

## **REPORT OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**Report #W2020-1; January 28 2020**

**In this report the Academic Standards Committee (ASC) brings to Senate its evaluation and recommendation on the following items:**

- **FACULTY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES – Changes to Field Placement hours in the School of Social Work**
- **DOUBLE MAJORS – Assignment of the Honours Bachelor degree designation**
- **PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW – B.A. English (Hons) Program, Faculty of Arts**

### **A. FACULTY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES – Changes to Field Placement hours in the School of Social Work**

The School of Social Work is proposing a reduction in the number of field placement hours for the 4<sup>th</sup> year SWP50A/B course from 504 hours to 364 hours, effective Fall 2021.

The social work program is professionally accredited with the Canadian Association of Social Work Educators (CASWE). The accreditation standards require a minimum of 700 hours in placement for the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree. Currently, BSW students complete a total of 840 placement hours, 336 hours in third year (SWP36) and 504 hours in fourth year (SWP51).

The Commission on Accreditation (COA) granted re-accreditation for a full-eight year period to the School of Social Work from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2024. In the letter dated February 8, 2017, recommendations included that the school revisit the number of required field placement hours and bring the hours into alignment with the standards of accreditation.

In addition to the recommendation from the COA, the School has considered other important factors in decreasing the number of hours:

1. The advanced standing program admissions process is highly competitive, and most students in the program far exceed the minimum 2 years of related experience.
2. Many of the students with the FNTI program live and work in their home communities. Asking those communities to create opportunities for 504 hours of placement can be a significant burden on community resources.
3. Aside from the advanced standing program, many students in the BSW program have prior or current experience in the social services field.
4. Faculty have not observed any preference for hiring Ryerson BSW graduates over graduates from other BSW programs with 700 hours in placement.
5. Student placements, for the most part, are unpaid and students are required to pay for two course credits for third year placement and two course credits for fourth year placement. Requiring more hours puts financial hardship on students as it limits the time they have available each week outside of school, to be working for income. This is particularly a concern for those students who are less privileged.
6. The School initiated having more placement hours than other schools decades ago, at a time when not as many students were working significant weekly hours during the school year to support themselves. Today, many BSW students work part-time or even full-time (e.g., doing overnight shifts) to earn income to cover their education costs. This makes completing the high number of placement hours very difficult for many students.

Comparably, other schools of social work require the total number of placement hours as follow:

- York University BSW direct entry students complete a 4th year placement of 700 hours
- Laurier BSW students complete 2 practicums - one in 3rd year and the other in 4th year. Both practicums are 360 hours each, for a total of 720 hours.

Comparison of current and proposed new calendar copy for SWP50A/B:

Current:	Proposed:
<p><b>COURSE DESCRIPTION</b>                      The second practicum emphasizes students learning in the field about themselves and social work practice through: developing critical self-reflexivity in working with people and transformative activities; engaging in anti-oppressive support and change processes; understanding links between policy, research and practice and how these are influenced by social, economic, political and organizational contexts; understanding professional roles and values and ethics of social work. Students are in field placement <b>three</b> days a week for two semesters.</p> <p>Weekly Contact: Lab <b>21</b> hrs                      GPA Weight: 2.00                      Course Count: 2.0</p> <p>Billing Units: 2/2</p> <p><i>Co-requisite: SWP 50A/B, Pre-requisites: All 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semester required courses.</i></p>	<p><b>COURSE DESCRIPTION</b>                      The second practicum emphasizes students learning in the field about themselves and social work practice through: developing critical self-reflexivity in working with people and transformative activities; engaging in anti-oppressive support and change processes; understanding links between policy, research and practice and how these are influenced by social, economic, political and organizational contexts; understanding professional roles and values and ethics of social work. Students are in field placement <b>two</b> days a week for two semesters.</p> <p>Weekly Contact: Lab <b>15.17</b> hrs                      GPA Weight: 2.00                      Course Count: 2.0</p> <p>Billing Units: 2/2</p> <p><i>Co-requisite: SWP 50A/B, Pre-requisites: All 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semester required courses.</i></p>

Having satisfied itself of the merit of this proposal, the Academic Standards Committee recommends: *That Senate approve the changes to the Field Placement hours in the School of Social work.*

**B. DOUBLE MAJORS – Assignment of the Honours Bachelor degree designation**

This proposal seeks to grant the Honours Bachelor degree designation to all existing and future Ryerson Double Majors, commencing in Fall 2020, that meet the following criteria:

1. Each individual major within the proposed double major has met the Quality Assurance standards for a Bachelor Degree: Honours.
2. The existing/proposed double major has been reviewed and approved by the required governance bodies, including Department/School/Faculty council, Academic Standards Committee, and Senate.

Currently, Ryerson offers three Double Majors within the Faculty of Arts (Senate approved November 3, 2015), as follows:

- Double Major in English and History
- Double Major in English and Philosophy
- Double Major in History and Philosophy

Moreover, on November 5, 2019, Senate approved an additional 6 Double Majors to be implemented in Fall 2020:

- Double Major in History and Sociology
- Double Major in History and Politics & Governance
- Double Major in History and Criminology
- Double Major in Sociology and Politics & Governance
- Double Major in Sociology and Criminology
- Double Major in Criminology and Politics & Governance

Double Majors are highly valued by many students who wish to broaden their scope of study, and are found in many university institutions. A review of Ontario universities shows that, while terminology varies slightly (Double Major, Combined Honours, Joint Major, Joint Honours), a number of institutions offer the option of a double major for Honours Bachelor degrees. Most institutions list popular combinations, but allow students to “design” their own Honours Bachelor degrees by choosing majors within and across faculties and departments. The pairings usually require approval from both programs. The table below provides examples of the models used by several Ontario institutions for double majors in Honours Bachelor degrees.

