

UCC Program Review Committee Summary of Review

Program: English

Date of last review: AY 2014-2015

Date of this review: AY 2022-2023

The program offers the following degrees, minors, and certificates:

- Ph.D. in English
- M.A. in English
- Online M.A. in English
- B.A. in English – Creative Writing
- B.A. in English – Literature, Culture and Writing
- Minor in English
- Writing Certificate (undergraduate)

Recommendation: This program is found to be viable.

See report for commendations, concerns, and recommendations.

The report was forwarded to the program director and college dean. Their responses are attached.

The Graduate Council's comments are included as well.

**Ohio University Curriculum Committee
External/Internal Academic Program Review**

Department of English

Laura Rosenthal, External Reviewer, Professor of English, University of Maryland
Sally Marion-Fetty, Associate Professor and Senior Associate Dean, College of Health Sciences
and Professions, Ohio University
Matthew Talbert, Associate Professor and Associate Director of the School of Music, Ohio
University

December 1-2, 2022

The reviewers conducted an external/internal program review on the Department of English on December 1-2, 2022. The Academic Program Review committee was comprised of Laura Rosenthal, External Reviewer, Professor of English, University of Maryland, and two internal reviewers, Sally Marion-Fetty (College of Health Sciences and Professions) and Matthew Talbert (School of Music).

1. The program as a whole:

- a. Is the current number and distribution of faculty sufficient to carry out the broad overall mission of the unit (Teaching; Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity; Service)? Is the level of the unit’s RSCA appropriate for the program given the size of the faculty and the resources available to the unit? Is the unit’s level of external funding at an appropriate level?**

The current number of faculty members is as follows: Athens Tenure-Track, 20; RHE Tenure-Track, 5; Athens Instructional Faculty, 4; and RHE Instructional Faculty, 2. The Department has an undergraduate major, a writing certificate, an MA program (online and residential) and a PhD program. The broad overall mission of the department is:

The Department of English fosters curiosity, discovery, and inclusion in our reading, writing, and scholarship in pursuit of how and why words matter. We prepare engaged citizens who think creatively, who read critically, and who write effectively in a changing and complex world.

The answer to this question is not a simple “yes” or “no.” Like other departments at the university, English has experienced a loss of full-time faculty (e.g., due to voluntary retirements) and increasing caps on class sizes. During the interviews, it was expressed that they are “doing more with less” with respect to resources in a “culture of scarcity.”

With respect to the distribution of faculty, the number of creative writing and rhetoric/composition faculty members has been reduced significantly. This has substantially impacted the PhD program—as noted in the self-study report: “PhD programs may be nearing a

breaking point due to inadequate number of specialist faculty in creative writing and rhetoric and composition.” This is disadvantaging the students in the PhD program. There is only one faculty member in each of three genres (poetry, fiction, non-fiction), so a student interested in poetry, for example, would get feedback from only one expert.

As will be expressed further in this report, resources are adequate to support the literature track, but not in the undergraduate writing track. Faculty resources for the MA in English online program are adequate for now; however, this has the effect of diverting staff from undergraduate courses.

English continues to be responsible for providing all the general education courses related to writing, now under the new BRICKS general education program. College credit plus has resulted in a reduction in general education composition hours due to students coming in with earned credits. It is unclear, at least at this point, what this new program and the Guarantee+ graduation plans will have on the second composition course.

The reviewers of this Department (hereafter referred to as reviewers) do not believe the current faculty demographics are sufficient to carry out the broad mission with respect to inclusion. During the interviews, diversity and inclusion was repeatedly mentioned as a limitation and a critical need area. The self-study noted that diversity has been insufficient throughout the department’s history. Reportedly, English now has a diversity and inclusion committee to address this need. Faculty of color have been hired in the past but have not been retained. While this is a challenge in many institutions, there is some suggestion that the department has not been able to create a sufficiently inclusive atmosphere in the past. We are optimistic that this new committee will address this challenge and hope that the rest of the faculty will endorse this project.

The English department provides a critical service to the university in its supply of general education courses. As noted above, it is uncertain how the new BRICKS and Guarantee+ programs will eventually impact the department.

