



Department of English
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To: Associate Dean John Slattery, Graduate School
Divisional Dean Michael Halleran, Arts and Sciences

From: Richard J. Dunn, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard J. Dunn', is written over the printed name in the 'From' field.

Subject: English Department Response to Ten-Year Program Review

I enclose the Department's response to the 2001-02 Ten-Year Program. As the response itself makes clear, the opportunity to consider carefully, involve the whole of our faculty and the agendas of Departmental administrators and major committees during the past quarter has primed the Department for action that needs to follow completion of the review process. Therefore we look forward to meeting with the Deans and respective Councils.

Cc: Deans Landholt and Hodge; Divisional Dean Jeffords; Director Robin McCabe;
English Chair Search Committee members Diana Behler, Gayla Diment, John Keeler

RESPONSE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH TO
RECOMMENDATIONS OF TEN-YEAR PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE
December, 2002

As the July 2002 report of the ten-year program review committee puts it, now is “an excellent time for the English Department to begin the discussions necessary to develop and implement serious reform.” (Note: all quotations are drawn from the ten-year review committee report.) The Department appreciates the committee’s extensive commentary and helpful recommendations and is actively moving forward in enterprising ways to sustain and enhance its academic excellence. This is, indeed, a rare opportunity for the Department to “define [or redefine] itself to itself” and to outsiders. Even before receiving the committee report in midsummer, the Department had implemented a number of the recommendations for improving communication and for engaging the faculty collegially to deal with the review’s major recommendations concerning curriculum, governance, faculty workload, and stewardship and expansion of private funding. This response is itself evidence of more direct participation by program directors, program faculty and committees, the Executive Committee, and the Department as a whole than had been the case for either the earlier goals and mission planning or self-study. This response begins with Departmental concern about morale, workload, and salary issues that the review committee regarded as critical. Later sections enumerate implemented recommendations and describe plans and work in progress with other high-priority recommendations.

The Department gives highest priority to the recommendations concerning morale, workload, and salary. If these problems cannot be resolved in the near future, the Department may well lose its impressive standing in the top twenty-five Departments of English in the nation (top 11 among public institutions; top ten in creative writing). The reviewers made pointed comments about the faculty’s low morale, with several recommendations for the Department and eight for the University and College. Through improved communication, increased collective decision making, and other community building efforts, the Department can effect some improvement of morale. So far, in major efforts underway to revise the undergraduate curriculum and in responding to the many other review committee recommendations, Department faculty have demonstrated a continued capacity (noted in the review report) for “hard work and enterprise in the face of limited resources.” For this enterprising work to succeed, the future must bring many changes—new leadership after a successful chair search, curricula and pedagogical practices that best utilize the entire range of faculty expertise and interest, substantial research support for faculty and graduate students, accelerated efforts to build endowments for faculty, students, and program support. The Department looks forward to working with the College and University in a sustained effort to improve its effectiveness and stature.

Regarding faculty workload, the review committee recommended curricular and programmatic changes that call for “considerable redistribution of the work of the faculty,” particularly in the undergraduate major and graduate literature and language

programs. Some redistribution has resulted from reduction in the size of the graduate literature programs, and more will come with the significant revision now underway in the undergraduate major. Given differing instructional formats for classes (graduate and undergraduate senior seminars, independent study and graduate student supervision, writing workshops, and numerous general education and expository writing classes), it is misleading to define faculty workloads simply by annual course load. English, along with other humanities departments, has begun discussing faculty workload in the broadest senses—teaching in all its forms, research and creative work, departmental and other administration, and engagement with the community. In the face of differing class formats, program pedagogies, and individual career tracks, other universities have established differential workloads (with differential reward criteria) the Department will consider that along with other options. The overall English Department instructional workload includes thousands of undergraduates enrolled in expository writing and general education classes. Over the past decade student headcounts and student credit hours have increased (total annual enrollments in English classes since 1998 have remained above 15,000, and total student credit hours have grown from 67,846 to 77,469). Consequently, tenure-track faculty teaching is heavily concentrated in the upper-division undergraduate major and graduate courses; at the same time tenure track faculty also spend much time administering and mentoring expository writing and general education. The review report recommends more summer stipends for departmental administrative work, larger lower division classes, a clear departmental policy for course-release, and reconsideration of the logistical consequences of the present commitment to faculty-taught senior seminars. These are all suggestions the Department is taking seriously as it constructs teaching schedules for the coming year and develops a new major for 2004-05. The objectives are to use faculty expertise where it best serves students at various levels and to assure that teaching loads are at once well defined and equitably administered.

