

**REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
TO THE REGULAR February 2016 SENATE**

FOR INFORMATION

Eighteen-month follow-up from ACAPLAN's recommendations from the Undergraduate Program Review for the following program: Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Rural and Northern Health

Below is an excerpt from the Institutional Quality Assessment Process at Laurentian University approved at the Quality Council in June 2011.

PROCESS FOR FOLLOW-UP

No later than 18 months after Senate submission, those responsible for implementing the changes write a report to the Dean and to ACAPLAN, on the actions it has taken in response to the review. If ACAPLAN does not find the response satisfactory, it may ask the program for further actions.

**RESPONSE TO THE JUNE 2014 REPORT TO SENATE ON THE ACADEMIC
PLANNING COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE
INTERDISCIPLINARY PHD PROGRAM IN RURAL AND NORTHERN HEALTH**

INTRODUCTION

Laurentian University's Interdisciplinary PhD in Rural and Northern Health (IRNH) was founded by faculty members from the Schools of Nursing, Midwifery, Social Work (which was subsequently divided into the Schools of Social Work and Native Human Studies), Human Kinetics, and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM). The initial proposal for IRNH was submitted to the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies in August 2004, revisions were submitted early in 2006, and it was accredited in the spring of 2006.

The IRNH program is designed:

- To enhance both the quality and quantity of research focused on rural and northern health;
- To educate students to become high quality professionals in health research;
- To promote the development of a critical mass of health research expertise in the north; and
- To facilitate linkages between the university and community health organizations.

The language of instruction for the program is English; however, students may complete their comprehensive examinations and all thesis research in either English or French.

In accordance with Laurentian's IQAP policy, this current report provides Senate with the process that has been made regarding the recommendations of ACAPLAN that arose from this program's first cyclical review and were contained in the June 2014 report to Senate.

WEAKNESSES

- i. There is no explicit statement of the conceptual framework that anchors the discipline and therefore the curriculum.

RESPONSE: See Recommendation #1 response below.

- ii. Level of knowledge about research methods varies (understandably given the many different backgrounds of the students)

RESPONSE: All applicants must have a graduate level course in research methods and/or statistics/biostatistics. This has always been a requirement of the IRNH admission criteria however based on the IQAP recommendations, the IRNH Admissions Committee now more strictly upholds this requirement for all applicants.

- iii. The syllabi of individual courses do not reference Graduate Level Degree Expectations

RESPONSE: See Recommendation #3b response below.

- iv. There is no evidence of team teaching: “One person should not develop the weekly sessions in the curriculum and have others teach on a given topic. That is multidisciplinary teaching. True interdisciplinary teaching requires professors from other disciplines being present in class to provide context and teaching.”

RESPONSE: See Recommendation #3c response below.

- v. The use of technology in class is modest at best; IT support is “patchy.”

RESPONSE: See Recommendation #9a response below.

- vi. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the program, it was strange that no-one had been successful in obtaining a PHARE grant¹.

RESPONSE: We are pleased to report that the IRNH program had one successful PHARE grant recipient in 2014-2015, Ms. Kelly Coons. As of March 2015 funding for all CIHR-STIHR programs (including the PHARE Training Graduate Program) ceased, and CIHR is not continuing this program. SRNH will continue to search for other funding opportunities for all graduate students.

- vii. The website needs improvement (for marketing purposes).

RESPONSE: See Recommendation #2b response below.

- viii. Library resources are not adequate

RESPONSE: See Recommendation #8 response below.

¹ PHARE= Public Health and the Agricultural Rural Ecosystem Graduate Training Scholarships worth \$21,000 annually

ACAPLAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The ACAPLAN implementation plan is provided below with at status update listed in the final column. Additional information regarding completion and/or on-going activities are provided for Senate's review.