

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PROGRAM UNDER REVIEW

PROGRAM	SENATE APPROVAL DATE	PREPARED BY
Child and Family Studies	[Select Date]	Provost and Vice-President

A. SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS & LISTING OF PROGRAMS UNDER REVIEW

SELF-STUDY REVIEW TIMELINE	DATE
1. Self-Study Presented to AQAPC	October 21, 2022
2. Site Visit Conducted (Virtually)	January 17 – 19, 2023
3. Reviewer's Report Received	February 23, 2023
4. Internal Reviewers Response Received	April 28, 2023
5. Dean's Response Received	April 28, 2023

The members of the review committee were:

- Dr. Tricia van Rhijn, University of Guelph
- Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi, Toronto Metropolitan University

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

- **Bachelor of Arts**

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on November 27, 2018 and re-ratified by Quality Council April 26, 2019.

B. PROGRAM STRENGTHS

The program is structured to provide multiple pathways to graduation where students can choose courses and applied learning opportunities that correspond to their interests. The certificates offered as part of the program add enormous value to the student experience, but also provide students with a competitive advantage in the job market both in and beyond education settings.

The program is a natural fit with the Education stream, specifically teacher education, that the university is well known for. The embedded concurrent stream within CHFS attracts a large number of students to the program and

prepares them exceptionally well for success in postgraduate education programs offered by the university. CHFS furthermore contributes to the success of other programs in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

External Reviewers Recommendation #1: *The priority for this program is the hiring of additional tenure-stream faculty members. We strongly urge the University to follow through with the planned replacement hire in 2023/2024, and to consider at least one but ideally two additional tenure stream positions over the next two years.*

Unit's Response: The dept. agrees with the recommendation of securing FT TT faculty. We have advocated for timely budget decisions and a fair recruitment process since our relocation to the main campus in 2016. Despite data-informed and long-standing needs of the program, across our applied curriculum in particular, competing tensions and pressures have hampered our ability to secure dedicated FT dollars. Instead, limited term and shared FT budget dollars are allocated annually, against identified programmatic need or departmental support. These last-minute stopgap measures have compromised our ability to adequately cover our learning objectives and impeded our progress across critical and longstanding priorities (IQAP Review, 2013-14; IQAP Review, 2022-23).

A FT dedicated faculty responsive to program need will help stabilize the program, support long-term visioning and sustainability, and enhance our capacity for growth in line with our reviewers' recommendations to position "this excellent program as a professional and applied program relevant to the health, social, and community sectors, and perhaps even to the policy sector. As the only such program located and rooted in near North Ontario, the opportunity to become the flagship program for health, social and community service careers in the near North and the North is readily present, and the dire human resource shortages of qualified professionals in these sectors in the near North and the North are well established". Indeed, our programmatic focus is on point with current strategic planning feedback at the Institution, as captured in the recent community feedback reports, in that CHFS is a program that: meets the demands of in-demand fields; expands offerings in fields with staffing shortages; offers certifications and provides opportunities for professional development, career advancement/pathways, and practical learning opportunities; is anchored and built on collaboration and partnerships with local community, organizations, and other community stakeholders for mutually beneficial outcomes; increases our community presence through collaborative partnerships and placements; and ensures we meet community needs and address gap areas, among multiple other strategic themes (Future Summary report; Apr 20, 2023).

Despite an annual budget allocation pattern that has resulted in long-standing inequities for faculty and risk for the program, we have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to building our curriculum and research, a tremendous focus on supporting our students, and an increased capacity for building meaningful professional community partnerships that enhance our student career pathways and bring value to our partners. We have experienced unparalleled success and have been recognized for our efforts to "keep this program not only alive, but also growing, are exceptional and without comparison across similar programs in Ontario" (External Reviewers' Report, Feb 8, 2023). As one of the largest programs in AS, it is critical that we secure budgetary support that is responsive to program curriculum and need and aligns with program strategic focus.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers and Internal Reviewers recommendation that there is a need for additional tenure-track faculty in the Child and Family Studies program. There are also opportunities to enhance capacity within CHFS by leveraging faculty members from several intersecting programs.

