***SUBMITTED TO OUCQA FOR INFORMATION – March 29, 2021***

***APPROVED BY TRENT UNIVERSITY’S SENATE COMMITTEE – March 23, 2021***

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# Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

# Bachelor of Arts & Science

# Completed by the Cyclical Program Review Committee (CPRC)

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| **Degree Programs Being Reviewed** | **Bachelor of Arts & Science Honours**  **Bachelor of Arts & Science General** |
| **External Reviewers** | **Dr. Lydia Miljan, University of Windsor**  **Dr. Patrick Barclay, University of Guelph** |
| **Internal Representative** | **Dr. Sally Chivers, English Literature/Gender & Women’s Studies** |
| **Year of Review** | **2019-2020** |
| **Date of Site Visit** | **February 6, 2020** |
| **Due Date for Implementation Report by the Program** | **October 1, 2021** |
| **Date Prepared by CPRC** | **March 10, 2021** |
| **Date Approved by Provost & VP Academic** | **March 11, 2021** |
| **Signature of Provost & VP Academic** | **Michael Khan, Provost & VP Academic Signature** |

The Bachelor of Arts and Science (BAS) program offers two distinct programs, BAS Honours and BA General, each with quite different goals and aspirations.

The four-year Honours program was designed to be intellectually challenging for students interested in pursuing studies in both the Arts and Science. This is a direct entry program designed to offer students the freedom and opportunity to blend creativity and analytical rigor, social expertise and empirical acumen. The Honours program offers students an excellent opportunity to gain skills comprising research excellence in the sciences and arts, professional-level oral and written communication, creativity, and inventiveness. This skill set and broad knowledge-base is highly sought after by employers, graduate schools, and professional programs including medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, teaching, and law.

The General program in Arts & Science is not a direct entry program. This option was added as an exit strategy for students currently enrolled at the University. To earn the General degree, students must first consult with an Academic Advisor and apply to the Committee on Undergraduate Petitions (CUP) for approval.

**Summary of Process**

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Bachelor of Arts & Science Honours and General programs underwent a review. Two arm’s-length external reviewers (Dr. Lydia Miljan, University of Windsor and Dr. Patrick Barclay, University of Guelph) and one internal representative (Dr. Sally Chivers, English Literature and Gender & Women’s Studies, Trent University) were invited to review the self-study documentation. The site visit took place at the Peterborough campus on February 6, 2020.

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 graduate degree programs. 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 completed a self-study that addressed all components of the evaluation criteria as outlined in Trent’s IQAP. Appendices included: Curriculum Vitae, Course Syllabi, Data Tables, Student and Alumni Surveys and a Library Statement of Support. Qualified external reviewers were invited to conduct a review of the program that involved a review of all relevant documentation (self-study, appendices, IQAP) in advance of the site visit. A one-day site visit took place where reviewers met with senior administration, faculty, students and staff.

Once the external reviewers’ report was received, both the Program and Deans 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 strengths, opportunities for improvement and enhancement, and the implementation of recommendations.

The Implementation Plan identifies those recommendations selected for implementation and specifies the proposed follow-up and the person(s) responsible for leading the follow-up. 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, 2021.

**Significant Program Strengths**

The BAS Honours program is a unique program offering students the best of both worlds, the opportunity to study in the arts and sciences. The core courses of the program offer a unique approach to interdisciplinary study and are well received by students. Students indicated they are very satisfied with the quality of instruction, flexibility of courses, and the ability to pursue independent research in arts and science courses.

**Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement**

The BAS Honours was developed as an elite program for high achieving students. The General program associated with the program places the reputation of the Honours program at risk and should be addressed. Focus should be placed on ensuring the offering of a quality program and enhancing the reputation of the program.

It will be important to develop a strong cohort of faculty to support the BAS program and provide mentorship to this unique cohort of students. A long-term faculty position (multi-year LTA) hired to coordinate the program would provide stability and leadership for the program.

