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2016-2017
Cyclical Program Review of Human Rights and Human Diversity

PROGRAMS:
Honours BA in Human Rights & Human Diversity
Honours BA in Human Rights & Human Diversity in Combination with another Honours BA

Final Assessment Report

Submitted by: Dr. Heidi Northwood, Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts; Dr. Kathryn Carter, Associate Vice-President: Teaching and Learning; Dr. Paul Jessop, Vice-President Academic
Date: September 29th, 2017

PART ONE: EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

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

Summary of Self-Study

- The self-study describes the evolution of the Human Rights and Human Diversity (HRHD) program from a minor in 2005 to its current status as an Honours and Combined Honours program with an Option in International Development. The self-study was prepared by the coordinator of the Human Rights and Human Diversity program, Dr. Andrew Robinson, and included contributions from faculty in the program. Since this is the first review of Human Rights and Human Diversity, there were no previous reviewer recommendations to respond to. The document asked reviewers to respond to questions about how to raise the program's visibility, develop practical skills and job and co-op opportunities, increase internationalization in the program, as well as identify any curricular gaps.

- The document articulates the program-level learning outcomes and describes the process by which they were developed. It outlines alignment with Laurier's Strategic Mandate Agreement and Academic Plan, demonstrating such core principles as experiential learning, creating engaged, aware citizens, and community focus and global engagement. The Human Rights and Human Diversity program is a direct entry program and admission requirements are set by the Faculty and the Admissions office.

- The curriculum in the HRHD program is arranged around a spine of core courses, disciplinary electives, and approved electives from other programs. The curriculum is mapped in a manner where learning outcomes are introduced, reinforced, and mastered by the end of the program. The program's International Development Option includes three courses on international development, an introductory economics courses, and an introduction to the United Nations and other relevant international political institutions. The program also includes the opportunity for students to complete one of two graduate certificates from Conestoga College in their third year (Human Resource Management, or Community and Social Service Management) and have that year count towards their Honours BA. The curriculum throughout the programs has been designed with the aim to present students with a comprehensive introduction to key topics related to human rights and human diversity and present students with courses that reflect the full-time faculty strengths and expertise. Currency is maintained by constantly updating syllabi and individual lectures to keep current with developments in the field.

- High Impact Practices in the curriculum include: writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, service learning and community-based learning, diversity and global learning, internships, common intellectual experiences, and capstone courses. Program innovations include emphasizing employability, the Mexico City-Canada Field Course on International Migration, Community Service-Learning in HR261 and HR/YC319, the two joint programs with Conestoga College, and the Ghana Summer Internship Program. Recently, the program became one of four programs at Laurier that is linked with the law program at the University of Sussex, and the program is, further, creating new specializations in Non-Profit Career Skills and International Development.

- The self-study outlines the program's efficient and effective use of existing human and financial resources and articulates the administrative structure and committee composition of the program. The breadth and sufficiency of units supporting the program is discussed and notes areas such as Writing and Study Skills, ICT, and the Centre for Teaching Innovation and Excellence.

- Faculty have been successful in their research funding and the data show the active and collaborative nature of this research. Faculty expertise is well aligned with teaching areas and faculty members are active in contributing to the program, their research profiles, and the wider academic community.

- Students in the program have achieved notable success, graduation rates are high, and GPA at graduation is higher than the campus averages. There has been steady growth in majors and those pursuing the program as a single honours degree. Teaching evaluation scores for the program are consistently high and are at or above Laurier averages. Alumni satisfaction was assessed and alumni responded positively about their interactions with faculty, and satisfaction with the program, especially the practicality of its courses.

- The program's strategic plan includes a focus on increasing enrolment by raising its profile, deepening collaborations and ties with relevant units both within and outside of the university, and identifying additional workplace learning opportunities for its students. As its concerns, HRHD identifies the impact of increasing class size on quality in its 100- and 200-level courses, the possible curricular impact of the Sussex program on the HRHD program focus, the possibility of local NGO fatigue as it relates to the university making experiential learning a priority, and the lack of language courses for HRHD students at the Brantford campus.

- The self-study concludes with the program's commitment to the university's mission and the broader national mandate of human rights education. It reaffirms the quality of the HRHD program and the variety of ways that students can customize their degree to suit their needs, along with the program's goal of attracting more students so that the faculty complement can grow with the program.

External Reviewers' Report Executive Summary

The external reviewers for the HRHD cyclical review were Dr. Alastair Edgar from the Department of Political Science at Wilfrid Laurier University and Dr. Ari Kohen from the Department of Political Science; Forsythe Family Program on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The site visit took place on November 17-18, 2016 at the Brantford Campus of Wilfrid Laurier.

Executive Summary

In a relatively short time span, the Human Rights and Human Diversity Program at Laurier Brantford has established itself as a small, high-quality program characterized by dedicated faculty providing innovative, high-impact teaching and learning, embracing diversity and providing students with a range of experiential learning opportunities. Recognizing and consolidating its strengths and accomplishments, HRHD now can look to work with Laurier's leadership to build upon these in order to grow its local, national and international profile, and expand its Program offerings for new students.