Concerning salaries, the 1992 program review committee recommended that “the University of Washington seek a more equitable system of reward for faculty contributions that will not press them to seek outside offers as the only effective way to keep their own salaries competitive and that the Department continue its efforts to correct inequities in salary.” Over the past decade the situation has worsened. The 2002 review finds the Department 24.3% behind peers at the associate professor level and 29.3% behind at the full professor level. Overall, the present average departmental salary (disregarding 3 exceptionally high and 3 exceptionally low figures) is \$53,594 (or with the highs and lows, \$60,825). Salary inversion exists at all ranks, with the most severe impact upon 16 permanent faculty (26% of all faculty, including 5 associate professors and most of the lecturers with salaries ranging from \$37,062-\$46,891), who are paid less than an entry-level assistant professor hired for fall 2002. At these low rungs of the salary ladder many faculty find it difficult to live in Seattle (which, as the report states, is a matter of “basic, break-even logistics [of] trying to build lives in a city with rising property prices”).

Carefully analyzed, the present salary structure for the Department makes little sense. For example, long-term, highly trained and experienced Senior Lecturers in the award-

winning Interdisciplinary Writing Program are at the bottom of the pay scale; even full professors who have consistently received high merit raises now suffer salary inversion and compression. There need to be meaningful salary floors for each rank and demonstrable career salary progression. The Department urges that this begin with a strategically applied unit adjustment. Although no one-time adjustment is likely to close the large peer-department salary gap, a start in doing so would greatly improve morale, and a plan for ongoing improvement would clearly help the Department retain faculty. Now is the time both to commit all possible resources and to plan for longer term improvement of salaries in this Department.

Implementation of Review Committee Recommendations

The Department is pleased that the College of Arts and Sciences has proceeded with several of the important review committee recommendations by appointing an interim chair, launching a national search for a new chair and for two Interdisciplinary Writing Program Lecturers, as well as authorizing a new faculty appointment (to complete a search that was suspended last year) and a new staff position for outreach and development. The Department is most grateful for the College Development Office's success in securing the first installment of an endowed professorship in English.

Recommendations Implemented by the Department

The Department improved internal communication and openness over the summer and fall of 2002. Through the Department's web site and list serves, faculty and staff now receive meeting agendas and minutes, reports and the quarterly calendar of meetings and events. The first of four fall-quarter faculty meetings centered on "Budget 101," the first department-wide explanation of funding sources and uses of resources in recent history. Soon thereafter, faculty learned that, whether or not they were using budgeted travel funds, an additional \$150 from private funding, was available to each for research or travel expenses. Upon appointment in early July, the Chair issued an open invitation for individual meetings, and has now met with two-thirds of the faculty, many staff, and a number of students. The Chair and Graduate Program Director now meet monthly with officers of the English Graduate Student Organization. The fall departmental newsletter, distributed internally and externally in print and electronically, was more broadly circulated; beginning in January publication of the newsletter will be quarterly.

The fall quarter agendas for departmental committees and program directors have concentrated upon two priorities: thoughtful response to and planning based upon the ten-year review report, and the continuation of work on the two-year plan for revision of the undergraduate major. During the remainder of the academic year the executive committee will consider alternatives for departmental governance; in tandem with other committees, it will be clarifying workload and course scheduling policies, and the Department will engage in the ongoing work of revisions to the M.A. and the undergraduate major. This curricular redesign necessarily entails the Department's attention to another of the program review committee recommendations, the development of a multi-year plan for future hiring needs.

[Note: The numbers for the following implemented recommendations correspond to the numbers on pages 21-22 of the review committee report.]

