



Waterloo Lutheran Seminary 2015 Annual Implementation Report

Submitted by: Dr. David Pfrimmer
On: April 8, 2015

Recommendations from 2013-2014 Final Assessment Report

Recommendation: To proceed with anticipated curriculum changes (Reviewer's Recommendation #1).	
Responsibility: Principal-Dean; Management Team	Implementation Date: September 2014
Additional Notes: The Management Team comprised of the Principal-Dean and Academic Program Directors will continue to make changes to the curriculum in line with the changes coming with the College of Registered Psychotherapists and changes by the Association of Theological Schools to the Master of Divinity programs. Further changes will be forthcoming in the negotiations with Laurier concerning the Operating Agreement and the Provincial SMA process. From the FGPS Dean: The Seminary is encouraged to move forward with the proposed diploma, and to discuss with the FGPS dean plans for new graduate programs which fit within the university's academic plan and Strategic Mandate Agreement.	
Progress to Date (check one): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):	
Unit Response: The proposal has been sent to the Graduate Faculty Council and is in the approval process. We are planning to implement the first course in June 2015 pending final approval.	
FGPS Decanal Response: The Diploma in Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy was approved by the Quality Council and is awaiting approval by MTCU. Applications for fall, 2015, will then be considered.	
PRS Comments: The committee considers this recommendation to be completed and there is no need to report on it further.	

Recommendation: Because of the distance that some students live away from WLS, it may be useful to develop some protocol about how students can qualify to be virtually connected occasionally to a face to face class through a variety of digital means so it meets real needs (icy roads) and avoids easy excuses (not bothering to come in) (Reviewer's Recommendation #2).	
Responsibility: Faculty Council	Implementation Date: June 2014
Additional Notes: The WLS Faculty Council has discussed the range of circumstances and adopted a policy and protocol for students wanting to connect to class through digital means.	
Progress to Date (check one): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):	
Unit Response: The WLS Senate/Faculty Council has approved a policy for students to	

connect to a Face-to-Face class through a digital means (Skype or Webex etc.). Students will negotiate this arrangement with the Instructor. In an emergency due to inclement weather, the instructor may arrange with another student to utilize an electronic means to connect a student unable to make it to class. This is strictly a voluntary arrangement.

PRS Comments: The committee considers this recommendation to be completed and there is no need to report on it further.

Recommendation: The pilot online class should be seriously monitored and evaluated to see its potential strengths and weaknesses, assessing what can and cannot be delivered in the purely online format, rather than jumping on some online bandwagon as "the solution" to demographic and pedagogic problems (Reviewer's Recommendation #3).

Responsibility: The Comprehensive Evaluation Committee

Implementation Date: April 2015

Additional Notes: The Comprehensive Evaluation Committee in consultation with the Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy Department will consider appropriate evaluation tools for this course.

Progress to Date (check one):

Completed

In Progress

Other (please explain):

Unit Response: WLS is exploring the degree to which it will offer online courses. There are two online courses currently being offered. We are in the planning phase for a third. We will be evaluating the delivery of the on line courses.

PRS Comments: Please provide an update on the status of the evaluation of the pilot online class in next year's report.

Recommendation: To develop a comprehensive assessment plan that has clear indicators for each of the learning outcomes in the various programs in a way that transcends success in individual courses (Reviewer's Recommendation #4).

Responsibility: Comprehensive Evaluation Committee

Implementation Date: Commencing September 2014

Additional Notes: This item will be referred to the Comprehensive Evaluation Committee. Additional Faculty to be appointed to work with this Committee.

Progress to Date (check one):

Completed

In Progress

Other (please explain):

Unit Response: Each program area is reviewing its outcomes. Instructors will be asked to consider how the program outcomes will be integrated into specific course syllabi. The Comprehensive Evaluation Committee will review the progress of this process.

FGPS Decanal Response: Clarify the membership and mandate of the Comprehensive Evaluation Committee.

PRS Comments: Please provide an update on this recommendation in next year's report, as well as clarification on the membership of the Comprehensive Evaluation Committee.

