

**Executive Summary – 2017 Academic Program Review
English Department, University of Victoria**

**Prepared by
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Strengths of the Department

The Department of English has an internationally respected faculty whose research productivity and success in securing research grants are truly impressive. The department, the Faculty of Humanities, and the University of Victoria, more generally, should promote the Department of English's research achievements more vigorously.

The department provides a wide range of curricular offerings for students beyond the traditional periods and geographical scope of English literature, including access to the interdisciplinary Cultural, Social, and Political Thought.

The department is also to be applauded for its innovative recruitment activities. In particular, the Twitter campaign *Where Can @UVic English Take You?* underscores the career dexterity provided by an English degree.

Furthermore, the department's community-building events such as the annual convocation reception, suggests that the department's faculty and staff are keen to celebrate their students' accomplishments and to enrich students' experiences beyond their engagement with the formal curriculum.

Curriculum Review

The department has already begun to rethink its undergraduate curriculum and we would strongly recommend that the Chair initiates a formal curriculum review that involves input from the entire department.

Before launching into a curriculum review, however, we recommend that the members of the Department first collectively create a strategic plan or vision statement that aligns with the University of Victoria's and the Faculty of Humanities' strategic plans, is based on statistical data about admissions numbers, student retention rates, and a survey of alumni experiences. The Chair should work with the Institutional Planning and Analysis office as well as the Alumni Relations office to secure the necessary statistical information that would help the Department prepare for a productive curriculum review.

The Honours Program

The honours program is one of the strengths of the department. As is the case with most honours programs in Canada, the students in this program are required to take more courses and cover more areas than is the case with the majors students. Unlike most honours programs in Canada, however, the honours option here begins in the second year. As well, all honours students must take a year-long course called "Practical Criticism," and demonstrate competence in a second language. The honours program certainly compares favourably in rigour with honours programs at other highly regarded North American universities. In their final year, students may undertake a research project supervised by a faculty member.

The Graduate Program

Overall, the current English graduate program at the University of Victoria seems to be doing very well at both the MA and the PhD levels. We were impressed with what a strong percentage of recent PhD students had found academic work in Canada in good teaching and research jobs, while the MA program seems to provide a steady stream of students into excellent PhD programs across Canada and internationally. Moreover, the department has done a strong job preparing students at both levels for work outside of academia, providing them with resources towards looking towards "alt.academic" careers. Graduate students had much praise for the faculty and for the teaching opportunities afforded them by the program, particularly through the tutorial program offered for the MA students.

Professional Communication Program

One of the most singular admired features of the University of Victoria English department is its program in Professional Communications. Multiple members of the administration, the faculty, and the graduate students expressed their admiration of this program, especially for its success in placing its undergraduate students in professional positions soon after graduation.