1. After consultation with Divisional Dean Halleran, the Department opted for a retreat at a later stage of its work this year when it has in hand more materials for discussion of undergraduate major revision and will be ready to conclude how best to resolve various governance issues raised by the review committee report.
2. Regular faculty meetings are occurring (four in fall quarter), and teaching schedules have been changed for winter and spring to avoid conflict between meeting and teaching times. With the exception of the first of these meetings, which was arranged by the chair, agendas develop through the consultation of program directors and Executive Committee..
4. The Chair met with program directors the first week he was on the job and frequently during the summer; through the academic year the chair and program directors meet weekly, the day before the Executive Committee meeting.
7. In October 2002, the English Department forwarded to the Dean of Arts and Sciences a request for response to an outside offer received by a full professor. Before doing so, the salary committee met and at its recommendation called for a Departmental vote on options for faculty involvement in merit and counter-offer recommendations. The deadline for response this fall precluded the full discussion that will come later in the year; for the time being the Department voted overwhelmingly to let the Chair, with consultation he thinks appropriate, handle departmental recommendations concerning retention.
9. In early October 2002, after reviewing the full c.v.'s of all associate professors, the professors of English met and discussed departmental expectations for promotion and then considered in detail the records of five associates. Finding all of them close to promotion but unwilling to proceed with any further review this fall, the professors directed the Chair to inform the five associates, in writing, of the discussion pertaining to each. Although no immediate promotion recommendations came from this meeting, the productive discussion clarified departmental expectations in ways that should in the near future lead to its recommendation of several associate professors for promotion.
11. That assistant professors need to be actively involved in search processes has been departmental practice for the last several years. An assistant professor is on the chair search committee.
12. There are a number of convivial occasions: a reception for new faculty and graduate students the first week of fall quarter; two department "showcase" events each quarter bringing together faculty, students and invited public guests, and scheduled colloquia gatherings which bring faculty and graduate students together both professionally and socially.

Progress With Other Recommendations (Listed by Program or Area)

A Governance (concerning review recommendations 3,5,6,7,8,10 and Sub-Report B on creative writing as a “semi-devolved” unit). This section of the Department’s response has been developed by the program directors and Executive Committee.

As the only body elected to represent the faculty as a whole, the Executive Committee is assuming responsibility for addressing two broad but related categories of concern detailed in the review, namely,--rethinking the most effective formal organization for internal governance within a large department charged with diverse responsibilities, and revisiting past policies on questions of faculty equity. In terms of the first set of issues, the Executive Committee is undertaking a review of current departmental executive and legislative structures as defined in by-laws, past democratic votes, and administrative tradition in order to arrive at the best organization for a department of such “sheer size and complexity.” Specific problems under investigation include:

- the most effective structure for the Executive Committee itself: the proper size, term of office, and nature of its selection (for example, whether its members should continue to be elected at-large or represent separate programs or groups);
- the proper relation of the Executive Committee to the Program Directors;
- the structure and interrelation of the other various faculty committees as they are currently defined by Departmental by-laws, including the issues of “semi-devolution” raised in the review’s “department-wide” recommendations and in the “Desiderata” section of Sub-Report B:
- budgetary transparency and programmatic control over specific endowments;
- whether or not there should be an Associate Chair.

The aim is to find a working order that permits maximum programmatic independence and initiative while defining and enforcing overlapping “habits of collective responsibility.” The Executive Committee is well aware, however, that such habits cannot be instituted by structural reform alone, and that the Executive Committee (and the faculty generally) must commit itself, year by year, to more active and effective participation in departmental decision-making.

As to the second category, issues of equity, the Executive Committee, along with the Salary Committee and Program Directors, is working to institute transparent, consistent, and just policies on workload, course relief, salary, and faculty retention in the face of outside offers.

B. Graduate Programs

M.A. and Ph.D.

For the M.A. and Ph.D. in language and literature, as well as for the more specialized Masters’ programs, the greatest need remains fellowships for recruitment and for dissertation support. These make the difference in competition with peer programs for the best new graduate students, and such support also allows students to devote necessary time to research. The Department’s development plan gives highest priority to graduate fellowships, along with faculty research support, because faculty strength and graduate

program strength are inseparable. Therefore the Department joins with the College's development goal of increasing numbers of graduate fellowships and, as opportunity permits, of securing new endowed faculty positions which include graduate student support.