**Table 1: Honours Double Majors offered by Ontario Institutions**

Carleton University, Combined Honours (Double Major)	A combined honours (or double major) is simply two majors completed in one degree. Due to the nature of program requirements, some programs are not available for combined honours. Examples of combined honours include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined Honours in Economics and Journalism</li> <li>• Combined Honours in Economics and Global Politics</li> </ul>
Lakehead University, Combined Honours (Double Major)	Students are able to take a double major for both a baccalaureate and honours baccalaureate degree. When the double major is a part of an honours baccalaureate degree, it is referred to as a combined honours program. Combined honours programs are available across a range of departments, but must be determined in consultation with the respective departments. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honours Bachelor of Arts (Philosophy and English)</li> <li>• Honours Bachelor of Arts (Gerontology and Psychology)</li> <li>• Honours Bachelor of Arts (Political Science and Women’s Studies)</li> </ul>
Nipissing University, Double-Major	A double major option is available within a Bachelor (Honours) degree. Students complete 39 credits in each major, plus a required number of electives. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honours BA, Art History and Visual Studies</li> <li>• Honours BA, History and Geography</li> <li>• Honours BSc, Biology and Chemistry</li> </ul>
Western University, Double Major	An Honors Bachelor Degree (Four-Year) must include at least an honors specialization or a double major. Western refers to these options as “modules”. Examples of possible double majors include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors Bachelor of Science, Biology and Chemistry</li> <li>• Honors Bachelor of Arts, Sociology and Criminology</li> <li>• Honors Bachelor of Arts, History and Jewish Studies</li> <li>• Honors Bachelor of Arts, Democratic Governance and Global Justice</li> </ul>
York University, Double Major	An Honours BA program may be pursued jointly with approved Honours Double Major degree programs in the Faculties of Environmental Studies, Health, Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, or Science, the School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design, or the Lassonde School of Engineering. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honours Bachelor of Science, Chemistry and Kinesiology and Health Sciences</li> <li>• Honours BA, History and European Studies</li> <li>• Bachelor of Disaster &amp; Emergency Management Honours Double Major</li> </ul>

Having satisfied itself of the merit of this proposal, the Academic Standards Committee recommends: *That Senate approve the assignment of the Honours Bachelor degree designation for Double Majors.*

## **C. PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW – B.A. English (Hons) Program, Faculty of Arts**

### **FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT (FAR)**

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the undergraduate **English** program. The report identifies the significant strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The Implementation Plan identifies who will be responsible for leading the implementation of the recommendations; who will be responsible for approving and providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

### **A) SUMMARY OF THE PERIODIC PROGRAM REVIEW OF THE ENGLISH PROGRAM**

The English program submitted a self-study report to the Vice-Provost Academic on November 8, 2019. The self-study presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the program, and program data including the data collected from student and alumni surveys along with the standard University Planning data tables. Appended were the course outlines for all core required and elective courses in the program and the CVs for all faculty members in the department.

Two arm's-length external reviewers (Dr. Kathryn Carter, Associate Vice-President, Teaching and Learning, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Dr. Linda Warley, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Faculty of Arts and Associate Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, University of Waterloo) were appointed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts from a set of proposed reviewers. They reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit at Ryerson University on March 14-15, 2019.

The visit included meetings with the Provost and Vice-President Academic; the Vice-Provost Academic; the Dean and the Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts; the Undergraduate Program Director and the Chair, Department of English; and the Chief Librarian. The PRT also met with several faculty and staff members of the department, as well as students and alumni. A general tour of the campus was provided, including the new Student Learning Centre, various classrooms where English courses are typically held, the Library, the Centre for Digital Humanities, the *White Wall Review* office, and the Provost's office.

In their report, dated April 8, 2019, the Peer Review Team (PRT) provided feedback that describes how the English program meets the IQAP evaluation criteria and is consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities. The Peer Review Team (PRT) indicated the current program is innovative and thriving but that there are several opportunities for development and enhancement. There are particular opportunities for the English BA (Hons) program to become the most experiential English program in the country. The intake of students has exceeded initial forecasts and continues to grow whereas enrolments in English BA programs at many other Ontario universities have either slipped or plateaued. The program is rigorous and intellectually challenging while also offering plenty of opportunities for creative and practical experience. Students both present and past expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program and were palpably aware of the mentorship provided by both faculty and staff. The department is notably collegial and members are passionate about what they offer to students.

The main areas of strength identified by the PRT include:

- Career ready skills are embedded in the curriculum and explicitly taught inside and outside of the classroom;
- Undergraduate student research opportunities;
- A transnational approach to English.

The PRT also identified areas for enhancement, specifically:

- there seem to be institutional barriers to taking double majors or a major in English with a minor in a non-Arts Faculty program;
- more streams or concentrations in areas such as creative writing, professional writing, digital media, publishing, etc.;
- course work develops students' writing skills, and in some cases digital literacies, but not necessarily their oral communication or team-building skills;
- more experiential learning opportunities could be developed through a systematic approach to integrating study and work, either paid, as in co op, or volunteer, as in internships;
- a more strategic use of the Professional Advisory Council.
- a more centralized approach to community-engaged opportunities.

The Undergraduate Program Director and Chair of the English program submitted a response to the PRT Report on May 7, 2019. The response to both the PRT Report and the Program's Response was submitted by the Dean of Arts on November 7, 2019.

The Academic Standards Committee completed its assessment of the English Program Review on December 5, 2019. The Committee indicated that a thorough, analytical and self-critical program review was conducted. The School integrated into the developmental plan feedback from students, alumni, and peer reviewers, and outlined a comprehensive plan for program enhancements moving forward.

The Academic Standards Committee recommends that the program continues, as well as provide a one-year follow-up report, as follows:

The one-year follow-up report, **due June 30, 2021** is to include:

1. A report on the status of the initiatives outlined in the Developmental Plan;
2. A report on number and programs of students completing English minors, as well as, number and program of minors completed by English majors.

