide. Terms of what the RJ consultancy might look like (along the lines of a "restorative justice residency") are being finalized (Winter 2024), with workshops and other activities to take place through Fall 2024 and possibly beyond.</p>	from the questions in these student evaluations.
	26	<p>"Students expressed interest in taking more Spring and Summer classes in English: the department should discuss the expansion of classes taught in the regular summer term within a wider University-level conversation."</p>	<p>We increased our summer course offerings in Summer term of 2023 and saw a 7% increase in enrolment over Summer 2022. This was due in part to our strategy of offering a mix of online and in-person courses, including sections of high-demand, required courses such as ENGA01 (What is Literature), ENGA02 (Critical Writing About Literature), and ENGB70 (How to Read a Film). We will continue to make sure we are offering a rich array of courses in the summer. We have a limited amount of faculty who choose to teach in the summer, so our offerings do depend to some degree on our stipend budget.</p>	The Dean's Office is fully supportive.
	27	<p>"Students expressed an interest in more interdisciplinary courses. The department should consider engaging with other departments at UTSC to expand interdisciplinary offerings."</p>	<p>In Fall of 2022, we offered a course, ENGD55 (Literature, Politics, Revolution), on the topic of "Climate Futures," (taught by Prof. Christine Bolus-Reichert), and the course was co-listed as a Political Science D-level, taught</p>	The Dean's Office is fully supportive of the department's effort to address this recommendation.

by Prof. Matthew Hoffmann. This course was a big success, and we will offer it again in 2024. I have asked Prof. Bolus-Reichert to write up her experience in the course and to serve as an advisor/point-person for other faculty members who would like to launch interdisciplinary courses or to partner with faculty from other departments to re-think existing courses as team-taught courses. The two professors made this work in a creative way, by offering separate D-level courses that were scheduled at the same time and held in a room that had enough space for the double enrolment. Because it has often seemed bureaucratically burdensome to offer cross-listed or double-listed courses, we would like to look for other, less “ad-hoc” ways to offer these types of courses in the future.

Short-term (1-2 years):

The Chair will convene a meeting with the Chairs of the other Humanities departments to gauge interest in pursuing more interdisciplinary courses; The Humanities Chairs also plan to work together on a regular series of events (such as, “research roundtables” or colloquia) to provide a platform and networking opportunity for faculty working in different Humanities disciplines at UTSC. The Chair of English will also seek guidance from the Registrar’s Office on the options for interdisciplinary or cross-listed courses.

Medium-term (2-3 years): The Associate chair and the DCC will poll faculty for team-taught and/or interdisciplinary course ideas. There has been a lot of enthusiasm expressed about this in meetings, but the logistics and workload issues seemed to create hesitancy. We will then assess as a group whether new courses, or modifications to existing courses

			are needed to provide templates for team-taught or interdisciplinary courses.	
	28	“The burdens of supporting students struggling with mental health and wellness during and since the pandemic may have fallen disproportionately on faculty. These needs should be brought to the Dean and the University, and the impact on faculty's well-being and mental health must be considered.”	We have brought these issues to the Chairs and Directors meetings and in discussions with the Registrar’s Office, AccessAbility Services, and the Campus Safety Office. We know there are several campus initiatives tied to these issues.	This is a campus-level concern. Supports in the Office of Student Experience and Wellness (OSEW) has continued to augment staff in our Wellness to address this need.
	29	“As the Film Studies Major comes into being, more attention will need to be given to its unique program needs, especially in terms of dedicated screening spaces, work study support, technology, and access to media.”	<p>With the existing film-friendly classrooms on campus and the anticipated opening of the Sam Ibrahim Building (Fall, 2024), the number of appropriate lecture halls, screening spaces, and smaller media-friendly classrooms will be significantly increased. As to the library and the question of media access, the library report that forms part of our proposal for the new Film Studies Major affirms that the library is ready and willing to support the new Major (this being a combination of UTSC, Robarts, and Media Commons). That acknowledged, having a smoother integration of film and media needs with the UTSC library will be important going forward.</p> <p>Short-term (1 year): In the run-up to the launch of the Film Studies Major, the Chair and the Film Studies program director will meet with the Registrar’s Office to go over space needs for film studies courses, including new large lectures coming online for the Major. We plan to request that priority be given, where possible, to FLM courses for booking the classrooms that are technologically appropriate for film. The Chair and the Program Director will also continue to meet regularly with representatives of the UTSC library and AV/IITS to discuss library, media, and technology needs for the new program.</p> <p>Medium-term (2-4 years): After assessing the needs of the new program after the first year,</p>	The Dean’s Office supports the efforts the department is making to address this concern, in particular, the plan utilizing of the unique classroom design in the Sam Ibrahim Building that will open in the summer of 2024.