Two review committee recommendations (16, 17) concern the M.A./Ph.D. program. As the report narrative recognizes, there has been a reduction in the size of this program in recent years; this fall there are 134 enrolled. Reduction below 125 surely would impact the quality of a strong, vibrant, and diverse program and would greatly endanger recruitment and retention of faculty. Following the cue of recommendation 16, the Graduate Studies Committee is presently considering structural revisions for the M.A. in literature. Language/rhetoric/composition faculty have already designed a Master's track, and present Graduate Studies Committee discussion centers on means for adding more focus and structure to the M.A. literature area and for improving mentoring of first and second year graduate students. The objective is to improve the preparation of students for rigorous Ph.D. work.

Recommendation 17 asks the Department to consider permitting students entering with strong M.A. degrees to enter directly into the Ph.D. Program. This is not a matter over which the Department has jurisdiction, but the graduate program director has discussed this issue with the Graduate Studies Committee, in connection with revision of the M.A., and is pursuing this possibility with the graduate school.

M.F.A.

The ten-year review committee's report correctly identifies four areas ripe for change within the creative writing program: program self-determination (called "devolution" in the report, and discussed in detail under "Desiderata" in Sub-Report B); the graduate program; faculty access; and the undergraduate program (addressed below in a separate section). In all areas the creative writing faculty are already working to address the issues raised and to take on associated responsibilities. Changes related to self-determination have the farthest-reaching implications, and faculty are in complete agreement that the program should "refine and redefine [its] present system of 'semi-devolution'" and that "the Department and the A&S Dean's office should encourage and facilitate such discussions." Creative writing faculty also agree with Sub-Report B's recommendation that the program should be given direct access to the chair and "should be able to make decisions relative to the M.F.A. and the B.A. minor track without recourse to multiple levels of committee approval." Presently the creative writing program and graduate studies directors are discussing initial steps for these changes. Such shifts in administrative practices will enable the creative writing faculty to address the other suggested changes more efficiently and expeditiously, and these faculty intend to be energetically involved in the discussions on organizational revision detailed under "Governance."

Sub-Report B focuses on three major areas of concern regarding MFA student: access to adequate financial support, opportunity to teach in their genre, and access to

distinguished faculty, including visitors. It also correctly identifies three issues behind the access problem: a very flexible leave policy, an inadequate faculty replacement policy, and distribution of workload.

Although most of these problems and issues are not fully separable from the broader issue of insufficient funding, especially (as the sub-report notes) the dearth of graduate fellowships, some of the actions faculty are now taking include:

- increasing regular communication between the director of creative writing and the Chair (with the encouragement of the current Chair);
- working to raise endowed funds and grant money for graduate student support, including writing a development plan specific to the program's needs and partnering with community groups;
- using endowed funds already in place for graduate student support;
- developing a specific policy regarding leaves of absence among creative writing faculty;
- monitoring thesis committee assignments to assure an equitable workload.

Beyond an increase in creative writing graduate fellowships and the facilitation of the discussions on "semi-devolution," the following assistance is needed from the College and University to address fully the sub-report's concerns:

- supplements to leave return monies for the hiring of distinguished visiting writers;
- consultation with the college regarding the impact of hiring and retention negotiations;
- control over creative writing hiring needs.

MATESL and MAT

The Ten-Year Committee report makes no specific recommendations concerning these degree programs but the reviewers find the MATESL program prestigious and note its faculty's ongoing efforts to develop plans for an inter-departmental center for language use and acquisition. (A center would institutionalize the informal relations now existing among applied linguists across campus, and would promote initiatives for sharing resources, students, and courses.) English MATESL faculty are engaged with colleagues from other departments in developing a proposed MATFL (Master of Arts in Teaching Foreign Languages) which would expand the MATESL student population to those working in languages other than English.

The MAT remains a very small program with no departmental resources or operations costs directly associated. Because it provides a means for English-centered M.A. content accompanied by course work in the College of Education, it serves a small but important need, and possibly in coming years is a degree option that will draw more students (such as Puget Sound Writing participants who decide to proceed with a graduate degree track).

