

January 30, 2018
Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies
Three Department Model

Generally Speaking

One of the founding visions of the Faculty was “to foster an environment where interdisciplinary scholarship and learning are promoted and where research, practice, and teaching are interwoven.” Copy for a brochure prepared in 2011 for the Department of Critical Studies states that Critical is “an exciting interdisciplinary department offering programming in languages, literature and culture in the innovative Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies (FCCS) at the University of British Columbia Okanagan Campus.” It’s hard to argue with any of this, but according to the environmental scan of the Department of Critical Studies made in 2015, there remains “a widespread, if not unanimous commitment to this interdisciplinary vision, but a recognition that the vision had yet to be achieved” and, perhaps more tellingly, a concession that a “larger number of faculty still admitted to thinking mainly within disciplinary contexts when asked about their students or their work (External Review 2015: 2).

In fairness to that vision, and the broader critique of the Faculty it implies, it is worth noting that our 2-department faculty hosts, at current count, 3 undergraduate degrees (BA, BFA, BMS); 3 graduate degrees (PhD; MA; MFA); 9 undergraduate programs; and 2 suites of language courses. That’s just the curriculum. Our students do well and go on to successes of all kinds—we need more of them, of course, something that simmers in the background of everything we try to cook up around here these days—but the Faculty has done well in spite of its idiosyncratic structure and singular name.

Toward the end of their report, the external reviewers of Critical made the following summary finding:

In summary, we found a generally congenial department, whose members were struggling with an unusual, multi-disciplinary department composed of disparate disciplines of varying sizes and student complement, working within an unusual faculty outside the usual BA structures, at a time of rapid change for universities, and the humanities in particular. The Department structure is unwieldy and there are genuine concerns, which we share, about its ability to function as a department. This unconventional structure also makes it difficult for a sense of student cohort to emerge. Given these challenges and understanding the constraints they produce, we conclude nonetheless that the department is reasonably well-positioned to weather these storms. The structure of the Department and the Faculty in which it is placed pose many challenges which may not easily be resolved. (External Review, 17)

Although written over three years ago, this remains an acute assessment, and to borrow a bit of the florid language here, we might ask if “weathering storms” is really the most we can ask of this boat. Is the current structure of the Faculty, and of the Department of Critical Studies, serving the purposes for which it was designed? It is not clear that it is, and perhaps, 12 or so years into this voyage, we should have a more certain answer to that question than we do today.

The rest of this document suggests that our current self-organization needs a rethink.

Curriculum

Turning to Critical Studies more particularly, even a quick curriculum glance reveals a department whose disciplinary discretions are just as pronounced as those residing within traditional departmentalized homes. The External Review notes a number of ways that Programs within Critical have courses and programs that are for the most part discrete. While it is true that ENGL and CULT share some curriculum and faculty, this isn't so because of the department structure; most Cultural Studies programs of the humanistic variety came out of English departments well before FCCS was organized on this campus, and many who teach in CULT today have backgrounds, teaching, and research interests in ENGL. The language programs here are, more or less, bounded within the modern languages traditions of North America. ARTH has flourished as a disciplinarily distinctive teaching unit that blends the traditional and the innovative, and appeals to both prospective majors and upper-year elective-seeking students. The "language suites" of GERM and JPNS are, it is fair so say, left to find their way within the Critical multiverse. In short: *the programs within Critical already behave as if they are departmentalized.*

Administratively Speaking

Each one of the programs in Critical—ARTH, CULT, ENGL, FREN, SPAN, and GERM/JPNS-- has its own Program Coordinator responsible for program planning and administration. Each member of each program works with their PC; works on or with their Program Committees; and works with the Head of Department. Each member of the faculty teaching within these programs therefore has three regularly traversed reporting lines--the Coordinator; the Program Committee and the Head—and all of this even before the UPPCC enters the fray. Without belaboring the point (and as the 2015 External Report *did* belabor): *this is demonstrably inefficient.*

Most of the Program Coordinators do their work without course release, moreover, which is to say that, in practice, the programs of Critical Studies are mostly run "off the side of the desk," as we like to say around here. Asking PCs to go above and beyond—to have the retreats and the meetings, to attend the planning conferences and campus pedagogy events, to lead the curriculum discussions (arguably the most difficult discussions within our world)—is asking a lot of people doing the work because it is "their turn" or because nobody else wants the job. There is an expectation that each of these PCs undertake and do all of this work, and yet there is little recognition or compensation, to say nothing of the actual authority needed to undertake such responsibilities with confidence. This is not to fault current or former PCs. *The problem here is our structure, not the people within it.*