A stronger emphasis in the sciences would ensure students are graduating with a balance of arts and science courses, similar to other BAS programs across the province. As well, the interdisciplinary focus of the program should be broadened to incorporate a larger array of topics.

**Complete List of Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1**

**That the program’s viability and future be considered, with two options, cut the program or make a commitment to the program.**

*This program is at a crossroads. The four core ASCI courses are the only thing that differentiates it from a standard BSc or BA with one major/minor in science and one major/minor in non-science. It was clear from the various meetings that a decision will have to be made regarding the viability and future of the program.*

**Program Response**

The Program responded to both options for the deans to provide response.

a) Cut the Honours program

* If we cut the Honours program, there is an argument for retaining one or both of ASCI 1001H: Arts and Science: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and ASCI 1002H: Theory and Practice as University courses. They are valuable introductions to university study.
* If we cut the Honours program, there is no reason not to retain the General program as a catch-all for students who would otherwise complete 15 credits without finishing a degree. If the General program is retained:
* It should be renamed to make it clear that it is not a Bachelor of Arts and Science program in the sense that this term is used at other institutions. We suggest something like “General Arts and Science.”
* For the benefit of those completing General Arts and Science, we would recommend replacing the requirement of ‘0.5 credit from ASCI 1001H, 1002H, or 2001’ with the requirement of ASCI 3001H Arts and Science Colloquium. ASCI 3001H, by contrast, would serve as a worthwhile capstone, giving students an opportunity to reflect on what they have actually accomplished in their three years at Trent.
* The BAS program committee would not be responsible for the General Arts and Science degree. The general program has nothing to do with the original intent of the BAS program and is of no interest to most of the current committee members.

b) Make a commitment to the Honours program

Since all of the recommendations below assume this commitment, we will respond to those recommendations specifically.

**Decanal Response**

The Deans propose to keep the Honours program and to regenerate a strong and exciting BAS program.

**Recommendation 2**

**That a full-time tenure track in the program be hired.**

**Program Response**

The Program agrees that a commitment to regular faculty members is needed, with a preference for ‘multiple cross-appointed faculty from other departments with permanent teaching commitment to the BAS program as part of their contract.’ The Program also agreed that the University would need to commit to tenure track positions in the long term.

**Decanal Response**

Given the circumstances, a multi-year LTA in the designated home department and adequate administrative support is desirable and seems realistic. An additional commitment of existing faculty to teach selected courses in the program would address the problematic situation of a single faculty member teaching all BAS core courses.

**Recommendation 3**

**That the program be housed within a department.**

*The lack of a department home means that the commitment to instruction within the program will always be subject to budgetary cuts. The program needs are better served within a department with more than one faculty member.*

**Program Response**

The lack of a departmental home has been an obstacle to the program. Several departments have previously been discussed/approached as potential home departments, but there have always been stumbling blocks.

**Decanal Response**

The Deans agree that a suitable home department would be key to building a stable, successful program. Deans will therefore start discussions with potentially interested units to explore their interest and the feasibility of hosting and administering the BAS degree.

**Recommendation 4**

**That team teaching be considered.**

*One of the most exciting things about Trent’s original approach to the program was that it was a program designed by the interests of faculty. The original courses had team teaching and innovative design. That aspect has been completely lost in recent years. Having more than one faculty member teach a course provides students with a more realistic interdisciplinary approach and could ease the pressure of having only one person deliver all courses.*

**Program Response**

The Program agrees that team teaching was part of the original pedagogical vision for the program, and would retain this model pending availability of staffing resources. The only way to effectively encourage this is to create the cross-appointed tenure-track hires suggested above or to cross-appoint faculty from other programs.

**Decanal Response**

It is critical to rejuvenate the interest of faculty of being part of BAS and putting them in position to continue teaching in the program. Depending on current home units this may take a variety of approaches. Deans should engage with departments to explore ‘secondment’ of faculty to teach in BAS.

