**REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**TO THE REGULAR May 2019 SENATE**

**FOR DISCUSSION**

**QUALITY ASSURANCE - CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW OF LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY’S**

**UNDERGRADUATE HISTORY PROGRAM**

**FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

In accordance with the Laurentian University’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report has been prepared to provide a synthesis of the external evaluation and Laurentian’s response and action plan. This report identifies the significant strengths of the program, opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report; who will be responsible for providing any resources made necessary by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations; who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

**SUMMARY OF THE CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW OF THE UNDERGRADUATE HISTORY PROGRAM**

**Introduction:**

Currently the History Department offers the following programs:

In English:

B.A. with a Minor in History (3 or 4 years)

B.A. with a Concentration in History (3 years)

B.A. with a Major in History (4 years)

B.A. with a Specialization in History (4 years)

Qualifying Year in History

M.A. in History

En français :

B.A. avec une mineure en histoire (3 ou 4 ans)

B.A. avec une concentration en histoire (3 ans)

B.A. avec une majeure en histoire (4 ans)

B.A. avec une spécialisation en histoire (4 ans)

Année propédeutique en histoire

M.A. en histoire

The undergraduate History program has been available since the university opened in 1960 but it has changed over time. In December 2009, following the Department of History’s previous Undergraduate Review, the Academic Planning Committee (ACAPLAN) made several recommendations including the following: **That the department modify its curriculum in all four years, with a view towards improving the student experience.**

ACAPLAN notes with pleasure that this recommendation has been implemented in full. Between 2009 and 2012, during Dr. Sara Burke’s term as Chair, the History Department revised its undergraduate curriculum almost from top to bottom, with the twin goals of more clearly defining levels of expectation in the 2000, 3000, and 4000 series, and of increasing flexibility and choice for students taking both Majors and Specializations.

in 1972 the History Department began offering Laurentian’s first MA program and made it available in both French and English. In 2016, that program underwent an IQAP review, scheduled to be repeated in 2023. While IQAP Guidelines encourage a simultaneous review of all programs offered by a department, under the circumstances the current review focuses exclusively on undergraduate programs.

**IQAP:**

In February 2018, the Department submitted its self-study to the Office of Vice-President Academic and Provost of Laurentian University.

The self-study was a model of its kind which was clearly divided into two parts: Part I was made up of 6 distinct sections. Part II of the Self-Study included the c.vs of professors teaching in the program including those teaching full-time, one Adjunct and two Sessionals.

In Part I, the first section, A, the Introduction, synopsized the various programs offered and included the program’s learning objectives and outcomes based on degree level expectations. The concerns raised in the previous appraisal in 2009 were reviewed and actions taken were tabled. The section then described how faculty, staff, and students and others participated in the writing of the study. Section B focused on the Faculty, listing both the full-time and part-time faculty. It identified core faculty and reviewed teaching loads as well as research funding by faculty members, and then summarized the career number and current supervision of bachelors’ thesis and graduate students. Section C was devoted to Physical Resources including library resources as well as laboratory and computer facilities. It also described the space occupied by the program and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the utilization of the existing physical resources. Section D was devoted to Students, listing the enrolment and graduation statistics for the past five years of the program and the educational and/or employment status the previous five years of graduates. Section E focused more specifically on Program Regulations and Courses and included a rationale for the organization of the curriculum and an analysis of how the program met its learning objectives. There was also a statistical summary of student course evaluations. Section F was devoted to Planning (strength and weaknesses).

There were also six appendices:

Appendix 1: List of courses for North American stream, or European stream

Appendix 2: Total courses including enrolments for past three years

Appendix 3: List of fourth-year (HIST 4055) Research Project over past five years

Appendix 4: List of M.A. Theses and M.A. Essays over past five years

Appendix 5: Sample of course outlines

Appendix 6: Summary of Laurentian University Library holdings

On 16 November 2018, after reviewing the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) report to learn parameters for evaluation, the History Department’s Unit Self-Study Periodic Appraisal for their undergraduate program, and the university’s mission statement, the Review Team conducted a site visit. The external was Dr. Carolyn Podruchny, Associate Professor, Department of History, York University.” It is worth noting that Dr. Podruchny is “an historian of Aboriginal and French relations and Metis history in early North American history, specializing in fur trade encounters, systems of communication, and identity formation.” In addition to Dr. Podruchny, the team consisted of two Laurentian professors, Dr. Sylvia Hunt from within the Faculty of Arts and Dr. Alicia Hawkins from the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Architecture. Finally, there were two students in the program, Samantha Boucher, a francophone and Robert Moyer, an anglophone.

