



Final Assessment Report

Academic Review

Native Studies

The Final Assessment was approved by Senate at the May 13, 2016 meeting. The following is the review:

A. Summary

- i. The Self Study was presented to the PPC on December 13, 2013.
- ii. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Dr. Robert Robson, Lakehead University and Prof. David Newhouse, Trent University and two internal reviewers, Dr. Larry Patriquin and Dr. Gerald Laronde.
- iii. The site visit occurred on February 13 and 14, 2014.
- iv. The Reviewers' Report was received on June 9, 2014.
- v. The Unit's response was provided on October 20, 2014.
- vi. The Faculty Dean's response was received on July 2, 2014.

The academic programs offered by the Department which were examined as part of the review included:

BA Major
BA Minor

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate.

B. Strengths

The Committee commends [name deleted] for the extraordinary effort he has made in keeping the program alive and his various efforts at improving the breadth and depth of the program as well as the efforts of colleagues in other departments and programs, most notably Biology, Political Studies, Anthropology and English. The committee also commends the Ethnobotany Service Learning Initiative put in place after the last review and which has garnered excellent reviews from participants and the Dokis First Nation.

The program is also to be commended for its Indigenous Knowledge foundation and for the excellent statement that places it clearly within the ideational world of the Anishinaabe while respecting the structures of the modern university. In this respect, it is at the leading edge in curriculum in Indigenous Studies.

C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

The Review Team offered the following specific recommendations:

1. The university should decide whether or not it wishes to continue the Native Studies program.

In its response, the Department advised that *in the last two decades there have been planning exercises and priority setting initiatives across successions of university administrations. Aboriginal initiatives have been identified on various occasions as a significant part of the directions of the university. Certain aboriginal initiatives have occurred but on the academic side of the education equation there has not been to date, any long-term plans for Native Studies. The program, as the reviewers point out, has no idea what each year will bring and mostly it has been little or no change. The program reached its maximum capability in faculty and resources years before the Program Review of 2005.*

The Faculty Dean noted that *this is the key question facing the university. A&S is committed to having a robust Native Studies programme that can act as the linchpin for all departments' efforts to strengthen their commitment to content which better reflects the history and contemporary experience of aboriginal, First Nations, and native communities in Canada. Some departments are also interested in developing courses that redress histories of contact and indigenous cultures outside of Canada. There is a real opportunity to be grabbed, but it can only be done with a considerable investment signaled by an investment in the programme.*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC considers that Native Studies is an important program that must be strengthened. PPC does not recommend the elimination of this program.**

2. If the university decides that it wishes to continue to the Native Studies Program, It should ensure that the faculty complement for the program be increased to at least three people within a reasonable period of time.

In its response, the Department stated that *the 2005 review indicated the need for the appointment of additional faculty, the development of the program into a four-year honours program and various recommendations for improving the breadth and depth of the degree. The 2014 Review echoed the earlier recommendations and added that it would take at least three faculty appointments and the subsequent development of promotional efforts, to increase enrollment.*

The Faculty Dean noted that *while it is generally outside the purview of the reviewers to make staffing recommendations, in this case, their recommendation is germane to what they have been asked to assess. Three fulltime members is reasonable to mount a four year honours programme. [name deleted] has articulated how such resources would be used, including one language position.*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC notes according to Quality Assurance Framework Reviewers are asked to comment on the "Appropriateness and effectiveness of the**

academic unit's use of existing human, physical and financial resources in delivering its program(s)". In making this assessment, reviewers must recognize the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation." Accordingly, PPC refers this matter to the Dean for consideration as part of the normal budgetary process. Notwithstanding, PPC recommends a second position for Native Studies. This is underway for 2016-2017. PPC also recommends that the equivalent of a third faculty position, either solely in Native Studies or by cross-appointment, be considered over the next few years.

3. The Working Group on Native Studies explore opportunities for creating a robust Native Studies faculty within a small university.

The Department advised that *"over the course of more than six years there have been occasions when, through the Dean's office, a Working Group Committee for Native Studies has been initiated. Unfortunately, the Working Group would be convened only once in the academic year, during the tenure of each of the previous three Deans. The Group's composition changed each time and the restarting process would take the whole procedure back to a beginning point. The Reviewers have acknowledged that a Working Group is a worthwhile form of development mechanism for the Program but the Native Studies Program would wish to add the proviso that the Working Group be convened in a regular fashion and with an eye to long-term commitment and long-term goal setting."*

The Faculty Dean responded that *"it was my hope when I convened the working group that this would be their task. I am pleased that the reviewers see value in the working group, as a support to the coordinator of the programme."*

PPC response is as follows: **That the Faculty of Arts and Science formalize the Working Group Committee for Native Studies and consider expanding it to include representation from the other two Faculties.**

4. If the decision is made to appoint additional faculty, we would recommend that the Working Group on Native Studies be mandated to develop a five year plan for improving the curriculum through additional Native Studies courses including a plan for cross listing with other departments and programs. As students exhibit high interest in the development of practical skills, we would also recommend that the service learning course be continued and properly resourced. It also provides a link to local community and is a visible demonstration of the university's commitment to local First Nations communities.