Provost's Response: All tenure-track and tenured appointments at Nipissing University are evaluated through a competitive process. In my role as Provost, I look forward to receiving the rationale for a new position and for that rationale to include the Strategic Plan, a clear and comprehensive position description linked to the program curriculum as well as the research goals for the program, and the ranking of the Dean.

External Reviewers Recommendation #2: *We also urge the university to make available dedicated administrative support for this program. It is highly unusual for a program of this size to operate without any dedicated administrative support.*

Unit's Response: Administrative support would be much welcomed, but likely a tall order given the fiscal needs of the AS Faculty and Institution. We are looking forward to some support for placement and experiential learning coordination via the Dean's office, however we realize this new role will not replace the discipline(s)-specific departmental level coordination required around applied and professional activities. Some of our greatest capacity comes from committed applied and Professional contract faculty members who support specialized and competency-based curriculum development, professional skill building and support for students, community-stakeholder and agency-placement collaboration, applied research and program evaluation that is responsive to our existing curriculum, and other related areas that cannot be simply allocated to "admin" as they require disciplinary, professional, and subject-matter expertise and cross-sectoral knowledge. Recruitment responsive to program need would help build capacity not just for faculty/students but also for program development and 'program management' which relies on professional skill/knowledge and practical (in-the-field/clinical/applied) experience.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers and Internal Reviewers recommendation to provide administrative support for the Child and Family Studies program. The Dean's office has hired a staff member to support finding placements and coordinating/tracking the experiential learning opportunities within Child and Family Studies and other programs in Arts and Science. There are four Practicum or Applied 4000 level courses that often run as Independent Study courses that the Dean's office can help administer. The Dean's office can also assist with maintaining relations the existing network of community-stakeholders and agency-placements.

Provost's Response: The Dean has committed to finding the necessary supports with the Decanal office. Optimally, administrative efficiencies are developed across programs and academic units.

External Reviewers Recommendation #3: *We strongly recommend strengthening the program's Indigenous-focused curriculum, including embedding this focus within the program learning outcomes, either by introducing a required course or by significantly increasing Indigenous-focused content, including Indigenous knowledges, across all courses in the curriculum, and notably in the research-related courses and those courses heavily influenced by psychology, since these fields often are centered on Western ways of knowing and white lived experiences.*

Unit's Response: We will continue to update our curriculum as needed, given our commitment to holistic programming and the creation pathways that support our students and community. We have already moved forward and modified our second-year methodology course, CHFS 2026, to more formally acknowledge the inclusion of research frameworks that bring together Indigenous and Western approaches to knowledge creation, and gain new ways of thinking about and approaching problems (senate-approved April 14, 2023).

We also value the suggestion that a specific required Indigenous themed course be introduced as part of our core offerings, and we not only agree from a programmatic perspective, but are committed to this in AS and institutionally. To this end, the creation of INDG breath requirement for all students at Nipissing was supported by Senate just this past year, and likely to be operationalized in the coming academic cycle.

We support this recommendation, however, would like to provide additional context to illustrate our existing strengths in this regard. We feel some aspects of our program were missed by our review team, likely for several reasons including; our oversight in detailing this information in our Self Study, a lack of institutional knowledge and history regarding the development and direction of our cross-coded curriculum with PSYC, a lack of knowledge around the significance of our cross-listed curriculum with other programs in meeting our degree requirements, and lack of access to senate approved changes made earlier in the academic cycle.

To clarify:

By budgetary necessity we continue to partner with relevant programs to cover our degree requirements. We have several courses where Indigenous themes, equity, inclusion, decolonizing practices, and cultural humility content is embedded directly into the learning outcomes of the course. These courses are cross-listed to CHFS and coded as SWLF or SOCI, or they are CHFS courses that are cross-coded and contribute to PSYC. At least two of the SWLF courses listed for the CHFS program are also offered as INDG. While cross-listed courses may not be budgeted directly by CHFS, they are nonetheless courses that contribute to the CHFS degree.