List of Recommendations

(1) While it is a young program, HRHD has established itself admirably well, and has been consolidating its strengths. The program is in process of compiling information about its graduates subsequent career paths. Having this material on hand, and in accessible form, in the near future will assist in adding weight to any efforts to raise the visibility of the program to prospective students within Laurier, to grade 11 and 12 Ontario- and Canadian-based high school students considering applying to the program, and to international students looking for HRHD related study opportunities.

(1.5) (in text but not executive summary): As the Program Director also notes, possible ways in which to improve enrolment totals include offering new internship and other workplace opportunities for students, as well as working closely with the Indigenous Studies program to provide opportunities for students to study an issue they care about and that has deep local importance.

(2) In order both to consolidate the gains made by the program over its first eight years while also allowing the program to serve the Sussex students and potentially expand the number of students recruited to the program from its lower-division courses, we respectfully recommend that the University consider examining the feasibility of hiring a teaching professor who can be utilized by the Program Director in order to take some of the teaching pressure off the core faculty.

(3) We also feel that there are opportunities to build upon the existing excellent course teaching, in fairly easy modes of online delivery. We recognize the excellence of what has been accomplished in a short time, and also that the members of the program currently report that they are working at full capacity. There nonetheless may be some opportunities to raise the national and international profile of the program in relatively easy ways such as podcasts by faculty members about their research, their teaching, and the achievements of graduating students, which may be featured on the HRHD website, faculty members' websites, the main Laurier website, and in other social media formats.

(4) The Program Director could discuss with Conestoga College (and perhaps with the Game Design and Development Program at Laurier Brantford, where a senior student or team of senior students might be interested in such a project), whether there is an opportunity to pursue a collaborative development of online programming. Online versions of existing classes would not require extensive new curriculum development, and might be offered as credit and non-credit courses.

(5) There would be an obvious benefit to the HRHD program—and to the Brantford campus as a whole— through the addition of another part-time service-learning coordinator or through the expansion of the current part-time position to a full-time position. The current part-time coordinator has more than sufficient work at present to expand the position or to hire another part-time staff person; as the HRHD program expands, and as other programs continue to integrate service-learning into their courses as well, this growth may be anticipated and encouraged.

(6) If the existing administrative assistant position was divided amongst fewer programs, rather than more programs, it seems clear that there is work she could do to take some of the administrative responsibilities off the plate of the Program Director. The resource implications are relatively small, but the ability of an administrative assistant to take some tasks off the plate of the Program Director would free up time for him to devote to High Impact teaching, and new research, as well as to innovative program development.

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(7) Laurier International staff spoke very cogently about their desire to develop the profile of the HRHD program internationally in order to attract international students to the Brantford campus to study with the HRHD faculty. One of the easiest ways to do this is to create marketing materials focused on HRHD that Laurier International can use. That said, expanding the HRHD footprint abroad will likely require more than a glossy brochure, or podcasts (as useful as those would be, as basic deliverables); if faculty members have more time and opportunities for conducting and disseminating their own research, this would expand their reputation as human rights scholars and would make Laurier Brantford an even more attractive place for international students to come to learn from them.

(8) In order to encourage students to officially enrol in the HRHD program at their earliest opportunity, it might be helpful to institute some clear incentives for students who are enrolled in the program beyond simply the level of access that students have to full-time faculty (which these students already enjoy in the cross-listed courses they are taking). One way in which this might be accomplished is through undergraduate research assistantships. Students have stressed their interest in these sorts of positions and the small amount of money they require might fit into the program's budget. If they cannot be funded from the program's current budget, these assistantships may be an excellent way for the university - and Faculty, if and where appropriate - to reach out to, and engage with, potential donors (one Reviewer has experienced considerable success with this donor funding model, in support of Human Rights programming).

(9) Making these research positions available only to students who are enrolled in the HRHD program might incentivize early declaration and further lower attrition rates. They also could provide faculty with additional research support that they do not need to finance from their own research budgets.

Summary of Unit Response

The Unit Response was authored by the HRHD Program Coordinator, Andrew Robinson, with input from faculty members in the program. The response thanks the reviewers for the time and effort put into the review and notes the alignment between the recommendations made and the questions and concerns noted by the program. For each recommendation, the program indicated if they agreed with it or not, identified any action already taken place toward its implementation, future steps that could or would be taken, and whether or not the implementation of a recommendation was contingent upon resources being made available. The attentiveness to detail in the response to each recommendation, along with an acknowledgement of the constraints and challenges that the university is operating under, was noted and appreciated. The Unit Response concludes by summarizing the program's takeaways from the review process and affirming HRHD's commitment to working with the university to realize the potential of the program.