			we will hire work-study students if needed to help facilitate program delivery – in particular, coordinating and liaising with AV services to promote smoother in-class experience with media for faculty.	
	30	“Coordination with the library should be undertaken to develop the resources and expertise required to support a Film Studies Major.”	See above (#29)	The Dean’s Office applauds the engagement of the department with the Library.
	31	“In order to ensure the successful operations of the program, there needs to be an increase in base budget and a move away from overreliance on carry-forward funds. This would include base funding for among other things, software, computers, professional training, and work study student assistants, as well as the needs of a growing faculty and two new Majors.”	We plan to ask for an increase in base operating budget. To clarify some of the items from the list cited by the externals, this would be for expenses including creative software licences (such as Adobe Creative Cloud) and other tools which aid in our communications and outreach campaigns, and for professional <i>development</i> training for staff in addition to the other needs listed.	Due to constraints placed on carry forward funding the academic departments are limited to 5% of their budgets for carry forward. Base budget requests go through an annual campus wide Planning and Priorities process that all departments are invited to engage in.
	32	“The department needs at least one further staff member. The primary needs are for a financial assistant who could take up some of the Business Officer’s routine responsibilities, allowing the Business Officer more time to focus on strategic planning and cost projections; and someone who has the skills needed to assist with department communications.”	In November of 2023, we hired a Communications and Digital Media Officer, which is a new staff role for our department. This has paid immediate dividends (seen in enrolment and elsewhere) with our much-improved capacity for outreach, promotion, and publicity. We made this hire out of our own budget, as a part-time, one-year contract position. We also hire 2-3 work-study students to work on communications as well. Short-Term (1 year): We plan to request that this position be moved into our base budget and made a continuing position. We will continue to hire and train work-study students, as it provides valuable experience for students. Medium-Term (2-3 years): We plan to ask for another additional position, a Financial Assistant, which would allow our Business Officer greater ability to focus on long- and short-term planning and bigger-picture budget issues that would support	As above.

			departmental planning in all areas (expanding our programs, improving student experience, aiding faculty with administrative or research-related resources, etc.). We also plan to request that the Business Officer position be shifted to a “Financial Manager” role, as that better applies to the scope of the position and matches other comparable academic department structures.	
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3 Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P) Findings

The spokesperson for the reading group reported that the review summary had accurately reflected the full review. The reading group reported that the Dean's administrative response had adequately addressed most of the issues identified by the review, however, asked the administration to further address the concerns around workload issues and faculty burnout, particularly for Creative Writing faculty and teaching-stream faculty. This included addressing the responsibilities and impact of the new Special Advisor to the Dean on Teaching-Stream faculty success and clarification of teaching release for "creative and professional work" of the teaching-stream faculty.

Jessica Fields, Acting Dean, and Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity & Success in the Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean responded that a special advisor on teaching stream faculty success was appointed in January 2022 and that this position arose from a UTSC working group that developed a report to address burnout, workload and other concerns amongst teaching stream faculty. The report addressed the various discussions and impact of workload concerns, and the relationship between workload and career advancement. The role of the Teaching Stream Special Advisor was intended to meet with teaching stream faculty, administrative units and leaders to explore the implementation of the recommendations in practice. She acknowledged that they experienced a lack of clarity in their workload policies, and that they were in the midst of a review. There were consultations with the chair and the dean on the workload policy to reflect on the current landscape in the department and noted that certain teaching activities, such as the coordination of a multi-section course, supervision of independent studies in creative writing, or mentorship, would be included in faculty workload considerations.

No follow-up report was requested.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers highlighted the Department's engaged and energetic community of students, as well as the excellent and deeply committed faculty and staff. They praised the programs as well-conceived, with innovative and diverse course offerings, and observed that all programs align well with the priorities of UTSC's strategic plan. They applauded the development of the Specialist and Major Co-op programs in English as "innovative responses to increasing calls for all University programs to discuss employment paths with students." They commended the Department's strong recent hires of younger scholars in film, creative writing, early modern literature, and Indigenous studies, and noted that both tenure and teaching-stream faculty bring their research into classrooms and actively support student research efforts. Finally, they praised the ways in which the Department "emphasizes the importance of achieving real diversity" in the faculty complement as well as in faculty research areas.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: exploring the development of more hands-on practical writing courses, community service learning courses, experiential learning opportunities, and courses that align with students' potential career paths; clarifying and communicating the benefits of the Co-op program, exploring ways to expand Co-op opportunities for English students in the English program, and fostering a greater sense of community among Co-op students; enhancing classroom supports for post-pandemic teaching and learning; engaging with teaching stream faculty concerns about a lack of available time to do their own creative writing work, and addressing broad faculty challenges related to workload and morale; engaging in strategic faculty complement planning to ensure coverage of existing and emerging disciplinary areas, and considering the optimal balance of departmental teaching and tenure stream faculty; enhancing the clarity of communication to faculty and students regarding the specific duties and responsibilities of staff members; engaging with Indigenous instructors to learn about their needs and to build strong support networks in the Department and the broader University, and pursuing ongoing initiatives to Indigenize the curriculum and to cultivate a welcoming space for Indigenous students; working carefully to ensure that women and racialized faculty are not unduly burdened with committee assignments, and paying close attention to how student evaluations are used with respect to the assessment of women and racialized faculty.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the unit's responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result.

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Dean's Office will monitor the implementation of recommendations through ongoing meetings with the Chair of the Department of English.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs no later than Winter 2027 on the status of the implementation plans.

The next review will be commissioned in June 2029.

6 Distribution

On June 30th 2024, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, UTSC, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.