The Departments responded that *"expansion of the present schedule of courses in order to offer students more choice and to make it less arduous for students to fit Native Studies within their*

required curricula for minors or majors. This expansion would also allow for true program progression of course content rather than having to teach every existent course as an introductory course from year one to year three of their undergraduate degree. As an example, the course NATI 3005 Native Religions and Spirituality is taught as an opening course and there is no continuing depth and specificity to the topic realm.”

The Faculty Dean stated that *“the working group could prepare a five year plan which would detail staffing and course/curriculum development, esp. cross-listed courses. Ideally, a timeline would be established for the work of the committee and resources provided based on their recommendations.”*

PPC response is as follows: **That the Department develop a five-year plan for the creation of additional Native Studies courses, including additional cross-listed courses.**

5. We would also recommend that the Working Group work closely with the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives to build Native Studies courses into other programs as one way of increasing program enrolments.

The Department advised that *“Native Studies has struggled over the years from being placed within numerous other discipline clusters, global budgets and as a small-voice program therein. In recent years it developed the initiative to be a stand-alone program which it is now entered as, in the stratification listing of programs and disciplines. This will hopefully make it easier in the future to resource the program more clearly and efficiently. Further attached is the larger possibility in the future to be a school or institute of native higher learning within the structure of the university, similar to other “schools” already present here.”*

The Faculty Dean advised that *“the mandate of the OAI is not academic. Accordingly, it has been difficult to establish, to date, an easy relationship. But if the OAI were charged with supporting community service efforts and recruitment, I think that would be a first step to negotiating a relationship that would have the potential to expand.”*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC recommends that the Director of the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives be invited to participate in the Working Group Committee for Native Studies.**

6. We recommend that the Working Group explore opportunities to increase enrolment in the Native Studies program through the offering of a new Native Studies teachable course within the B.Ed. program, The rationale being that some students may be attracted to a career teaching Native Studies within the school system. The flow through of students from the Native Studies program in Arts and Science into Education would benefit the university as a whole.

The Department advised that the *“Four Year Honors Program in Native Environmental Management. This initiative idea was spawned by surveying the needs and wishes of both students and the communities from which they come, and would wish to have maximum flexibility in courses or stream choices if coupled with a larger interdisciplinary program within the university. Potential graduates are increasingly looking to practicality and the accompanying skill sets from which to launch into careers in First Nations communities and in the general workplace. As First Nations turn ever increasingly towards self- government, self-determination and self-management of their own infrastructures this type of program would fill many gaps that are both present now and well on into the future.”*

The Faculty Dean noted that *“Native Studies needs to be a four year honours programme if students are to go on directly into a B.Ed. It would be wonderful if the new chair in Aboriginal Education would work closely with the Native Studies programme (there are a number of opportunities for crosslisting and cross- appointment that might formalize some of these ties). As well, one of the faculty members in Education who is working on the teachable may well serve on the working group or as a liaison.”*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC considers that the review of the structure of the Bachelor of Education programs should be undertaken by the Schulich School of Education.**

7. We recommend that the Registrar's Office work with the Native Studies program to develop a promotion/recruitment/retention strategy that not only meets the needs of the Native Studies program but also the needs of the University.

The Department noted it *“has struggled over the years from being placed within numerous other discipline clusters, global budgets and as a small-voice program therein. In recent years it developed the initiative to be a stand-alone program which it is now entered as, in the stratification listing of programs and disciplines. This will hopefully make it easier in the future to resource the program more clearly and efficiently. Further attached is the larger possibility in the future to be a school or institute of native higher learning within the structure of the university, similar to other “schools” already present here.”*

The Faculty Dean advised that *“recruitment is a crucial issue. Both the Registrar’s Office and External Relations need to be charged with recruitment into the programme. We certainly want*

more native students at Nipissing University, it is a misunderstanding to assume they will all want Native Studies as a major.

Recruitment into Native Studies needs to take the curriculum and its appeal into account.”

PPC response is as follows: **PPC considers this recommendation to be somewhat outside the scope of the program review. However, PPC recommends that the relevant University units (Recruitment, Marketing and Communications) continue to consult with all academic units and the Deans in the development of their marketing/recruitment/communications strategies.**

8. We recommend that the Nipissing University explore the possibility of developing a community-based or off-campus component to the Native Studies program. With five reserve communities located within an hour drive of the campus, community based teaching would appear to be an obvious way to introduce students (or potential students) to the Native Studies program as well as to introduce the University to the Aboriginal community.

The Departments response is imbedded in their response to recommendation #6.

The Faculty Dean advised that “everyone seems very excited by the possibility of developing an off-campus component to the programme. Again, Native Studies needs to have a critical mass of faculty in order to develop and offer more and other options. Success is not guaranteed, but more faculty are necessary to make success possible.”

PPC response is as follows: **PPC endorses this recommendation.**

D. PPC RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are the recommendations that require specific action as a result of the Review, along with the identification of the position or unit responsible for the action in question. Notwithstanding the position or unit identified as the being responsible for specific recommendations, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the recommended actions are undertaken.

Recommendation	Responsible	Projected Date
That the Faculty of Arts and Science formalize the Working Group Committee for Native Studies and consider expanding it to include representation from the other two Faculties.	Dean	December 2016
That the Department develop a five-year plan for the creation of additional Native Studies courses, including additional cross-listed	Department	May 2017

courses.		
PPC recommends that the Director of the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives be invited to participate in the Working Group Committee for Native Studies.	Dean	December 2016