Presented to Senate for Approval: **January 28, 2020**

Start date of next Periodic Program Review: **2023-24**

## **B) SUMMARY OF THE REVIEWERS' RECOMMENDATIONS WITH THE PROGRAM'S AND DEAN'S RESPONSES**

### **RECOMMENDATION 1.**

**Align first year offerings with student expectations (more hands on opportunities in first year).**

**Department Response:** The English BA (Hons) program agrees with the PRT's directive. The core areas of instruction in the first-year are composed in part by Faculty of Arts Common Platform courses, including SSH 205 (Academic Writing and Research), a course taught by contract instructors and housed in the English Department, which introduces students to academic writing, citation, and argumentation, and SSH 105 (Critical Thinking I), a course taught by faculty from the Philosophy Department, which is designed to introduce students to forms of thinking relevant to the Humanities and Social Sciences in the Faculty of Arts. Both courses are conceived as foundational for students entering any program in the Faculty of Arts. By making the Common Platform available in the first year, students develop transferable skills that enable them to explore various disciplines and to flexibly change majors within Arts programs. Undeclared majors, likewise, are readily able to apply to any program in Arts in the second year with this preparation in the basic practices essential to the Humanities and Social Sciences.

One course, however, that does not fit well for English majors in the Arts Common Platform is SSH 301 (Research Design and Qualitative Methods), a required second-year offering taught by faculty in Sociology. The perception

of the course by students is that it is confusing and not a necessary component of their education since there are no other opportunities in their major to apply such qualitative methodologies. While students in our program who wish to take other courses in Sociology may benefit from SSH 301, the majority of those in the English major have no need of the course and have no opportunities to apply any of the skills they may learn in it. We feel that students should be able to self-select. If they are thinking about moving from English to the social sciences, they can take SSH 301 in the second-year slot. If not, there's no reason not to take it later in their program, or not at all. Therefore, we would like to take away the requirement for SSH 301 and see it designated, for our students, as a professionally-related elective. Moving SSH 301 to a Table IV elective would increase student choice and give them options to decide whether or not the course is something they need.

In response to the PRT's concern that first-year students in English do not have many opportunities to connect with courses that excited them about the degree in the first place, we would like to see Table 1 allow students the option for another English course. ENG 222 (Fairytale and Fantasies) and ENG 224 (Children's Literature) would be good options. Additionally, a proposed course, ENG 230 (Creativity, Writing, and Everyday Life), could be offered beginning in fall 2020. While this course is taught as a traditional, large-format lecture, experiential opportunities can be easily woven into the assignment structure. Similarly, experiential assignments can be developed for ENG 110 (Literatures Across Borders) as a way to introduce English students to the experiential possibilities they will encounter going forward with their degree. The issue of opening up Table 1 will require conversations with the Associate Dean, and will require discussion with other departments in the Faculty of Arts.

The intent of the Common Platform could be enhanced, finally, by more faculty oversight and coordination to define and shape the goals and agenda for first-year students in English and in other Faculty of Arts programs. One way to do this would be to hire faculty trained in Writing Program Administration to oversee and coordinate contract faculty and to develop a curriculum in line with current research in Composition methodologies. Such a role would effectively define a culture of writing and critical thinking for students in the Faculty of Arts and help students prepare for the diversity of writing situations they encounter in programs throughout Arts. A writing specialist would also provide rationale and curriculum oversight that could excite English students in the first year with writing as a part of their academic trajectory through the English BA (Hons) program.

**Dean's Response:** The role of SSH 301 in the Common Platform merits more consideration in the context of the PRT/Departmental response. As a qualitative methods course, SSH 301 should ideally provide students with core competencies in critically examining research claims, an antidote to the common argument: "Studies show...", often used to support spurious theories. Students learn here to read statistics and develop their critical numeracy skills, but the course is not a quantitative methods course per se. SSH 301 is not just intended to teach students methods in social science research; it also teaches students to read research critically, to consider the implications of ethics reviews, to analyze statistics effectively, to reflect on what conclusions can logically be drawn from such studies. The ethical implications of working with human subjects, with carrying out surveys and interviews, are also taught in this course, which recently, in some sections, has taken on an Indigenous focus. Greater clarity could result if the instructors themselves outlined the importance of the core competencies. If the learning objectives of the course are unclear, then this issue must be addressed.

The Common Platform was developed to allow students in first year to explore their options while maximizing transferability, given that a significant number of students in first year often change their major once they have entered university. All but two of the programs in the Faculty of Arts are part of the Common Platform and even they contain most elements of it. The Common Platform is under the purview of the Dean of Arts and can be changed only with the agreement of the Dean's Council, composed of the Faculty of Arts Program Chairs. Adding courses to Table I is generally uncontroversial. The SSH courses, intended to teach core competencies of value to all students, are taught by different departments, but any changes made to their role in the Common Platform must be reviewed by Dean's Council as well. Since other students in the Humanities also take SSH 301, removing that course from the English curriculum would also affect transferability to other Humanities programs, not just Social Science programs, although this is somewhat mitigated by its placement in second year. Changes to the curricular role of any of the SSH courses would have resource implications for the teaching department, which would have to be consulted.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2.**

**Reconsider how and when students can fulfil Common Arts Platform requirements, particularly the SSH courses. Cohort building is crucial and breadth requirements can be met in different and more relevant ways.**

*Department Response:* Please see response to Recommendation 1 above.

