



Society, Culture and Environment 2016 Annual Implementation Report

Submitted by: Rob Kristofferson

Date: 22 June 2016

Recommendations from the 2012-2013 Final Assessment Report

Recommendation: Review the teaching needs of the program and make recommendations for further resources, if necessary (Reviewers' Recommendations #1, #2, #5).	
Responsibility: Office of the Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts, and Program Coordinator	Implementation Date: Academic year 2014-15
<p>2014-2015 Actions</p> <p>Unit Response: Students could take a BA in SCE as an independent 4-year program or part of the Concurrent Education program in which students could receive the BA in SCE from Laurier and a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree from Nipissing University (over five years). The majority of students in SCE were part of the latter program, Concurrent Education, which regularly took in 200-250 students per year. Thus, the SCE program had over 1000 students enrolled with the vast majority taking a joint BA-BEd degree.</p> <p>In December 2014 Laurier received notice that Nipissing University would no longer offer the Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree in Brantford. This has dramatic implications for the number of students that will be in the SCE program over the next two to three years, resulting in significant shifts in terms of the teaching needs of the program. With Concurrent Education students we had over 1000 majors in the SCE program; however, SCE-only majors are just under 100 students. The full impact of the loss of Concurrent Education will not be realized for at least another one to two years because we still had a new cohort of Concurrent Education students begin classes in September 2014.</p> <p>Further, the full impact of this loss remains unclear as senior administration at Laurier continues to request that the Provincial Government allocate undergraduate education seats to Laurier. If we receive these seats, SCE may again be paired with a Concurrent Education program; however, at this time it is unclear whether this will happen and what impact that it may have on the number of SCE majors (and thus the program's teaching needs). Members of the SCE program continue to work closely with the Dean of Liberal Arts to address such questions in a timely manner.</p> <p>Decanal Response: We continue discussions with the Provincial Government about the possibility of undergraduate education seats in Brantford, and a new concurrent education program run by Laurier's Faculty of Liberal Arts in Brantford and Faculty of Education in Waterloo. By the end of next year, we should have an answer that will allow us to plan the future direction(s) of the program more concretely.</p> <p>PRS Comments: Please provide an update on any new developments related to this recommendation in next year's report.</p>	
<p>2015-2016 Progress (check one):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Completed</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):</p>	
<p>Unit Comments: The loss of the Nipissing University Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree in Brantford continues to have dramatic implications for the number of students that will be in the SCE program over the next two to three years, resulting in significant shifts in terms of</p>	

the teaching needs of the program.

The program also received news this year that attempts to mitigate this loss through a request that MTCU reallocate of undergraduate education seats to Laurier was denied. In other words, it became clear that SCE will need focus on the expansion of its program-only majors to strategically respond to this crisis. To best position itself to meet this goal while still adhering to its learning outcomes and mission, the program initiated and completed a major modification this year in the form of a name change to Social & Environmental Justice. A number of other curriculum pieces have also been initiated but not yet completed to achieve this end, including a program specialization in Social Innovation, specializations in the Bachelor of Social Work program, a minor and more. The impact these changes may have on the program's teaching needs amidst these changes is not yet known. Members of the SCE program continue to work closely with the Dean of Liberal Arts to fashion these changes while also staging the exit cohorts of our Nipissing students. Teaching needs raised by the new curricular developments are currently also under discussion with the Dean and include the possibility staffing a small problem-based seminar for program majors in the first year and the addition of courses comprising social innovation content in the program.

Decanal Comments: The program has taken significant steps forward in its strategic response to Nipissing's departure, e.g., the renaming of the program, and the addition of a second Conestoga graduate certificate (Community & Social Service Management). Further it has begun discussions internally and with other university constituents about the best way to implement some form of social innovation curriculum into the program, and to provide a first-year problem-based seminar in a financially sustainable way. I strongly urge the program to seriously consider making social innovation (in some form) a required part of the program's curriculum and not an optional specialization (at least initially). This will provide a clearer message to prospective students, and lead to a sustainable suite of required courses and electives.

PRS Comments: The committee recognizes that there have been made changes that are outside of the program's control that have prevented this recommendation from being completed. We would like an update on the teaching needs of the program as they align with the current situation in next year's report.