The site visit was thorough and included the History Department’s Office area and teaching areas as well as the J.N. Desmarais Library. Stakeholders consulted included senior members of the university administration: V.P. Academic and Provost, Dr. Serge Demers (by external examiner alone), Associate Vice-President, Learning and Teaching, Dr. Shelley Watson (by external examiner alone), the Interim Dean of Arts, Dr. Joël Dickinson (by external examiner alone), and finally the University librarian, Mr. Brent Roe.

The team also met History Department Chair, Dr. Todd Webb, and two stakeholders, City Archivist, City of Greater Sudbury Archives, Shanna Fraser and a Sessional Faculty member Dr. Michael Commito. Finally, it met various faculty members both individually and as a group as well as a group of current and former undergraduate students in History program.

In their report dated 17 December 2018, the reviewers noted that: *“The Department of History is a high functioning and successful department. It has a strong record in research and teaching. It meets the University’s mission statement fairly well by providing programs in both English and French (and conducting its business in both languages) and providing a good degree of Indigenous content in its course offerings. It uses its human resources in creative ways to fully maximize its ability to achieve its objectives. Departmental relations are marked by cooperation, collegiality, and a willingness to share the burdens.”*

More specifically, the reviewers observed that:

* The program is mostly consistent with the institution’s mission and academic plans.
* The program requirements and learning outcomes are clear, appropriate, and in alignment with the institution’s statement of undergraduate Degree Level Expectations
* The admission requirements are appropriately aligned with the learning outcomes established for the completion of the program.
* The curriculum generally reflects the current state of the discipline in the area of study.
* The sample syllabi included in the self-study show that the Department members are using innovative scholarship in their course content.
* The significant innovation and creativity in the program are multi-faceted. They include:

1) The curriculum is fully bilingual; students have the option of taking most courses in

French or English.

2) Indigenous history is incorporated into many of the courses on North America, not just those devoted specifically to it.

3) The Department requires that students take a course on historical methodology, which provides students with the grounding to become strong historians and ensures a standard across the student body.

4) The Department requires geographic breadth in students’ training by requiring that they take courses in both the North American and the European streams.

* The Department has merged all its French-language first- and second-year courses. Students attend the same lectures and do the appropriate level and amount of work for their level. Students cannot take both levels of the course, so there is no risk they will be repeating

content. This is a creative solution to increasing the number of courses offered based on limited human resources, but it limits the variety of courses students may take,

* The modes of delivery appropriate and effective to meet with program’s identified learning outcomes. All degrees are offered in both French and English, and a significant number of courses offer Indigenous content. It should be noted that students can also complete a three- year degree by taking courses offered solely online.
* The means of assessment (particularly in the students’ final year of the program) are appropriate and effective to demonstrate achievement of the program learning objectives and the institutional and program degree level expectations.
* The technology in the classroom is appropriate
* In general, students have expressed great satisfaction with the History Department, especially regarding the quality of the courses and faculty members, the availability of counselling, the ability to do similar courses / programs in either French or English, the availability of enough courses to do a three-year degree fully online, and the congeniality of the Department as a whole… The numerical scores from student evaluations and the comments of students involved in the review process show a very high level of student satisfaction.
* The qualifications and the research and scholarly record of the faculty in the Department are excellent.

Amidst these encomiums, there were some concerns expressed about the program in the body of the report.

* The History Department does not have the number of professors it needs to best deliver its program.
* The objectives of the program are not fully consistent with Laurentian University’s mission and academic plans because the Department does not have a scholar specializing specifically in Indigenous history (they lost the person in this position a couple of years ago).
* The low number of colleagues offering courses in French threatens the Department’s ability to continue offering degrees in French.
* The Department’s website is poorly designed and limited since it lacks a clear and definitive list of courses on offer in the Department, especially serious since there is no university calendar.
* The Department’s definition of history focusing on documentary sources is too narrow since it fails to reflect the sorts of sources Indigenous historians also rely on.
* Department members don’t apply enough for both internal and external funding to be able to hire more students and increase the possibility of work-related learning.
* The range of courses is limited.
* The first-year survey courses may not be as effective in attracting students to the program as focused studies of particular historical events, peoples, or problems.
* The fourth-year course learning requirement is unclear. It seems that in most of these courses students focus on conducting original research with primary materials, but it is not explicitly stated in the Department’s material.
* There is no universal style and citation guides for both the French and English courses.
* Library resources are inadequate.