*Dean's Response:* In speaking to Recommendation 2, the comment regarding "breadth requirements" does not reflect a clear understanding of the Common Platform. At Ryerson University, students apply directly to their major rather than declaring a major in the second half of the first year, as is the case at the University of Toronto and Waterloo University. (This is somewhat mitigated in the Faculty of Arts at Ryerson by the existence of the Undeclared Arts major, which allows students to explore options in first year.) Yet, we know that students often change their undergraduate majors. In the Arts Common Platform, the range of Social Sciences and Humanities electives and the grounding offered by the required SSH courses ensure that students have maximal opportunities to transfer from one major to another and that they have the tools they need to succeed in their studies. The SSH courses are not offered to provide "breadth" but rather to teach core competencies that will assist students in their university studies and beyond.

## **RECOMMENDATION 3.**

**Develop the profile of the department as the most experiential learning of any English program in Canada in collaboration with the Co-op office and in alignment with Social Venture Zone and the Ashoka accreditation. Capitalize on Ryerson's location in Toronto, which is arguably the centre of Canada's cultural industries.**

*Department Response:* The English BA (Hons) program acknowledges experiential learning as a priority for the Department, and strongly recommends the appointment of one full- or half-time administrative position to facilitate the Department's experiential learning opportunities.

The initial Proposal for the BA English of May 2010 requested three administrative roles, to be held by faculty: an Undergraduate Program Director, an Academic Advisor, and an Experiential Learning Coordinator. The Experiential Learning Coordinator role has never been filled. While a faculty position in this administrative area would fulfill the task of industry liaison and initiate opportunities for students to connect to industry beyond the university, we believe that a part-time staff member could best coordinate with the Co-op office, the Social Venture Zone, and other programs and institutes to ensure students are connected to experiential opportunities throughout Ryerson and the greater GTA. We currently have a part-time administrative position appointed to the Literatures of Modernity MA Program. An additional half-time appointment of an Experiential Learning Coordinator would help students interface with greater experiential opportunities in the business sector while also keeping data on student opportunities and skills connections. We will prepare a plan based on discussions and share creative opportunities already extant in the program.

*Dean's Response:* Experiential learning has been part of Ryerson University's mandate since its inception and has always been an integral part of the Faculty of Arts curriculum and teaching practice. As part of our Student Experience Team, we have an expert in community-engaged learning and teaching (CELT), Dr. Reena Tandon, who works with individual faculty members, including those in the English Department, to incorporate experiential learning into their classes. The Faculty of Arts also works closely with the Career and Co-operative Education Centre, particularly the Arts representative, Nikki Waheed. Although the Faculty of Arts is no longer aligned with the Social Ventures zone, students are encouraged to participate in zone learning at any one of the ten zones at Ryerson, according to their interests. The Faculty of Arts is currently working with the Career and Co-operative Education centre to create co-ops in the Faculty of Arts. We anticipate launching a certain number of co-operative programs by Fall 2021.

The request for a part-time staff member to act as Experiential Learning Coordinator has significant resource implications and as such will require the Dean of Art's full consideration. It must be remembered that while some staff members in the Faculty of Arts do have responsibility for internships at the graduate or undergraduate level, this is generally for programs that have mandatory internships with significant enrolment numbers. It is clear that the Faculty of Arts will need to reflect on the best way to support experiential learning, including job-shadowing, internships, placements and co-operative education, while collaborating with the appropriate units on campus such as the Career Centre. The Faculty of Arts is determined to offer robust opportunities for students to participate in

experiential learning of all kinds, despite the financial constraints we currently face. Nonetheless, these measures do have resource implications and require a careful cost-benefit analysis.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 4.**

##### **Preserve small class sizes for writing intensive and practicum courses (cap at 25).**

*Department Response:* Each year, the Department Chair successfully preserves current caps (25 students) in our second-year experiential courses. We are concerned that the University's move to Open Electives for students may put pressure on our ability to serve our BA in popular courses like ENG 306 (Writing Poetry) and ENG 307 (Writing Fiction). If students from other departments are allowed to compete for our experiential courses, we may find difficulties ensuring English BA students are able to access required experiential courses in the second year. There is also the threat of those courses losing their relatively small caps of 25 if students across the university are allowed to register. Core experiential courses should continue to be protected for our students. Those courses include: ENG 304, ENG 306, ENG 307, ENG 302, ENG 340, ENG 390, and ENG 910.

*Dean's Response:* The PRT and the Department both agree on the importance of small class sizes for writing intensive courses and for practicum courses. As mentioned above, the Faculty of Arts has traditionally defended the use of small classes where they are pedagogically appropriate; for example, for seminars, creative writing and language courses. It should, however, be noted that small class sizes should be compensated by larger class sizes, where this is appropriate (particularly in Liberal Studies), to offset the extra cost.

The Faculty of Arts departments have all participated in the first phase of the transition to Open Electives. It is possible for Departments to exclude certain courses from the Open Elective category by restricting those courses to their own students. The English department has chosen to do this for its practicum courses, which are only available to students in English, BACS English Option and the English double majors. It is important to maintain a balance between student demand and available resources but this critical issue is always part of the discussion between the Departments and the Dean of Arts Office when course offerings are determined each year.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 5.**

##### **Engage in assessment mapping with the support of the Learning and Teaching Office.**

*Department Response:* Faculty recognize the need for diverse assessment methods to help students achieve the goals and outcomes outlined in our Course Information Documents (CIDs) and mapped according to Ontario's Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UDLEs). We acknowledge the PRT's suggestion to adjust assignment structures to fit currently mapped courses while also responding to increasingly large class sizes. In order to respond effectively to this suggestion, the Department will discuss assessment methods to share ideas and to increase perspectives among faculty. Since many Department members currently use diverse assessment methods, we will be able to enhance the current assessment ladder across the four-year curriculum leading students through elements of critical thinking and research (years 1 and 2), experiential applications of learning (year 2 and 3), and academic writing and critical analysis (years 3 and 4). The Undergraduate Program Committee (UPC), in alignment with advice from the Learning and Teaching Office, will review CIDs in fall 2019 to determine how assessment scaffolding might enhance student learning while increasing faculty flexibility for evaluation and student feedback in large lectures courses.

