

SUBMITTED TO OUCQA FOR INFORMATION – May 13, 2016

APPROVED BY TRENT UNIVERSITY’S SENATE COMMITTEE – May 10, 2016

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT – CYCLICAL REVIEW

BA/BSc in Geography

April 28, 2016

DEGREE PROGRAMS BEING REVIEWED	BA and BSc in Geography
EXTERNAL REVIEWERS	Dr. Kathi Wilson (University of Toronto Mississauga) Dr. Paul Treitz (Queen’s University)
INTERNAL REPRESENTATIVE	Dr. David Poole, Trent University
DATE OF REVIEW VISIT	April 8 and 9, 2015

SUMMARY

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) is responsible for completing a self-study which encompasses all degree programs under review. The self-study addresses all components of the evaluation criteria as outlined in Trent’s IQAP. Appendices will include the course outlines in each of the degree programs and CVs for full-time faculty members teaching in the degree programs. Qualified external reviewers are invited to conduct a review of the degree programs which involves a review of all relevant documentation (self-study, appendices, IQAP), and participating in a university site visit. During the site visit reviewers meet with the Provost and Vice President Academic, relevant Dean(s), the Chair and or Director of the degree program(s), full- and part-time faculty, support staff and students. Once the external reviewers’ report is received both the program and dean provide responses to the report.

The Cyclical Program Review Committee (CPRC) reviews and assesses 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 timeline for addressing the recommendation.

During the academic year 2014-2015, a review of the BA and BSc programs in Geography was completed. Two arm’s-length external reviewers (Dr. Kathi Wilson, University of Toronto Mississauga; Dr. Paul Treitz, Queen’s University) and one internal member (Dr. David Poole) were invited to review the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to the university on April 8-9, 2015.

The Cyclical Program Review Committee reviewed and discussed the self-study, the external reviewers' report, and responses from the program and dean. A Final Assessment Report was developed and includes an Implementation Plan which addresses specific recommendations, proposed follow-up and implementation dates. The Program will submit an Implementation Report in January 2017.

CPRC proposes to Senate that the BA and BSc programs in Geography be granted approval to continue.

SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM STRENGTHS

Notable strengths of the BA and BSc programs offered by the Geography Department are as follows:

- Reviewers observed that the Programs show a strong commitment to experiential learning and field-based study. This is achieved by the inclusion of field trips and an offering of courses which incorporate a focus on research and an emphasis on community-based education. The Review Team specifically noted that *GEOG 3100H – Peterborough and the Kawartha's*: “is an interdisciplinary course that could serve as a model for other Geography Departments.”
- The Programs demonstrate strong interdisciplinary connections which is in keeping with Trent's interdisciplinary mission as evidenced by the integration of Physical and Human Geography and an extensive offering of cross-listed courses and joint degree programs. The programs also foster strong partnerships with external communities and other institutions.
- The program provides a very positive first year experience, with the result that many students choose to select GEOG as their major
- Faculty have strong research-based connections at local, national and international levels and are committed to involving both undergraduate and graduate students in research projects.
- The Program requirements and learning outcomes are clearly defined and the Reviewers agree that “the methods used to assess student achievement in each course have been designed to enable instructors to determine whether or not learning outcomes have been achieved.”

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Aspects of the programs that could be improved were summarized as follows:

- Reviewers suggested that the area of Biogeography and Landscape Ecology be considered for inclusion as part of the BSc program. Biology already offers a complement of courses that might service a biogeography theme, and discussions with the Biology Department would determine if these courses could be incorporated as part of a biogeographical theme.
- For a more integrated approach, it was suggested that the Department provide more opportunity for students to apply the statistics-related material and methods taught in GEOG 2080H in upper-level courses. This would help students to better appreciate and recognize the relevance of the course content. This same approach should be applied for human geography students.
- It was noted that the 4th year experience could be improved by planning more joint events for GEOG 4010Y/4020D (Honours Thesis) and GEOG 4030Y (Community-Based Research).
- The Department may want to consider a review of the curriculum to ensure it aligns with current faculty interests and expertise. As an example, a focus on the department's expertise in urban and social geography would benefit both faculty and students.

COMPLETE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Revise the Human Geography curriculum to reflect the research and teaching expertise of the current faculty complement (it appears that the existing suite of courses is based on the research and teaching interests of faculty members who are no longer in the Department).

Recommendations 2 & 3

Expand the Human Geography faculty complement by at least one faculty member (while sessional instructors and LTAs provide important teaching, their lack of continued presence in the Department results in less contact time for students and continuity in the program)

Hire a tenure-stream faculty member with a strong research focus in the field of urban or social geography to build on the Department's existing strengths and ensure the offering of core courses

Recommendation 4

Install a proper projection system in the small (12 seat) computer lab to facilitate instruction of the GIS and remote sensing courses

Recommendation 5

Incorporate GIS, qualitative methods and statistical methods in upper year geography courses to demonstrate to students the relevance of their methods training at second year

Recommendation 6

Explore course synergies (coordinate prerequisite requirements and timetabling) for courses in Math and Biology (and others) that would complement the geography programs (perhaps adding depth to components of the program)

Recommendation 7

Implement a strong administrative structure to any proposed new School (i.e., the proposed School of the Environment) as opposed to an overarching aggregation of the existing units.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Program Chair, in consultation with the program/Department and the applicable Dean(s) will be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Report and for submission of an Implementation Report by the due date provided. Reports should be submitted electronically to the Office of the Provost and copied to the applicable Dean(s). The Report should address recommendations that require follow-up and should include details of the proposed follow-up and status of the follow-up (i.e., in progress, completed, not attainable) in accordance with the Implementation Date provided (if any).

Implementation Report Due: January 2017

In some cases programs may be asked to submit an earlier report for a specific recommendation. This will be clearly indicated in the final column under *Timelines for Addressing Recommendation*.

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up If no follow-up is recommended please clearly indicate ' No follow up report is required ' and provide rationale.	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation (If required)
Recommendation 1 Revise the Human Geography curriculum to reflect the research & teaching expertise of the current faculty complement		Director of School, Dean of Science	Expected date of completion: September 2017
Recommendations 2 & 3 Expand the Human Geography faculty complement by at least one faculty member. (While sessional instructors and LTAs provide important teaching, their lack of continued presence in the Department results in less contact time for students and continuity in the program.) Hire a tenure-stream faculty member with a strong research focus in the field of urban or social geography to build on the Department's existing strengths and ensure the offering of core courses	No follow up required. New faculty hires will occur as resources are available.		
Recommendation 4 Install a proper projection system in the small (12 seat) computer lab to facilitate instruction of the GIS and remote sensing courses		Director of School	Expected date of completion: September 2016

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up If no follow-up is recommended please clearly indicate ' No follow up report is required ' and provide rationale.	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation (If required)
Recommendation 5 Incorporate GIS, qualitative methods and statistical methods in upper year geography courses to demonstrate to students the relevance of their methods training at second year		Director of School, Dean of Science	Expected date of completion: September 2017
Recommendation 6 Explore course synergies (coordinate prerequisite requirements and timetabling) for courses in Math and Biology (and others) that would complement the geography programs (perhaps adding depth to components of the program)		Director of School, Dean of Science	Expected date of completion: May 2017
Recommendation 7 Implement a strong administrative structure to any proposed new School (i.e., the proposed School of the Environment) as opposed to an overarching aggregation of the existing units.		Director of School, Dean of Science	Expected date of completion: September 2016