



Cyclical Program Review of Health Studies

PROGRAMS:

Honours Bachelor of Arts in Health Studies

Honours Bachelor of Arts in Health Administration

Honours Bachelor of Arts and Science in Health Studies

Final Assessment Report

Submitted by: Dr. Lauren Eisler, Acting Dean, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences; Dr. Deborah MacLatchy, Vice-President: Academic; Dr. Kate Carter, Associate Vice-President: Teaching & Learning (Acting)

Date: October 29, 2015

PART ONE: EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

Please provide a brief response to each of the following.

A) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REVIEW DOCUMENTS (SELF-STUDY, REVIEWERS' REPORT, UNIT RESPONSE)

Self-Study

This was the first cyclical review of the Health Studies (HS) programs. The self-study was being written at a time when significant changes to all three programs were underway and thus, where relevant, the report focused on the revised rather than the old curriculum.

The self-study noted the following:

- All faculty members in the program contributed to the self-study.
- The unit asked for the reviewers' input on the recently modified curriculum, on resource re-allocation that could enhance the programs, and on areas or opportunities for strategic growth within the unit.
- The program is structured around three major foci: theoretical approaches to health, methodological approaches to health research and substantive or practical engagements with health issues. Courses in each area of focus have been developed in line with recent developments in the health sector.
- While the programs do not offer a formal thesis option, numerous students each year choose to complete HS401 which involves a Major Research Project.
- In terms of small class experiences, students in the Health Studies programs benefit from the smaller composition of the Foundations courses, and from smaller class sizes at the 3rd and 4th year level. BAsC students have additional small class experiences through tutorials and labs.
- The programs have several cross-listed courses that contribute to university service teaching and have a couple of courses within the revised curriculum that would be well-suited to online delivery for students outside of the HS programs.
- In terms of strategic planning, Health Studies has just undergone significant curricular changes to all three of its programs and plans to take some time to assess those changes, while also looking ahead to possible new programming at both the undergraduate and graduate level.
- Under "Program Innovation," the unit notes that the varied interdisciplinary experience of the HS faculty is one of its greatest strengths, as well as the flexibility

of program curriculum that allows students to customize their degree according to their interests. Later in the document, the self-study notes that faculty are considered leaders in their field who are active researchers who contribute to their fields through academic and community service.

- As noted throughout the document, in terms of curriculum changes, the self-study was being written at a time when all three Health Studies programs had been examined and revised to better differentiate them and their areas of focus, as well as to make them more appealing to students.
- HS indicates that at present, the faculty resources are inadequate which impacts the ability of full-time faculty to teach core courses and limits course selection for students. They signal that the BASc program, in particular, is in need of an additional appointment. HS also feels that the current administrative support for their programs is inadequate given program growth.
- Library resources are identified as an area of concern since most resources are held at other Laurier campuses (i.e. Waterloo) or institutions (e.g. University of Waterloo or University of Guelph) and must be ordered and delivered to the Brantford campus.
- During the time period under review, there has been a modest growth in program enrolments each year, with recent growth in the Health Administration program and BASc student numbers increasing each year that the program has been offered.
- Progression and attrition rates in the programs, particularly from Year 1 to Year 2 are an area of concern and the unit has been discussing possible solutions. Although limited data are available at this point, HS is generally pleased with graduation rates and student GPA at graduation.
- Average class sizes at the 300 and 400 level are satisfactory but the unit feels that 100 and 200 level courses are “larger than they should be.” (p.45)
- The programs are still developing mechanisms for assessing student achievement of program learning outcomes. At present, capstone courses (HS401 and HS402) are the primary indicators of outcomes achievement.
- Letters collected from HS alumni express a high degree of satisfaction with the programs, noting in particular the closeness of their relationships with faculty.
- In their conclusion, HS reinforces the growth of their dynamic programs, the dedication of HS faculty and the need for additional faculty resources to maintain program quality.

External Reviewers' Report

The external reviewers for the Health Studies programs were Geoff Nelson from the Department of Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier and Elaine Power from Kinesiology & Health Studies at Queen's University. The site visit took place on April 29 and 30, 2015.

The reviewers provided an executive summary of their report along with a list of 17 recommendations. These recommendations have been included in Section D, along with the response to each.