*Dean's Response:* The PRT, the Department and the Dean of Arts Office are all in agreement regarding this recommendation. Assessment mapping should be carried out regularly by all programs. This is an excellent idea and the timeline is perfectly feasible.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 6.**

##### **Keep metrics about community-engaged learning and other experiential opportunities for students.**

*Department Response:* The duties of an Experiential Learning Coordinator will include tracking community-engaged learning and other experiential learning opportunities for students. See recommendation 4 above.

*Dean's Response:* The Dean of Arts Office supports the principle of recording metrics for community-engaged learning throughout the Faculty of Arts departments. The CELT coordinator does keep records and produces a regular newsletter on CELT activities. Recently, as part of the university-wide Career-Ready MAESD initiative, the Faculty of Arts produced an Experiential Learning Inventory, which has been reviewed by the Dean of Arts and



the Experiential Learning Director Anita Abraham. The Faculty of Arts Experiential Learning Working Group, which includes members from all departments, will follow up on this in Fall 2019 but we intend to maintain a faculty-wide inventory in future to support all departments and allow us to share ideas.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 7.**

##### **Get better data on retention rates and why students leave the program.**

*Department Response:* We will coordinate with UPO analysts to obtain more detailed information. While we track students who leave the program, the Department has not coordinated directly with UPO analysts to analyze long-term trends. Current data from the UPO indicates that our retention rates are on par with other Arts programs, though retention is low when compared to the University as a whole. Our sense is that current attrition is not a major concern. Unlike career-specific degrees like Engineering or Business, Arts attracts students with diverse interests and curiosities in Humanities and Social Sciences, and Arts makes it easy for students to explore diverse department pedagogies. Arts, moreover, encourages student choice within the Faculty, which means students can easily change majors. Annual discussions with UPO analysts will provide us with more exact information regarding retention rates, allowing us to better understand student movements between departments and across the university.

*Dean's Response:* The Department agrees with the PRT that it should obtain and maintain better data on retention rates, in collaboration with the UPO. Although the retention rate for the Department is on par with other programs in the Faculty of Arts, it is not as strong as in other programs across campus, especially those with a well-defined career focus such as Engineering. The Department is no doubt correct in attributing this to the wide-ranging interests of students in the Humanities and Social Sciences. It is a useful exercise to study why students choose to leave or stay in their programs, since without it we have only speculation to draw on. If there are factors that affect retention, this would be useful information to improve the program.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 8.**

##### ***If the double-major programs are a priority, make sure that advising processes are streamlined for the students.***

*Department Response:* Double Majors in the Faculty of Arts are relatively new. We anticipate a growing number of applicants in coming years. At the moment, it is up to the home program to act as the administrative liaison for students in the Double Majors, but there is no central Double Major administrator to coordinate with students or to track trends between programs affected by the Double Major. We encourage the development of a Faculty of Arts Double Majors Director to oversee Double Majors and to give direction regarding the administration of these programs. The current system is not built to track the Double Major, so current Department Administrators in the home programs do so manually. As the number of students in the Double Majors increase, their experience will become increasingly difficult to track.

*Dean's Response:* The Dean of Arts Office supports the development of double majors as part of student choice. However, it is not clear that a Double Majors Director position is the most effective way to manage the students' navigation of majors. Furthermore, the Department does not indicate if this position would receive compensation of any kind. Given the collaborative nature of double majors, it might be more effective to have a multi-department curriculum committee to address such concerns. Ideally, the UPDs would be involved since they are primarily responsible for student advising. This is a matter that merits examination by the Dean's Council and the programs involved in double majors. Whether or not a Double Majors Director position is needed may also depend on the size of the double major cohort. So far, the English double majors with Philosophy and History have fewer than 20 students each but we recognize that this should grow over time.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 9.**

##### **Connect with and engage alumni. The department could build stronger relationships with its alumni, who are the program's best ambassadors. Alumni could be brought back to campus to speak to current students about their career pathways after graduation.**

*Department Response:* The Department acknowledges the importance of Alumni connections for the enhancement of student life in the program. To that end, we have supported this year an initiative by current and former students to form an Alumni Association. While Ryerson's Alumni Office establishes strict guidelines to manage how departments contact former students, we look forward to coordinating future events that feature Alumni. Hearing

about the experiences of Alumni would be valuable for current students, helping them understand the value of the hands-on preparation of the degree and showing them how Ryerson prepares and supports students beyond the BA. An Alumni event for current students could be planned for the fall, combining guest alumni speakers with more informal opportunities for students to interact.

The Department also acknowledges the importance of coordinating events with alumni and our Program Advisory Council. As a volunteer group of professionals in the community, the PAC advises the program on matters of curriculum, program review, and trends in the workplace. Alumni inclusion on the PAC would synthesize first-hand experience and knowledge of the Program with an understanding of diverse professional skills and opportunities required to succeed in the workplace. To that end, the SLC will meet in fall 2019 to discuss ways of better aligning former students within the PAC.

**Dean's Response:** The Department and the PRT agree on the importance of engaging alumni in various ways. The Dean of Arts Office applauds this initiative. The inclusion of alumni on the Program Advisory Council will be especially effective. Encouraging the alumni to provide mentorship to students and advice on the program's development is a worthwhile enterprise.

### **RECOMMENDATION 10.**

#### **Fund an Arts specific Digital Media Lab where faculty can teach digital competencies.**

**Department Response:** While the Ryerson Library Digital Media Experience Lab provides equipment and support to students university-wide on an as-needed basis, designated equipment and space would enhance our ability to serve students' needs. Digital literacy requires a dynamic, mobile, interactive environment that includes movable tables, chairs, and devices, spaces for critical making, and white boards for project modeling. The space should be inspirational and spacious in its layout and design, encouraging collaboration in creative and critical work. Ideally, it would be situated in the library, facilitating students' interaction between experiential, print, and online ways of knowing, discovering, creating, and sharing. At a Digital Media Lab, students learn experientially how to navigate and contribute ethically, responsibly, and critically to a media economy.