It was reported during the site visit that increased demands on faculty have impacted their ability to develop scholarly/creative activities. Although the scholarly production of the faculty has remained high, burn-out due to being over-extended is a concern. Additionally, the amount of funding faculty needs to present at regional and/or national conferences has been reduced significantly.

b. Is the level of service, outside of teaching, appropriate for the program given its size and the role that it plays in the University and broader communities it interacts with? Is the unit able to fulfill its service mission?

The reviewers believe this to be an area of concern. There has been loss of support for English Department signature events supporting graduate and undergraduate creative writing. This includes the Writers-in-Residence (visiting writers) and the Spring Literacy Festival. Service has become challenging in general due to the reorganization of staff access.

c. Does the unit have an appropriate level of financial resources, staff, physical facilities, library resources, and technology to fulfill its mission?

The primary concerns, as understood by the reviewers, are the reduction in the number of faculty members in key areas and administrative support. These concerns will be further discussed in this report.

2. Undergraduate Program:

a. Is the unit fulfilling its service role, adequately preparing non- majors for future coursework and/or satisfying the needs for general education?

The unit is so far able to fulfill its service role, although there is some mismatch between the areas of specialization of the current faculty and student demand. The department could attract more students if they had more creative writing faculty members. They do a good job of providing composition classes; the composition program relies on both current faculty members and graduate students for staffing. One excellent bright spot in the undergraduate is the Honors Tutorial College (HTC) program, in which students get individual attention and work on independent projects. The faculty embraces this program and these students in impressive ways.

b. Is the program attracting majors likely to succeed in the program? Is the number of majors appropriate for the program? Is the program attracting a diverse group of students?

The program is attracting majors and holding steady in their numbers. This is particularly impressive since, across the country, English departments are losing majors at a rapid pace. Their new tenure-track hire is bringing media studies into the curriculum, which will help them attract majors in the future. The program could probably absorb more majors and build capacity with more hires in the right areas.

With respect to diversity, members of the department are aware of their limitations here and would like to improve in this area. The RHE campuses attract many first-generation students. Humanities programs nationally have seen considerable enthusiasm for diverse authorial perspectives (writers of color, queer writers, women writers, religiously diverse writers) and ways of understanding traditional literature that take into consideration the fraught historical tensions from which it emerged. This presents an opportunity for the English department to expand beyond its current offerings.

c. Does the undergraduate curriculum provide majors with an adequate background to pursue discipline-related careers or graduate work following graduation?

The department offers two tracks, literature and writing. In the literature track, the department provides an excellent background to pursue graduate study. The faculty members interviewed mentioned that sometimes they had to substitute requirements, but this did not seem to be a significant issue. There are certainly enough faculty members in the literature track to prepare students for graduate study and discipline-related careers. It should be noted, though, that graduate study in English these days does not often lead to academic employment. Like the OHIO department, English departments across the country are shrinking due to the student focus on career-oriented majors and higher education, in general, moving away from “core” requirements (ideas that institutional leaders believe that citizens in a democracy should understand and traditions that should be conveyed to new generations). Thus, setting up a curriculum to prepare students for graduate study needs going forward to be only one of many goals of an English major. The writing track needs more support, and the department struggles to provide enough classes in this area. They are considering bringing back a pre-law track, which is an excellent idea.

d. Are the resources and the number of and distribution of faculty sufficient to support the undergraduate program?

There are adequate to support the literature track. They are not adequate to support the writing track.

e. Are pedagogical practices appropriate? Are program learning outcomes adequately assessed?

While English has been admirably engaged in assessment, the MA online program has yet to undergo a critical assessment to close the loop on student learning. The current leadership is deeply committed to it and thinking in capacious and creative ways about how to continuously improve their assessment practice.

f. Are students able to move into discipline-related careers and/or pursue further academic work?

They can move into discipline-related careers or further academic work.

3. Graduate Program:

The graduate program offers three tracks in the PhD: Literature, Creative Writing, and Rhetoric. There is also a residential MA and an online MA.