Recommendation: 2. a) Track students and projected program outcomes; b) carefully monitor program growth and relationship with SJCE; c) maintain the integrity of the program's curricular objectives (Reviewers' Recommendations #6,#7,#8,#9,#10,#11,#12).

Responsibility: Program Coordinator and PCC, with administrative support as necessary

Implementation Date: Beginning Fall 2014, and ongoing thereafter

2014-2015 Actions

Unit Response: Given the current state of flux that the SCE program is experiencing, it is likely that program members will need to make significant curriculum revisions. While the prospect of doing so brings some frustration – we recently did a major curriculum re-visioning process and just launched the new program this past September (2014) – program members are also highly committed to the core principles and curricular objectives expressed in the SCE program. Because of the dramatic changes that have occurred to the SCE program over the last year, and the potential for further curriculum changes, the

program did not begin measuring projected outcomes in any formal way. However, program members do continuously refer to curricular objectives and outcomes when discussing the potential changes to the program. As we move forward in re-defining the program we will continue to closely track the link between curriculum changes and curricular objectives, while also integrating discussions about the relationship of SCE to the SJCE MA program. Throughout the past year, program members in both SCE and SJCE have been working to make the relationship between these two programs more explicit to the university community more broadly. The SCE Program Coordinator and the SJCE Director also feel that the opportunity to revise the SCE curriculum may allow the programs to be more explicitly aligned in the curriculum itself. The Coordinator and Director also continue to work closely together to address questions regarding TA responsibilities, teaching workload, and balancing the success of the undergraduate program with the success of the MA program.

Decanal Response: I agree that tracking students and projected program outcomes will give useful data after the future directions of the program has been determined. Significant progress has been made, however, in clarifying the relationship between SCE and SJCE to the university community, and I am confident that the ongoing successful coordination between the two programs regarding TA responsibilities, teaching workload will continue. With Nipissing's departure, SCE has an opportunity to align its curriculum more clearly with SJCE. Discussions about this have already begun.

PRS Comments: Please provide an update on any developments related to this recommendation in next year's report. The committee noted that any discussions related to the SJCE graduate program should also involve the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

2015-2016 Progress (check one):

Completed

In Progress

Other (please explain):

Unit Comments: As outlined in last year's update, given the current state of flux that the SCE program is experiencing, curriculum revisions are currently being conceived. Program members remain highly committed to the core principles and curricular objectives expressed in the SCE program. Due to these changes it has not been possible to chart projected outcomes in the formal way originally envisaged. However, program members do continuously refer to curricular objectives and outcomes when discussing the potential changes to the program. As we move forward in re-defining the program we will continue to closely track the link between curriculum changes and curricular objectives, while also integrating discussions about the relationship of SCE to the SJCE MA program. The program has succeeded this year in making the relationship between the undergraduate and graduate programs more apparent, as evidenced most strongly in the name change to Social & Environmental Justice. TA assignment protocols have also been further developed between the Graduate Program Officer and the Coordinator of the undergraduate program.

Decanal Comments: I agree that the renaming of SCE to 'Social & Environmental Justice' has made the relationship between the undergraduate and graduate much clearer. Given the success of the SJCE program, there may be opportunities to highlight this relationship in recruitment materials for the undergraduate program. I encourage to program to consider this in relation to the idea of a 'Social Justice' cluster as is emerging through FLA strategic planning discussions. Please forward a copy of the TA assignment protocols to me.

PRS Comments: In next year's report, please outline any initiatives that have been undertaken to track students' post-graduate work or career opportunities once they complete the program. We would echo the comment made in last year's report about the necessity of involving the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in discussions about the SJCE program.

Recommendation: Review service and administrative workloads and work towards an equitable distribution, and alleviation if deemed necessary (Reviewers' Recommendation #3).

Responsibility: Dean, Program Coordinator, and PCC

Implementation Date: Beginning Fall 2014, and ongoing thereafter

2014-2015 Actions

Unit Response: The Program Coordinator has worked closely with SCE program members and the Dean of Liberal Arts over the past year to discuss and address issues regarding equitable service and administrative workloads. While challenges still remain, especially in the upcoming year where a large number of SCE faculty members are on leave, in general the Coordinator feels there has been some movement towards addressing the most egregious issues. Certainly compensation for demanding administrative loads has been addressed through increased course release for the Coordinator and Undergraduate Advisor.