C. Professional Program

Puget Sound Writing Project

Although not a graduate degree program, the Puget Sound Writing Program, as part of the National Writing Project, has long been housed and sponsored in part by the English Department. Each summer it conducts institutes for area teachers of writing, and during the academic year mentors those teachers' in-service activities in their home schools. This nationally recognized, long-term project has had lasting impact on the professional training of teachers and even more on the writing skills of pre-college students. For close to a quarter of a century English Department support of this program has involved academic year and summer salary for a faculty co-director, a half-time co-director who has had long K-12 and PSWP experience, and hourly staff assistance. The review committee recommends (see Sub-Report A) that there be additional course release and additional instructional support for PSPW and that its operating budget be increased. There have been recent discussions with the College of Education about jointly implementing this recommendation. Further, the Department's development efforts include PSWP among other objectives. It is important that the commitment of Department and College to this program be recognized as a vital part of both the teaching and outreach mission. Teaching teachers should be as important as teaching undergraduates and graduates to become teachers, and the PSWP partnerships between schools and University are active and effective.

D. Undergraduate Programs

The reviewers highlight a number of key concerns that include: the "impasse" over curricular reform; the need for more "faculty-taught courses" at the 200-level; the increasing reliance on TAs in many 200-level courses and on postdoctoral Acting Instructors for a number of 300-level courses; and the benefits of increasing our commitment to large lecture courses that accommodate pre-major access to faculty. The Undergraduate Programs Office and the Undergraduate Education Committee acknowledge the validity of these concerns and, together with an English advising staff that the report deems "one of the department's best stories," look forward to improving the quality of an undergraduate major under enormous pressures.

While the report argues for the urgency of addressing each of these cases, it also registers positive movement toward the resolution of these problems. Even as the report was being penned, positive changes were being made. Citing the then recently organized Committee for the Re-Structuring of the Undergraduate Major (CRUM) as well as work by the creative writing faculty to revise the undergraduate creative writing program, the report notes that "things have been moving in the months since the Self-Study was published" and that "we understand that some reforms to the major are already in place." The concerns of the ten-year review have only reinforced the undergraduate office's commitment to change and renewal. The Department embraces the report's suggestions as an opportunity to work toward a re-invigorated undergraduate program in "a department which has such faculty strengths."

In 2002-03, the first of a two-year plan for revision of the undergraduate major, CRUM has begun a yearlong series of Departmental meetings designed to discuss ideas and

models for a new major. At the initial meeting, 24 October 2002, CRUM presented its preliminary findings based on its review of some twenty-five undergraduate majors at peer institutions. The committee was greeted with enthusiasm by a faculty ready to begin the work of reforming its curriculum in the next year. In its presentation CRUM especially stressed the need for a two-course gateway to the major, one of which would be taught by tenure-track faculty at the 200-level, and the other of which would be a team-taught or collaborative large lecture course, possibly at the 300-level. This addition to the major will address two of the review committee report's major suggestions regarding 200-level courses and large lecture access. A second department meeting on 22 November dealt in more detail with ways that the new major can accommodate the full range of current faculty expertise and interest, and provide for the students focused tracks of subject concentration and substantial skills in the language of the texts they both study and produce.

CRUM recognizes the need for a streamlined major, one that makes more effective use of our current faculty numbers by reconfiguring core course requirements and integrating various area studies, including language and rhetoric and creative writing, into the Department's offerings. This plan also requires a re-consideration and recasting of the function and enrollment in senior seminars, which the report suggests must be revamped in order to make better use of limited resources. Each of these ideas will be central to ongoing discussions. However, although the re-structuring of the undergraduate major will make more effective use of our current faculty and help to alleviate at least some of the pressures created by departmental faculty losses, merely trimming down the core requirements cannot fill existing needs in vital program areas, and therefore the Department's multi-year hiring plan must prioritize these needs.