B) IDENTIFICATION OF PROGRAM STRENGTHS

The HRHD program should be commended for their efforts and achievement; the program is one of the strongest programs in the Faculty of Liberal Arts, as measured by student achievement, relative program growth, and curricular innovation and stewardship.

C) OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Most of the recommendations from Reviewers are centred on increasing the profile of the program so as to increase enrolment and its renown. This is because the program is doing an excellent job. As a staff member in Recruitment & Admissions has put it, "HRHD consistently punches above its weight class". This is shown in student outcomes, the diversity of experiential learning opportunities, faculty grants and awards, teaching evaluations, and student engagement. And, I am pleased to be able to report that since the writing of the HRHD Self-Study, this has also been reflected in the numbers of students enrolling in the program. The LLB joint program has certainly increased the number of students in the program, but the number of students in the program who are not in the LLB has also increased. Consequently, statements regarding program improvement and enhancement, in the main, amount to: 'keep doing what you're doing'.

D) PRIORITIZATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

<u>Recommendations Concerning Increased Opportunities for Experiential Learning and Support (#1.5, #8, #9):</u>

#1.5: The program has requested the support of the dean in its work with Development, and the possibility of funding a pilot program. I fully support the development of an internship pilot program, and would like it to be the 'gold-standard' for the Faculty. As such, the program needs to develop Learning Outcomes for the internship (if it hasn't done so already), make it credit-bearing, and include the relevant elements of Experiential Education best practices (authenticity of experience, preparation, reflection, and so on). The program should also explore the possibility of it being an accredited co-op. The first step should be to meet with members of the Co-op office to explore existing institutional options and see what supports already exist.

#8 and #9: I support the program's exploration of undergraduate research opportunities for its students. I would suggest that the program meet with the Coordinator for Undergraduate Research in the Faculty to determine whether the program's goals would be achieved by encouraging students to take part in FLA's Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship program, which already has funding attached to it for students.

<u>Recommendations Concerning Hiring Additional Faculty/Staff (#2, #5, #6):</u>

#2: While it is impossible to hire additional faculty at present (given the financial consequences of the Faculty's loss of the Concurrent Education program), there are a number of faculty within Liberal Arts whose expertise align with that in HRHD, and whose teaching could be partially redirected to HRHD. I invite the Program Coordinator to work with me to identify such faculty members in other programs.

#5: I agree with the HRHD faculty that additional hours for the Service Learning Coordinator is appropriate, given the impact such experiences can have on a student's life, Laurier's emphasis on Experiential Learning, and the Faculty's Strategic Plan. As I understand it, the recent restructuring of the Centre for Teaching and Learning has already led to the increase of hours for the Service Learning Coordinator, from part-time to full-time.

#6: I appreciate the argument for decreasing the number of programs that the Administrative Program Assistants are responsible for. We will take it into consideration when we work on budgets over the next 2-3 years, but

there are likely to be higher priority items. There may be other ways of supporting Program Coordinators that could achieve the same results, e.g., pooling resources between programs faculty-wide.

Recommendations Regarding Recruitment (#7):

The Reviewers have provided specific suggestions about international student recruitment, but their suggestions are also applicable to recruitment of domestic students. The Dean's Office is willing to commit funds to marketing materials for the program, following the submission of a plan and budget.

Recommendations Concerning Graduate Career Path Data (#1):

I would encourage the program members to work with the Career Services Centre and Alumni Relations on this effort to ensure coordinated efforts and data sharing, and to encourage them to make a permanent connection to graduating students through LinkedIn. Tracking the impacts of those students who participated in the summer internship in Ghana is an excellent initiative insofar as it will (1) give an understanding of how this opportunity fits with the program's learning outcomes, (2) is in line with the faculty's and university's SAP, and (3) will aid in the endeavour to increase the profile of the program by telling student stories.

Recommendations Concerning Online (#3, #4):

Procedures and costs associated with the development of online courses has recently changed in CTIE. HRHD should put together a business case and timeline for the development of an online HRHD minor.

SIGNATURES

Heidi Northwood   August 11, 2017

Kathryn Carter   September 12, 2017

Paul Jessop   September 29, 2017

PART TWO: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
Create domestic internship for HRHD students (Recommendation #1.5)	Program Coordinator	Pilot 2018-19 or 2019-20	
Coordinate Undergraduate Research initiatives with FLA Research Apprenticeship Program (Recommendations #8, #9)	Program Coordinator, FLA Associate Dean	Fall 2017	
Identify and invite faculty member from another FLA program to join HRHD (Recommendation #2)	Dean in consultation with Program Coordinator	Fall 2017 individual(s) identified and approached in time for course building for 2018-19	
Explore creation of online HRHD minor (Recommendation #3)	HRHD faculty, Dean	2020 (business case completed 2017-18 to determine feasibility)	
Collection of graduate data for HRHD students (Recommendation #1)	Dr. Robert Ame, Program Coordinator	Summer 2018 (process developed and coordination complete with Alumni and Career Development office)	

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