Online MAE (Master of Arts in English)

This program is 100% online and uses the same [curricular expectations](#) as the residential MA. It is a degree in literary history with attention to coverage of different historical periods. In that sense, it is an excellent degree for high school teachers, for whom it was originally created. Students also take courses in writing and produce a substantial thesis at the end of their program. As originally conceived, it is a “win-win,” educating Ohio teachers, making effective use of the talents of the faculty, and providing some revenue to Ohio University. It seems, however, that

the program has created some unexpected challenges. The program has expanded beyond its original mission to educate Ohio teachers (which is not necessarily a bad thing), but it changes the character of the program and the base level of knowledge that instructors can expect from students. Faculty members now teach in this program “on load,” which takes needed resources away from delivering the residential programs. Courses can be taught “off load” in the summer, but it seems that summer compensation has been restructured so that the 20-student cohorts that this graduate program educates are not considered a full class, and so instructors do not receive full pay. The reviewers recommend reconsideration of this policy given the greater intensity of a graduate program where much attention to written work is needed.

MA (residential) and PhD in English

This program has three tracks: [Literary History](#), [Rhetoric](#), and [Creative Writing](#)

The Literary History track requires a range of study in contemporary and historical literature. The department is fully able to support this program and has many distinguished research-active faculty members in this area. There is a need to expand the faculty in Rhetoric and Creative Writing. There is an imbalance between current student interest, which is currently based on historical excellence in the program and their own career considerations, and the current faculty. This seems to be based on faculty attrition in those areas due to retirements and other opportunities. The department would welcome the opportunity to replace them and rebuild those important programs.

- a. Is the program attracting students likely to succeed in the program? Is the number of students appropriate for the program? Is the program attracting a diverse group of students?**

While the overall ratio of students to faculty is appropriate, there is an imbalance, as mentioned, in the areas of expertise and student interest. There is one Rhetoric professor supervising 13 graduate students, which is unsustainable. Literature professors welcome the opportunity to work with graduate students, but there are fewer students in this area. The OHIO English department has a reputation for excellence in Creative Writing. Several faculty members, however, have recently retired and have not been replaced. There are not enough creative writers to support the graduate student interest. There is one tenure-track faculty member in each genre, so as one graduate student we talked with pointed out, an aspiring poet would only have one mentor in their area to work with over their entire program. The Creative Writing program, because of its reputation, attracts the strongest students.

- b. Does the graduate curriculum provide an adequate background to pursue discipline-related careers following graduation?**

Creative Writing and Rhetoric have been able to prepare students for discipline-related careers, although the current situation is challenging this history. Unfortunately, the job market in Literary History has become extremely challenging in the last several years and no programs have robust placements except in specific areas and with specific individuals who bring much-needed diversity to departments.

Students are thus moving away from pursuing degrees in Literary History as discipline-related careers are limited in availability.

c. Does the program provide adequate mentoring and advising to students to prepare them for discipline-related careers?

Currently faculty members do an exceptionally good job of this, but their capacity is limited for the reasons mentioned above.

d. Are the resources and the number of and distribution of faculty sufficient to support the graduate program?

Yes, for Literary History, no for Rhetoric. Creative Writing is also barely sufficient. Faculty members work heroically to support students but can only do so much in current conditions.

e. Does the program offer appropriate financial support to graduate students?

Graduate students described stipends as low, referring to them as poverty-level wages.

f. Are program learning outcomes adequately assessed?

The department has so far focused their assessment efforts on undergraduate studies and is aware that they need to develop assessment practices for their graduate programs. The current graduate director has recently taken training to spearhead this project, and the reviewers are confident that they are working toward developing a robust assessment practice.

g. Are students able to move into discipline-related careers?

As mentioned, there has been success moving students in Rhetoric and Creative Writing into good positions. That history of success is currently threatened by the limited number of faculty members in those areas.

4. Areas of Concern and Recommendations

- a. As the reviewers read in the self-study and heard from faculty members in the interviews, more clarity is needed to better understand the purpose of the One OHIO initiative. The English Department has embraced the RHE mission and how the RHE faculty contribute to student and department success. However, the faculty seek clarity on the integration of course scheduling and teaching capacity. Related to this, are there ways in which RHE faculty could be utilized more in the Athens campus programs?
- b. With the decline of the effects of the pandemic and the recent record-size incoming class, this is an opportune time for leadership in the Provost's office and The College of Arts and Sciences to clearly communicate the future direction and values of the college. The

faculty members in English are reportedly unaware of strategic planning and how English fits into the plan and vision. Equally important is the communication pertaining to support staff. While a staff support member may not be “down the hall” anymore, faculty members do have access to these services. The current centralization of support staff represents a change—and change can be difficult to manage. The reviewers understand that the college leadership will work closely with chairs to better understand the needs for support staff.