On 31 January 2019, the Department submitted its comments on the Report and the Department’s comments were followed by a set of comments from the Dean of Arts. The Dean nicely summarized the Reviewers’ recommendations, the Departments’ reaction to those recommendations, and added her own reactions. Her report received on 1 February 2019 is synopsized below.

**SUMMARY OF THE REVIEW TEAM’S RECOMMENDATIONS (R) THE DEPARTMENT’S (H) RESPONSES AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE DEAN OF ARTS (D)**

**R1. The Department needs more human resources to meet its learning objectives and outcomes. Specifically, the Department needs at least one member fully devoted to Indigenous history (the Department currently has none); at least one member who can teach in French, preferably specializing in Western Europe (the Department currently has four members who teach in French); and a commitment from the university to maintain strong levels of human resources and diverse specializations (such as in women’s history) as retirements occur**.

H1. Since the departure of our specialist in Indigenous history (Anglophone) and the unfortunate failure of the search to find a suitable Indigenous historian (Francophone), the department has been urging the university to fill this gap in our course offerings and to act to achieve the goal of greater indigeneity set out in the university’s strategic plan. Perhaps, under the current fiscal constraints faced by the university, a bilingual hire, able to teach Indigenous history in both the Anglophone and Francophone programs, would be an elegant and budget-friendly response to this recommendation.

In addition, to balance the course offerings on the Francophone side of the department, where we currently have three scholars of Canadian history and one of European history, the latter of whom is approaching retirement, an additional historian of Europe, specializing in whatever period, is a priority for achieving program outcomes.

Finally, a commitment on the university’s part to replace individual faculty members or, at the very least, areas of specialization (such as women’s history and European history) as retirements occur is a necessity.

D1: I agree that the inclusion of Indigenous history is paramount to the program. I encourage the department to put in a request for this position to be considered for the 2020-21 budget consideration. I strongly support the request to replace future faculty vacancies.

**R2. The Department needs to maintain one full-time administrative assistant to effectively meet its objectives and outcomes. With a faculty complement of twelve and both a graduate and undergraduate program, it is essential that a full-time administrative assistant be maintained**.

H2: The History program’s current administrative assistant, Rose-May Démoré, has long been a linchpin of departmental life. She, too, is approaching retirement. There will be a period of transition once she does retire and that will be made much more difficult, and disruptive to the day-to-day life and wider culture of the department, if her replacement is part-time or, in the worst-case scenario, if she is not replaced at all.

D2: I agree that a department this size with a graduate program requires a full-time administrative assistant.

**R3. The Department’s website needs to be updated, which is important for recruitment and effective communication with its students**.

H3: Difficulties with the university’s website have, if anything, become more pronounced over the past few years as Information Technology has struggled to design a more user-friendly public interface. To give but one example from the most recent update: for several months, the department’s webpage stated that David Leeson, the former chair, was the current chair. This led to confusion among prospective and current students, as Dr. Leeson forwarded emails about admissions and advising to the actual chair, Todd Webb.

With help from Information Technology, the department is determined to update its webpage to make it both more accurate and more useful for future and existing students. As part of its efforts at recruitment and retention, the department is also maintaining an active Twitter and Facebook presence.

D3: I commend the Department of History as many of their members are active social media contributors, bringing more attention to the many colloquia and conferences they organize. As a former chair, I agree that the responsibility of website upkeep is a daunting task, and perhaps one that should not be left to the Department.

**R4. The Department could broaden its public definition of history (currently posted on the website) to better recognize the way history of Indigenous peoples is produced and disseminated, acknowledging the array of types of primary sources that historians use. Recognizing the centrality of oral traditions and sources would answer the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s call for academic institutions to Indigenize.**

H4: Despite its lack of an Indigenous historian, either Anglophone or Francophone, the department is dedicated to fulfilling the TRC’s call, and that of the university’s strategic plan, to indigenize its curriculum wherever possible. As part of its wider effort to update its webpage, outlined above (Recommendation 3), the department will broaden the posted definition of historical sources in line with the external reviewer’s recommendation.

D4: Agreed.

**R5. The Department could do more to increase work-integrated learning by encouraging more faculty to apply for funding to hire undergraduate students as research assistants and by continuing to develop close relationships with public history organizations.**

H5: As the university moves increasingly in the direction of work-integrated learning and other related educational opportunities, the department will explore ways to support those initiatives, including providing research opportunities for our undergraduate students and building on or cultivating relationships with libraries, museums, and archives in the Sudbury community.