~6% of our full curriculum is Indigenous-centered and ~67% contains Indigenous themes or content; for example, SWLF 3406 (also coded as INDG 3406) Colonialism in First Nations' Communities and SWLF 3407 (also coded as INDG 3407) Social Development in First Nations' Communities

Our numbers are somewhat lower for our research and applied human dev curriculum, however many of these courses are also explicit in their inclusion of multiple and intersecting identities, social positions, and theoretical frameworks, with ~59% containing INDG themes or content respective to the course topic.

Further to this, we are committed to inclusionary core values in our work and planning, have wide representation of multiple identities, social positions, and theoretical frameworks throughout our curriculum, and will continue to work on enhancing this and more explicitly outlining Indigenous values, content, and knowledges across the curriculum in our program.

In understanding the influence of PSYC on CHFS courses, it is important to contextualize PSYC and to clarify the cross-coding partnership we have and the direction of our cross-coding.

1st, while PSYC may be seen as traditionally Eurocentric, the profession has experienced a rapidly progressive and culturally responsive rebirth over the past two decades and has contributed to significant cultural shifts and social impact. The field itself spans widely diverse approaches, theories, philosophies, specializations, and worldviews; from basic neuroscience and connectionist networks to community decolonial feminist psychology theories and practices. Real-world applications of the latter, are subserved by and argue for decolonial psychology and practice embedded directly within applied and professional structures, a thread that runs across our transdisciplinary programming in CHFS: To empower students to support our most vulnerable children, youth, and families directly from within the colonial systems and service sectors in which they practice, directly in the context of assessment, therapeutic settings, education, policy, program development, implementation, and evaluation. While under these theories we focus on issues relevant to marginalized and equity seeking groups in our own WEIRD society, the field itself tackles concerns of the global majority, including marginalized cultures of the global South.

2nd, our collaboration or cross-coded programming with PSYC, actually originated with and was driven by CHFS, such that the direction of our curriculum and development of our learning objectives was CHFS → PSYC, rather than PSYC → CHFS. In other words, we add value to PSYC courses, and PSYC students benefit from exposure to INDG themes, cultural responsiveness and humility, and considerations of decolonizing practices embedded across a significant portion of our CHFS curriculum, including those crossed with PSYC, and have full responsibility for developing, budgeting, and teaching this curriculum.

3rd, 82% of our full-program curriculum and 64% of our applied human dev reflects pedagogy that is inclusive of multiple and intersecting identities, social positions, or theoretical frameworks. For example, all of our CHFS cross-coded courses include mixed methodologies and social themes - social justice and equity, diversity, inclusion - that ensure students engage with social, systemic, and structural inequities in human service, therapeutic, and educational contexts. For example, themes of diversity, equity, inclusion, decolonization, cultural responsiveness and humility are captured widely in our course learning outcomes, across CHFS 3036 - Ethics; CHFS 3116 - Perspectives in Autism; CHFS 3127 - Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorders; CHFS 4106 - Interventions for Planning and Neurodivergence; CHFS 4306 - Special Topics in Applied Human Dev, and multiple others. Even in courses that would perhaps be perceived reductively as Eurocentric, such as CHFS (PSYC) 3137, Applied Behaviour Sciences, explicit senate approved learning objectives include: "Outline ethical decision-making processes in applied settings and competence for individual and cultural diversity in planning and goal setting" and "Integrate theoretical and applied frameworks for addressing diversity considerations across various fields, including responsive and nondiscriminatory practices, as related for example, to neurodiversity, mental health, trauma, language, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, culture, social economic status, and others". In the context of this course, as an example, students learn to work hands-on with the A.D.D.R.E.S.S.I.N.G model (age/generational and intergenerational influences, developmental disability, disability acquired later in life, religion and spiritual orientation, ethnicity/race identity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, Indigenous heritage, national origin, and gender), while they learn the theories and applications of behavioural analysis and program planning in tandem with skills to practice cultural humility and be responsive to cultural complexities they face in the field/in practice settings. They learn to consider issues and engage with factors that impact diverse communities and also to understand the impact of cultural incompetency in the context of service access, service delivery models, cultural accommodation in the context of caregiver training, cultural differences and social significance in parent training, and multiple other related topics.