**Recommendation 5**

**That the BAS General program be renamed or realigned with the BAS Honours program.**

*The General BAS program is inconsistent with the goals and standards of the Honours BAS program. Unless the admission requirements and degree requirements for the General BAS are made more rigorous and interdisciplinary, it is recommended that the General BAS be either eliminated or renamed to avoid association with the Honours BAS program. This program does serve a useful function as a fail-safe for students and it is recommended that the program be renamed...*

**Program Response**

This is correct. If the Honours program is retained, the general program will have to be terminated or significantly revised. In either case, it could not continue to serve as a “fail-safe.”

**Decanal Response**

The Deans agree that the Honours BAS degree should be retained and propose that the General BAS degree be split to offer a General BA and a General Sc.

**Recommendation 6**

**That the scientific content be increased.**

*The current scientific content is a minimum of 3.0 science credits plus 2.0 ASCI credits (currently taught by a non-scientist). It is recommended that the scientific content be increased by either requiring more science credits, increased teaching/team-teaching commitments by science faculty, re-introduction of a 4th-year capstone ASCI course, or more than one of the above.*

**Program Response**

The Program is not convinced that the scientific content in the core courses needs to be increased (and note that students currently have the option to increase their number of science credits depending, e.g., on their major), but in the event that the Honours program continues, we will consider this recommendation. There are three parts to it, which we will respond to briefly here:

1) Requiring more science credits. Requiring more science credits is possible, although it is not clear that adding 0.5 or 1.0 additional sciences courses to a student’s university career is going to noticeably change their educational experience. The Program is suggesting that a minor in science be added however there may be scheduling implications.

2) Increased teaching/team-teaching commitments by science faculty. Despite the fact that there has been quite a bit of interest in this program from multiple science faculty across several departments, there is no framework that encourages this kind of commitment on an ongoing basis, either from Science faculty or from Arts faculty.

3) Re-introduction of a 4th-year capstone ASCI course. The University would need to commit to staffing a course with low enrolment or:

* Cross-list the course with another program. It would most likely be a humanities or social sciences cross-listing that would not reflect the recommendation to increase science content. This option would also raises further questions about the distinctness of the BAS program.
* Offer supervised 4th year thesis projects. This would require a long-term commitment from faculty members outside of the BAS program that may not be sustainable.

**Decanal Response**

The proposed curriculum change would allow for the suggested increase in science content. The (perceived) obstacles for engaging more faculty to teach in the program can be removed and should not be a deterrent in the future. (Re)introduction of a 4th year capstone course would be desirable and could be developed using existing models in other programs (having also low numbers of graduating students).

**Recommendation 7**

1. **That space be made available for students to congregate; and,**
2. **That there be a mechanism for students to provide feedback on program curriculum and structure.**

**Program Response**

There may be space opportunities if the program is housed within another academic however substantial support may be required from the Dean. Space on the main campus would be beneficial, given that science courses are taught on main campus.

**Decanal Response**

The Deans support the initiative to build a BAS community. Exact details would depend in part on the nature and the location of the new home department.

**Recommendation 8 – Minor Recommendations**

* 1. **That the use of summative evaluations to assess key knowledge in core courses be increased;**
  2. **That the representation of diverse sciences in core courses be increased;**
  3. **That the program considers cross-listing courses from other departments;**
  4. **That engagement with the advisory council be increased; and,**
  5. **That applicants are made aware of how the BAS program differs from a BA or BSc.**

**Program Response**

a) The Program will take this suggestion under advisement. The pedagogical value of summative evaluations is not even across disciplines

b) If the Honours program continues, balancing the representation of sciences with arts in the core courses will be difficult to accomplish without team teaching (i.e. without having at least one instructor from each division).

c) The Program will revisit this proposal if the Honours program continues.

d) This is unlikely to occur under the current circumstances. Hiring permanent faculty members to provide a core of engaged faculty members might give the advisory council some gravitational pull. Members of the program committee have competing demands from their home departments and it is difficult to rely on them for core program functions.

e) If the Honours program continues, the Program will work with recruitment and marketing.

