****

***SUBMITTED TO OUCQA FOR INFORMATION – May 31, 2017***

***APPROVED BY TRENT UNIVERSITY’S SENATE COMMITTEE – April 4, 2017***

**CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE (CPRC)**

**FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**ENVIRONMENT (Undergraduate Degree Programs)**

*(March 15, 2017)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DEGREE PROGRAMS BEING REVIEWED** | * **BA Environmental & Resource Studies**
* **BSc Environmental & Resource Science**
* **BESS Bachelor of Environmental Science & Studies**
* **BSc Ecological Restoration (with Fleming)**
* **BA and BSc Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems**
 |
| **EXTERNAL REVIEWERS** | **Dr. Stephen Murphy, University of Waterloo****Dr. Yves Prairie, Université du Québec à Montréal, UQAM**  |
| **INTERNAL REPRESENTATIVE** | **Dr. Carolyn Kapron, Biology, Trent University** |
| **YEAR OF REVIEW** | **2015-2016** |
| **DATE OF SITE VISIT** | **March 28 & 29, 2016** |
| **DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT BY BIOL** | **January 31, 2018** |
| **DATE OF NEXT CYCLICAL REVIEW** | **2023-2024** |
| **DATE PREPARED BY CPRC** | **March 1, 2017** |
| **DATE APPROVED BY PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC** | **March 17, 2017** |
| **SIGNATURE OF PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC** | **Provost Muldoon** |

Trent University offers a number of significant and distinctive environmental degrees, each with their own history, structure and learning outcomes. The recent external review of Trent’s environmental degree programs highlights the quality and calibre of programs the university offers its students, and is supported by the reviewers’ comments, ‘the state of the programs and unit is very good and thriving.’

The Dean commented that ‘Trent faculty essentially ‘invented’ the Environmental Science degrees’ and proudly refers to the degrees as ‘the gold-standard for such programs in Canada’. As a leader in environmental education, ‘it is therefore not surprising that the external assessors had very few suggestions for quality improvement.’

In July 2015, the School of Environment was created and now administers the degree programs. This enables programs to draw upon collective resources of the program, including: courses, faculty, staff, laboratories and facilities. The primary challenge in delivering these programs will be to provide for succession planning and the seamless continuation of high calibre programming.

**SUMMARY OF PROCESS**

During the 2015-2016 academic year, the following degree programs were conducted:

* + BA Environmental & Resource Studies
	+ BSc Environmental & Resource Science
	+ BESS Bachelor of Environmental Science & Studies
	+ BSc Ecological Restoration (with Fleming)
	+ BA and BSc Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems

Two arm’s-length external reviewers (Dr. Stephen Murphy, University of Waterloo and Yves Prairie,) Université du Québec à Montréal, UQAM) and one internal member (Dr. Carolyn Kapron, Trent University) were invited to review the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to the university on March 28th and 29th, 2016.

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 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(s) completed two self-studies (one for ERS, BESS, SAFS; and one for Ecological Restoration) that addressed the components of the evaluation criteria as outlined in Trent’s IQAP. The self-study clearly identified and discussed the evaluation criteria as it related to each of the degree programs, for example, curriculum, data analysis and learning outcomes for each of the degree programs is clearly outlined and discussed. Appendices included: Curriculum Vitae; Course Syllabi; University Calendar Copy; University Degree Requirements; and TUFA Collective Agreement. The sections on Learning Outcomes and Data Analysis were incorporated into the self-study document. Qualified external reviewers were invited to conduct a review of the degree programs which involved a review of all relevant documentation (self-studies, appendices, IQAP) in advance of the site visit. A two-day site visit took place where reviewers: met with Trent’s senior administration, faculty and students from Trent; met with Fleming’s Dean, faculty, and staff; and toured Trent’s Water Quality Centre.

Once the external reviewers’ report was received both the School of Environment 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 reports 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 January 31, 2018.

**SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM STRENGTHS**

* Students are enthusiastic about the quality of their education they receive.
* The external reviewers noted that ‘the participation and accessibility of faculty is without a doubt a very strong point for the programs.’ Faculty are ‘the driving force and soul of the programs’. Faculty members of the environmental programs ‘are an unusually dedicated and talented group of professors that care immensely about the viability and excellence of the degree programs.’
* ‘The School lives up to its mandate, being a very interdisciplinary home for a variety of degrees in both the Arts and the Sciences.’ The School ‘will provide a "virtual house" to several related programs that should enhance the sense of belonging among the students, an important parameter to the success of students.’