4th, Our curriculum and program development is supported by a widely diverse complement of contract Professional colleagues and CASBU members, who bring together multiple intersecting identities and viewpoints across education,

experience, protected status, and theoretical orientations; all highly credentialed, with professional, clinical, applied, practice-based, expertise and lived experience, and all who play a key role in enhancing our curriculum, overall program pedagogy, and our student experience. While degrees and specializations do not always reflect the full scope of an individual's training, expertise, theoretical breadth, worldview, or lived experience, our applied faculty represent a wide spectrum of pedagogy and research backgrounds including critical theories across clinical and feminist psychology, counseling, critical disability studies, education and critical education, women and gender studies, health and rehabilitation sciences, health promotion, international studies, leadership studies, mental health, native and Indigenous studies, nursing, philosophy, psychology, psychoeducation, recreation and leisure studies, social development studies, social work, critical sociology, and special education - with a diverse set of interests and expertise across a range of topics within and across these fields. Our current faculty profile is similar across the full program and applied curriculum, including 80% female, 60% critical theories, 60% protected status, 30% francophone, 30% racialized, and 20% Indigenous.

In reference to our research methodology and analytics courses specifically, we were pleased to learn that we are uniquely positioned amongst similar programs in Ontario - and nationally, in our focus on these types of competencies and skill-sets. This is especially important given our program goal of not only equipping our students for success, but also enhancing health and social outcomes across our service sectors, communities, community partners, and families. Consistent with our vision for equity and intersectionality-informed methods and evaluation practices, we will continue to bring these courses and certificates in line with Canadian Evaluation (CES) standards for equitable research and evaluation; with clear, measurable, and accountable learning outcomes.

Our certificates were originally developed in consultation with key community and sector leaders, in response to identified gaps across the sector. Data literacy is critical in the face of increasing pressures in community programs that service vulnerable children, youth, and families, and equitable data science principles and practices even more so. We have been working to more clearly outline ethics and equity learning objectives into our methodology curriculum. Intersectionality-informed quantitative research and analysis is a critical knowledge and competency area for our field and one that is abandoned too rapidly; first because many students are not always keen on what they see as "math" and second because data sciences are erroneously considered as a separate field from child, youth, and family studies. This couldn't be further from the truth given the responsibilities required of our graduates once they enter career pathways across sectors that service vulnerable children, youth, and families; including program development and implementation, evaluation, quality improvement, and health/social outcomes management for programs that service vulnerable children, youth, and families.

Our FT faculty member has expertise in working with and addressing inequity and hidden bias across evaluative data lifecycles in the social, health, and not-for-profit sectors, and we have been working to more formally integrate these competencies and build equitable quantitative analysis principles, values, and practical strategies into our 3rd year stats course and our 4th year seminar and program evaluation courses; especially as related to primary data collection and analysis of primary and secondary data with human participants, but also across the full data/evaluation/implementation-science cycle with agency/program clients. We have been slowed by depleted FT faculty capacity, with multiple courses in cue for our academic curriculum quality improvement process in the coming cycle, 2023-24.

In sum, we have and will continue to integrate multiple perspectives into our pedagogy and research, embedded in our learning objectives and also as contributed by numerous of our faculty who teach, research, and work across systems of knowledge. We may have some continued work and development in this regard, but have been meticulously and mindfully growing our teaching, research, and overall programming to be mindful to learning that is inclusive of multiple and intersecting identities, social positions, and theoretical frameworks, including Indigenous knowledges.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers recommendation that CHFS integrate required courses with an Indigenous-focus curriculum. As the Internal Reviewers outline above, there are electives within the CHFS program that provide opportunities for students to develop competencies or understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing. However, there are several new courses in the Indigenous Studies program that could complement the CHFS core courses offerings (e.g. INDG-2007 Land-as-Home & Well-being; INDG-2406 Indigenous Families – Colonial Impacts & Contemporary Responses; INDG-3106 Indigenous Health and Wellness).