A digital media lab, specific to Arts/English, would require the following:

1. Movable tables for group work and movable chairs;
2. Multiple outlets, on floors and walls to accommodate tables/groups;
3. A collection of fully loaded laptops and tablets for use at each table;
4. Whiteboards, supported with post-it notes and markers for project modeling;
5. A large screen for demonstrations and displays;
6. A ceiling-mounted digital projector;
7. A movable (not fixed) computer podium;
8. A "maker space" bench on one wall with multiple outlets, scanner, and printer;
9. High-speed internet connections;
10. Card access system;
11. Some storage.

**Dean's Response:** While the Dean of Arts office recognizes the limits of the Digital Media Experience Lab, which serves a very large number of students across campus and may well be at capacity or beyond, we note the considerable expense involved in the requirements specified in the Department's response to the PRT report. In addition, if this were to be a lab available to all programs in the Humanities, discussions with the Dean's Council would be necessary so that the lab would meet the various program needs. As the lab would also presumably be used as a classroom, scheduling would have to be discussed. These considerations, however, do not rule out the possibility of creating such a Digital Media Lab, which could be of great benefit to our students and faculty. There may even be possibilities of fundraising and naming opportunities.

### **RECOMMENDATION 11.**

#### **Fund a year-end showcase of student work.**

**Department Response:** The Student Life Committee will coordinate with instructors who have appropriate final projects for the creation of a showcase. The committee will look into the feasibility of formalizing an event with the Dean of Arts in conjunction with the year-end Arts party.

The SLC also will increase attention to ARTeries, an annual liberal arts undergraduate research conference sponsored by the Faculty of Arts. While English students this year and in the past have participated in the conference, we could do more to promote it to students and faculty as a way to highlight BA research and writing in English.

Other opportunities for student showcases will continue via student participation in the publishing and editing of the White Wall Review, the Department's literary journal. Besides opportunities to participate in the publishing of the journal, the annual launch of WWR provides a showcase for student literary contributions and creates a space for larger public displays of work shared between our students and the larger literary community of Toronto.

**Dean's Response:** The PRT, the Department and the Dean of Arts Office are all in agreement regarding the benefits of a year-end showcase of undergraduate student work. Such a showcase would bring more attention to the annual ARTeries conference and the White Wall Review. Obviously, this is not a revenue neutral proposal and, if extended to the entire Faculty of Arts, would require discussion and a detailed budget.

## **RECOMMENDATION 12.**

**Make more strategic use of the Professional Advisory Council. Currently the PAC operates in a consultative capacity but there are no regularly scheduled meetings, clear agenda items for discussion, or process for membership renewal. The PAC could be deployed in developing experiential learning opportunities. Alumni from the English BA (Hons) could serve on the PAC.**

**Department Response:** The Department acknowledges the importance of the Professional Advisory Council for the benefit of students and for the enhancement of the English BA as the "most experiential English program in the country." In addition to inviting Alumni to participate on the Council (see response to recommendation 9), the 2019-2020 Undergraduate Program Committee will organize an annual event with PAC members, faculty, and students. Such an event could take place as an annual luncheon, or some other informal opportunity for students and professionals to interact.

One way to increase the effectiveness of the PAC is to limit terms to three years, thereby ensuring that new members are able to bring diverse career expertise to the Council. Effective development and management of the PAC ideally would be facilitated by the Experiential Learning Coordinator (see recommendation 3 above).

**Dean's Response:** The PRT, the Department and the Dean of Arts Office are all in agreement regarding the potential to engage the PAC more fully, to have it meet on a regular basis, to renew membership, to include more alumni. The Department's decision to limit terms to three years makes perfect sense. The Department's suggestion that the proposed Experiential Learning Coordinator could direct its engagement with the PAC needs careful consideration. It is not clear that the Department needs extra staff to develop and manage the PAC, given limited resources and financial constraints.

## **C) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

<b>Recommendation #1:</b> Provide innovative and academically challenging experiences for our students – develop Internship program (Priority – High)
<b>Rationale:</b> It is vital for the Department to establish a feasible Internship (or Co-op) Program. Having an Internship Program is in line with the University's mandate to provide students with career-ready skills and responds directly to overwhelming student support for such a program. Additionally, an Internship Program will help the BA English (Hons) maintain its distinct identity as a leader in innovative literary studies and help the Program to participate in city-building and community collaboration. Internships will also help students better understand the link between the skills that they develop in the Program and possible career-fields.
<b>Implementation Actions and Timeline:</b> The Curriculum Committee will begin investigations into the feasibility of an Internship Program in the 2018 – 2019 academic year. These investigations will take into consideration student preference for an internship model in which both students and the Department find Internship opportunities. The Curriculum Committee will bring a progress report, as well as plans for next steps, to the Year End Faculty Retreat at the end of term 2019. The Department aims to have an Internship program in place by the 2020-2021 academic year.

**Responsibility for****a) leading initiative:** Curriculum Committee, UPD, Chair**b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** Faculty Dean**Recommendation #2:** Provide innovative and academically challenging experiences for our students - Better integrate career-ready skills across the curriculum (Priority – High)**Rationale:** The results of both the NSSE and Exit Survey show a disconnect between the skills that the Program aims to develop and students' understanding of how these skills translate to the job market. Students' consistent request for more career-related instruction reveals that the Program cannot rely only on the Practicum suite of electives, the Advanced English Research Methodologies, and the Independent Project courses as a means of highlighting connections between literary study and career skills. The Program must make these links explicit for students on an ongoing basis throughout their time in the Program.**Implementation Actions:**

- a.) Encourage instructors to include an assignment, such as a reflection piece, that encourages students to make connections between course material and career-ready skills;
- b.) Make better use of the services offered by the Career Centre to help train students in how to make these connections within our courses; and
- c.) Explore the possibility of introducing more explicit industry-related courses in the curriculum.