The Critical Studies tenure-stream and FT lectureship headcount currently sits at 45 (including 2 joint appointments), which makes it the largest department on the campus. 3 members of Critical currently serve in the Dean's office. There are nearly always at least 4 faculty on some form of leave or another in any given year, meaning that 35 faculty are available to serve in officer/administrative positions yearly. This year we have 11: Head; Assistant head; ENGL PC; CULT PC; GERM/JPSE PC; SPAN PC; FREN PC; ARTH PC; IGS; MA-ENGL; Curriculum PC (new

position). There is some fluctuation, year to year, but it is still the case (and the 2015 Review drew this point out as well) that between 20-30% of the faculty serve in leadership positions in any given year. No wonder everyone feels overworked (and the External Review makes reference to service fatigue no fewer than three times).

The Headship in Critical is more or less unworkable. One of the most important jobs of the Head is to be a leader, somebody inclined and enabled to convene the kind of discussions that lead to new or renovated programs, connections, and successes. Given the size and the internal diversity of Critical, it is unreasonable to expect any Head, no matter how gifted, dedicated, and well-compensated, to be that kind of a leader, and also, and at the same time, be the person responsible for timetabling; for convening all those committees; tenure and promotion reviews; hiring; Merit/PSA; 5.02s; putting out fires (starting them too); answering unreasonable requests from the Dean; etc--and that's only a partial list. The Critical Studies Headship is a super-manager job whose time and energy gets vacuumed up by "administrivia", personnel management, and juggling the often competing claims of unevenly sized and staffed programs. *The size and complexity of the department disables what the Headship can and, one might say, desperately needs to be, particularly as we continue to face declining enrolments in exactly the program areas existing within Critical.*

To put the matter differently: each of the program areas in the Critical Studies multiverse has different kinds of problems in need of sustained and thoughtful attention. In the absence of a working time machine (yes, I've been watching too much Star Trek of late), it simply isn't reasonable to expect a single Head to thoroughly administer all of these programs and all of their challenges, to say nothing of all of the people in all of these programs. Breaking Critical up into two smaller and more intellectually coherent administrative units will enable both their respective Heads and members to focus on their unique challenges and opportunities more consistently.

Reorganization

Even if there were 100% agreement over the need to change the status quo, how we make that change may not be so univocal.

There are a number of possible configurations*:

Option A

1. Creative and Art History
2. English and Cultural Studies
3. Languages (and World Literature)

Option B

1. Creative (status quo)
2. English
3. Art History, Cultural Studies, and Languages (and World Literature)

Option C

1. Creative (status quo)
2. English and Cultural Studies

3. Art History and Languages (and World Literature)

Yes: There Is Actually a Rule about This (*)

<https://senate.ubc.ca/vancouver/policies/establishment-new-departments> If the clickbait there worked, you see this document was created and adopted in 1965, but according to the UBC Secretariat, it is still in force and applicable to the Okanagan campus. Only FT appointments—including Lecturers—may be counted in this regard. There is some wiggle-room in terms of the minimum FTE of 15 for departmental status, but it's probably fair to say it must be “ballpark”—that ancient parchment is still on point in many respects. In any case, our approach to re-arranging the deck chairs needs to develop within this constraint. (see attached chart of current appointments and how they might distribute over the three options).

Process

According to the mandarins I've consulted, the process for a re-organization would be: Dean→FCCS Council→Provost→Senate Academic Policy Committee→Senate→BoG . For what it's worth, the current Provost has indicated her support for the discussion taking place. There likely will be an ask at some point up the line for a broader campus consult, or even a consult with Vancouver Senate, Vancouver Provost, Vancouver Deans, and/or Secretariat. It is likely as well, and I welcome the opportunity, that we (and individuals) consult with Faculty Association; if a reorganization of any kind takes place, individual faculty departmental locations will be affected, a matter on which FA quite properly takes an interest. This is all fine, and our discussion in no way precludes or evades the academic and collegial review process as it relates to administrative organization.

Cost

FCCS would incur additional overhead expenses: a stipend for a third headship; new business cards and so on. Call it \$10,000 per year, all in. On the “plus” side, the consolidation or elimination of the assistant headship and some coordinator positions would likely save more in course release replacement teaching. While this isn't in any way undertaken as a cost-saving effort, we can for the sake of the discussion call the cost piece a wash. If we decide to move forward on this, more detail will be provided, including models of the revenue/cost attributes of a 3 departmental structure.