Provost's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers and the Dean about the integral nature of indigenous research and pedagogy with the CHFS program. It is no longer sufficient in the Academy (were it ever the case) to point to ways in which Eurocentric bias are named or addressed, or that courses exist elsewhere as cross-coded, cross-listed or cognate. What the experience of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made clear, and what the commitments through treaty embody, is that Indigenous voices are central to the conversations especially about psychological and familial health and wellness. I look forward to the Dean redressing the response of the academic unit now that it has been reconfigured to expand disciplines.

External Reviewer's Recommendation #4: *We recommend strongly that there be further exploration of program delivery methods, including virtual and online delivery of courses, hybrid and blended learning opportunities, and intensive courses.*

Unit's Response: We agree with this recommendation, which is consistent with our previous IQAP Review Recommendations (2013/14) and in keeping with our vision for accessible programming, and have submitted an LOI request proposing this major modification to the program - supported by the Dean and Provost, pending completion of the current IQAP process. We have also outlined key strategies and actionable objectives in our Self-Study, particularly related to building a meaningful virtual and hybrid presence and culture for students. We currently offer all of our curriculum in an accessible format, either via hybrid or online delivery, with multiple options for blended formats, and have a number of recommendations in our Self Study for enhanced access.

Dean's Response: I agree that the CHFS program needs to be accessible for the different cohorts of students. Although currently, Consecutive Education students make up 70% of the majors in the program; most of these students are looking for on campus courses. Perhaps alternative modes of delivery (i.e. virtual or intensive courses) will be necessary for the development of microcredentials, professional certificates or post-baccalaureate degrees. We also need an on-site presence for the purpose of recruiting students into the program.

Provost's Response: Access broadly defined will be a necessary conversation for Arts and Science. Understanding the profile of current and prospective students will be key to developing a suitable array of offerings in modes of delivery that meet the needs of the University, the academic unit, program and students.

External Reviewer's Recommendation #5: *We recommend that the grouping of elective courses based on categories of human development and learning and child and family wellbeing and social justice be discontinued, as these categorizations are out of step with current academic and professional practices.*

Unit's Response: We agree with and will move forward with this recommendation as one of our first steps in follow-up to the review, in our program logic model and restructuring. This is also consistent with our IRC self-study.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers and Internal Reviewers recommendation to discontinue the categorization of courses within the Human Development and Learning, and Child and Family Wellbeing and Social Justice. A thorough curriculum review is required.

Provost's Response: I agree with the Dean that a thorough curriculum review is required. It would be best for all programs undergoing IQAP to be sufficiently far along in their review that a full cycle isn't missed by virtue of really taking the full opportunity presented by external review.

External Reviewer's Recommendation #6: *We strongly recommend exploration of expanding experiential learning opportunities for students, notably in the context of internships, co-op placements, and unpaid placements in the community sector.*

Unit's Response: We agree with this recommendation and are eager to coordinate with our new Experiential Learning role in the Dean's office. Notably, the role of coordinating and supporting applied/and professional placements cannot be managed fully outside of the program. Centralized admin support for these functions cannot

cover significant applied and practical support that needs to take place at the program level. Our applied curriculum, certificates, and placement competencies require significant discipline- or practice-specific knowledge and related professional/sector-based knowledge and expertise.

It is only with enhanced FT faculty capacity with specialized and professional background that we can meet this recommendation for “expansion”, or even be able to sustain the current needs of the program in this regard or support students through applied research and community engagement. This type of applied/experiential engagement has fueled our success to date, not just with students but with our community partners.

A further caveat on this recommendation is that our placement and experiential options are quite limited in North Bay. As such we will need to consider enhanced placement and experiential options for students within their home/local communities. We have been enhancing our reach beyond North Bay, and will continue to look to remote, distance, and greater community opportunities for students. Ironically, the pandemic pivot to remote and virtual access for students even across placements, has enabled us to build community capacity far beyond North Bay, including in national/and pan-Canadian associations, metropolitan and rural southern community agencies, and across our more northern communities like Elliot Lake, Timmins, or Wawa. This will require a focused effort on enhancing accessible e-learning and virtual support options for our students and connecting them to their local hubs or possibly even exploring outreach to enhance pan-Canadian and international options for students.

