



Final Assessment Report

Academic Review

Social Welfare and Social Development Program

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

A. Summary

1. The Program Self Study was completed and sent to the external reviewers November 2012. There were two volumes, the first, Self-study Social Welfare and Social Development Program and the second, Background Data Review of the Social Welfare and Social Development Program.
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Meg Luxton (York University) and Alan Sears (Ryerson University) and two internal reviewers, Gillian McCann, Faculty of Arts and Science, Religions and Cultures, and Sal Renshaw, Faculty of Arts and Science, Chair Gender Equality and Social Justice.
3. The site visit was conducted February 7th and 8th, 2013.
4. The Reviewers' Report was received on March 19, 2013.
5. The Department's Response was provided on April 30, 2013.
6. The Dean's Response was provided on April 22, 2013.

The academic programs offered by the Department which was examined during the review included:

BA in Social Welfare and Social Development.

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of Nipissing University's IQAP approved by Senate on December 17, 2010.

B. Strengths

The Review committee noted the following: *"With small class sizes and well qualified faculty combined with a strong pedagogical basis for the program, Nipissing offers a quality program in Social Welfare and Social Development in the view of the reviewers. "The program has real strengths in the area of deliberate capacity development among students." This is accomplished by the faculty combining important areas of discovery based learning and providing interdisciplinary perspectives of human services and social policy.*

The reviewers noted that in this program, students valued their small classes and the opportunities to get to know their professors. From a teaching and assessment point of view, the reviewers were impressed by the level of assignments stressing "critical reading, thinking and writing, rather than relying on measures such as multiple choice that only

require memory work.” The majority of courses require that assignments be related to each other as building blocks ending with a final assignment being a culmination of the preceding assignments. There was a comment from the reviewers that they were impressed with the close collaboration among the three full time faculty members and that as a result of this close collaboration, there were a number of program wide assignments. The reviewers noted that another strength of the program was that in the 2012-13 academic year seventy percent of the course offerings were taught by full-time faculty.”

C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

The Review Team offered the following specific recommendations:

1. The immediate sustainability of the program requires that the current limited term position be converted to a tenure-track position. The medium term sustainability of the program requires the hiring of a fourth faculty member once the program has proved its ability to attract and retain students. We recommend that the Program receive an additional tenure stream appointment, possibly in the area of Community Service Learning and community-based research.

The Department response pointed out “that as the main recommendation to address one of the potential issues identified by the reviewers was the need to stabilize faculty complement to prevent “burnout” of current faculty members and to address a broadening of the curriculum. The Department pointed out that they had received approval to convert the Limited Term Appointment to a Tenure Track Appointment to commence July 2014. As to the addition of a fourth faculty member, the Department indicated that ideally this should take place in 2014-15 when one of the full time faculty members is on sabbatical. In their recommendation, the reviewers suggested that the background for the fourth faculty member could be from the area of Community Service Learning. The Department view was that the faculty member currently involved in this subject area, continue with Community Service Learning and that the new faculty member follow the reviewers’ alternative recommendation that any new addition to the faculty should “reflect the program’s hiring priorities.” The hiring of a fourth faculty member in 2014-15 would allow the Department to be fully staffed in anticipation of the commencement of the Bachelor of Social Work program.”

The Faculty Dean’s response “echoed the note from the Department regarding the conversion of the Limited term Appointment to a Tenure Track Appointment. In terms of adding a fourth faculty member to the Department, the request will be made in the 2014-15 budget year. The Department will decide on the disciplinary and research expertise of the position to compliments and strengthens its current faculty membership.”

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.

2. *We recommend that the program be assigned an administrative secretary who will take responsibility for most of the administrative tasks of running the program and who will serve as the “public face” of the program for students and others.*

In its response to this recommendation, *“the Department separated the recommendation into two issues. The first issue was to address the need for dedicated administrative support to relieve these duties taken on by the department faculty. The Department noted that there were additional administrative resources made available in the Office of the Dean of Applied and Professional Schools in 2013-14. They anticipated that there may be the opportunity to enhance these resources with the anticipated implementation of the Bachelor of Social Work program. To address the second issue in this recommendation, the creation of “a public face” of the program, the Department suggests that they will be working with the Office of the Dean of Applied and Professional Schools, to cluster the faculty offices in one physical area and this would enable the establishment for this program presence.”*

The Faculty Dean *“in his response did not believe that there was sufficient work in the department to justify full time administrative support. Once the Bachelor of Social Work program is established there may latitude to provide full time support on a combined basis. He did note that there were additional resources made available in his Office to address in part some of the needs of this and other departments.”*

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.