Staff

We do not see any need to allocate resources for new staffing positions, although current staff positions might need to be redistributed. The workload for staff is not expected to rise.

Proposal

Let's discuss this at Council next week. The central question to consider: do we think a reorganization is needed?

If there is consensus on that point, then letting the different options described below, or brought forward next week, sit with Council and with the Departments until another meeting, perhaps in March, would be advisable.

OPTION A

Creative Studies and Art History (FT=19)		English and Cultural Studies (FT=25)		Languages (and World Literature) (FT=18)	
1	Stephen Foster – VISA (Head)	1	Martin Blum (Joint) - ENGL/GERM - .5	1	Milka Beck - FREN
2	Neil Cadger – INTP	2	Anderson Araujo – ENGL	2	Martin Blum – GERM (.5 FTE)
3	Myron Campbell - VISA	3	Jodey Castricano - ENGL	3	Diana Carter – SPAN
4	Briar Craig – VISA	4	Alison Conway (Joint Appt Barber) – ENGL - .5	4	Ramine Adl – FREN
5	Aleksandra Dulic – VISA	5	Robert Eggleston - ENGL	5	Claude Desmarais - GERM
6	Renay Egami - VISA	6	Greg Garrard – ENGL	6	Mercedes Fernandez-Duran - SPAN
7	Anne Fleming - CRWR	7	Lisa Grekul – ENGL	7	Grisel Garcia-Perez - SPAN
8	Suzanne Gott - ARTH	88	George Grinnell – ENGL	8	Christopher Gordon - FREN
9	Nancy Holmes - CRWR	9	Jennifer Gustar - ENGL	9	Jelena Jovicic - FREN
10	Denise Kenney – INTP/FILM	10	Allison Hargreaves – ENGL	10	Francis Langevin - FREN
11	Keshani, Hussein - ARTH	11	Melissa Jacques – ENGL	11	Nina Langton - JPNS
12	MacHardy, Carolyn - ARTH	12	David Jefferess – CULT/ENGL	12	Marianne Legault - FREN
13	Virginie Magnat (Joint Eng/Cult: .5 FTE)	13	Daniel Keyes - CULT/ENGL	13	Francisco Peña – SPAN/WRLD
14	Katherine Pickering - VISA	14	Sean Lawrence – ENGL	14	Bernard Schulz-Cruz - SPAN
15	Matt Rader - CRWR	15	Ruthann Lee – CULT	15	Cristina Senn - SPAN
16	Samuel Roy-Bois - VISA	16	Marie Loughlin – ENGL	16	Alwyn Spies - JPNS
17	Michael V. Smith - CRWR	17	Oliver Lovesey – ENGL	17	Stephanie Tolman - FREN
18	Miles Thorogood - (joint Appt barber: .5 FTE)	18	Janet MacArthur – ENGL	18	Virginie Magnat (Joint Appt Creative) - .5
19	Holly Ward – VISA	19	Paul Milton – ENGL		
20	New Hire – VISA (July 1, 2018)	20	Margaret Reeves – ENGL		

		21	Karis Shearer – ENGL		
		22	Jordan Stouck – ENGL		
		23	Bryce Traister - ENGL		
		24	Michael Treschow – ENGL		
		25	Kyong Yoon – CULT		
		26	DH Hire – ENGL/DIHU		

OPTION B

Creative Studies (FT=16)		English (FT=21)		Art History, Cultural Studies, and Languages (and World Literature) (FT=25)	
1	Stephen Foster – VISA (Head)	1	Martin Blum (Joint) - ENGL/GERM - .5	1	Milka Beck - FREN
2	Neil Cadger – INTP	2	Anderson Araujo – ENGL	2	Martin Blum – GERM (.5 FTE)
3	Myron Campbell - VISA	3	Jodey Castricano - ENGL	3	Diana Carter – SPAN
4	Briar Craig – VISA	4	Alison Conway (Joint Appt Barber) – ENGL - .5	4	Ramine Adl – FREN
5	Aleksandra Dulic – VISA	5	Robert Eggleston - ENGL	5	Claude Desmarais - GERM
6	Renay Egami - VISA	6	Greg Garrard – ENGL	6	Mercedes Fernandez-Duran - SPAN
7	Anne Fleming - CRWR	7	Lisa Grekul – ENGL	7	Grisel Garcia-Perez - SPAN
8	Nancy Holmes - CRWR	8	George Grinnell – ENGL	8	Christopher Gordon - FREN
9	Denise Kenney – INTP/FILM	9	Jennifer Gustar - ENGL	9	Jelena Jovicic - FREN
10	Virginie Magnat (Joint Eng/Cult: .5 FTE)	10	Allison Hargreaves – ENGL	10	Francis Langevin - FREN
11	Katherine Pickering - VISA	11	Melissa Jacques – ENGL	11	Nina Langton - JPNS
12	Matt Rader - CRWR	12	Sean Lawrence – ENGL	12	Marianne Legault - FREN
13	Samuel Roy-Bois - VISA	13	Marie Loughlin – ENGL	13	Francisco Peña – SPAN
14	Michael V. Smith - CRWR	14	Oliver Lovesey – ENGL	14	Bernard Schulz-Cruz - SPAN
15	Miles Thorogood - (joint Appt barber: .5 FTE)	15	Janet MacArthur – ENGL	15	Cristina Senn - SPAN
16	Holly Ward – VISA	16	Paul Milton – ENGL	16	Alwyn Spies - JPNS
17	New Hire – VISA (July 1, 2018)	17	Margaret Reeves – ENGL	17	Stephanie Tolman - FREN
		18	Karis Shearer – ENGL	18	Robert Belton - ARTH
		19	Jordan Stouck – ENGL	19	Suzanne Gott - ARTH