Dean’s Response: I agree with the External Reviewers and Internal Reviewers recommendation to explore more experiential learning opportunities within North Bay and the wider region. This may help attract a new cohort of students towards the Child and Family Studies, separate from the Consecutive Education majors in the program.

Provost’s Response: I agree that a review of how experiential offerings are defined and a commitment to offer meaningful and original experiential offerings will enrich all programs.

External Reviewer’s Recommendation #7: *We recommend that further consideration be given to the certificates offered as part of the program becoming available to non-program students and to community-based learners as part of a continuing education scheme.*

Unit’s Response: We agree with the suggestion that our certificates would be a draw for community-based learners, and generally with the recommendation for supporting broader institutional-level continuing Ed. initiatives. Provided that adequate resources are infused into our already depleted program, we will need to first stabilize and cover existing and critical curriculum needs, and equitably support our current program faculty. Given a significant shortage of FT faculty resources, if we are to engage in these types of initiatives, we would also like to suggest a shared revenue-generation formula that can support both academic program growth and institutional continuing Ed. In the interim, we will continue to build our academic certification initiatives that can perhaps cross-over into continuing Ed in the future. Several are already in development in consultation with key community partners (for example, certificates Child and Youth Mental Health, Child and Youth Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, Developmental and Behavioural Practitioner Post-Baccalaureate Diploma for health/community service front-line teams in collaboration with provincial gov. stakeholders, and ABA/PBS for teachers). Of significance to this recommendation, provincial stakeholders have shared that decision-makers across child, youth, and family sectors are interested in degree-granting and academic standing certifications for their teams and front-line practitioners, for example post-baccalaureate options or course-based 1-yr Masters degrees over non-credentialed or micro-credentialed continuing Ed. While the latter is indeed valuable for some segments of our community, given our current fiscal situation and growing competition from highly accessible continuing-Ed platforms, we would first want to understand where our value-add could be, and map our key strategic drivers in relation to this – as well as running a cost-benefit analysis for a program with severe faculty shortages. Historically, many of our courses have been listed as accessible online offerings with Contact North, and available to community-based learners as we cycled through them. This may be a transitional first-step to offering the certificates more widely, and engaging in continuing-ed options.

Dean’s Response: I agree with the External Reviewers and Interval Reviewers recommendation to explore continuing education opportunities, such as professional certificates, microcredentials or post-baccalaureate programs. The Dean of Arts and Science office will work with CHFS and the Dean of Teaching to help develop these initiatives.

Provost's Response: I agree with the Dean and External Reviewers that a review of continuing education offerings is key to the ongoing success of programs.

External Reviewer's Recommendation #8: *We recommend that consideration be given to further development of this program with a view of becoming a more obvious and desirable pathway for careers beyond the education sector, such that a greater percentage of enrolled students aim for social and community service careers rather than education and teaching careers. This is particularly relevant given the dire human resource shortages in health and community service fields in the near North.*

Unit's Response: We agree with this critical recommendation, as it is in keeping with our program vision and forms the foundation of our curriculum and research activities. The original scope of the program from its Muskoka days in the Faculty of APS, was not simply as a feeder program into Education. CHFS continues to have intrinsic close ties with SW, SWLF, community/applied PSYC, CRSJ, and relevant sectors. Indeed, this trajectory is also consistent with recommendations for FT faculty that aligns with this scope of programming from our last IQAP Review, 2013/14. This recommendation also resonates with repeated input from community stakeholders and partners across key sectors of practice, in particular those that serve vulnerable children and youth and their families, and has been identified in community engagement events as far back as 2011-12. To our credit, we have made significant progress across our curriculum and certificates in this regard, and many of our non-con-Ed graduates enter relevant career pathways immediately post degree completion. For example, our reviewers note our strength as an applied or professional program: "CHFS appears as particularly well positioned within the university's broader context given that it essentially serves three core purposes: it is a professional or applied program unto itself, with students receiving excellent preparation for careers in community health and human services; it serves as an exceptional preparation and enrichment for students aiming to become teachers; and it provides relevant and meaningful elective learning content for students from across the university. As such, CHFS is an ideal program in a university that must concern itself with efficiencies and flexible curriculum opportunities for students to support its sustainability".

