

Minutes of the Department of English Meeting Wednesday February 1 2012

Joe Eska convened the meeting at 12:15, announcing that our focus would be developing the department's five-year hiring plan. He explained that the meeting comes at the request of the Graduate Committee in order for the department as a whole to discuss the recommendations of the various curriculum committees (LLC, Creative Writing, and Professional Writing) that had already made their own recommendations.

Joe gave an overview of our enrollments in the various curricular divisions, then listed the hiring plan established in Spring 2011:

LLC positions:

- Children's Literature (with international and/or ethnic focus)
- Linguistics
- World Literature
- Ethnic Literature
- 20th c British Literature
- 18th-19th c British
- Medieval-Renaissance (the idea of combining these very large areas met with some opposition)
- American Literature (2 hires)

Professional Writing positions:

- Rhetoric/Professional Writing (2 hires)

Creative Writing positions:

- Creative Nonfiction
- New Media (Digital/Multi-Media)

A wide-ranging discussion of the five year plan followed; do we, for example, take research areas into consideration (along with the regular subjects we teach) as we draw up the plan? The need to attract outside funding for research is a major factor in our planning, but other hiring needs are driven by program requirements (a useful example being the number of Linguistics courses required for teacher training, mandated by the Commonwealth).

It soon became clear (and Joe underscored the point), that we should try to make hires that cross as many areas as possible, or, to phrase it slightly differently, hires in areas that are unmistakably interdisciplinary. We generally agree that the Internationalization of the Curriculum should remain a priority, as should Digital Humanities. Likewise, Humanities and Health Sciences, along with Literature and Medicine, combine in ways that can attract major funding. (We acknowledged that most humanists are able to do their work without large-scale funding, but that collaborative Humanities-Science programs might attract funding of sufficient magnitude to benefit the whole department.)

We discussed some other attractive disciplinary combinations: for example, it might be possible to hire an individual with background in International Children's Literature, or a World Literature specialist trained in Digital Humanities. It is clear that we need to do the sorts of things the dean wants to do, such as Creative Arts and Technology initiatives. Perhaps we could form partnerships with Foreign Languages. We could also approach the study of Science Fiction in interdisciplinary collaborative programs.

The meeting concluded at 1:05 with Joe asking us to continue thinking about the possibilities.

Respectfully,

Tony Colaianne