- 3. We recommend that the strong pedagogical basis of the program be reinforced by further work in the areas of democratic pedagogy, applied and community research, anti-oppression pedagogy and information literacy. This will require both the basic investment in faculty resources described above and specific support for faculty development, including travel, conferences, consultants and library resources as appropriate as well as stronger community liaison support for community service learning and partnership with community agencies.*

The Department provided a very detailed response addressing this recommendation. *“The response included inclusion of additional readings to be incorporated into various courses, addition of information literacy into course materials or the addition of a specific course in information literacy and potential cross-listing of courses with Gender Studies and Sociology.”*

In his response, the Dean *“fully supported and endorsed the detailed curriculum response from the Department. In addition, the Dean re-iterated that the Reviewers’ Report stated that the pedagogy and curriculum are both sound, each contributing to a “unique learning process” and experience for students.”*

PPC response is as follows: **PPC recommends that the School review its curriculum to determine whether further changes are needed to ensure that the following areas are adequately covered: democratic pedagogy, applied and community research, anti-oppression pedagogy and information literacy.**

- 4. The program will benefit from a stronger identity, which would include over time: a discernible space with appropriate staff support, an improved website and the community liaison work. In particular, we note that the website is difficult to read, hard to navigate and in no way distinguishes the Social Welfare and Social Development program.*

The Department *“combined its response to recommendations 4 and 6. They supported the need to improve communication of information of their program through the program website. They also recognized that any webpage redesign would require sufficient resources from the University’s senior Administration. In regard to the issue of improving linkages with community college, the Department stated that they will undertake to update the articulation agreement with Canadore College and with the assistance of the Office of the Dean of Applied and Professional Schools, explore possible links with other community colleges providing college diploma students the opportunity for a degree completion pathway to either in Bachelor of Arts degree or in the future a Bachelor of Social Work degree.”*

The Faculty Dean noted that *“the senior administration is committed to a long term space planning process where faculty will be located to create a “point of presence” for the*

Department. Included in this planning is the potential for designating a classroom for faculty and student use during times when classes are not scheduled. The Dean also noted that the University website continues to be edited and updated by the Marketing and External relations department. In the opinion of the Dean, there is little academic input into that process or on-going development. The Marketing and External Relations department have identified the need to enhance content online and in print form. The Marketing and External Relations department does not recommend developing individually branded program sites as the Nipissing University brand does not have the recognition to support sub-brands.”

PPC response is as follows: **(1) 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.**

5. The program has attracted a strong group of students and this would be enhanced through the development of a student association/club, which can be seeded through events and drop-ins. Students were clear that they would like to have a space designated for their use or at least the opportunity to use a room on a regular basis for student meetings, socials and other activities.

The Department noted in their response “*that the creation of a student club would enable students to faculty their support and concerns about the Social Welfare and Social Development program. Students would have the opportunity to bond as a group and enhance their organization capacities. There is an effort underway to designate classroom space for faculty and student use during non-scheduled times. In addition, future plans include setting aside department funds to support the formation of a student club. A faculty member will be designated as an advisor for the club”.*

The Dean’s response was included in the remarks for Recommendation 4 above.

PPC response is as follows: **PPC considers that the actions proposed and undertaken by the Department and the Dean adequately address the issue raised in the Reviewers’ Report.**

6. We recommend that the University and the Program develop more active information and recruitment efforts, directed at both high school students and guidance counselors and Colleges. A more attractive and informative website that reflects the specific attractions of the Social Welfare and Social Development Program is definitely central to such efforts.

For the Department response, see response to Recommendation 4 above.

In his response, the Dean noted “*that the marketing and recruitment have recently been combined under the External Relations and Advance Office. They are identifying Social Welfare and Social Development as a distinct program option at recruiting fairs and high school visits. Information request cards, paper or virtual, include Social Welfare and Social Development as an explicit area of interest and communications are specifically targeted to inquiries indicating this area of interest. Promotional material distributed to community college contacts for Social Welfare and Social Development high affinity programs will be enhanced. These efforts are in addition to the current work performed by the Marketing department with respect to the material included in the Student Guide, training sessions with Liaison Officers in regard to specific program background, Program Brochures, and fall and winter open houses where program representatives are available to all campus visitors to discuss their program opportunities.*”

PPC response is as follows: **PPC considers that the actions proposed and undertaken by the Department and the Dean adequately address the issue raised in the Reviewers’ Report.**

D. 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
PPC recommends that the School review its curriculum to determine whether further changes are needed to ensure that the following areas are adequately covered: democratic pedagogy, applied and community research, anti-oppression pedagogy and information literacy.	School	May 2017