- c. Faculty members should reach out to the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment to learn ways to implement assessment in a way that does not feel burdensome to faculty members. Each program should have a curriculum map as well as meaningful and measurable outcomes. The reviewers suggest involving all faculty members in this process, focusing on the most important student learning outcomes—not everything that students could possibly learn in the programs.
- d. RHE faculty feel that the university is ethically invested in them but not financially. The RHE faculty feel that their workload is out-of-balance (far greater service and teaching load) compared to what it was previously and feel as if they have little to no say with respect to teaching. We recommend that the Dean/Provost clarify the relationship between the Athens faculty and the RHE faculty and related policies.
- e. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is significant concern for the English Department. Hopefully with the new leadership and the D&I committee, this will change for the better in the future.
- f. A concern was raised about staffing in Ellis Hall when parents and potential students visit. The faculty members describe that there is “no sense of a department” when parents and potential students visit the campus. Is there the possibility of graduate-student coverage during the summer?
- g. Reinstate the pre-law track.
- h. The English Department has genuinely faced several negative impacts in the last several years. Some are a result of national trends, such as decreasing student interest in traditional literary history, often based on a sense of urgency to prepare for a career, and a general disinvestment in the humanities. Some are local issues, such as general education courses traditionally provided by the English Department now available in high school. Some are the result of retired faculty members in key areas and a challenging reorganizing of staff support.

However, with challenges and changes also come opportunities. The reviewers believe that the Department is at a critical time in its evolution. That is, how does a traditional and somewhat conservative English Department thrive in today’s educational climate? One faculty member raised the possibility of “rebranding” the English Department. Could this be an area of discussion amongst faculty members?

Rebranding or not, the English Department will certainly need to be strategic and innovative going forward. For example, joint faculty appointments should be considered—such appointments have the benefits of serving more than one need/program. Related to this, one faculty member mentioned the importance of English establishing innovative partnerships across departments and colleges. This was expressed in the interview in a few ways, including being “ripe for creative partnerships” and the need to “systematize collaborations.” The reviewers believe there are significant opportunities here that should be explored. To return to the mission of the department: *We prepare engaged citizens who think creatively, who read critically, and who write effectively in a changing and complex world.* These skills, including creative thinking, interpretation of texts, and effective writing are ones that are required in many credentialed and non-credential professions. An example for moving in this direction is the recent hire in media and digital studies whose work could help lead the way to an expansive notion of English studies that could speak to current students. Cultivating courses in media/digital studies, health humanities, speculative fictions, and other areas could refresh the literary history program.

4. Commendations

- a. Current leadership
 1. All faculty members that we spoke with appreciate and greatly admire Dr. Quitslund’s leadership. She seems very good at listening to all the diverse perspectives in the department and balancing their needs.
 2. Dr. Quitslund has made a sincere effort to include Non-Tenure Track and Regional Higher Education faculty members in the department. This decision has provided a level of optimism not seen in recent memory from faculty away from the Athens campus.
 3. The graduate director is also thoughtful and creative, looking for ways that English can serve the institution. His development of courses in Health Humanities at an institution known for its Health Sciences program is admirable and strategic.
 4. All department administrators are steadily guiding the department forward while facing considerable challenges. Many faculty members have been overwhelmed by recent changes; they all, however, believe that their leadership is taking their distress seriously and looking for positive solutions.
 5. Faculty members are devoted to their students and productive scholars.
- b. Formation of Assessment and Diversity Equity and Inclusion committees – the creation of these committees is long overdue, and the faculty seem enthusiastic about the positive outcomes/changes that can be implemented from these groups.
- c. The HTC program continues to be a jewel of the department and the faculty enjoy working with students in the program. They appreciate the rigor and creativity that accompanies the students in this program.

