

Health Sciences 2017 Implementation Report

Submitted By: Robb Travers, HE Department Chair

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Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
Recommendation #1: Grow the program in the context of excellence. Align the growth with faculty and financial resources.	Department Chair Dean of Science	Ongoing; two- and five-year goals should be put in place	Growth will have to be planned so that student numbers and resources grow together at a manageable pace.

Completed In Progress Other

2017 Unit Comments: We have implemented a number of strategies to continue to grow HE as a program.

Strategic Plan: We have completed 60% of the process of completing our department strategic plan. We have held 4 sessions attended by the HE department and facilitated by Dr. Manuel Riemer in Psychology. We will host two focus groups with students in the coming months and a draft plan will be ready by December, 2017. Final version by January, 2018.

Faculty Hires: We have added one additional faculty member to HE with the hiring of Dr. Karen Grepin, Canada Research Chair (Tier II), Health Systems. We also hired a LTA for a two-year period to cover sabbaticals, parental leaves, etc. This helps us to maintain our current courses at status quo – additional sections of courses were covered by CAS or LTA personnel.

Student Growth: We have seen a steady increase in the number of students entering HE. The first cohort, nine years ago, had 42 students, while in September 2017, 206 students were admitted. We accommodated this steady increase of incoming cohorts to honour our commitment to offering students smaller class sizes compared to larger health sciences programs in the province. We created multiple sections of core courses in years one through three to ensure more interactive learning classrooms, greater comfort among our cohort, and opportunities for professors and students to get to know each other better. We have implemented processes (see Recommendation 3) to enhance the strengths of incoming students, and to help them better maintain academic excellence while they are in the program. Moreover, our incoming students in 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 were the strongest ever in terms of the overall percentage entering with exceptionally high grades from high school (over 90%). We have also witnessed a decrease in first to second year attrition for HE students in the 2016-2017 cohort. We will monitor this over time to see if it becomes a trend.

Administrative Support: We have increased our administrative support to full-time for September to June. Shelagh Santi joined HE two days/week to fill this role, while Linda Bennett works the other three days/week. This has helped significantly in our ability to better respond to student/administrative needs.

Challenges – Faculty shortages remain a core and urgent issue to be addressed in order to “ensure that student numbers and resources grow together at a manageable pace”. While the hire of a CRC increases the research cache of HE, the associated teaching opportunities for the unit are limited. Moreover, while we did hire a two-year LTA, who is covering courses that are vacant as a result of sabbatical leaves. A third challenge remains the number of faculty who are cross-appointed – while these individuals increase the overall ‘faculty count’ in HE, their teaching contributions are often

limited. Finally, too many of our core courses remain taught by CAS. Incoming first year numbers should be curbed to the 150 range to maintain overall academic excellence.
2017 Decanal Comments: The Health Sciences Department has put considerable effort into growing the excellence of the HE program, in terms of student recruitment and retention, faculty hiring, and administrative support. The Department notes a clear challenge in that full-time faculty are still required, given the strong student numbers. A full-time hire is anticipated in the near future, which will begin to address the Department's challenges.
2017 PRS Comments: The committee was pleased to hear that a new full-time hire for the department was anticipated for the future. There is no need to report on this recommendation further.

Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
Recommendation #2: Work to maintain the strong relationships within Science and consider a broader participation with other Faculties. Resources could be considered in the context of activity-based budgets.	Department Chair	Ongoing	

Completed In Progress Other

2017 Unit Comments:

Cross-listed courses: We have continued to develop collaborative arrangements with other FOS departments to enhance excellence in the delivery of courses. HE435 Exercise as Medicine was formally cross-listed with KPE where two core faculty have the substantive expertise to offer this course on an ongoing basis. Recognizing the interest of students in both departments to take the course, it is now called KPE435/HE435. The first year of this offering has been highly successful with a full class complement.

Minor in Community Psychology: We are contributing to the development of a 'minor in community psychology' that will see students able to access key HE courses that have a greater social science focus – eg., HE301 Social Determinants of Health; HE440M Indigenous Issues in Health; HE411 Critical Perspectives in Public Health; HE440K Global Health; HE44L Health & Human Rights.

Collaborative Research: HE faculty members have been active in developing research collaborations with those from other academic units, including Biology, KPE, Psychology, and the Balsillie School of International Affairs. These collaborations have provided significant opportunities for student engagement in professors' labs and for publishing, and for receiving academic letters of reference.

Challenges: The ability to focus more significant energies on this recommendation are hampered by current faculty levels, coupled with several sabbatical/parental leaves.

2017 Decanal Comments: The Health Sciences Department has worked to develop strong linkages across the Faculty of Science. These initial efforts have been fruitful and I believe that such connections will continue to strengthen over the coming years. As such collaboration is one objective of the Faculty of Science's current strategic plan, it will remain a priority for the entire Faculty.

2017 PRS Comments: The committee considered these intra-faculty relationships to be an ongoing initiative, and appreciated the specific examples provided by the department of how it had been engaging with this recommendation. There is no need to report on it further.

Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
Recommendation #3: Celebrate the program success and make it more visible.	Department Chair Dean of Science	Ongoing; two- and five-year goals should be put in place	Work with Recruitment & Admissions, CPAM, Development, etc., to align with University communication.

Completed In Progress Other

2017 Unit Comments:

Alumni Video: We created an alumni video that has been used at open houses and orientation sessions. While the video has been effective, it was done with no budget and has some quality issues (sound, lighting, etc.). We will work with CPAM in the coming months to initiate a new strategy for promoting the program to students.

Student Involvement in Program Promotion: We have spent considerable time and energy in continuing to build the capacities of the Health Sciences Students' Association. One of our key focus areas, has been to build the capacity of students to actively promote the program. Students are fully engaged in promoting the program at OUF, Open Houses, and Fall Orientation; indeed, we have found their engagement to be directly linked to improving the quality and quantity of students we attract to Laurier.

Celebration of Student Success: We implemented a unique model of celebrating our top students in the spring convocation. We held an 'Academic Awards of Excellence' event for HE students graduating with an average of 11.00 or higher. Twelve HE students received the award at a small ceremony in the Senate and Board Chamber following the main June convocation ceremony. Each was allowed to invite family/friends and a total of 80 people attended. Awards were presented to each student by HE and affiliated faculty; faculty mentors each said a few words about the unique academic contributions and strengths of each student. Dr. pam Bryden, Dean of Science, opened the event with come celebratory comments.

2017 Decanal Comments: The Health Sciences Department has been very successful in celebrating and promoting their students and the program. Such initiatives should be considered by other departments within the Faculty of Science.

2017 PRS Comments: The committee considered this recommendation to be completed and there is no need to report back on it.

PRS Comments: The PRS commends Health Sciences on the expeditious completion of all recommendations that came out of the 2014-2015 cyclical review. While most of the recommendations are to be considered ongoing initiatives, for reporting purposes, they are considered to be completed. No further reports will be required in advance of the department's next cyclical review, currently scheduled for 2021-2022.

Subsequent Report Required? Yes No