Recommendation: Work with Laurier and their Director of Teaching Support Services [now CTIE] to be a pioneer in the new module for assessment that has been created and is being funded by Laurier, since this promises to give important evaluative data from the course to program to degree levels (Reviewer's Recommendation #5).

Responsibility: Director of Leadership and Ministry; Director of the Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy Program	Implementation Date: August 2014
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Additional Notes: The Directors of the M.Div. and M.A. Spiritual Care and Psychotherapy programs have begun a pilot project to implement models for assessment.

Progress to Date (check one):
 Completed
 In Progress
 Other (please explain):

Unit Response: The Director of the M.Div. program worked with CTIE during the Fall Term to pilot a new assessment module that was being prepared in partnership with Desire2Learn. The intent of the module is to step beyond merely connecting course outcomes to program outcomes, but assessing student performance vis-a-vis the course outcomes, such that it could be tracked through to the program. Specific assignments in each course are weighed and graded in connection with specific outcomes.

We are awaiting their report on the success of the pilot. Apparently, they are also continuing to work with D2L to refine the software.

PRS Comments: The committee appreciated the Seminary's willingness to participate in this pilot project. Please provide any relevant updates in next year's report.

Recommendation: We would further recommend that the many informal forms of evaluating courses, programs, and degrees that occur in such a collegial and well-connected faculty be made more formal so it both gives a trace of the history of decisions and can guide future decisions, e.g., terminating or initiating programs. Clear documentation of the assessment processes and the content of the assessment seem to be a real need (Reviewer's Recommendation #6).

Responsibility: Comprehensive Evaluation Committee	Implementation Date: April 2015
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Additional Notes: The Comprehensive Evaluation Committee will discuss and consult about possible modalities for adopting a system of evaluation in the light of the new Laurier Course Evaluation process.

From the FGPS dean: The Seminary is encouraged to include the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies in early discussions of program changes, including terminating and initiating programs.

Progress to Date (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):
Unit Response: The Seminary is continuing to re-engineer its academic programs. The Doctoral programs are in the middle of a renaming process. The focus of the M.A. in Christian Studies is the next program to be reconsidered. Initial conversations are underway in the Department. Once some preliminary ideas are identified, a conversation will be initiated with the FGPS Dean.
FGPS Decanal Response: Senate approved the change in name of the DMin to a PhD in Human Relationships.
PRS Comments: The committee felt that the spirit of this recommendation; that is, a more formal documentation record of assessment work being undertaken within the Seminary's programs, has been lost in the comments provided. In next year's report, please address the recommendation more directly.

Recommendation: Consideration should be given for providing standard internet access in all teaching rooms and data projection (Reviewer's Recommendation #7).	
Responsibility: Principal-Dean	Implementation Date: June 2014
Additional Notes: All classrooms have access to internet and media technology. WLS has secured some additional equipment to support instruction and promote communication. The Principal-Dean will monitor the functioning of information and digital technologies to insure they are working effectively.	
Progress to Date (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):	
Unit Response: There is Wi-Fi throughout the building. We have checked this with Laurier IT. It may not be as seamless given some of the walls and building materials. Currently we are developing a Master Plan for the Seminary Building. The initial report will be completed by September 2015. Consideration will then be given to major renovations to the building in 2016.	
PRS Comments: Please provide any updates on this recommendation in next year's report.	

Recommendation: The workload is very heavy and thus it is a challenge to balance teaching, supervision and research. It appears to be a good idea to have a person (maybe the assistant dean) assigned to have annual reviews of the overall workloads of each of the core faculty members. At that time, it would be helpful to have the faculty members articulate their research plans for the coming year and express what support they would need for that (Reviewer's Recommendation #8).	
Responsibility: Principal-Dean	Implementation Date: September 2014
Additional Notes: WLS will begin phasing in reduced teaching loads Regular faculty will move from six to five courses for the academic year May 1 to April 30 th . The Principal-Dean will review faculty workloads at time of performance reviews.	