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT**

* The School of Environment presents an opportunity for increased synergies of resources and faculty in the offering of degree programs. The School should review each degree program and its curriculum offerings; and consider opportunities for streamlining courses that offer similar curriculum. The School should consider working more closely with ‘related disciplines such as biology’ to ‘enhance the learning and teaching environment’ of its degree programs.
* Degree pathways and nomenclature need to be clearly articulated to students. Increasing the number of required courses, even if by only a few, would work in favour of a more equitable skillset among graduating students.
* Students (as well as faculty) indicated that the School should consider developing increased experiential opportunities.
* The Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems program would benefit ‘from a more integrated use of the experimental farm’. A farm manager would enhance the ability of the ‘program to deliver experiential education.’
* The Fleming-to-Trent Ecological Restoration program is unique in its college-to-university delivery.

**COMPLETE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

* *Recommendations 1a, 2, 3 were official recommendations from the External Reviewers.*
* *Recommendations 1b and 5 were recommended by the Dean.*
* *Recommendation 4 was flagged by the reviewers and is under Program consideration.*

**RECOMMENDATION 1**

**That the School of Environment develop a five-year succession plan that clearly identifies the resources needed to support the School and the degree programs managed by the School.**

Program Response

The School agrees that it is essential to develop a succession plan to ensure teaching and research capacities remain at the forefront of scholarship in environmental science and studies. Clarity on the university’s commitment of resources would be helpful in planning.

Decanal Response

A succession plan addressing impending or expected retirements must be developed, and should take into consideration the proposed curriculum review (Recommendation 2)

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

1. **That the School conduct a curriculum review of all of the degree programs reviewed, to be completed in conjunction with succession planning.**
2. **That the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems degree be properly defined to provide for a distinct and clear set of expectations and requirements in order to ensure the success of students.**

Program Response

The School of the Environment will begin a broad curriculum review in Fall 2016. This will allow the School to better develop a succession plan, identify future teaching requirements, identify greater efficiencies in teaching, and consider revising degree structures. Course requirements may be further defined to ensure that all students are achieving their degree learning outcomes.

Decanal Response

A comprehensive curriculum review is recommended to maximize existing efficiencies in delivering related degrees and to identify potential redundancies in current course offerings. Defining core themes and identifying new or reaffirming existing foci will aid in developing a proper succession plan to ensure that the needs of the School will be met in the future.

**RECOMMENDATION 3**

**That the School of Environment receive adequate support to administer the degree programs under its umbrella with priority being given to hiring an Associate Director for the School and a coordinator for the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Program.**

Program Response

An Associate Director will be hired to support the Director position. Additional administrative/ technical support is needs, specifically to support the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Program. A coordinator position would include management of the Experimental Farm, and would allow for the development of relationships with local farmers and community partners which would create potential experiential opportunities for students.

Decanal Response

An Associate Director has been appointed to a three year term. The SAFS program including the operation and management of the Experimental Farm must be one of the key areas of the curriculum review.

**RECOMMENDATION 4 (Program)**

**That the School consider raising the admission requirements for all of its degrees from 70% to 75%.**

The School will determine the number of students currently admitted with averages between 70 and 75%, review the success of this group of students, and assess the impact of increasing the entering average.

**RECOMMENDATION 5 (Dean)**

**That the roles and responsibilities of existing (OPSEU) support staff be reviewed to ensure that all key activities of the School, including the operation and management of the Experimental Farm, are properly supported.**

The review should identify potential overlap in duties and potential gaps in support.

**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: JANUARY 31, 2018**

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **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 1That the School of Environment develop a five-year succession plan that clearly identifies the resources needed to support the School and the degree programs managed by the School.  | Program to complete success plan and provide update on status.  | Director of School in consultation with Dean |
| Recommendation 21. That the School conduct a curriculum review of the degree programs reviewed, to be completed in conjunction with succession planning.
2. That the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems degree be properly defined to provide for a distinct and clear set of expectations and requirements in order to ensure the success of our students.
 |  A comprehensive review of curriculum for the environmental degree programs should be completed for January 2018.Efficiencies and redundancies should be identified.Specifically the degree requirements of SAFS should be reviewed. |  Director of SchoolDirector of School |
| Recommendation 3That the School of Environment receive adequate support to administer the degree programs under its umbrella. Priority should be given to hiring an Associate Director for the School and a coordinator for the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Program.  | No follow up is required.Both an Associate Director and Coordinator for SAFS have been appointed.  |   |
| Recommendation 4 That the School consider raising the admission requirements for all of its degrees from 70% to 75%. | Program to provide report.  | Director of School |
| Recommendation 5 That the roles and responsibilities of existing (OPSEU) support staff be reviewed to ensure that all key activities of the School, including the operation and management of the Experimental Farm, are properly supported.  | A comprehensive review of support staff should be completed and reported on for January 2018. | Director of School |