- d. The Department had an excellent response to the new general education program and reframing of the undergraduate degree. This was a major change for the university and is being well received.
- e. While some faculty members seem resistant to change, others are beginning to look toward the future and work through, from a realistic perspective, how this department can align with the goals of the university and the current higher education landscape. Everyone in the department continues to adjust to the changing environment OHIO has experienced in the last few years.

5. Overall judgment: Is the program viable as a whole?

The reviewers conclude that the undergraduate program in the English Department is viable. However, the reviewers shared some concerns about graduate programs in Rhetoric and Creative Writing. The first has been highly successful in placing job candidates, and the second has, in the past, enjoyed an extraordinary reputation. It would be to the advantage of Ohio University to support these programs. The Rhetoric program, which supports writing classes for the entire university, is not currently sustainable without more hires. The Creative Writing also needs more hires to hold on to its reputation for excellence and support the students in the program.



OHIO
UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences

Department of English
Ellis Hall
Athens, Ohio 45701-2979
Tel: 740-593-2838
Fax: 740-593-2832

December 19, 2022

To the UCC Program Review Committee:

In accordance with University Curriculum Council policy, I am offering this response to the 2022 Program Review Report on the English Department, on behalf of the Department. The Department also wishes to thank the reviewers, Drs Rosenthal, Marion-Fetty, and Talbert, for their time and care in learning about and evaluating the program's viability.

First, we are pleased that the reviewers recognize the Department's core successes in its undergraduate mission. These include continuing to attract major students despite strong countervailing winds nationally; the critical service provided by our general education courses; our undergraduate curriculum revision to align with BRICKS and our current faculty resources; attention to assessment; and our vibrant HTC program.

The report also points to Department challenges. Broadly, these break down into four areas: 1) continued adaptation to shifts in student expectations for higher education; 2) the mismatch between our faculty resources and graduate program demand; 3) the paucity of faculty diversity; and 4) the ambiguities, inefficiencies, and confusion of One OHIO implementation. I will also comment on some mismatch between resources and mission that are alluded to but not emphasized in the report. All of these areas are interrelated, but for the sake of clarity I will here address them individually.

Change and adaptation. The reviewers commend the undergraduate curricular revision undertaken to better align with BRICKS. The same revision is also vehicle for moving our course offerings and the core experiences in the program, particularly for students in the literary track, toward a more flexible set of offerings that both requires more attention to diverse authorial perspectives in the literary history courses and makes room for the kinds of non-traditional courses that will better equip our students for the future, including media studies, digital rhetorics, and experiential learning. As noted in the report, our RHE faculty have taken the lead in demonstrating how successful this new direction can be with our students, and I welcome the report's recommendation that Athens follow suit.

As the report recommends, our proposal to resurrect our Pre-law track is currently in the UCC curricular approval process. The recommendation to take advantage of the CTLA for training on less burdensome assessment methods along with the nudge to map curricula to learning outcomes is also helpful, and we plan to do these things.

Residential graduate programs. We concur with the reviewers that this is the most serious area of concern for English. The report concludes that “[t]he Rhetoric program, which supports writing classes for the entire university, is not currently sustainable without more hires. The Creative Writing [program] also needs more hires to hold on to its reputation for excellence and support the students in the program.” By contrast, the report deems the literary history graduate track adequately supported with the current faculty. Although we agree that hiring in Rhetoric & Composition and Creative Writing is critical, we believe that we can sustain both tracks in the short term with resources that have been committed for AY2023-24, especially if the university allows us to quickly convert already or soon-to-be vacated faculty lines in literature.

English is hiring three positions to begin in fall 2023: two instructional faculty in Composition and one visiting faculty in Creative Writing. Because Rhetoric & Composition is a field where scholarship of pedagogy is a primary mode of research, it is more possible for faculty with higher teaching loads to stay current in the field. We believe that we can maintain a very small track in Rhetoric and Composition with the one tenure-track faculty member and three instructional faculty members we will have next year; precisely this model is employed successfully at the University of New Hampshire now. We also have one faculty member currently classified as literary history whose work is increasingly moving in the direction of composition and who can support thesis and dissertation committees. This is a bridge strategy, however.