Progress to Date (check one): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):
Unit Response: The teaching load of faculty has been reduced from six to five courses. New faculty have been hired which should help alleviate some of the administrative and advising load. During Performance Reviews with faculty, they are asked to identify their research plans.
FGPS Decanal Response: Ensure that all faculty members involved in the teaching or supervision of graduate students are nominated to the FGPS dean for appointment to the Graduate Faculty.
PRS Comments: The committee considers this recommendation to be completed and there is no need to report on it further.

Recommendation: At the same time, it is important for WLS to articulate to the university that the nature of their teaching, supervision, and community-engagement, will from time to time reduce not their capacity of research and critical reflection on their field nor their teaching, but the traditionally measured "outputs"(Reviewer's Recommendation #9).	
Responsibility: Principal-Dean and WLS Team for the Seminary/Laurier negotiations	Implementation Date: October 2014
Additional Notes: WLS will begin a conversation with Laurier on the future direction of the Seminary with a possible name change to become a small University within Laurier. As such it will be a professional and teaching focused school. This will be the WLS contribution to Laurier that will help in the provincial process for differentiation among Ontario Universities.	
Progress to Date (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):	
Unit Response: This process is underway with Laurier. We have begun a negotiations process concerning our Operating Agreement. It is anticipated that the name change will proceed over the summer and a plan will be undertaken over the next year to implement the new business plan and transition to the new name.	
FGPS Decanal Response: the dean looks forward to the outcome of these negotiations to clarify the roles of WLS and FGPS in the admission and progress of students in the Seminary's graduate programs.	
PRS Comments: The committee felt that the comments provided did not directly address the spirit of this recommendation; that is, the way in which the Seminary communicates to the university community its commitment to teaching, supervision, and community engagement. Please provide an update in next year's report, addressing the recommendation more directly.	

Recommendation: Consideration for faculty to apply for SSHRC funding with faculty from across the university may provide a way to access these research funds (Reviewer's Recommendation #10).	
Responsibility: Principal-Dean	Implementation Date: December 2014
Additional Notes: The Principal-Dean has discussed this issue with the Laurier VP-Research. WLS Faculty feel it remains difficult to access funding through these granting Councils and Foundations. WLS also gained access to a searchable data base for Foundation funding.	
Progress to Date (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Completed <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):	
Unit Response: Plans had to be postponed for a workshop on research funding. This was aimed at helping faculty apply for research funds. This initiative will be rescheduled once a new VP-Research is appointed.	
PRS Comments: Please provide an update on the implementation of this recommendation in next year's report.	

Recommendation: It may be useful to find someone at Laurier, contract someone, or appoint someone internally at WLS who can help faculty members identify potential external funding sources for their research projects, if they need it for the nature of their work (Reviewers' Recommendation #11).	
Responsibility: Principal-Dean	Implementation Date: December 2014
Additional Notes: The Principal-Dean will organize a session with staff from the Laurier Office of Research to explore possible approaches.	
Progress to Date (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):	
Unit Response: Some cross disciplinary partnerships are being initiated (e.g. Psychology, Political Science etc.) As these develop they may enable further initiatives in research funding.	
FGPS Decanal Response: Now that the DMin has become a PhD, research expertise on the part of faculty members is even more important. The dean encourages WLS to explore sources of research funding that will also benefit doctoral students who currently are not covered by the university's minimum guarantee of funding.	
PRS Comments: Please provide an update on the implementation of this recommendation in next year's report.	

Additional Recommendation from the Program Review Sub-Committee: At its November 11th, 2013 meeting, Senate Academic Planning approved the following motion: “that the Senate Academic Planning Committee, on the recommendation of the Program Review Sub-Committee, approve the inclusion of a university-wide recommendation on each Annual Implementation Report that, prior to the next cyclical review, the program develop a means for assessing program learning outcomes.” A full explanation of the rationale behind the motion can be found here:

http://legacy.wlu.ca/documents/56385/PRS_Recommendation_for_Annual_Implementation_Reports_SAPC_Nov_11_2013.pdf

The committee recommends that the Seminary begin having conversations about program learning outcomes assessment and put together a strategy for collecting and presenting evidence of this assessment in its next cyclical review.