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***SUBMITTED TO OUCQA FOR INFORMATION – December 6, 2017***

***APPROVED BY TRENT UNIVERSITY’S SENATE COMMITTEE – November 7, 2017***

# CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE (CPRC)

# FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**FORENSIC SCIENCE**

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| **DEGREE PROGRAMS BEING REVIEWED** | **BScFS Forensic Science**  **BSc and BA Joint Major Forensic Science** |
| **EXTERNAL REVIEWERS** | **Dr. Scott Fairgrieve, Laurentian University**  **Dr. Shashi Jasra, University of Windsor** |
| **INTERNAL REPRESENTATIVE** | **Dr. Brian Patrick, COIS, Trent University** |
| **YEAR OF REVIEW** | **2016-2017** |
| **DATE OF SITE VISIT** | **March 2 & 3, 2017** |
| **DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT BY FRSC** | **October 1, 2018** |
| **DATE OF NEXT CYCLICAL REVIEW** | **2024-2025** |
| **DATE PREPARED BY CPRC** | **October 18, 2017** |
| **DATE APPROVED BY PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC** | **Oct 24, 2017** |
| **SIGNATURE OF PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC** | Provost Muldoon |

The Forensics Science degree program has been a part of Trent University since 2004. In 2009 Trent, created a BA/BSc Joint-Major program, becoming the only University to allow students to combine their study of forensics with other academic disciplines. The program provides an interdisciplinary knowledge base, creating strong critical thinking and analytical skills.

The program combines theory and practice to provide students with the confidence and skills in preparation of a professional career. Students are exposed to a working knowledge of a diverse range of topics along with current developments in forensic science via experiential learning. Reviewers commented on unique student ‘opportunities to experience forensic science in a real world atmosphere’. Working directly with scientists in the lab and professionals in the field, students will engage in investigative skills, including: blood spatter analysis, finger printing and evidence recovery in mock crime scenes in Trent’s own Crime Scene House. ‘The hands-on nature of the program and the wide variety of courses present students with unique opportunities that distinguish it from other forensic science programs,’ was highlighted by the external reviewers.

**SUMMARY OF PROCESS**

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the BScFS Forensic Science and BSc and BA Joint Major Forensic Science underwent a review. Two arm’s-length external reviewers (Dr. Scott Fairgrieve, Laurentian University and Dr. Shashi Jasra, University of Windsor) and one internal member (Brian Patrick, Trent University) were invited to review the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to the university on March 2nd and 3rd, 2017.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR), in accordance with Trent University’s Institutional Quality Assurance Policy (IQAP), provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the undergraduate degree program. The report considers four evaluation documents: the Program’s Self-Study, the External Reviewers’ Report, the Program Response, and the Decanal Response.

A summary of the review process is as follows: the academic unit(s) completed a self-study which addressed all components of the evaluation criteria as outlined in Trent’s IQAP. Appendices included: Curriculum Vitae; Course Syllabi; Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Mapping; Enrolment, Retention and Student Data; Calendar Copy; University Degree Requirements; TUFA Collective Agreement; and Student Surveys. Qualified external reviewers were invited to conduct a review of the two degree programs which involved a review of all relevant documentation (self-study, appendices, IQAP) in advance of the site visit. A two-day site visit took place where reviewers met with senior administration, faculty, and students.

Once the external reviewers’ report was received both the Program and Dean provided responses to the report. The Cyclical Program Review Committee (CPRC) reviewed and assessed the quality of the degree programs based on the four review documents and reported on significant program strengths, opportunities for improvement and enhancement, and the implementation of recommendations.

The Implementation Plan identifies those recommendations selected for implementation and specifies: proposed follow-up, who is responsible for leading the follow-up, and the specific timeline for addressing the recommendation, if applicable. Academic units, in consultation with the respective Dean(s), will submit an Implementation Report in response to the recommendations identified for follow-up. The Report is due October 1, 2018.

**SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM STRENGTHS**

* The program emphasises hands-on learning as shown through investigative techniques in the laboratory and through evidence recovery via the Mock Crime Scene House.
* Reviewers commented on the interdisciplinary approach of the program that enhances student experience and provides students with the opportunity to complete a joint-degree, combining forensic science with a related or non-related discipline.
* Trent’s Wildlife DNA facility, as well as the university’s association with a number of external agencies, differentiates the program from other forensic science programs, and at the same time provides experience in real world atmospheres.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT**

* The program should consider reviewing the admission average to accurately reflect current admissions into the program and to maintain consistency with other forensic science programs in Ontario.
* The program should consider moving the crime scene house closer to the main campus for easier access to the facility.