Executive Summary (from the External Reviewers' Report)

The Health Studies Program at Laurier-Brantford is a relatively new program offering three distinct degrees: an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Health Studies (recently changed to an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Community Health); an Honours Bachelor of Arts and Science in Health Studies (recently changed to an Honours Bachelor of Arts and Science in Public Health); and an Honours Bachelor in Health Administration. The Health Studies Program is an excellent fit with Laurier's values, mission and strategic plan. The program produces graduates who have a comprehensive and interdisciplinary understanding of health, health care and health policy and who are well-satisfied with their degree programs. They are exceptionally well-placed to help meet our society's thirst for knowledge to improve health and its increasing need for personnel in a vast array of health-related jobs and careers.

The program has a number of features, strengths and advantages. These include

- a small, tightly knit campus community;
- proximity to metropolitan Toronto, with a large potential pool of applicants;
- the Brantford Foundations program, which provides incoming students with a strong base for moving forward in university studies;
- small class sizes;
- easy access to and availability of supportive faculty members who are dedicated to student success and well-being;
- a cohesive and well-planned curriculum explicitly organized around and oriented towards social justice in health;
- enthusiastic and dynamic interdisciplinary faculty members who are well-recognized in their respective fields;
- and an innovative, entrepreneurial, nimble, and collaborative spirit in the program.

The reviewers are concerned by high rates of attrition and poor rates of progression in the program. This appears to be a function of a weak applicant pool, which includes students

who are ill prepared for university and do poorly, despite the Foundation Year and attentive faculty members. There is significant opportunity to enhance marketing and recruitment efforts, particularly in metropolitan Toronto.

The reviewers are also concerned that there is only one full-time scientist in the program, and on the Brantford campus, and the reliance on Contract Academic Staff to deliver core courses, particularly in the sciences.

Unit Response

The Unit Response to the Reviewers' Report was authored by the Program Coordinator and provided a programmatic perspective on each of the 17 recommendations made. There were no clarifications or corrections noted to the report by the Unit. The Unit was supportive of the majority of the recommendations made and noted that "Those made that involve matters under direct control of the Health Studies program coordinating committee can be implemented in relatively short order, and should result in improvements to the unit and the degree programs that it offers." (p.6).

B) IDENTIFICATION OF PROGRAM STRENGTHS

Program reviews are time intensive for all involved and we therefore wish to express our gratitude to both the external reviewers and the internal faculty who contributed to the Self-Study and the Unit Response for the time they spent on this. We also want to thank both Kari Brozowski and James LeClair for ensuring that the Self-Study was an exceptionally well-written and cohesive document.

The external reviewers identified several areas of program strength and innovation with which we strongly agree. These include the intimate community environment and the strong connections faculty have with students, staff, and other faculty across the university. Faculty in the program consistently strive for new and improved methods to meet the needs of students and the community. In addition, the interdisciplinary scope of faculty members allows students to explore issues of social justice and health in a diverse and inclusive environment. The program curriculum encourages student growth and development through the integration and synthesis of concepts in, and between, courses in a manner that encourages the expansion of student knowledge, skills, and critical capacities.

We also recognize the development of the BASc and the hiring of the first scientist on the Brantford campus. This program holds potential for growth and is a clear demonstration of both the foresight and creativity of the program faculty and is a clear example of the interdisciplinarity of the program.

C) OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

The reviewers identified several important opportunities for improvement and enhancement for the Health Studies Program. These opportunities include:

1. Consideration of developing additional courses for online delivery, as resources are available.
2. As resources are available, consideration of the development of courses in health promotion and in health program design and evaluation, which are common in other Health Studies programs.
3. Hiring an additional scientist to support the BASc program objectives.
4. Exploring the transformation of the Health Studies program into the Health Studies Department.

D) RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN PRIORITY ORDER

The program was undergoing significant changes in both structure and content at the time of the review and some of the suggestions made by the external reviewers have already been implemented. With this in mind, we will focus on recommendations that more directly address issues of resources.

We also wish to thank the Library for the thoughtful response to recommendations #14 through #17.