The visiting faculty for Creative Writing will provide much-needed support for current graduate students (it is a visiting line to allow for a lower teaching load while we wait for the ability to hire enough faculty on the tenure track). Creative Writing will need at least one tenure track hire very soon, however, to sustain graduate recruitment. This program is now the backbone of the residential graduate program, so it is the more important area for us to invest in graduate mentoring strength. We are hopeful that the university will reinvest the funds from a faculty line that will become vacant at the end of this academic year in such a hire.

In the longer term, the overall health of the Department will probably depend on approaching hiring differently than we have done in the past in order to fulfill the academic goals of both the graduate and undergraduate programs. A strong Creative Writing program will require at least five faculty members with notable reputations in the field broadly construed. However, this may involve faculty who can also contribute substantially to other areas, whether inside the English Department or in other units (e.g., Media Arts & Studies or Film). Likewise, we can maintain a doctoral concentration in Rhetoric & Composition if we meet the challenge of changing student needs and trajectories with faculty who cross over between rhetoric, new media, and the expertise to handle some traditional literary courses at the undergraduate level.

The report also briefly notes the low stipends for our graduate students. We would welcome any additional support for them, and we are planning conversations within the Department and with the College about the possibility of slightly reducing the target size of the program in order to increase graduate student support.

Diversity. We appreciate the report’s commendation of our recent efforts to address the Department’s lack of diversity and history of Black faculty attrition. The Department is

committed to recruiting faculty from historically underrepresented groups when given the opportunity and to creating an explicit and meaningful culture of inclusion for faculty and students alike. As noted above, we have begun with changes to our undergraduate curriculum that prioritize intercultural and varied texts and perspectives for our students, and we hope that this is also a first step toward a more welcoming milieu for a diverse group of faculty.

RHE and One OHIO. As the reviewers observe, we continue to sort through confusion regarding the role of our regional faculty in the English Department organization and in relation to the concerns and challenges for Athens-only programs. We are fantastically lucky in the quality and commitment of the full-time English faculty currently working from RHE, and the tenure-track faculty are all highly research-active. Rotating RHE faculty into the online master's program (MAE) now would allow us to better balance the demands of that program with the need for literature and other upper-division undergraduate courses; in the future, calling on RHE faculty to assist with residential graduate student mentoring or occasional courses could help compensate for reducing the number of literature lines in Athens. (Although staffing is currently adequate for literary history programs, significant holes are likely to develop when we reallocate faculty to the other concentrations.) It is encouraging that the report supports our desire to find ways to gain more of the benefits promised from the One OHIO integration. Doing so, however, will require changes in the current relationship between the RHE and Athens structures on a University level.

Aside from these four main areas of concern, the report touches on two issues that played a part in several conversations with faculty during the site visit. The first is the effects of centralizing all Arts & Sciences support staff with ~50% reduction in FTEs. Both in the report and in conversation during the site visit, the reviewers suggested using GAs as partial replacements. Depending on funds and student time available, we are quite open to this idea. The report also implies that a significant portion of the faculty dissatisfaction about this is a question of change management and communication. Based on explicit conversations with support staff about what falls into their job responsibilities, we respectfully disagree. More explicit and detailed conversation between faculty with administrative responsibilities, College leadership, and support staff is likely to clarify where there are differences in perception, but it is unlikely to solve the problem.

The second issue is the dilemmas created by staffing the MAE. As the report notes, the faculty is "adequate for now" in terms of numbers, though it diverts staff from undergraduate offerings. As the report also notes, there are other structural problems relating in part to compensation. One of the largest is that it is a year-round program relying on faculty who have nine-month contracts. Because the up-front effort to create the courses is enormous and uncompensated, relatively few faculty have undertaken the task, with the result that there are few staffing choices for summer and some of those now take on summer teaching out of a sense of obligation rather than by choice—and receive pay for it prorated down from a standard course size designed for undergraduate courses. It would be extremely helpful to revisit the compensation offered to faculty who are making this very successful revenue-producing program possible. And, as noted above, drawing on regional faculty interested in teaching in the program would reduce pressure on faculty who would prefer not to teach in the program as frequently as they do now.