Decanal Response: We have made significant progress toward this goal. I will be revisiting this often over the next few years as enrollments in SCE changes with Nipissing's departure and changes occur in the curriculum and possibly structure of the program.

PRS Comments: Please provide any relevant updates in next year's report.

2015-2016 Progress (check one):

Completed

In Progress

Other (please explain):

Unit Comments: The Program Coordinator has worked closely with SCE program members and the Dean of Liberal Arts over the past year to discuss and address issues regarding equitable service and administrative workloads. The large numbers of core program faculty on leave this academic year did present some challenge, though planning was undertaken to help avoid this in the future, especially with the extra-heavy teaching and administrative and service burden the final Nipissing cohort in Fall 2017 will exact on the program.

Decanal Comments: Practices have been established to compensate faculty members in an equitable way that is flexible enough to accommodate the changes in student numbers and administrative work associated with the exiting ConEd cohorts.

PRS Comments: Please provide an update on this recommendation in next year's report.

Recommendation: Work to ensure that course sizes, class caps, and appropriate ratios be maintained at equitable levels for faculty and students (Reviewers' Recommendations #13, #14, #15).	
Responsibility: Dean, Program Coordinator, and PCC	Implementation Date: Beginning Fall 2014, and ongoing thereafter
2014-2015 Actions	
<p>Unit Response: The Program Coordinator worked closely with the PCC, the Dean of Liberal Arts, and the Registrar's Office to develop a clear plan regarding course sizes, class caps and ratios. The first stage of the plan was introduced in the 2014-15 schedule, and the full implementation was made for the 2015-16 schedule. For example, with the benefit of SJCE graduate students as Teaching Assistants (TAs), we created a tutorial system for our introductory course (CT100) to address the concern that it was the largest class in the program (~two sections of 130 students). Similarly, we created a course cap structure for all of the programs 200-level required courses (six in total) that kept them at 70 students. However, as noted above, with the loss of the Concurrent Education program, our numbers will likely decrease dramatically. As a result, questions about class sizes, caps and ratios will need to be re-examined in the coming years.</p> <p>Decanal Response: Significant progress has been made. We will watch this closely over the next three years to ensure equity as Nipissing winds down its B.Ed. at Brantford.</p> <p>PRS Comments: Please provide any relevant updates in next year's report.</p>	
<p>2015-2016 Progress (check one):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Completed</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain):</p>	
<p>Unit Comments: The plan regarding course sizes, class caps and ratios was implemented this academic year as detailed in last year's update. However, as noted above, with the loss of the Concurrent Education program, our numbers will likely decrease dramatically. As a result, questions about class sizes, caps and ratios will need to be re-examined in the coming years. As the transition to Social & Environmental Justice unfolds it seems likely that class size of the majors-only problem-based first year course will need to be monitored.</p>	
<p>Decanal Comments: We will continue to monitor this closely over the next few years. I encourage the program to consider these numbers and ratios in refining its curriculum (as SEJ).</p>	
<p>PRS Comments: The committee would like an update on initiatives undertaken by the program in the coming year to evaluate course sizes and ratios in next year's report.</p>	

Recommendation: Facilitate knowledge of, and participation in, grants programs, both internal and external (Reviewers' Recommendation #4).	
Responsibility: Dean and Program Coordinator in conjunction with the Office of Research Services	Implementation Date: Beginning Fall 2014, and ongoing thereafter
Additional Notes: VP: Research to be made aware of this recommendation to	

support implementation

2014-2015 Actions

Unit Response: The Office of Research Services recently hired a new Research Facilitator for the Brantford campus. The Coordinator is aware of several faculty members in the program who have met with the facilitator to discuss the possibility of applying for internal and external grants. Faculty members have also provided feedback to the Facilitator about recent changes to the internal granting program that make it more difficult for liberal arts-based researchers to access research monies. The main concern is that any successful internal grant must now result in the researcher applying to a larger external granting agency for that same project (such as SSHRC). One of the most significant concerns is that liberal arts-based research often requires smaller sums of money to complete the research, so that internal grants are often adequate in covering research costs. The requirement that researchers must apply for large external grants (and within specified time limits) may deter researchers in the Faculty of Liberal Arts from applying to the internal research grants program.