Reviewers' Recommendations

1. *Recommend that resources be made available to hire additional full-time faculty. In particular, recommend on an urgent basis hiring an additional scientist to support the BASc program objectives.*

We recognize the importance of faculty to the success of any program and will work to ensure all programs have access to new hires as funds become available. In the current fiscal climate new faculty positions are allocated where there is sufficient program growth or where a demonstrated short-fall in faculty can be determined. When the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences receives a confirmation of a new hire(s), the Dean will work with program coordinators to determine the highest program need. In the new Responsibility Centre Management (RCM) budget model to be adopted by the University by fiscal 2017-18, hiring of staff and faculty will be the responsibility of allocation by the Dean with revenues available to the Faculty primarily from its own revenue generation.

2. *Recommend on an urgent basis, that the university develop a coherent strategy for marketing the Health Studies program, specifically the Laurier-Brantford campus, more generally, and enhance the resources available for recruitment so that the Health*

studies program has a stronger applicant pool and can increase the average entrance grade for incoming students.

We recognize the importance of a strong, coherent strategy for marketing the Health Studies program and will continue to work with Recruitment & Admissions to promote the program through the development of promotional material that highlights the unique strengths in all three programs (BASc in Public Health, BA in Community Health, and the BA in Health Administration. These promotion materials may include videos and testimonies from current students, faculty, and alumni.

- 3. Recommend exploring the transformation of the Health Studies program into the Health Studies Department.*

This recommendation is currently under consideration by the program faculty who will consult with the Dean regarding the viability of departmentalizing under the Senate policies. Currently, under the Collective Agreement, program coordinators have the same responsibilities and compensation as department chairs.

- 4. Recommend an increase in the administration support staff available to the Health Studies program.*

We recognize the importance of strong administrative support for all programs. Currently the level of administrative support for the Health Studies program is comparable to support offered to all programs at the Brantford campus. If additional resources become available the Dean will carefully consider the needs of all programs and allocate these resources accordingly.

- 5. Recommend developing a procedure to allow the Health Studies faculty members to have input into hiring Contract Academic Staff for their program.*

The Part-Time Hiring Committee (PTAC) responsible for hiring Contract Academic Staff is fully comprised of full-time faculty members from the Health Studies program.

- 6. Recommend finding ways to consistently allocate teaching assistants for high enrolment courses.*

The Collective Agreement for both full-time and part-time faculty sets out the terms and conditions of providing instructional assistants for marking and grading for all programs based on enrolment. Faculty in the Health Studies program are allocated support according to this agreement, as are all programs at the Brantford campus.

For Part-time instructors

Article 16.3.9.1 (b) - In lieu of receiving the marking/grading allowance under (a) above, a Member may elect to have marking/grading assistance provided by the University. This assistance shall be on the basis **of one (1) hour of assistance for each student in excess of fifty (50) to a maximum of one hundred (100) hours.** Members shall apply in writing for marking/grading assistance to the Department Chair

or equivalent within two (2) weeks of the commencement of the term, and shall be notified of the assistance to be provided within two weeks of the application.

For Full-Time Instructors:

Article: 18.2.4.3 - If a Member teaches assigned courses that have a **total enrolment in excess of 100 students or more in a given term** and these courses have written assignments and tests that require hand marking and grading, the Member may request grading/marking assistance. The Member makes this request to the Department Chair or equivalent within two weeks of the commencement of the term. Upon this request and confirmation of the enrolment in the class, the University, through the Chair, shall provide a **minimum of one hour of grading/marking assistance for each student in excess of 100 to a maximum of 125 hours.**

- 7. Recommend consideration of developing additional courses for on-line delivery, as resources are available.*

We strongly support this recommendation and the Dean will work with the program coordinator, faculty, and the Centre for Teaching Innovation and Excellence to determine which courses are best suited for on-line development. Resources are available to faculty through the Centre to assist in the development of on-line courses.

- 8. Recommend offering courses in the spring/summer, as resources are available.*

We recognize the importance of offering courses in the spring/summer and have already implemented this recommendation. The Dean works with the Program Coordinator and Registrarial Services to determine which courses will best meet the needs of Health Studies students and then schedules them in the spring/summer term. These courses may be cancelled if there are not sufficient students enrolled (usually 10), however, this is at the discretion of the Dean. In the spring/summer term of 2015, two Health Studies courses were run with a total enrolment of 39 students.