We recognize that this is an unusual and potentially worrying program review report in that it does not unambiguously endorse English's suite of programs on the whole as viable. While concurring that there are concerns, we do not believe that any part of the program is non-viable in the immediate term with the resources on offer. In the longer term, we will need the support of the College and University to sustain our programs as we intentionally transition faculty and program emphases.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Beth Quitslund", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Beth Quitslund
Professor & Chair



College of Arts and Sciences
Office of the Dean
Wilson Hall, College Green
Athens OH 45701-2979

January 19, 2023

Dear Members of the UCC Program Review Committee,

This is my response to the 2022 report submitted by the Program Review Committee for the programs associated with the English Department. The review notes the success and high quality of English department programs and some of their signature events for the community. I applaud the department's faculty and leadership for their efforts on behalf of English graduate and undergraduate students and students across the university system who are served by the department in its general education mission.

While the review committee does conclude that the English programs are viable, the review committee report and the department chair's response do note a few significant areas of concern including the distribution and diversity of faculty, staff support and graduate stipends, and how the department fits into the strategic vision for the college. The reviewers also acknowledge other challenges but note that the department is already considering curricular and other reforms, so I will address these significant areas mentioned.

Faculty Expertise and Diversity

With respect to faculty expertise and the diversity of faculty in the department, the reviewers and the departmental response both note that the current distribution of faculty with fewer faculty in creative writing and composition and rhetoric make it difficult to recruit and mentor graduate students who are increasingly focused on these areas. We have prioritized additional faculty resources in this area and remain committed to bolstering support for graduate and undergraduate education with this focus. Through the regular college strategic planning and position request processes as well as the special IDEA Tenure Track Hiring Program. We are actively working with the department as well as colleagues in the College of Fine Arts and the Scripps College of Communications to work collaboratively in this area to support students across the university with interest in creative writing, writing for new media, storytelling, and digital writing. Our proposal to the IDEA program also begins to address concerns about the lack of diversity among English faculty and the department, college, and university missions related to diversity and inclusion with its focus on a tenure-track position in creative writing that addresses multiple writing genres with underrepresented voices and perspectives.

Staff, Event and Graduate Student Support

We recognize the concerns raised in the report about the need for more administrative staff support and more communication with faculty about who and how to access this support. We also note the

need for increased support for important events, especially those that provide experiential learning opportunities to students and provide opportunities for the college to engage with and serve our communities. This semester we are reviewing graduate student stipends across the college, and will work with departments to understand the impacts on graduate student recruitment, retention and success. We are committed to working with departments and our elected CAS Faculty Advisory Committee and our college Inclusive Excellence Committee to expand staff and services and implement changes to support key college priorities like programming and events and graduate student support.

Strategic Plans and Communication

The committee report also noted that English faculty were unclear about the strategic plans for the college and how the English department fit into those plans. This year, I have worked to update and communicate the college plans and communicate them to our faculty and staff across the college. In addition to this broader college communication, I have requested and met with a number of departments to share and coordinate departmental, college and university priorities and plans. I look forward to continuing this work this academic year.

Thank you to the review committee for the thoughtful report and to the department for its thorough and conscientiousness self-study and commitment to the program review process.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Poggione". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Poggione
Interim Dean
College of Arts & Sciences
Ohio University

From: [Mather, Peter](#)
To: [Such, Barbel](#)
Subject: Re: program review reports at Grad Council
Date: Saturday, February 25, 2023 12:54:45 AM

Hi Barbel,

Here is the approved review report from the last Graduate Council meeting. The next meeting will be next Friday (March 3rd).

Pete

English

The Department includes an online Master of Arts in English program, and three residential tracks for MA and PhD students: Literary History, Rhetoric, and Creative Writing. The overall program area was considered viable. However, the review pointed out challenges with balancing current staffing resources with student enrollment. Responses by the Department Chair and Interim Dean reported faculty searches and strategic realignments are underway to address these concerns. Graduate student stipends were also noted as an area of concern.

Peter C. Mather, PhD
Professor, Department of Counseling and Higher Education
Patton College of Education
Ohio University
432B Patton Hall
Athens, OH 45701

Office Phone:
740.593.4454

If you'd like to make an appointment, please book here:

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/PeteMather@catmail.ohio.edu/bookings/>

From: Such, Barbel <such@ohio.edu>
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2023 5:02 PM
To: Mather, Peter <matherp@ohio.edu>
Subject: program review reports at Grad Council