D5: Agreed. I do know of a few opportunities already going on in the Dept that would fall under the WIL umbrella. Promotion of these already existing opportunities would also be beneficial.

**R6. The Department could easily broaden its course offerings by making courses with historical content in other departments eligible for history credits, which would also respond to the University’s strategic plan highlighting of interdisciplinarity**.

H6: The department has a tradition of supporting interdisciplinarity. Over the past several years, for instance, it has participated in the creation of a number of interdisciplinary minors and it currently allows students in its specialization to take six of the twelve fourth-year credits required for graduation in another Arts discipline. Given this past practice, the department will give serious study to the external reviewer’s suggestion concerning cross-listing courses in other programs with History-related content.

D6: I will support the decision that the Department comes to regarding this suggestion.

**R7. The library budget designated for History needs to be restored to levels from a decade ago.**

H7: While the library staff continues to be willing to consider and act upon requests from the department for purchases of books, databases, and other sources, the library budget assigned to History has, nevertheless, shrunk noticeably since the last external review of the undergraduate program. Restoring that budget will help not just History students – as well as students in related disciplines – but also the university in general as it strives to establish itself as a premiere institution for research.

D7: I support the request for the availability of more library resources.

**ACAPLAN’S RESPONSE**

ACAPLAN endorses the recommendations of the Review Team but notes that while the Review Report expressed several concerns about the program, it did not make any recommendations concerning:

• The first-year survey courses may not be as effective in attracting students to the program as focused studies of particular historical events, peoples, or problems.

• The fourth-year course learning requirement is unclear. It seems that in most of these courses students focus on conducting original research with primary materials, but it is not explicitly stated in the Department’s material.

• There is no universal style and citation guides for both the French and English courses.

Accordingly, ACAPLAN will make its own recommendations on these subjects.

**LAURENTIAN QUALITY ASSURANCE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM**

**in**

**HISTORY**

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| Recommendation | Proposed Follow-up | Responsibility for Leading Follow-up | Timeline |
| R1. **The Department needs more human resources to meet its learning objectives and outcomes.** | i. Hire a bilingual Indigenous historian  ii. Replace retiring faculty or at least areas of specialization (women’s/European History) | Dean of Arts and University Budget Committee | Start process in May 2019. |
| **2. Replace administrative assistant with a full-time hire upon incumbent’s retirement** | Prepare case | Departmental Chair with Dean of Arts and Budget Committee | As required. |
| **3. Update website** | Continuous review to ensure currency | Department Chair with IT | Start April 2019 and ongoing |
| **4. Broaden public definition of history** | Include Indigenous perspectives | Department Chair | April 2019 |
| **5. Increase opportunities work-integrated learning** | i. Faculty must apply for more funding to hire UG research assistants  ii. Cultivate relationships with libraries, archives and museums in area to facilitate hiring of students | i. Department Chair with colleagues | June 2019 and ongoing |
| **6. Broaden course offerings** | Analyze content of courses in other programs to expand those which can be cross-listed | Department Chair with colleagues | June 2019 and ongoing |
| **7. Recommend that library substantially increase budget devoted to history** | Discussion with liaison librarian and University Librarian | Department Chair | June 2019 |
| **8. Consider changing first year survey courses so they become focused studies of particular historical events, peoples, or problems** | Identify various possibilities, possibly by benchmarking with other universities | Department Chair with colleagues | December 2019 |
| **9. Clarify fourth year course learning requirement** | Make clear that in most of these courses students focus on conducting original research with primary materials, and explicitly state as much in the Department’s material. | Department Chair with those teaching at that level. | December 2019 |
| **10. There is no universal style and citation guides for both the French and English courses** | Consider ensuring that Chicago style format is used in both languages in all courses | Department Chair with colleagues | December 2019 |

The Dean of Arts shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation plan. The details of progress made shall be presented in the Dean’s Annual Report and filed with the Vice-President Academic and Provost. The executive Summary and the monitoring reports will be posted on Laurentian University’s web site.

**CONCLUSION**

The Undergraduate Program in history is approved to continue and it will be reviewed in the fall of 2023. This date is earlier than normal (2026), but since 2023 coincides with the scheduled date for the review of the graduate program, it will allow both programs to be reviewed simultaneously, which is the normal practice at the university.