Largely a professional or applied program, we have worked diligently at establishing strong collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders across community health and human services, particularly in relation to developmental, behavioural, and mental health outcomes of vulnerable children and youth in the context of vulnerable families. This not only includes the developmental or neurodevelopmental health sector that serves children with I/DD and complex special needs, but also the child/youth mental health sector, children's aid and social welfare sectors, education, and criminal justice and youth corrections sector. Because of our curriculum focus, research, and expertise across these sectors, we were key partners in the development and implementation of the International Post Baccalaureate Diploma in Health & Social Impact. As such, we are committed to strengthening our programmatic vision in this regard, and meeting this recommendation for enhanced career pathways for students by 1/ fostering creative collaborative opportunities with intersecting programs (for example SW, SWLF, SOCI, PSYC, Ed, CRSJ), 2/ continuing to leverage our extensive community partnerships across services and sectors that serve vulnerable children and youth, 3/ strategically recruiting highly qualified practitioner-researcher or scientist-practitioner faculty colleagues with an established record across child and youth behavioural health, developmental health, and/or mental health, and 4/ strategically leveraging our national and international networks of expert researchers and practitioners across these sectors, for example iNCAH (International Network for Child & Adolescent Health), iNMH (International Network for Mental Health), and CanFASD (Canadian FASD Research Network), with representative fellows in the Dept. and across both faculties at NU, as well as key representative members from within the vulnerable child and youth Nipissing-NB community.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviews and Internal Reviewers recommendation to develop alternative pathways to attract new cohorts of students and continue to grow enrollment in the program. I support the Internal Reviewers suggestions to enhance career pathways by looking for collaborative opportunities with the intersecting programs, leveraging community partnerships, and connecting with regional and national organizations to create a network of researchers and practitioners. Given the number of cross-listed and cross-coded courses, there are opportunities for existing faculty members at Nipissing University to contribute to development of alternative pathways and experiential learning opportunities.

Provost's Response: I agree with the External Reviewer and Dean; however, I caution the proliferating cross-listed and cross-coded courses comes at a cost. I urge the Faculty of Arts and Science to refine its offerings and to have a clear sense of required courses as opposed to electives and to clarify the mutual dependencies.

External Reviewer's Recommendation #9: *We recommend that consideration be given to developing a research facilitation plan for the faculty members, in collaboration with the community professionals involved as instructors, to expand their impact through locally and regionally relevant knowledge generation.*

Unit's Response: This sounds promising and a value add for the program and community. Strategic recruitment for FT practitioner-researcher colleagues with a proven track record and key linkages/connections in the field would be key for creating synergies and building on the foundation we have in the program. A program level applied research and knowledge sharing agenda that can reach across vulnerable child, youth, and family sectors, would enable us to build some momentum, and expand our impact locally and regionally. Despite our limited capacity, we have a well-established foundation of applied and community research, with a significant number of applied projects, all with cross-institutional partners from CRJS, Ed, and SW, and with key community partners such as OKP, HANDS, NB Police, interRAI Network, GBV Organizations, and Private Industry partners. We also have initiated conversations with our community partners around our synergies and becoming a northern hub of excellence for vulnerable children, youth, and families, particularly related to behavioural, developmental, and mental health and wellbeing outcomes, and have generated a great deal of interest from key community stakeholders. We will continue to creatively explore options to facilitate an enhanced research agenda for building community capacity and enhancing knowledge sharing with our greater communities of practice.

Dean's Response: I agree with the External Reviewers and Internal Reviewers recommendation to develop a collaborative research plan that includes community and regional partners. By creating experiential learning and research opportunities with local and regional partners, it could help enhance the reputation for the applied aspects of the program and attract new students.