In general, the administrative and service burden on the Brantford campus remains high. Thus, continuing to create opportunities that encourage faculty to focus on the development of their research agendas is important.

Decanal Response: I am aware of these issues and will be working with FLA Program Coordinators to encourage grant writing next year.

PRS Comments: Please provide any relevant updates in next year's report.

2015-2016 Progress (check one):

- Completed
- In Progress
- Other (please explain):

Unit Comments: The new Research Facilitator from the Office of Research Services continues to meet with program faculty to discuss grant opportunities. Faculty have recently become concerned with proposed changes to the Research Ethics Board that could potentially threaten academic freedom. External grants, both from the Tri-Council and elsewhere, continue to be won by program members. As was in previous updates, the administrative and service burden on the Brantford campus remains high. Thus, continuing to create opportunities that encourage faculty to focus on the development of their research agendas is important.

Decanal Comments: I encourage the program's faculty to submit proposals for both external and internal grants. In particular, the newly created 'Community/Well-Being Grant' available to faculty on the Brantford campus is a good fit, as it intended to enhance faculty member's research capacity, better positioning them to apply for larger, longer-term external grants.

PRS Comments: The committee would like to reiterate the importance of faculty members seeking out sources for both internal and external funding. Please provide an update in next year's report.

Recommendation: Review library resources to ensure adequacy (Reviewers' Recommendation #16).	
Responsibility: Program Coordinator, Librarian, and PCC	Implementation Date: Beginning Fall 2014, and ongoing thereafter
2014-2015 Actions	
<p>Unit Response: The discussion in relation to library resources needs to occur at two levels. The first is a review of current library resources to see if they align with the needs of the SCE program. The Program Coordinator has not met with the librarian given the state of flux the program is in, and the possible shifting of program focus. A shift in curriculum focus would lead to different library resources, thus it was not an appropriate time to review.</p> <p>The second level that the conversation needs to occur, and the one that faculty focused on with the external reviewers, was the near complete lack of an adequate library on the Brantford campus. The faculty were (and continue to be) less concerned with whether the small number of books available to Brantford students and faculty have an adequate representation of SCE-related materials, and rather are overwhelmingly concerned with the fact that the Brantford campus does not have a library at all. Rather, the campus shares space with the Brantford Public Library, and Laurier-owned books fill a few stacks in the basement of this building. In January 2014, Laurier did open a "Digital Library and Learning Commons" in the basement of a Laurier building. This is where the Laurier academic librarians are now housed, and there is space for students to study and access electronic resources; however, faculty members have continuously highlighted to the university administration the challenges that not having a library brings with respect to teaching and research. Faculty members have yet to have their concerns clearly answered with a concrete plan about how the nonexistence of a full library on the Brantford campus will be addressed.</p> <p>Decanal Response: Discussions are underway about the possibility of a library in the newly acquired Market Square building.</p> <p>PRS Comments: The issue of library resources is a concern for many programs at Brantford. Please provide any relevant updates in next year's report.</p>	
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Decanal Comments: Planning is underway for the development/renovation of Market Square, where it is planned a library/learning commons will be located. The SCE Program Coordinator will be invited to provide input in summer 2016.

PRS Comments: Please provide any relevant updates in next year's report.

Recommendation: Ensure that the Dean is aware of all relevant program changes and their resource implications (Decanal Recommendation).

Responsibility: Program Coordinator

Implementation Date: Beginning Fall 2014, and ongoing thereafter

Recommendation completed (2015).

Additional Comments (Dean): The program members should be commended for their creativity, pragmatism and collaboration. They have worked hard to find new paths for the program in the wake of Nipissing's departure. In addition to what has been mentioned above, the SCE PC and team also led the development of a new program: Work & Employment, which went to the Ministry and Quality Assurance this summer. This new program is a great addition to FLA, and it also makes use of existing faculty expertise and previously developed courses in SCE.

Additional Comments (PRS): The committee would like to congratulate the program on the approval of the Work and Employment and wish it luck with the revised curricular focus of Social and Environmental Justice. We look forward to hearing about the outstanding recommendations in next year's report.