The review committee report concludes by urging "faculty commitment across the curriculum," and suggests that the current work of our curriculum coordinator, together with ongoing conversation about the value of "pre-major teaching, especially at the gateway level," will be the keys to a productive and vigorous future for the Department. To this end, CRUM is currently actively soliciting commitments from faculty across all ranks to a new major that includes gateways and recombined core courses. Sub-report A's and B's recommendations for creating a writing/language/rhetoric minor, one separate from the current English Education track, will be part of discussions involving the new major. The creative writing program is actively considering the suggestion put forth in sub-report B to revise its undergraduate program. It is CRUM's hope to create a smaller and more competitive creative writing track within the English major, rather than to initiate a minor. Other changes under review include establishing a formal application procedure for admission to the creative writing track, redesigning the upper-division workshops, and redesigning 200-level courses. Here the objective would be to increase enrollment for and to involve senior faculty members (possibly team-teaching) in classes open to all undergraduates. The Department appreciates the review committee's encouragement for comprehensive reconsideration of the undergraduate major requirements. Responding to these challenges must and will be the result of a combined effort by faculty and staff.

The English Department carries a heavy service responsibility, perhaps beyond that of any other department in the College of Arts and Sciences. This is the result of providing courses that meet “C” (Composition) and “W” (Writing) credit requirements, and of teaching the lion’s share of VLPA (Visual, Literary, and Performing Arts) courses. In 2001-2002, English Department TAs, with training and direction from the Expository Writing Program (EWP), taught 4,213 students in first year writing and another 2,000+ in 200-level courses. As the program review report notes, the two major undergraduate writing programs—the Expository Writing Program (EWP) and the Interdisciplinary Writing Program (IWP)—are “well known and regarded throughout the United States.” Responding to the review committee’s recommendations (see section D) to strengthen writing program support will require more funding. Because there is now a College-wide writing committee reconsidering undergraduate writing requirements, instruction, and support and because also the Simpson Center for the Humanities is sponsoring a series of new humanities general education courses, the Department will not make any immediate changes in its expository writing and general education offerings; it will, however, carefully consider recommendations concerning the Department’s administration of EWP and IWP.

E. Support Staff

The review committee report notes the need for more technological support, both for computer integrated instruction courses and for assistance to faculty and staff. Due to budget reductions over the years, a number of staff positions in the Department have been reduced to less than 12-month appointments, and although changing program needs (such as the increased emphasis upon outreach and development, less clerical and more program-assistance work by staff) have driven redefinition of various staff responsibilities, it is unlikely that further internal realignments of jobs will meet even near-term staffing needs. The highest priority here remains that of a second full-time tech support staff member. The next priority is to restore to full time at least three of the current staff positions that are less than full year.

Conclusion

The review committee report “lays the responsibility for the unit’s future both upon the Department itself and upon the University and College administration: the commitment to rebuilding the Department which [the review committee] seek[s] from the administration must go hand-in-hand with clear departmental self-improvement in the areas of communication, governance and curricular reform.” The Department understands this mandate, and its response to the reviewers’ recommendations documents significant progress in recent months. A handful of examples includes: (1) a commitment to examine departmental workloads with regard to equity and transparency; (2) creative commitment of more private funds to faculty research and graduate student support; (3) effective engagement of the faculty as a whole in the re-structuring of the undergraduate major and M.A.; (4) intensified activity in outreach and development (producing more frequent newsletters, sponsoring two public showcase events per quarter, improving donor stewardship). The Department’s greatest challenge, especially in the context of a

state budgetary crisis, will be in addressing the non-competitively low salaries of faculty and of obtaining enough new positions to rebuild the intellectual core of the Department in the wake of serious faculty losses in the last several years. As noted above, these are complicated and long term problems, casting long shadows over the work done and the work that remains. In order to close the salary gap with peers, the Department will continue aggressively to seek private funds for faculty and student support but needs a unit-based salary adjustment and continuing College and University support to recruit, sustain, and retain top faculty and graduate students.

The English Department appreciates important steps taken recently by the College, and looks forward both to the selection of a new Chair and to College and University attention to faculty salary improvement and graduate student support. Particularly because of uncertain opportunities for replacing faculty, and because graduate student quality and faculty quality are so interrelated, it is essential in the near-term to be aggressively responsive in faculty retention, committed to support of faculty research, and poised to make strong strategic hires whenever possible.

The Department welcomes the general recommendation for a follow-up review in five years rather than ten; there must be immediate rebuilding and improvement. The Departmental goals are ambitious—to move upward in distinction, to improve graduate and undergraduate education, and to connect more effectively with the larger community.