- 9. Recommend stabilization and consolidation of existing programs before new ones are developed.*

We strongly agree with this recommendation and have discussed with the program coordinator and faculty the need to allow the three programs to solidify and grow before embarking on new program development.

- 10. As resources are available, the program might consider the development of courses in health promotion and in health program design and evaluation, which are common in other Health Studies programs. These would complement and develop the offerings in the BA and BASc in Health Studies and give students additional practice and marketable knowledge and skills.*

While we agree with this recommendation, we reiterate our response to recommendation #9 which advocated for the stabilization and consolidation of existing

programs prior to new program development. We believe the Health Studies program needs time to evaluate the impact of its redevelopment on both students and faculty before new curriculum is developed. We do, however, agree that courses in health program design and evaluation should be developed in the future and will work to support faculty who develop these courses. These may be courses which could be done in collaboration with other departments, such as Psychology or Health Sciences, and perhaps on-line. HS will approach these units to determine if there is also interest from these cognate disciplines in developing Laurier-wide courses, which could decrease time to development and implementation and increase viability of the offerings.

11. Recommend the identification of suitable space to house social science research.

We recognize the need for suitable space for social science research for a number of programs on the Brantford campus. Currently space is scarce on the Brantford campus and likely will be until Market Square is renovated. However, if new space becomes available, the Dean of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences will consider requests from all programs and departments and allocate the space according to priorities.

12. Recommend exploring the potential for collaboration with the Department of Health Sciences at Laurier's Waterloo campus.

We support this recommendation and will encourage discussion between the programs. See response to #10 previously.

13. Recommend the Health Studies program coordinator and the Student Advisors meet to review concerns on a regular basis.

We understand this recommendation but wish to highlight the strong relationship between programs and advisors on the Brantford campus. Program Coordinators and advisors are in frequent contact, either via email, telephone, or in person as issues arise. This culture of collaboration between programs and advising means that there is a significantly lesser need for regular scheduled meetings. However, this recommendation will be left to the discretion of the program coordinator who can best determine if such need exists.

14. Recommend that the university prioritize the development of a full service library facility with its own collection.

This recommendation has been addressed. The Library has managed to secure, with strong support from finance, protection for the largest part of the acquisition budget, that for e-sources and journals. It was widely recognized that, due to the importance of these resources to the teaching, learning, and research done on campus, special treatment was required. It has therefore been placed in a discrete ledger where the annual increases and exchange rate fluctuations will be mitigated. In addition, the

University has recently purchased the Market Square building in Brantford and has prioritized the Library as one of the key units that will be in this space.

15. Recommend that there be twice daily library book delivery service between the main campus and the Brantford campus.

This, and recommendation #16, relate to the delivery of material to the Brantford Campus. Although the Library has been able to improve delivery to the Brantford Campus in the last few years, there is still room for improvement. This continues to be monitored by the Library and the University. As the Brantford Campus grows, questions continue to be raised about the movement of material and people between the two campuses. This extends beyond the needs of the Library to other units. It is anticipated that this service issue will be addressed as part of the development of the library space within the Market Square building.

16. Recommend that the Laurier-Brantford campus become its own stop on the TUG delivery route.

Please see the library response to recommendation #15 above.

PART TWO: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Please include any of the recommendations that came out of the review that are to be implemented by the academic unit.

Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
Development of additional courses for on-line delivery (Reviewers' Recommendation #7)	Program Coordinator Dean		Develop a plan by January 2016	The Program Coordinator will work closely with CTIE to develop the courses.
Transform the Health Studies Program to the Health Studies Department (Reviewers' Recommendation #3)	Program Coordinator Dean		January 2017	
Development of courses in health promotion and health program design and evaluation (Reviewers' Recommendation #10)	Program Coordinator Dean			The Health Studies Program needs to stabilize from the most recent changes to curriculum and its new partnership with Conestoga College. Once the program has done so and there is an increase in enrolment the program will engage in strategic curriculum development. The Dean will be involved

				with the discussions in regard to the need for new courses and the resource implications for both program and the faculty.
The hiring of an additional scientist for the program (Reviewers' Recommendation #1).	VPA Dean	Enrolment-dependent (FHSS)	Cannot presently be assigned a date	Additional faculty hires will be based on prioritization within Faculty by Dean.