Provost's Response: Expanding local and regional partners will be key, subject to the curriculum review and the refinements proposed to the degree by the External Reviewers and Dean. There is a temporal order of activity that should be respected. Finding partnerships should not be first, if there are concerns about the integrity, coherence, and ability to staff the current offerings. We do not want to disappoint our partners if we cannot deliver on premature commitments.

External Reviewer's Recommendation #10: *We recommend that the timelines for banking and deleting courses be accelerated considerably. Specifically, we do not recommend that the time between a course ceasing to be offered and then appearing on a banked courses list be five years, nor that it take five years on the banked courses list for a course to be deleted. This process could be significantly accelerated, and this would provide for greater clarity of the curriculum and its course offerings.*

Unit's Response: The acceleration of banking and deleting courses seems to be counter-intuitive and counter to our programmatic needs, but we understand the need for an Institutional approach that reduces the variance between calendar options and actual options available for students at registration. Given limited FT faculty resources and budget restrictions in CHFS, accelerating banking would deplete our program of valuable courses and would deplete our one FT faculty member even further as their time would be taken up in unnecessary paper work and motion/senate approval processes to un-bank courses banked prematurely. With adequate PT/Professional faculty budget, we would be able to cycle to ensure all courses listed are offered regularly. That said, strategic recruitment for another FT faculty that would help stabilize the program/with the background to teach the bulk of our existing courses, would allow us to more efficiently cycle so that perhaps banking would be less of a concern. With the collapsing of the groups in keeping with recommendation 5, this will be a more easily attainable goal, provided a FT budget responsive to CHFS programmatic needs is approved in the future. In addition, we will also look to reduce curriculum redundancies, where these may exist with other programs and perhaps cross-coding where program alignment exists. We are also hopeful that with continued PT funding we will be able to continue contributing to the international Post-Bacc, thereby increasing the availability of our course offerings.

Dean’s Response: I agree with the External Reviewers recommendation that a five-year timeline is too long for the banking and deleting of courses; however, it appears this comment is not directed towards the CHFS courses. Upon review, it seems as though the majority of CHFS courses are offered on a regular basis. I assume this comment was directed towards some of the cross-listed courses from other programs. I recommend CHFS prepare a three-year course cycling plan so that students can plan their degree accordingly.

Provost’s Response: As part of the curriculum review, the cycling of courses (and continuing offerings) should be presented.

External Reviewer’s Recommendation #11: *This program could be enriched by the inclusion of international students, so long as there are support systems in place for international students to live well in the community and be academically successful.*

Unit’s Response: We agree that our Institutional community would be enriched by the inclusion of international students, including our own program. Unfortunately, lack of budget/resources will make this recommendation difficult, if not impossible in the near future, unless perhaps a related international post-bacc can be considered. We identified several such opportunities for which our CHFS curriculum would be appropriate, in the development of the Health & Social impact post-bacc. In addition, we can offer accessible opportunities for international students for online programming, and focus on building capacity in the students’ local communities.

Dean’s Response: I agree that the CHFS program would be enriched by the inclusion of international students. Several CHFS courses are part of the Post-baccalaureate degree in Health and Social Impacts. We are also seeing an increase of international students within our 4-year degree programs in Arts and Science. We continue to enhance our academic supports for international students and are working with the City of North Bay to help find accessible housing.

Provost’s Response: I am concerned about the suggested that international students could not be accommodated within an CHFS degree, unless a dedicated post-bac were devised and offered or online offerings were provided to a distinct cohort. I think this fails to appreciate the contribution of international students to the current degree and to the community. I encourage the Dean to engage the academic unit in a conversation about the contribution of international students to studies at Nipissing.

D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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 has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the recommended actions are undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE MEMBER/UNIT	PROJECTED COMPLETION
Recommendation #5: Urgent Curriculum Review; this will have implications for Recommendations #5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11	Chair and Dean	February 1, 2024
Recommendation #3: Indigenous commitments in CHFS; this will have implications for #1 and 5	Chair and Dean	November 1, 2023