		20	Bryce Traister - ENGL	20	Keshani, Hussein - ARTH
		21	Michael Treschow – ENGL	21	MacHardy, Carolyn - ARTH
		22	DH Hire – ENGL/DIHU	22	David Jefferess – CULT
				23	Daniel Keyes - CULT
				24	Ruthann Lee – CULT
				25	Kyong Yoon – CULT
				26	Virginie Magnat (Joint Appt Creative) - .5

OPTION C

Creative Studies (FT=16)		English and Cultural Studies (FT=25)		Art History and Languages (and World Literature) (FT=21)	
1	Stephen Foster – VISA (Head)	1	Martin Blum (Joint) - ENGL/GERM - .5	1	Milka Beck - FREN
2	Neil Cadger – INTP	2	Anderson Araujo – ENGL	2	Martin Blum – GERM (.5 FTE)
3	Myron Campbell - VISA	3	Jodey Castricano - ENGL	3	Diana Carter – SPAN
4	Briar Craig – VISA	4	Alison Conway (Joint Appt Barber) – ENGL - .5	4	Ramine Adl – FREN
5	Aleksandra Dulic – VISA	5	Robert Eggleston - ENGL	5	Claude Desmarais - GERM
6	Renay Egami - VISA	6	Greg Garrard – ENGL	6	Mercedes Fernandez-Duran - SPAN
7	Anne Fleming - CRWR	7	Lisa Grekul – ENGL	7	Grisel Garcia-Perez - SPAN
8	Nancy Holmes - CRWR	8	George Grinnell – ENGL	8	Christopher Gordon - FREN
9	Denise Kenney – INTP/FILM	9	Jennifer Gustar - ENGL	9	Jelena Jovicic - FREN
10	Virginie Magnat (Joint Eng/Cult: .5 FTE)	10	Allison Hargreaves – ENGL	10	Francis Langevin - FREN
11	Katherine Pickering - VISA	11	Melissa Jacques – ENGL	11	Nina Langton - JPNS
12	Matt Rader - CRWR	12	Sean Lawrence – ENGL	12	Marianne Legault - FREN
13	Samuel Roy-Bois - VISA	13	Marie Loughlin – ENGL	13	Francisco Peña – SPAN
14	Michael V. Smith - CRWR	14	Oliver Lovesey – ENGL	14	Bernard Schulz-Cruz - SPAN
15	Miles Thorogood - (joint Appt barber: .5 FTE)	15	Janet MacArthur – ENGL	15	Cristina Senn - SPAN
16	Holly Ward – VISA	16	Paul Milton – ENGL	16	Alwyn Spies - JPNS
17	New Hire – VISA (July 1, 2018)	17	Margaret Reeves – ENGL	17	Stephanie Tolman - FREN
		18	Karis Shearer – ENGL	18	Robert Belton - ARTH

		19	Jordan Stouck – ENGL	19	Suzanne Gott - ARTH
		20	Bryce Traister - ENGL	20	Keshani, Hussein - ARTH
		21	Michael Treschow – ENGL	21	MacHardy, Carolyn - ARTH
		22	DH Hire – ENGL/DIHU	22	Virginie Magnat (Joint Appt Creative) - .5
		23	David Jefferess – CULT		
		24	Daniel Keyes - CULT		
		25	Ruthann Lee – CULT		
		26	Kyong Yoon – CULT		