**Decanal Response**

The Deans support these initiatives and look forward to their implementation.

**Recommendation 9 (Deans/CPRC)**

**That a General BA and General BSc be developed from the BAS General degree in order to meet the needs of students wishing to complete a general degree in either arts or science.**

**Additional Information**

This recommendation has been proposed by the Deans and the Cyclical Program Review Committee. The Honours BAS degree is a direct entry program initially designed for high academic achievers. The general BAS degree is twofold, it is an integral part of Trent’s Swansea partnership programs however, in recent years the general degree program has also been used by students as an exit degree option. Students wishing to pursue a general degree are typically seeking a degree in either the arts or science and the development of a general BA and a general BSc will provide students with this option. During this review, both students and faculty commented that the quality of the program had been affected by the inclusion of these students in the BAS required courses. Developing distinct BA and BSc general programs supports Recommendation 1 – the viability and future of the BAS program and will enhance the educational experiences of the students in the BAS program.

**Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action. The Academic Unit in consultation with their Dean will be responsible for moving forward with the recommendations to ensure that each is completed within the recommended timeframe.

The Academic Unit will submit an Implementation Report to their Dean reporting on the completion and/or status of each recommendation. The Dean will review the Implementation Report prior to submitting the report to the Office of the Provost.

**DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT: OCTOBER 1, 2021**

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| Recommendation | Proposed Follow-Up | Position Responsible for Leading Follow-up |
| Recommendation 1  That the program’s viability and future be considered, with two options, cut the program or make a commitment to the program.  Recommendation 5  That the BAS General program be renamed or realigned with the BAS Honours program.  Recommendation 9 (Deans/CPRC)  That a General BA and General BSc be developed from the BAS General degree in order to meet the needs of students wishing to complete a general degree in either arts or science. | It is clear that there is a commitment to saving the BAS Honours program. In light of this, CPRC requests that the program identify specific actions/outcomes that will be taken to demonstrate the university’s commitment to the BAS Honours program.  The future of the BAS General program is still not clear. If the Honours program was developed to attract high-achieving students and there is a plan to offer a General BA and a General BSc, it is unclear as to the purpose of retaining the BAS General program.  If the decision is to retain the BAS General program, please clarify its purpose and distinction. | Deans |
| **Faculty**  Recommendation 2  That a full-time tenure track in the program be hired.  Recommendation 4  That team teaching be considered. | To stabilize the program and to ensure its ongoing quality, provide an update on the faculty staffing of core courses for the Honours program  CPRC would like an update on the plan for staffing the core/required courses | Deans  BAS Coordinator /Program Curriculum Committee in consultation with Deans |
| Recommendation 3  That the program be housed within a department.  Recommendation 8d  That engagement with the advisory council be increased | Deans to explore potential home departments for the BAS degree.  Provide a status on the development of a Program Curriculum Committee or Advisory Council to help make decisions on program curriculum and structure | Deans  BAS Coordinator /Program Curriculum Committee in consultation with Deans |
| **Curriculum**  Recommendation 6 and 8b  That the scientific content be increased.  Recommendation 7b  That there be a mechanism for students to provide feedback on program curriculum and structure.  Recommendation 8a  That the use of summative evaluations to assess key knowledge in core courses be increased.  Recommendation 8c  That the program considers cross-listing courses from other departments. | Conduct a curriculum review and determine how student feedback will be collected and considered. Specially comment on the recommendation to increase science content. | BAS Coordinator/ Program Curriculum Committee |
| Recommendation 7a  That space be made available for students to congregate | No follow up required as this is not considered to be an issue affecting the quality of the program.  CPRC recognizes that a dedicated space would be beneficial to the student cohort as it would enhance the student experience. |  |
| Recommendation 8e  That applicants are made aware of how the BAS program differs from a BA or BSc |  | BAS Coordinator / Program Curriculum working with Marketing and Recruitment |