**Timeline:** Instructors will be encouraged to include career-ready assignments and work with the Career Centre in the 2018 – 2019 academic year. The Curriculum Committee will consider the possibility of introducing more explicit industry-related courses as part of its ongoing work in curriculum development. The Curriculum Committee will report on its progress in this area, and establish next steps, at the Year-End Faculty Retreat, 2019.**Responsibility for****a) leading initiative:** Curriculum Committee, UPD, Chair**b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** Faculty Dean**Recommendation #3:** Provide innovative and academically challenging experiences for our students - Develop Concentrations (Priority – Medium)**Rationale:** Developing Concentrations for the BA English (Hons) provides opportunities to build on current strengths in the Program and areas of student interest.**Implementation Actions:** The Department (whenever possible, in conjunction with other faculties and programs across the University) will prioritize developing Concentrations in areas such as: Creative Writing and Publishing; Literature and Social Justice; Digital Humanities and New Media; and, Drama and Performance Studies.**Timeline:** The Curriculum Committee will begin the process of exploring the feasibility of, and models for, the concentrations listed above in the 2018 – 2019 academic year. The Department will aim to offer at least one new concentration in the 2021-2022 calendar.**Responsibility for****a) leading initiative:** Curriculum Committee, UPD, Chair**b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** Faculty Dean**Recommendation #4:** Provide innovative and academically challenging experiences for our students - Expand creative writing offerings (Priority – High)**Rationale:** As of Fall 2017, ENG 306: Practicum: Forms of Creative Writing, has only been delivered as a poetry course.**Implementation Actions:** The Department will create two Creative Writing Practicum courses, one for fiction and one for poetry. The Department will also explore the possibility of adding scriptwriting and playwriting to its course offerings.**Timeline:** The Curriculum Committee will bring a motion to create the two Creative Writing Practicum courses, one in poetry and one in fiction, at a Department Council in the 2018 – 2019 academic year with an aim to have

the courses included in the 2019 – 2020 Undergraduate Calendar. The Curriculum Committee will explore the possibility of adding scriptwriting and playwriting to its offerings beginning in the 2018 – 2019 academic year as part of its ongoing work in curriculum development. The Curriculum Committee will update the Department on progress in this matter and next steps at the 2019 Year End Faculty Retreat.

**Responsibility for**

a) **leading initiative:** Curriculum Committee, UPD, Chair

b) **approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** Faculty Dean

**Recommendation #5:** Strengthen SRC excellence in the Department - Review Research Courses in Curriculum (Priority – High)

**Rationale:** The Department will re-evaluate the research-focussed courses in the curriculum to determine whether they provide an effective and logical progression of research skills.

**Implementation Actions:** This evaluation will consider whether ENG 810 should be returned to Year 3 of the Program and whether ENG 810 should be preceded by an Introductory Research Course. The Department will change the mode of delivery for ENG 810 from a “lecture” to a “lab” to better describe the work that is conducted in that course. As more than half the students found that they used the skills in SSH 301 “very little” or “not at all” during their time in the Program, and 25% of respondents who gave suggestions of a course that could be removed from the curriculum identified SSH 301 as such a course, the Department will support any efforts to make SSH 301 an elective course in the curriculum.

**Timeline:** In the 2018 – 2019 academic year, the Department will review Intended Learning Objectives for ENG 810 against Intended Learning Objectives in ENG 110 and ENG 208 to identify gaps in the graduated learning structure and propose means to address these gaps. The Curriculum Committee will report on its findings and plans for next steps at the Faculty Year End Retreat in 2019. The Curriculum Committee will make a motion to change ENG 810 from a “lecture” to a “lab” at a Department Council in the 2018 – 2019 academic year, with an aim to have the change noted in the 2020 Undergraduate Calendar.

**Responsibility for**

a) **leading initiative:** Curriculum Committee, UPD, Chair

b) **approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** Faculty Dean

**Recommendation #6:** Strengthen SRC excellence in the Department – Request for hires (Priority – High)

**Rationale:** The BA English (Hons) Program has not received the full faculty staffing as costed for by the University in the original BA Proposal that was passed by Senate in 2010. A full and diversified faculty complement is integral to the Department’s ability to deliver the Program in a cost-effective manner, maintain SRC excellence, and meet the equity, diversity, and inclusion priorities set out in the University and Faculty’s Academic Plans. Increasing the Faculty complement will also help reduce the student-to-Faculty ratio in the Department.

**Implementation Actions:** The Department will prioritize requesting hires in the following fields in the next three hiring cycles: *Indigenous Literatures*; *Gender Studies*; and *Victorian Literature*.

**Timeline:** The DHC will request three hires, one in Indigenous Literatures, one in Gender Studies, and the other in Victorian in the 2018 -2019 academic year with an aim to have at least one new faculty member in place for the 2019-2020 academic year. The DHC will continue to request hires in these areas each academic year until the positions are filled.