**COMPLETE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION 1**

**That the program establish specializations in forensic sciences.**

Program Response

With the recent creation of new courses and increased faculty, Forensic Science will now be in a position to allow for streams of specialization.

Decanal Response

The recent new hires should put the department in a position to develop new specializations within the BScFS. Establishing such streams would address a longstanding request of BScFS students and would further strengthen the degree program.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

**That specializations, specifically in: Policing and Law, Molecular Biology, Forensic Chemistry, Forensic Anthropology and Forensic Psychology be considered.**

Program Response

Our focus will be on biology, chemistry and law and policing as we likely have the courses in place to allow for these streams to be realized. We have worked with ANTH towards the creation of two cross-listed courses, and hope to work with PYSC in the future to develop a cross-listed course. These courses, and their success, would be the basis of any further consideration for streams in these fields.

Decanal Response

The current curriculum already offers a solid foundation in the above areas. Where possible, the program is encouraged to provide more depth, where appropriate. Currently, the development of specializations in biology, chemistry, law/policing should have priority over planning new degrees in Forensic Psychology, for example.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

**That health and safety issues in the Crime Scene House be addressed.**

Program Response

Health and safety concerns are currently being addressed based on the recent audit of the current Crime Scene House (CSH). There are no plans to have the current structure serve the longer term needs of FRSC. Discussions are ongoing with the Dean to find suitable lab space for crime scene labs on campus for Fall 2018. FRSC has also contacted advancement towards starting a fund-raising platform to work towards the creation of a new facility on campus.

Decanal Response

The renovation or replacement of the CSH is a top priority for the Dean of Science. The institution must address and resolve this issue.

**RECOMMENDATION 4**

**That the Crime Scene House be relocated to the Trent University main campus.**

Program Response

In general, we agree with this recommendation and are exploring options.

Decanal Response

Agreed, locating the CSH on the main campus is most desirable.

**RECOMMENDATION 5**

**That the laboratory component of Forensic Science courses be restricted to those students in the BScFS program.**

Program Response

The Program has no plans to provide joint major students with first year courses without a lab component. This concern relates largely to our 1st year courses that are now far in excess of 300 students. Students do not declare majors until second year so partitioning students in the suggested manner is not possible. One solution we have considered is to have on-line labs in the intervening weeks for those first-year courses when the students do not have an in-person lab.

Decanal Response

The Dean rejected this recommendation. While practical lab experience is a must for BScFS students, joint majors should not be dismissed as “second class” forensic students. This would go diametrically against the culture of Trent, where we strive to allow students to customize combine degrees where possible. The department has offered adequate solutions to address the issue.

**RECOMMENDATION 6 (additional recommendation by CPRC)**

**That the Program consider the requirement of a half credit in calculus and a full year physics course in order to meet American and Canadian accreditation standards.**

CPRC

The reviewers had included this as a suggestion, however, members of the Cyclical Program Review Committee felt strongly that this should be a formal recommendation.

**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**The applicable Dean, in consultation with the Department Chair/Director of the relevant Academic Unit shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The Reporting Date for submitting a follow-up Implementation Report is indicated below and is the responsibility of the Academic Unit in consultation with the Dean.**

**DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT: October 1, 2018**

The Implementation Report should be submitted to the applicable Dean(s) who will then forward the Report to the Office of the Provost.

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| **Recommendation** | **Proposed Follow-Up**  *If no follow-up is recommended, please clearly indicate ‘No follow up report is required’ and provide rationale.*  *Indicate specific timeline for completion or addressing recommendation if different than Due Date for Implementation Report* | **Position Responsible for Leading Follow-up** |
| **Recommendation #1** That the program establish specializations in forensic sciences.  **Recommendation #2** That specializations, specifically in: Policing and Law, Molecular Biology, Forensic Chemistry, Forensic Anthropology and Forensic Psychology be considered. | Program to report back.  Note: CPRC recommended that the Program develop Specializations rather than Streams, as Specializations are included on the student’s final parchment. | Chair in consultation with Dean |
| **Recommendation #3** That health and safety issues in the Crime Scene House be addressed.  **Recommendation #4** That the Crime Scene House be relocated to the Trent University main campus. | The Dean reported that there are plans to build a new Crime Scene House on campus. CPRC looks forward to an update. | Chair in consultation with Dean |
| **Recommendation #5** That the laboratory component of Forensic Science courses be restricted to those students in the BScFS program. | Both the Program and Dean disagreed with this recommendation and felt strongly that all students should participate in laboratories.  Program to provide update on ability to continue to offer labs to all students. | Chair in consultation with Dean |
| **Recommendation #6 (CPRC recommendation)** That the Program consider the requirement of a half credit in calculus and a full year physics course in order to meet American and Canadian accreditation standards. | Program to report back. | Chair |