**Responsibility for**

a) **leading initiative:** Chair, DHC

b) **approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:** Faculty Dean, VPFA, UPO

**Recommendation #7:** Better prepare students for future graduate and career opportunities - Integrate the Program Advisory Council more Directly into Student Life and Learning (Priority – High)

<b>Rationale:</b> The Department will refresh membership in the PAC, particularly with an aim to include alumni, as alumni may be highly invested in the development of our students. The Department will foster more connections with the PAC and more directly integrate them into the life of the Department.
<b>Implementation Actions:</b> The Student Life Committee will identify appropriate alumni and invite them to become members of the PAC beginning in the summer of 2020 with an aim to have a new PAC on board by the 2020 – 2021 academic year. Student Life will host a “brainstorming” session in August or September 2018 with the PAC to determine the direction of the PAC for the year. The Student Life Committee will report on progress in this area at the 2019 Year End Faculty Retreat.
<b>Timeline:</b> 2020-2021
<b>Responsibility for</b> a) <b>leading initiative:</b> SLC, UPD b) <b>approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:</b> Faculty Dean

<b>Recommendation #8:</b> Better prepare students for future graduate and career opportunities - Integrate Career Consultant Services into Coursework (Priority – High)
<b>Rationale:</b> The Faculty of Arts Career Consultant has offered to provide classroom sessions that show students in English how to make links between the skills that they develop in their studies and industry needs. The Department will explore the best means of providing these sessions to students and integrate them into student life and/or course instruction.
<b>Implementation Actions:</b> The Department will invite Nikki Waheed, Career Consultant to a Department Meeting to describe the services that she provides in Fall 2018. Individual instructors, along with the Student Life Committee and the Curriculum Committee, will work with Nikki Waheed to develop and deliver appropriate training to students throughout the academic year. Instructors and the Student Life and Curriculum Committees will report on their progress in these areas and develop next steps at the End of Year Faculty retreat 2019.
<b>Timeline:</b> 2019-2020
<b>Responsibility for</b> a) <b>leading initiative:</b> UPD and Chair b) <b>approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:</b> Faculty Dean

<b>Priority Recommendation #9:</b> Attract and retain high-quality students (national and international) - Work with Admissions and Recruitment to Develop High-Quality Marketing Materials and Events and Social Media Connections (Priority – Medium)
<b>Rationale:</b> The Department will continue to work with Admissions and Recruitment to develop new and innovative ways of attracting high-quality students to the Program. The Department will utilize social media to draw greater attention to the Program. The Department will seek to maximize its outreach in new and innovative ways.
<b>Implementation Actions and Timeline:</b> The Department will hire a Social Media Coordinator to maintain and expand its social media outreach. The Social Media Coordinator will review the Department’s social media use and make recommendations for improvement in the summer of 2019 to the Web Committee. The Student Life Committee will explore and work on opportunities for marketing with Admissions and Recruitment on an ongoing basis. The Student Life Committee will develop a new pamphlet for the Program to be available by for Winter 2019.
<b>Responsibility for</b> a) <b>leading initiative:</b> UPD and Student Life Committee (SLC) b) <b>approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:</b> Faculty Dean

<b>Priority Recommendation #10:</b> Attract and retain high-quality students (national and international) - Rebuild the Department Website (Priority – Medium)
<b>Rationale:</b> The Department will update/rebuild its website to make it more attractive, to showcase the unique aspects of the Program, and to make it easier to navigate.

<b>Implementation Actions:</b> Conduct review. Submit required changes to web developer.
<b>Timeline:</b> The Website Committee will conduct a review of the website and identify areas of improvement during the summer 2018. The Department will submit required changes to the website builder or hire a new website creator in Fall 2019. A new Department website will be ready by winter 2020.
<b>Responsibility for</b> <b>a) leading initiative:</b> UPD, Chair <b>b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:</b> Faculty Dean

<b>Priority Recommendation #11:</b> Attract and retain high-quality students (national and international) - Create an English (or Humanities) Annual End-of-Year Student Showcase (Priority – High)
<b>Rationale:</b> The Department will, on its own or in conjunction with other Humanities programs in the Faculty of Arts, develop an end-of-year student showcase. The showcase will be marketed to high school students and guidance counsellors, the PAC, alumni, and members of industry. Students will participate in organizing and delivering the showcase, in addition to presenting work, as a means of providing an opportunity for students to develop Leadership and Teamwork skills. To maximize interest in the showcase, a keynote speaker from industry will be invited to speak.
<b>Implementation Actions and Timeline:</b> The Student Life Committee will work with the Career Centre and, if possible, other programs in the Arts, to deliver the first annual showcase in spring 2020. The annual showcase will be an ongoing event.
<b>Responsibility for</b> <b>a) leading initiative:</b> UPD and SLC <b>b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:</b> Faculty Dean

<b>Priority Recommendation #12:</b> Contribute to Ryerson’s priority of city-building and community contributor - Support the Development of an Alumni Association (Priority – High)
<b>Rationale:</b> The Department will support the development of an Alumni Association and help foster the development of an alumni community.
<b>Implementation Actions and Timeline:</b> The Student Life Committee will identify and contact alumni who may be good leaders of an alumni association, gauge their interest in establishing an alumni association, and host their initial meeting (with representatives from University Advancement) in Summer/Fall 2019. The Student Life Committee will plan an alumni event for Homecoming weekend, October 2019. The Department will utilize new alumni pages on the revitalized website to promote events that will be of interest to the alumni and to foster an online alumni community. The Student Life Committee will support University Advancements efforts to encourage the creation of an Alumni Association on an ongoing basis.
<b>Responsibility for</b> <b>a) leading initiative:</b> SLC and UPD <b>b) approving recommendation, providing resources, and overall monitoring:</b> Faculty Dean

Having satisfied itself of the merit of this periodic program review, the Academic Standards Committee recommends: *That Senate approve the Periodic Program Review for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) English Program - Faculty of Arts.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly MacKay, Chair for the Committee

ASC Members:

Charmaine Hack, Registrar

Donna Bell, Secretary of Senate

Kelly MacKay, Chair and Vice-Provost Academic  
Anita Jack-Davies, Office of the Vice President, Equity and Community Inclusion  
Bettina West, Director, Curriculum Quality Assurance  
Ann Marie Singh, Faculty of Arts, Criminology  
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